

Crook and Weardale Ramblers

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Held on 5 February 2020 at Park Head Hotel New Coundon

Attendees: Steve Musgrove (Chair) Mike Knipe (Secretary) Kath Wright (Treasurer)

Alison Musgrove, Chris Ebdon, Dennis Ebdon, Ian Edwards, Marj Askwith, David Balmer , V Turnbull, Beryl Cox, Peter Johnson, David Jackson, Elena Cross, Jeff Foster, Pat Jackson, Doreen Atkinson, Debbie King, Trevor King, Grahame Rose, Mike Hornby, Trish Hornby, Terry Fenwick, Thelma Musk, Ann Waters, Keith Waters

Guests: Ann Clare, Robbie Foster

Apologies: None

Matters arising:

Website Committee: The website committee met and the website has been significantly improved and is now second to none.

Jungle drums: Funding for Jungle Drums is not yet resolved and funding will be discussed further under AOB.

Chairman's Report:

Steve started by thanking and welcoming everyone to the AGM at the new venue of Park Head Hotel.

Crook Ramblers remains thriving and welcoming to new walkers and members.

I would like to personally thank to the active committee who all contribute enthusiastically to their individual roles and responsibilities.

Mike - as secretary – new links to Ramblers central and local community groups.

Kath - as treasurer looking after our funds now supported by Alison Grahame – tireless work on footpath issues working with local councils and other groups.

David – continues to provide thrice annual varied walks programs to be increased in 2020.

Dennis – with our memberships.

Alison and Liz - fundraising help keeping our heads above water financially.

Chris – supports Dennis with membership but also drumming up support for bus trips.

And not forgetting our outgoing footpath officers of Jeff & Elena.

We have once again had a varied walks schedule which started to incorporate shorter walk options on many scheduled walks.

Walks increased by 14% in 2019 from 35 to 40.

Numbers of walkers attending increased by 37% from 396 to 545.

Also, miles walked increased by 31% from 255 in 2018 to 335 in 2019.

Membership was also up by 8.57% to 76 when last reported in January.

Last year our group were involved in several new local initiatives which Mike and Grahame will pick up on during their report.

Looking forward to this year 2020

Our spring walks program will be out in the coming weeks which as well as our normal fortnightly walks now includes a monthly Tuesday short walk as well as a monthly Wednesday more challenging walk a little further afield

Our summer program which will run 18 weeks from late June will include walks each week

9 fortnightly walks as normal but it is proposed that we add 9 additional walks on the alternate weeks with walks of a maximum of 5 miles all within a radius of 10 miles of so to reinvigorate those long serving members who may not be able to walk 10 miles plus any more but retain some enthusiasm for walking or new members who may be trying to build up their stamina and capabilities initially at a less challenging level.

For us to add this to our program we require established walks leaders to support Dave as we put together this new walk schedule

The first walk will be Sunday 5th July and will be Peter & Ann's annual scone walk around Crook

Mike will also continue to include the midweek Tuesday and Wednesday walks on the next two programs

We have increased the walking bus trips this year to 7 running from April to October

4th April - NORTHALLERTON

2nd May - ALNWICK

6th June - SCARBOROUGH

4th July - PENRITH

1st August - KESWICK

5th September - AMBLESIDE

3rd October – WHITBY

And of course we have our planned 4 day walking trip to Scotland in June taking in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs from our base hotel in Falkirk Spaces are still available if anyone interested

My personal target for the group is to achieve

- 50 planned walks
- 600 attended walkers
- 400 miles walked
- 80 members
- Continue to work with the community DCC / Groundwork's / planning teams

There was a snippet of C&W Ramblers in the local Northern Echo newspaper on Saturday 1st February recognising the unparalleled achievements of two of our founder members (Peter & Jeff). Congratulations to both of them

There is also the opportunity to introduce new blood to the current committee as all current positions are all up for re-election as some of these roles will become vacant as current incumbents have already indicated that they will not stand again beyond this current term

Secretary's Report:

We've had several events or developments during the year:

Teesdale/Weardale MRT talk, which raised £100 for TWSMRT

Contact with an organisation called Groundworks which does community-based practical work based on various grants available from a range of sources. This lead to:

a litter-pick in Kitty's Wood, bagging 26 bags of litter, an estate agents sign, a bike saddle and a tent.

The refurbishment of 4 stiles on Dowfold Hill - work to start in March: we have landowners permission and some support from DCC.

This in turn will lead to the promotion of a 7 mile route which circumnavigates Crook, aimed at families and with a route leaflet with a map (Ramblers OS licence covers the copying and publication of maps)

A further development proposal for an all-abilities route between Crook and Howden le Wear – we are currently in the process of applying for a grant of £2000 to pay for this, although we may need further grants. This is intended to be the first phase of a number of similar routes around Crook and other

towns in our area. There's already a similar route in Wolsingham created by Wolsingham Wayfarers,

We are using Twitter and have 136 followers – an increase of 45 and with approximately 7000 engagements each month – an increase of 2000 since October.

We have some walk leader “standards” published on our website.

We have established navigation training for members . We've had one course and can do more on demand.

We've introduced midweek short walks of 4 to 5 miles – mainly very local and there's plans to have some Sunday short walks as well. This is in-line with Ramblers Short Walks initiative and means we have more than 30 short walks available annually once the summer short evening walks begin.

We've also introduced more adventurous Midweek walks which at the moment are “bagging” 2000 foot tops in the YDNP.

Its likely that the Area Council will be re-established within the next few weeks with a kind of provisional committee. One of the functions of an Area Council will be to allocate funds to Groups based on levels of membership and also on bids made for other funds such as hire of venues, expenses, printing, training and so-on.

Area Council will also be considering issues such as recruitment of new members and the training and development of volunteers.

For the future, as a group, and as per the Chairman's report, we will need to recruit more members and develop more walk leaders, especially for short walks, and, generally increase activity in all areas including guided walks.

Treasurer's Report

We have now received the first two quarters budget payments. We have claimed the basic budget from the Ramblers.

CROOK AND WEARDALE RAMBLERS

Unity Trust Bank as at

Date		£		Date	Cheque		£
1.10.19	Opening Balance	17.35					
20.1.20	1st Quarterly Payment	43.38					
20.1.20	2nd Quarterly Payment	42.18					
	3rd Quarterley Payment						
	4th Quarterley Payment			30.9.18		Closing Balance	102.91
		£	102.91				£ 102.91

Footpath Officer's Report

Grahame thanked retiring footpath officers Jeff and Elena.

Grahame and Kath attended the Ramblers roadshow in Kendal and met with the Ramblers legal team who were very helpful and supportive.

We now have a new, updated version of the Blue Book.

We have made an objection to some developments affecting rights of way at a proposed housing development at Hunwick where the footpath is proposed to cross over a swale (ditch)

We are also testing a new App on the Ramblers website which will be useful in identifying historical but unregistered rights of way under the Ramblers Don't Lose Your Way initiative. Any rights of way successfully registered will be included in the 2026 Definitive Map.

Grahame intends to set up a local Footpath Working Group and Ramblers have indicated that they will help and support this development particularly in terms of training and insurance.

Membership Secretary's Report

Over the previous 12 months we have seen a slight shift in membership. This has been on the positive side, with 4 members leaving and 12 joining the group. The overall effect is we are up by 8 from last year from 69.

The effect in % terms is we were down on leavers by 6% of membership.

But in real terms we are 18% up on new members.

Which is an overall gain of 12%.

The club is as follows on members:

Active Members - 77

Life Members - 2

Joint Members - 32

Individual Member's – 44

As membership secretary my suggestion going forward to increase / promote the Crook and Weardale Ramblers would be in the new year, we are moving into spring and I would suggest it is time to promote where practical the Crook and Weardale Ramblers.

We have publicity materials from the Ramblers, but this is generic and as a group I would suggest we need to keep our identity.

1. We use this material and enhance this with our own Logo - self-adhesive labels would suffice.

2. As I believe has happened over previous years we leaflet / poster prominent places -

:- Doctors

:- Library's

:- Supermarkets

:- Council Offices etc.

3. We look to promote the group at shows such as Stanhope / Woolsingham / Hunwich? / Crook and make a stall up with maybe raffle etc to raise awareness and promote the club and raise some

funds. This will need a little planning so could I suggest some support for this or other ideas. This was a suggestion from last year. So, if we feel this is appropriate / option then we need to decide if this would be something the group would like to pursue.

4. We spoke last year of some kind of promotion, 'Jungle Drums' was suggested. We need to decide whether this is a consideration going forward.

5. Last year there was an initiative in County Durham to improve Cycling and Walking and to promote the health benefits. I think some of the group were contacted with information on this. I followed this up and contacted them and explained the club would be interested in being part of this and received a note back acknowledging this.

I have not received any further information. I will try again for this with the intention of putting forward Crook and Weardale Ramblers as a sign post for any interest. (Mike have you any contacts in this area?)

So, from a positive point of view we are attracting new members and the view should be to engage our current Crook and Weardale membership as we have done so positively in the previous year. With the walks programme and bus trips.

We will always have the challenge of age profile, as we need to try and tap into the Ramblers association for better coverage in our area. We need more visibility for our group via the Ramblers to engage in a balanced age profile.

Comments / Suggestions please.

Walks Programme Co-ordinator's Report

The programme for the next period is in hand and will be published in due course.

We need more leaders and it seems that all local walking groups are struggling for leaders. David thanked the current walk leaders for their efforts.

Webmaster's report

Debbie reported that the “walks programme” tab now has a section for walk leader resources and that a link to the Twitter feed is now available on the home page.

Debbie encouraged members to use their “crookramblers” email address to avoid spam and that if anybody would like a “crookramblers” email address to contact her.

Debbie said that the Footpaths page needed updating.

Election of Officers

Chairman indicated that Jeff and Elena were standing down as Footpath Officers and that all current committee members had indicated their willingness to continue in post for a further year. There were no further nominations for the committee and so members were asked to vote to elect the current committee for a further term. This was proposed by David Jackson and seconded by Keith Waters and the current committee was re-elected.

Gifts in recognition of service and/or showing support for Members in difficult circumstances (e.g. bereavement)

After some discussion it was agreed that Crook and Weardale Ramblers will not provide a gift in these circumstances but that individual members would provide this kind of support

Annual Budgets/Expenses for Walk Leaders, Officers etc.

It was agreed that this matter would be placed on the next committee meeting agenda.

No other business...

Meeting ended at 21:30.