

The Ramblers Association, East Surrey Walkers Group

38th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

2:30pm Saturday 7 November 2020. On line via Zoom

1. Chair's Welcome

Judy Brua welcomed everyone to what was described as a first of its kind AGM. Judy then set out how the meeting would work in respect of questions, polls etc. There were 45 links (including committee members) but some screens showed more than one member so the estimated attendance was 55.

2. Apologies for absence: Jean Scott, Barbara Bulman

3. Minutes of 2019 AGM: Held on 16 November 2019.

The minutes are available for members to read on the website so were not read. The results of the online poll to approve the minutes was 88% yes, 12% abstained. Minutes approved

4. Matters arising - There were no matters arising.

5. Chair's Report

In her final report Judy lamented not only the cancellation of the walks and other activities that usually take place but also the shelving of the new initiatives which had been planned for the year – namely the cream tea for the footpath teams to recognise their sterling work and the starting of a new group - the 'Cutting Crew' – to work on vegetation clearance. She hoped that the new Committee will take on these new activities in due course.

During lockdown the Committee and Officers issued 'Lockdown News'. These were sent out for 12 weeks in place of Noticeboards.

During the year, as was mentioned on Noticeboard, Adam Wilson, the Assistant Webmaster, retired. Judy thanked Karen Frost and Carolyn Stokes who have stepped forward to take over his work. In addition to a number of behind the scenes activities, they will be responsible for sending out the weekly Noticeboards which will probably be their most visible 'face'.

Judy then looked forward to the 40th anniversary of ESW's formation in February 2023. Inspired by Mole Valley's calendar for their 40th anniversary, the Committee is proposing to prepare a 40th anniversary calendar. John Nathan has agreed to co-ordinate this with the assistance of Brian Smith & Barbara Witherington. A photographic competition will be announced via Noticeboard requesting seasonal photos.

To finish, Judy thanked all those who have helped and supported her as Chair over the past 3 years. Particular thanks were given to the committee members and to Judy's wife, Alice.

6. Treasurer's report

Robert advised there is currently enough money in the Kissing Gate Fund for 9 or 10 gates. This is in addition to gates which are being funded elsewhere but which will be erected by ESW.

Advertising revenue is down this year as we have not published our quarterly programmes. Nigel advised that Brian had published the Sep/Oct/Nov programme. Amanda asked that as so few people print off the programme would it be possible to explore if advertising revenue could be obtained from advertising on the website. Robert stated he would look into both matters

Robert mentioned that he has one more year on the committee. If there is anyone who might like to stand as Treasurer next year please contact him.

The results of the poll to approve the Report and Accounts showed 94% in favour with 6% abstaining. Report and accounts approved.

The poll to reappoint Keith Towers as auditor showed 95% in favour with 5% abstaining. Auditor re-elected.

Robert expressed his thanks to Keith Towers, the independent auditor.

7. Officer reports and matters arising

Membership Secretary's Report

Pauline reported that during her time as membership secretary members have grown from 432 to 497. We have a 91% retention rate and the percentage of members who are volunteers at 23% is above that nationally and for Surrey. Membership numbers did fall during lockdown but Pauline was glad to report there had been a strong recovery since September.

Walks Co-ordinator Reports

Report One - Helen Whiteley

Helen explained that was sorry she had stepped down in the summer but introducing the new Covid guidelines for leaders was too much especially with her other commitments organising holidays and the difficulties her vision causes.

During her time on the committee the walks programme has expanded considerably and 14 new leaders have joined.

Helen thanked Sue Halsey and Nigel Poulter for their invaluable assistance

Report Two - Liz Whittaker

Since walks resumed there have been 47 walks with 535 walkers. Liz mentioned the Boot Buddy initiative and the walks library for those walking during lockdown 2.

The draw was made for the winning walk leader since walks resumed. This was won by Andrew Keynes.

Liz sent her best wishes to Helen McDonnell and the new committee.

Publicity Secretary Report

In her last report as Publicity Officer Pamela reported that publicity activities were severely curtailed during 2020 but articles are now appearing in local parish magazines and are mainly aimed at new walkers. Pauline mentioned that at least one new member had reported reading an article in the Warlingham parish magazine.

Social Secretary Report

With the only event this year since the New Year Lunch being the picnic, Christine is waiting to see what 2021 will bring. Hopefully the BBQ and Cream tea being outdoor events will happen and the November social event is booked. Further information will be provided nearer the time.

Local Footpath Secretary Report

Tony Pearson reported on behalf of the 5 Local Footpath Secretaries

As mentioned in his report Surrey CC is currently only addressing issues where there is a high risk to public safety and contractors are dealing with vegetation clearance.

Tony did put out a request for someone to volunteer as another footpath secretary in the south of the district.

Responding to a question on planning applications that affect bridleways Tony confirmed that Tandridge DC should contact the footpath secretaries if there is a proposal that affects any right of way. Lisa Wilson mentioned a footpath diversion in Chelsham and Tony said he would check if we had been advised.

Tony requested that members should continue to report defects and the footpath secretaries can help with this if required,

Ken's Krew Report

In Barbara's absence there was nothing further to add to what was in the report. However, Rosie did comment that she was glad to hear that Barbara is working on the Eulyn Farm issue.

8. Report on Surrey Area

Judy as Chair and Barbara represent ESW at Surrey Area level. The group meet quarterly and it is generally felt to be a good source of information and useful. Deb Skinner is now the Assistant Webmaster for Surrey.

Surrey Area has noted that Kent Area's website has more hits than theirs and one of the Kent website features is a number of very good walking routes with detailed directions. Surrey will be asking each group within Surrey to provide a route that can be added to the Area website. See below the link to Kent's website which shows the great detail they have given to their walks, making it very user friendly. If there is anyone who would like to

volunteer to provide the submission for ESW please email Deb Skinner and she will help you liaise with Surrey Area.

<http://www.kentramblers.org.uk/KentWalks/>

9. Golden Boot Award

This new award was awarded to the following individuals for their outstanding service to the ESW working behind the scenes to enable the group to be as enjoyable as it is and to provide a service not only to the group but to the wider public as well.

- **Sue Halsey** – Sue runs the Walking Wounded tea parties and a year ago additionally became our Welfare Officer where she excels at keeping in touch with anyone who is under the weather and making sure they feel looked after and valued. During Lockdown she volunteered to be the central person for our ‘Boot Buddy’ scheme.
- **Nigel Poulter** – Nigel is the Walks Administrator helping leaders with the planner and posting the programme to the website. Just how much this involves became clear when it was time for us to start walking again in September. The help and advice he gave to Judy and Liz was absolutely invaluable
- **Barbara Bulman** – Since joining ESW 2011 Barbara was initially our Social Secretary and then our Welfare Officer until Sue took over last year. She is our representative on the Surrey Area Council and last but not least she took over the organisation of our Ken’s Krew when Ken Clare retired. Barbara’s energy and determination to get things done is known to all of us and our footpaths are in better condition because of her industry in fighting our corner with Surrey County Council. Barbara is a force to be reckoned with!

Vouchers would normally be presented at the AGM, but this being a virtual event, will be sent the vouchers at a later date.

10. Election of officers

The list of individuals standing for election was included in the agenda together with their proposer and seconder. Steve Hanks has since agreed to stand as Publicity Officer and been proposed by Amada Whiteley and seconded by Janette Ruiz.

Prior to the election of officers those individuals looking to be elected onto the committee as new members at this time gave a brief introduction.

Ruth as Chair elect thanked Judy for all her work over the last 3 years and Alice presented Judy with a gift on behalf of ESW.

The results of the poll to elect the committee showed 95% in favour with 5% abstaining. New committee elected.

At this point Judy formally handed over the Chair of the meeting to Ruth

11. AOB

- Sue Halsey asked if anyone knew of any members who had health issues to please let her know

- Helen W asked if the walks programme could be published one month in advance rather than quarterly. This is a matter which was raised at the last Committee meeting and is ongoing. An action was taken away for Ruth and Helen M to investigate further. Nigel offered to attend the next committee meeting.

Meeting finished at 3:35 pm