

THE ROTHSA Y RAMBLERS
In association with the Rothsay Education Centre (Bedford) Ltd.

Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting held on 18th May, 2015.

Present: 47 members signed the attendance sheet, including 7 committee members.

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

1. **Apologies** were received from Jan Shoosmith, Helen Beazley, Jill Davies, Jen Jones, Valerie James, Janet Bird, Christine Taylor, Dagmar Styles, Audrey Gant, Marlene Howker, Christine Dewbury, Caroline Bowdler, Peter Walden, Robert Oliver, Richard Hopkin, Shirley Hand, Doreen Denny, Dave King, and Roger and Barbara Pheasant.
2. **The Minutes of the 23rd AGM** held on 13th October, 2014 were unanimously approved: proposed by Richard Harper, seconded by Margaret Badley.
3. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising.
4. **Chairman's report.** The Chairman said that our club continues to flourish and that we should all be grateful to the volunteers who lead walks and to those who co-ordinate the various groups to ensure that there are always walks available. Robin reminded members that the expected Bank Holiday Monday walk on 25th May has been cancelled due to Richard Hopkin's incapacity.

The Chairman reported that the committee has been working over the winter on a revised Constitution that they hope has brought it into line with how they think the committee should work, and how the association should be governed. The new Constitution would be looked at later in the meeting.

The committee has also organised the updating/re-wording of the Ramblers' section of the REC website to reflect the current situation.

Robin reported that Graham Trundle y's new venture for members, the Occasional Dining Club, continues to go from strength to strength trying various world cuisines. If members would like to join, they should contact Graham directly.

Teresa Moon guided members through a successful annual party, which Robin had sadly not been able to attend, or enjoy the line dancing.

The Chairman was able to give information for this year's linear walk, to be held on Wednesday, 12th August. The coach will probably be leaving the Aspects car park a little later than usual, as the Saffron Walden area is where we are headed, so not too far away. Coffee will be at a garden centre en route, and 3, 6, and 9-mile walks will all end in Saffron Walden. A visit to Audley End House (an English Heritage property) may be possible, and walkers will be asked on the booking form to indicate whether or not they are prepared to pay extra to visit the property. If numbers are sufficient, it may be possible to negotiate a group booking rate, rather than the normal £12 entrance fee. English Heritage members can, of course, use their membership card. The evening meal on this day is planned to take place at The Holiday Inn at Sandy. The committee hope to keep the cost for coach and evening meal at around £30 if possible, but morning coffee, after-walk refreshments and alcohol at The Holiday Inn will be for the individual member to pay. Robin said that members could sign up for the linear walk at the end of the AGM if they wished, and make their evening meal choice. If they preferred they could wait for the forms to be available on the website. A £5 deposit is required, and direct payment should be made via members' bank accounts. A 53-seater coach has been booked. Members may invite guests, but their inclusion depends on the number of members attending.

Robin said several committee members were leaving at this AGM: Sally Wright and Jen Jones, who have shared the Red Walks' Co-ordinator role; Robert Oliver who has done sterling work on the website as the club's Web Manager as well as being responsible for uploading the walk details onto the website; and finally, Robin said we are sad to lose our Secretary and Membership Secretary, Roy Ashley, due to his illness, but it was great to see Roy at the meeting today. Prior to becoming

Secretary, Roy was the club's Treasurer and, with Robert Oliver, has had a lot of the responsibility for dragging the club into the IT age. Robin thanked Roy for all he has done for the club, and hoped he would be out walking with us again soon. Robin also thanked Sally, Jen and Robert for their work, and Gail for acting as temporary secretary to tide things over to the AGM.

5. **Secretary's report.** In respect of the secretary's report, Robin stated that there are 142 paid up members at present. A newsletter has been produced and the website kept up to date.
6. **Treasurer's report.** Elizabeth presented the audited accounts for the period August 2014 to March 2015. With the change of the AGM date, almost all payments and receipts are now in the right financial year. The exception is the holiday money, the balance of which will be requested from holiday participants in June. Elizabeth reported that the party made a loss, details of which would be enlarged upon by the Social Events' Organiser. Last year's linear walk and the Christmas lunch balanced financially. The Treasurer said that membership income covers the expenditure on the AGM and administrative expenses. Miscellaneous expenses include donations in memory of deceased members, Secretary and Treasurer expenses, and miscellaneous photocopying, etc. Elizabeth reported the receipt of a Goodwill payment of £150 from Barclays Bank as compensation for extreme difficulties and errors in Mandate changes.

The accounts were accepted by the meeting, proposed by Elizabeth Belcher and seconded by Robin Rowles.

7. **Walk Co-ordinators' report.** Kathy Wright reported on behalf of all the walk co-ordinators. The Greens have enjoyed walks from different venues in various parts of the county, with some new walks being added to the range of familiar ones. Sheila Harradine, the co-ordinator for the Greens, is grateful to the Green walkers who have lead, and also to those from the 5-mile groups who have contributed to the programme. Thanks were expressed, too, to all those who have offered to be walk leaders during the coming six months.

On behalf of the other groups, Kathy thanked everyone, volunteer leaders especially, for an enjoyable and varied programme. She also noted that we have some enthusiastic and willing new members. Kathy said that some familiar faces were not walking now for various reasons, and thanked them all for their past contributions. She wished Richard Hopkin well, as injury has prevented him from leading his London walk – premonition of the train strike? The walk programmes for July to December are complete, and will be available on the website next month. Kathy thanked Jen and Sally for their work as Red Walk Co-ordinators, and welcomed their replacements, to be elected later in the meeting.

In response, Sally said that she and Jen would personally like to thank everyone who supported them in willingly volunteering to lead walks.

Kathy then thanked contributors to the AGM exhibition: Roger Stokes for knitting; Richard Harper for his model railway; Wendy Parker for knitting; David Mitchell for stained glass; Gina Makela for Batik; Sue Thomas for needlepoint; Elaine Donaldson for a mosaic; Barbara Ward for pottery; and Robin Rowles for his model crane.

Kathy then informed the meeting of the Bedford Art Society exhibition at the Art Centre and offered their raffle tickets for members to purchase, with a £50 voucher prize.

Finally, Kathy drew members' attention to the Hinchbrook Park Walk on 1st and 15th June to remind them the location was easy to find, just after Frosts at Brampton, and has a £2 car park charge at the park.

8. **Web Manager's report.** In Robert Oliver's absence, the Chairman reported on behalf of the Web Manager, as follows: The website has been running now for 3 years and, on average, there have been 150 unique visitors each month, and visitors made, on average, 2 visits per month. Since the last AGM the walks' database has gone live and there are currently 21 walks available for download from the site. Walks that are available for members to either take over or adapt have been prioritised in the first batch made accessible. If members are interested in leading these walks, they should advise the appropriate walks' co-ordinators. These are several other walks currently in preparation for inclusion in the database and members are encouraged to check back regularly to see new walks added.

If members have an event that they would like to advertise, they can do this through the Notice Board page on the website. Currently the Occasional Dining group are using this facility. The club continues to make all the walks' programmes, newsletters and AGM documents available to members to download directly from the website.

If anyone has any questions about the website, we can try to answer them from the expertise available in the meeting. Otherwise, please let the committee have your contact details and we will get back to you with an answer. If there is anything that members feel should be added to the website to improve it, please have a chat with any member of the committee.

Graham Trundle, organiser of the Occasional Dining Club, asked about the possibility of putting information on the website himself.

- 9. Holiday Organiser's report.** Marie Gallagher reported that 14 members of the club will be taking part in the walking holiday this year, based in Long Stretton, Shropshire, and their outstanding balances for payment will be collected next month.

Marie said that in recent years holidays have alternated between the UK, towards the end of August, and mainland Europe, in April. However, in 2016 Marie will be away for most of March, so proposes that the holiday should be in the UK again. Having spoken to a cross section of members, St Ives is the preferred destination for a holiday from Saturday, 27th August to Saturday, 3rd September. By booking early participants will benefit from a discount of £100 per person, making the cost approximately £694 per person. Marie invited those interested to sign up after the meeting, indicating their preferred type of accommodation. As usual, if more people ask for single rooms than the number available to the club, Marie will carry out a ballot, as this seems the fairest way of allocation.

- 10. Social Events' Organiser.** Teresa Moon reported that a very enjoyable party was held at Renhold Village Hall on Friday, 13th March, which began with the usual delicious 'Bring and Share' lunch, followed by quizzes. Activities afterwards aimed at getting people to mix, with some dancing. Hilary Andrews and Roger Nicholls led the party in some very enjoyable country dancing, followed by Mike's Line Dancing, which seemed to go down very well, with everyone dancing if they were able.

Teresa said that the reason the party ran so smoothly was because of the team effort, and she thanked the many willing helpers. Teresa passed on her personal thanks to Roy for all his help in organising this event.

Teresa said that, for the first time, paper invitations had not been sent out this year and this was perhaps why attendance numbers were down. Next year, it is planned to hand out flyers through the Walk Co-ordinators, though individual invitations will not be posted. Members were urged to use the online system, as it cuts down the work the committee has to do.

This event will, in future, be called a Lunch Party, as it is primarily a lunch, with a chance to meet new members through a few after-lunch activities. No new members attended this year, and it is hoped that next year people will make a point of encouraging new members to join in, and maybe offering to bring them in their cars.

Teresa reported that, because the numbers at the party were down, no profit was made this year. Unusually, £40 was spent on Mike's Line Dancing, because last year a profit of £60 was made and a way to spend it was sought. Without this, the loss made this year would have been only £33.36 rather than the actual loss of £73.36.

Teresa stated that the committee is aware that some members who are no longer able to go on walks still like to attend the party to see their friends. While they say that they do not mind watching everyone else dancing, the committee is looking for activities that everyone can join in with. In particular, singing might be an option, but needs someone to lead it. If any member knows of anyone who would be prepared to do this, or a member who would be prepared to do this themselves, please speak to Teresa.

The date of the 2016 Lunch Party will be Friday, 11th March, from 12.30 to 4.00pm at Renhold Village Hall.

Elizabeth Belcher told the meeting that she had pictures of the party, which members could look at after the meeting.

11. Constitution. Sally Wright pointed out that in clause 3.1 of the Constitution, the name of the REC should be amended; it is now Rothsay Education Centre.

Robin stated that the main additions to the Constitution are because the committee decided that it should lay down details of how the club handles subjects that the membership wishes to bring to the club's attention about the way it is run. Therefore, there are clauses about Extraordinary General Meetings and how these are called and when. There is also a clause added to cover potential occasions where a member or members might be considered to be bringing the club into disrepute, and also to cover its dissolution. The potential maximum size of the committee has been increased from 10 to 12. The committee felt this would enable them to, for instance, co-opt members with specific skills to cover a need without recourse to a General Meeting.

Robin asked the meeting if there were any questions; none were asked.

The new constitution was accepted by the meeting; proposed by Elizabeth Belcher and seconded by Jenny Cox.

12. Election of Officers. The Chairman, Treasurer, Orange/Blue Walks' Co-ordinator, Green Walks' Co-ordinator, Jade Walks' Co-ordinator, Social Events' Organiser and Holiday Organiser were happy to continue in their posts for the coming year and, as there were no other nominations for these posts, the current post holders were all re-elected en bloc and approved unanimously by the meeting.

For the remaining posts: Angela Chappell and Christine Fielder have agreed to share as Red Walks' Co-ordinators, proposed by Jean Jeavons, seconded by Gina Makela; Valerie James has agreed to become Membership Secretary, proposed by Gail Trigg, seconded by Christine Fielder.

Unfortunately, no-one volunteered to be Secretary or Web Manager, so the new committee will discuss what is to be done at the next committee meeting. Any member interested in the Secretary's position can speak to Gail Trigg for more information. Ideally, the Web Manager will be someone who is IT literate. The Chairman asked members to consider standing for these committee posts.

So far, the Committee for 2015-2016 is now constituted as follows:

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| Chairman | Robin Rowles | Red Walks' Co-ordinator | Angela Chappell and Christine Fielder |
| Hon. Treasurer | Elizabeth Belcher | Orange/Blue Walks' Co-ordinator | Kathy Wright |
| Hon. Secretary | <i>Vacant</i> | Green Walks' Co-ordinator | Sheila Harradine |
| Membership Secretary | Valerie James | Jade Walks' Co-ordinator | Jan Shoosmith |
| Social Events' Organiser | Teresa Moon | Holiday Organiser | Marie Gallagher |
| Web Manager | <i>Vacant</i> | | |

13. Election of Auditor. Elaine Donaldson was proposed by Elizabeth Belcher, seconded by Gail Trigg.

14. Any Other Business. There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.