



RAMBLERS

South Cheshire

SCR Committee Meeting, 31 May 2023

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees:

Trevor Park, Phil Guest, Jim Eckersley, Nigel Hallam, Alan Edwards, Kevin Bush

Apologies:

Chris Ashton, Hazel Wallis

Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:

All items arising from the March 2023 Committee meeting are covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Walk Programme:

Phil Guest presented the latest update of his *Walks Planner*, which showed several walks soon to be added to the official walk programme on the SCR website. The emphasis has been on filling in gaps in the walks programme.

Monthly adverts showing specific walks for the forthcoming month have now commenced in the local LINK magazine, beginning with the May issue (through Trevor).

Shorter Sunday walks will soon be commencing, typically for the first Sunday of each month.

Kevin presented further updates of SCR's walk programmes over the past few years. The number of walks offered is now almost back to pre-Covid levels. The average number of walkers is stable at about 11 walkers per walk, though this average is expected to increase as our summer programme of (popular) pub walks has begun.

There are currently about 30 active walk leaders involved in the programme, though there are some 17 people, listed on the RA website, who are no longer active leaders. It was agreed that we should clarify how many, if any, of these 17 wishes to return to walk leading, and, where not, remove them from the list of walk leaders, and recover from them any SCR materials (access to OS maps, first aid kits etc) for distribution to newer walk leaders.

All agreed that the database of walks presented by Kevin had a lot of use to the wider SCR network, particularly walk leaders. Kevin and Jim will discuss further the most appropriate way to place the Walks Database on the SCR website, and in what form.

A planning meeting to drive the next update of the Walks Planner will be held by Phil later this summer.

Reports from Officers / Activities:

Trevor (Chair) felt that the Group continues to recover well. There will be a Nantwich Societies Event in the market square on 1st July. SCR will have a stand and Trevor will prepare a rota for the day.

Trevor had recently attended the Ramblers AGM in Birmingham, which he found useful and interesting, especially the light thrown on broader Ramblers issues. He encouraged other committee members to attend in the future, if they were interested.

Chris (Treasurer) had provided the usual report on the finances of the group, and the current surplus we hold. The surplus we had was partly to be used to support our Social Evening (see later) that is celebrating our 30th Anniversary as a Ramblers Group.

The car share element has now been reset to 6p per mile, for all those sharing a ride to the walks. All drivers are to be encouraged to accept this level of support from those they give rides to.

Hazel (Membership Secretary) reported that we were about 200 members strong, relatively stable with Leavers and Joiners roughly balanced.

Hazel will be preparing a note to all Walk Leaders with details of items they should carry on their walks – kit bag, first aid kit, chewable aspirin, bite removers, secateurs.... Trevor will provide further information for Hazel to help in the preparation of this note.

Jim (Website editor) reported that websites and walk management are changing soon, as the recent Ramblers Association initiatives in these areas unfold. The most significant will be the migration from *GWEM* to *Walks Manager*. Trevor is our contact on this and will be following the RA developments closely. As GWEM is no longer functional, this is now an urgent issue.

Social (we have no specific person in this area). Phil is arranging a 2024 HF vacation for the group, to be based at Alnmouth. An email to go out to all SCR members will be issued soon by Kevin on this subject.

Phil has arranged 2 walks (of different lengths) to be held at Kinder Scout on 21st June, Midsummer night, and there were concerns about the uptake of walkers for this day. Kevin and Phil will prepare an email for distribution, emphasising the need to register participation in advance.

Eileen Dorman is arranging some walks around Ludlow, over the Magnalonga weekend in August. Kevin will be preparing an email to publicise this further.

Nigel (Paths). Nigel continues to engage with Cheshire East Council on the issue of paths, good, bad and lost. He re-emphasised that any problems encountered with any footpaths (whether these be in Cheshire East or not) should be reported, through him, to Cheshire East, who will forward any issues outside their area to the relevant council.

It was re-emphasised that walk leaders on all walks should carry secateurs with them, so that any smaller issues with overgrown plants could be dealt with, on the spot.

Communications and Social Media:

Following on from the lengthy discussion on Comms and Social Media at the last Committee meeting, Kevin re-stated the following:

1. SCR has now adopted **MailChimp** as the main vehicle for email communications with the Group. One-on-one communications eg Hazel emailing new members, or Phil emailing walk leaders, would continue, at least for the time being, through the existing email channels. At some stage later this year we will evaluate whether it is suitable for replacing or augmenting some of the other email channels we use.
2. The new **Newsletter** had been well received and the next one should be issued mid-summer.
3. Kevin has begun to setup a working **Facebook** page (reviving the old one which was used for a while during lockdown). However, he reconfirmed he will not be able to manage this Facebook page on an ongoing basis and encouraged the Committee to bring in someone to manage this and other social media. Phil Guest agreed to approach some members to gauge their views on this.
4. There has been no further development on other social media sites, such as MeetUp. (This medium is aimed at a different, younger demographic group than Facebook, and that it might help take SCR's message out more widely.) The emphasis in 2023 will be focussed on our key initiatives of more walks / more involvement / new members.
5. Kevin mentioned that there will now be a regular advert for SCR in the quarterly Shavington Village Voice. He questioned whether there were other very local magazines in other locations in our area where we could advertise.

30th Anniversary Events

Our **Celebration Evening**, to be held on 15th July, was discussed at length. As of 31 May there were 27 confirmed attendees, and five further to come from other Committee members. It was agreed that Committee members would contact as many SCR members as possible by phone, to ascertain whether we would likely reach a minimum level of 40 attendees for the Event. Further consideration would then be given to continuing, postponing or cancelling the Event.

It was also agreed that we would have a **Celebration Ramble**, likely to be walking the Sandstone Trail. Trevor will take this item for further development.

Date of Next Meeting

It is proposed our next Committee meeting be held on **Monday September 4th**