

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Ramblers – Bromley Group held on Sunday 11th November 2018 at Farnborough Village Hall**

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47 members attended the AGM

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Nicky Ashley, Sandy Huckle, Paul Clark, Hazel Taylor, Linda Harland and Richard Bickel

### **Minutes of the 2017 AGM**

Noted that the minutes had been agreed by the Group's Committee as an accurate record and were approved by the meeting.

### **Matters Arising**

There were no specific matters arising.

### **Chairman's Report**

Lawrie Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that this would be the last time, after 10 years in office, that he would be addressing the AGM as Group Chairman. He referred to some of the challenges faced during the last 10 years and said that he had thoroughly enjoyed his time in post. It was noted that Group membership currently stood at 561 and Lawrie mentioned that people join, and indeed leave The Ramblers, for a number of different reasons. Sadly, some members succumb to such things as cancer and other illnesses. However, their memory lives on and, in the case of James Davis, there may well be a physical legacy as well, as he was very keen for a substantial bequest to be made to Bromley Ramblers, with the Group Committee now considering how best any money might be best used to ensure that it is not only spent to benefit the rambling community, but is also something that James would have approved of and something relevant to remember him by. Lawrie hoped that as many members as possible would rally round and provide support when it had been decided how best to use the money. He went on to refer to the large variety of walks on offer over the last year and mentioned the planned national walk leaders' training that is to be organised by Central Office; he hoped this would be attractive to potential new walk leaders. He then confirmed, with regret, that no vegetation/footpath clearance work had been undertaken over the last 12 months, mainly because of the need for a volunteer to come forward to organise and coordinate such work. Lawrie thanked Helen Sivill for organising a fantastic and well attended Christmas lunch in 2017 and said he was looking forward to a similarly well organised event this year. He then referred to the General Data Protection Regulation and explained the need for a change in the signing-in sheet used on walks; to the reason why they should no longer be sent to the Membership Secretary for scrutiny; and for the requirement for other changes in practice and procedure and the way we use personal data. Lawrie apologised for any complications or additional work needed by walk leaders as a result of the transfer of our walks programme to The Ramblers website which, he explained, was because our own website is now very old, is unsupported and is subject to major

problems/breakdowns. He confirmed the plan to transfer the whole of our website to be hosted by The Ramblers sometime over the winter months. Lawrie then referred to the Bromley Countryside Consultative Panel and the fact that, over the last 12 months, it had considered the need for the Borough's digital definitive map to be updated and to be made available on the Council's website. He confirmed that the latter has now happened, but that a working group had been set up to deal with a number of outstanding issues. Lawrie thanked Annie Brough for her 10 years of highly effective and quietly diligent support as Group Secretary, and Richard Bickell for remaining in post as Programme Secretary for longer than originally agreed. He also thanked committee members generally, all walk leaders and walk coordinators and those involved with organising walking holidays and social events. He concluded by offering his best wishes to the newly elected officers and committee.

### **Treasurer's Report and presentation of the Annual Accounts**

Anne Clark reported that the income/expenditure for the year ending 30 September 2018 showed a deficit of £190. She confirmed that ensuring a deficit for the year was a deliberate policy decision in order to keep the Group's Reserves down below 100% and in line with Central Office guidelines. By deciding to stop voluntary walk donations from July and reducing the budget requested from Kent Area, we had successfully kept Reserves at 95.6% at the end of the financial year. Anne confirmed that income from Ramblers Walking Holidays had increased slightly since last year from £480 to £510; and that voluntary donations had decreased from £678 to £522. She mentioned that £350 had already been received from Ramblers Walking Holidays this financial year. Anne confirmed that the slip at the bottom of the walks signing-in form would still need to be sent to her with any donations collected; and that nobody should feel under pressure to donate or feel guilty if they choose not to do so. She went on to say that the Group remains in a strong financial position with a cash balance at the end of the year of £2,780. Anne concluded by referring to the possible bequest from James Davis's family and confirmed that it was unlikely to affect Reserves as it would be dealt with as a designated or restricted fund.

### **Election of Officers and Committee members**

Committee members were elected as follows:

Tony Upson	Group Chairman
Jane Beckley	Group Secretary
Anne Clark	Group Treasurer

Roy Bareham, Linda Harland & Philip Wall

Approval was given to co-opt additional members to the committee during the year.

It was noted that Sandra Whichello was happy to continue as Membership Secretary, but not as a member of the committee.

**Approval of Hon. Auditor for 2018/2019**

Rosamund Sykes' nomination was approved.

**Approval of nomination for the Group's Bromley Countryside Consultative Panel representative for 2018/2019**

Lawrie Smith's nomination was approved.

**Any other business**

Anna Koffer referred to details of a relatively cheap HF walking holiday next October in Shropshire and asked members to contact her for details.

Di Gordon asked about membership trends over the last 10 years. Lawrie confirmed that membership had gone down fairly significantly some years ago when the new computerised membership system had weeded out lapsed members; but he was pleased to report that Bromley's membership had remained quite stable in recent years and that the challenge for the future was to find ways of recruiting younger members.

Roy Bareham thanked Lawrie for the outstanding and conscientious manner with which he had performed the role of Group Chairman over the last 10 years.