

MINUTES OF
BRISTOL RAMBLERS GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING
11th JUNE 2024, BRADBURY HALL, HENLEAZE

0 ATTENDEES

Heather Toyne (Chair), Peter Budden, Tony Parsons, Keith Budd, Sarah Marshall, Carew Reynell, Sue Fox, Ceiswyn Blake, Paula Cannings, Margaret Ruse.

PART 1: WALK COORDINATORS AND COMMITTEE

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

HT welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Walk Coordinators Paula Cannings and Margaret Ruse, who attended Part 1 of the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Bob Gibson and Walk Coordinator Aubrey Newport.

2 NEW LEADERS' GUIDANCE AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The main item on the agenda was a discussion, to which Walk Coordinators were invited, regarding how Bristol Ramblers will implement the new national guidance for walk leaders (see <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/resources-walk-leaders>). The detailed guidance had been circulated by HT in advance of the meeting. BG and AN had provided their views by email. The purpose of the guidance is to provide suggestions and recommendations to help leaders ensure the safety of our walkers. Bristol Ramblers already has significant established practice, and the Committee felt it was important to continue with this. The Committee also recognised the time and effort our walk leaders already commit and were keen not to add unnecessarily to the burden of leading walks, especially as we are already struggling to find new leaders.

The Committee reviewed the national recommendations in detail and agreed to implement the guidance in practical ways as follows:

The guidance talks about ratios of walkers to leaders/backmarkers

- We know that most of our walks include experienced leaders, who can help out if necessary. This will generally cover the ratio requirements. The Committee agreed to therefore continue with current practice, i.e., continue to appoint a backmarker when there are 10 or more walkers, or when otherwise appropriate.

The guidance recommends walk registers/next of kin

- Bristol Ramblers will not require walk leaders to take registers, or ask for next of kin details because most of our walkers are already known to the leader. Instead, we will ask walkers to carry 'emergency contact' cards ('ICE Cards'). HT had contacted Ramblers HQ 6 weeks ago to ask for a stack of such cards.

ACTION Walk Coordinators to distribute ICE Cards to walk leaders when necessary

- It was considered important that details of a walk route and expected time of finishing be shared with someone not on the walk, in case of emergency.

ACTION CR to contact BG to ask if the Route Card can be piloted with hill walks

Training and skills development

- We should encourage all leaders to do the on-line training and examine the guidance.
- CR offered to liaise with John Wrigley to offer some 'in person' local walk leader training. CR noted that there used to be a course, aimed in particular at prospective new leaders. This could be repeated, perhaps in shorter form, if necessary.

ACTION CR to discuss walk leader training with J Wrigley

ACTION CR to send CB information to put an article in eBoot concerning walk leader training

Risk assessments

- The Committee agreed leaders should assess risks when planning a walk. We already have a pro forma on the website which can be used when judged appropriate. HT will review the form to assess its conformance with national guidance. Completed forms should be sent to CR for storage for 3 years. The committee felt new leaders in particular might find it useful to undertake a written risk assessment. It was also agreed that leaders should be reminded to complete an incident form in the event of an incident occurring.

ACTION HT to review the risk assessment form on the Group's website

New Leaders

- Any new leaders who are not currently set up on the national system as Walk Leaders will have to undertake on-line training. This is a national requirement which is not possible to change.

ACTION HT to send email to Walk Leaders summarising how we propose to implement the guidance at Bristol Ramblers

ACTION HT to write to Walk Coordinators asking them to take responsibility for setting up new walk leaders (HT will forward instructions once received from Ramblers HQ)

3 FIRST AID TRAINING

The feedback from the First Aid Training Course had been good. There was some outstanding interest in attending such training if a further course were to be held, particularly from within the Saturday and Wednesday groups. HT suggested that a waiting list could be set up. It was agreed to revisit the possibility of arranging further courses in 6-12 months' time.

DECISION The Committee to discuss arranging further First Aid Training courses in 6-12 months

4 WALK NUMBERS

HT and SF gave the figures for participation on walks in the last period.

For Saturday walks, there had been an average of 15 walkers (16 last time) with the attendance ranging between 6 and 32.

The average attendance on Wednesday walks was 13 (11 last time), with minimum and maximum numbers of 7 and 22, respectively. There were 5 weeks without a weekday walk.

For Sunday B walks, the figures were an average of 17 (compared with 16 last time), a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 23.

There were between 5 and 13 ramblers on A walks, with an average of 9 (compared with 10 last time). There were also 9 people on the most recent 'new members walk', the same as the last such walk.

5 WALK FEST

There had been 419 participants on the 40 Bristol Ramblers walks held as part of Walk Fest 2024. The walks with the highest attendance were the Failand Bluebell Walk, with 32, and the Waterfall Walk, with 31. The 419 figure compares favourably with previous numbers of 278 and 216 in 2023 and 2022, respectively. The walks had been well appreciated by those taking part. CR raised a few issues for future consideration. SF asked whether it was really necessary to fill in an Evaluation Form for each walk that a person goes on noting that most of the questions are generic in nature. However, it was understood that this was indeed the expectation of the Walk Fest organisers.

There was some discussion about Bristol Ramblers' contribution to Walk Fest 2025. This will be discussed again in detail at Committee meetings held subsequent to the October AGM. The Group's contribution ideally needs to be available in outline by November or December.

ACTION HT to put Walk Fest on the agenda for the November Committee meeting

HT reminded the Committee that Eileen Bartlett was stepping down as the Group's representative on the Walk Fest Steering Group. The Committee thanked Eileen for her efforts. HT suggested that two people could share the role in future. CR and HT agreed to do so and HT will advise Eileen accordingly. The Committee endorsed this suggestion.

DECISION The Committee agreed that HT and CR should replace Eileen Bartlett as Walk Fest liaison for Bristol Ramblers

ACTION HT to inform Eileen Bartlett that HT and CR would replace her as the Bristol Ramblers liaison with Walk Fest and thank her for her past contributions

Leaders, Walk Coordinators and CR were thanked by the Committee for all their time and commitment that had made a success of Bristol Ramblers walks contributed to Walk Fest, recognising that the Group is now one of the main contributors of free walks for the Walk Fest programme.

As a result of the earlier discussion on guidance from Ramblers HQ, the following were also agreed: (i) to ask walkers to be responsible for each other at start of Walk Fest walks; (ii) to ask leaders to ensure they have a helper/backmarker on popular walks; and (iii) CR to feed back to Karen Lloyd the importance of ICE/contact details.

ACTION CR to feed back to Karen Lloyd the importance of ICE/contact details

PART 2: COMMITTEE ONLY

6 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes (Draft 4, dated 25th March 2024) of the last meeting, held on 29th February 2024, were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

7 ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

HT noted that all Actions carried over from the previous meeting had either been completed or were covered in the agenda of the present meeting.

8 WEBSITE

The only item raised concerning the Group's website was that there is now a button which enables users to provide feedback.

There were a couple of actions placed following the earlier discussion on the guidance from Ramblers HQ.

ACTION SM to put information for walkers on website (this is contained in the guidance), along with the updated risk assessment and checklist

ACTION SM to check that the Leaders area of the Group's website aligns with the national guidance

9 AGM WEDNESDAY 16th OCTOBER

Final arrangements were discussed for the AGM on 16th October, which will again take place at Redland Bowls Club. All members are welcome to attend the AGM and have a say on what they think we should be doing next year.

At the last meeting, it was suggested that either Lesley Insall or Paula Cannings could give a presentation. SM stated that she would be seeing Lesley soon and raise the matter. Otherwise, it was likely that Paula would give the presentation.

Also at the last meeting, HT had indicated that her three-year tenure as Chair of Bristol Ramblers, and hence of this Committee, was due to expire at the October AGM. No offers to assume the role have been received. Hence HT has agreed to continue as Chair for a further year. As a consequence, the Minutes Secretary, PB, also offered to continue for the coming year. All other Committee members also agreed to stand to continue in their role for 2024-2025. These offers were endorsed by the Committee subject to formal confirmation of the composition of the Committee at the forthcoming AGM.

DECISION The Committee endorsed HT and PB continuing as Chair and Minutes Secretary, respectively

10 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES

HT advised on the status of the Access to Nature bill but suggested that its progress through Parliament was likely to be interrupted by the forthcoming General Election.

11 TREASURER'S REPORT

The latest Treasurer's report had been received from BG.

The cash in the Group's 3 bank accounts has now been consolidated into one account, as per the Committee's decision at its last meeting.

In the year-to-date, expenditure has been £2,123 and is anticipated to increase to £2,300 at year-end.

The reserves are £3,112 in total (Main £1,189, Restricted £1,280, Self-funded £643).

Main reserves are anticipated to be 97% of unrestricted annual spend at year-end (the target is between 40% & 100%).

At the time the Treasurer's report was received from BG, instructions from Ramblers' Head Office on the budgeting submission for 2024-2025 were awaited. However, at the meeting, CR stated that BG has now received such advice from Head Office and that the submission needed to be sent to CR as Area Treasurer by end-July indicating whether the group would be seeking additional funds based on allocation, or whether they would draw on the existing underspend during the following year. HT will contact BG and ask him to let members know whether he recommends seeking additional funds for 2024-2025.

ACTION HT to contact BG and ask for him to circulate the proposal on the budget submission for 2024-2025 to Committee members for endorsement

BG had also noted that if there are queries regarding money in our bank account, or what has been spent when and on what, even if it relates to transactions some years ago, please do ask the Treasurer for details. The accounts and bank statements will always be made available to anyone asking.

12 PROW UPDATE

An update on the recent PROW meeting had been received from Roger Britton. HT indicated that she had contacted RB to thank him for his efforts. CB was asked to put something in eBoot on PROW.

ACTION CB to add an article in eBoot on the discussion at the PROW meeting

13 FUTURE MEETINGS

The next Committee meeting will be held prior to the AGM and will be arranged by Doodle poll following this present meeting. It is likely to take place in August at Bradbury Hall. As noted earlier in the agenda, the 2024 Group AGM is to take place on Wednesday 16th October. It is necessary to prepare the annual report 2 weeks in advance of the AGM and advise people accordingly.

ACTION HT to send Doodle poll invitation for an end-August next meeting of the Committee

ACTION CB to put an announcement in eBoot for the 2024 AGM

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CR indicated that he holds a folding table and various banners on behalf of Bristol Ramblers. These have been used in the past at various events. CR asked if anyone else would like to keep them or otherwise could he dispose of them. It was agreed that these items could be recycled.

DECISION CR to dispose of folding table and other items held for the Group

SM asked whether Bristol Ramblers' involvement in Walk Fest had led to any increase in participation in the regular walks programme HT replied that this was difficult to quantify as, for example, there was generally a seasonal variation in numbers.

There was no other business raised. HT closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.

Peter Budden

25th June 2024 (Draft 2 for comment by Committee)

LIST OF DECISIONS

DECISION The Committee to discuss arranging further First Aid Training courses in 6-12 months

DECISION The Committee agreed that HT and CR should replace Eileen Bartlett as Walk Fest liaison for Bristol Ramblers

DECISION The Committee endorsed HT and PB continuing as Chair and Minutes Secretary, respectively

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| ACTION | CR to discuss walk training with J Wrigley |
| ACTION | CB to put an article in eBoot concerning walk leader training |
| ACTION | HT to review the risk assessment form on the Group's website |
| ACTION | HT to send email to Walk Leaders |
| ACTION | HT to write to Walk Coordinators asking them to take responsibility for setting up new walk leaders (HT will forward instructions once received from Ramblers HQ) |
| ACTION | HT to put Walk Fest on the agenda for the November Committee meeting |
| ACTION | HT to inform Eileen Bartlett that HT and CR would replace her as the Bristol Ramblers' liaison with Walk Fest |
| ACTION | CR to feed back to Karen Lloyd the importance of ICE/contact details |
| ACTION | SM to put information for walkers on website (this is contained in guidance), along with the risk assessment and checklist |
| ACTION | SM to check that the Leaders area of Group's website aligns with the national guidance |
| ACTION | HT to contact BG for his views on the budget submission for 2024-2025 |
| ACTION | CB to add an article in eBoot on PROW |
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