



Kent Area

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 2 February 2019 at St Andrew's Church Hall, Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, TN12 6DZ

Present

Alison Hargreaves (Chairman), Margaret Lubbock (Vice Chairman), Neville Machin (Vice Chairman), Ray Lawrence (Treasurer), Robert Peel (Secretary) and about 80 members

Welcome and Introduction

Alison Hargreaves welcomed everyone to the AGM.

Welcome from the Hosting Group

Lawrence McLean, Tunbridge Wells Group Chair, welcomed members to Paddock Wood.

Minutes of AGM held on 3 February 2018

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 3 February 2018 at Littlebourne Village Hall were agreed to be a true record. No one wished to raise any matters arising from the minutes.

Annual Report

Alison recalled the exceptionally hot summer which, though unpleasant at times, had not stopped everyone walking and doing practical work to maintain and improve paths, stiles and gates. Other business continued as usual too, including map reading courses, group holidays, producing walking guides, searching for lost ways, creating the coast path and building relationships with the local MP. We have also continued to support the Kent aspects of Sue Mott's walks for carers project, which has now expanded to other parts of England.

Alison noted that this was her last AGM as Chairman and Ray Lawrence's last as Area Treasurer. She thanked the committed and knowledgeable Area Officers without whom she could not have fulfilled her role which, despite challenges such as the Board's governance review, she had enjoyed. Her circumstances had changed and she could no longer find the time that the role needed.

Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Ray had nothing to add to his published report.

The meeting agreed the accounts.

Ray explained that although he would finish his term at the end of the meeting, the handover would take a few weeks and he would need to remain a bank account signatory until the process was complete. The meeting AGREED to this request.

Election of Honorary Officers

Robert Campbell was elected Chairman

Margaret Lubbock and Neville Machin were elected Vice Chairmen

Robert Peel was elected Secretary

Hilary Adams was elected Treasurer

There were no nominations to serve as Area Council Representatives for Affiliated Clubs

Les Preston and Ken Neville were elected Area Council Representatives for Individual Members

Appointment of Delegates to General Council

The meeting agreed to send John Billings from Maidstone Group as one delegate and authorised the Officers to appoint a second delegate if a candidate could be found.

Appointment of Auditor

Faye Clarke was unanimously appointed.

Topical Presentations

Down to Earth

Dawn Champion described a project to be run by Kent Wildlife Trust and funded by Sport England that aimed to get families in the Romney Marsh area more involved in outdoor activities. There may be opportunities for Ramblers' members to support aspects of the project that encourage walking.

Lost Ways

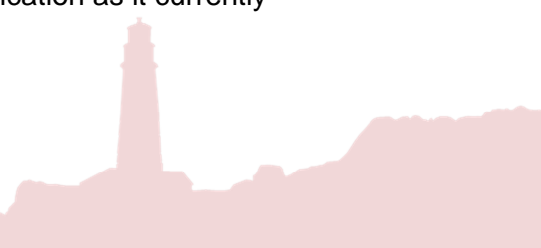
Neville Machin gave a brief update on the work he was coordinating to identify rights of way that have been omitted from the definitive map and that will otherwise be lost on 1 January 2026. He had conducted a map exercise that had identified around 200 anomalies for investigation on the ground by volunteers. He had conducted a pilot exercise with Kent County Council for obtaining information from their records relating to a small sample anomalies that had been surveyed by volunteers.

Named Walks Project

Robert Peel outlined a project agreed by Area Council that aimed to increase the usage and enjoyment of Kent's many named paths. These paths cross some superb Kent countryside yet many are little known and little walked. The hope is to promote the routes with new guide books and information boards and make them easier to use with better waymarking and possibly other improvements.

Coastal Access

Ian Wild gave an update on coastal access in Kent. He also spoke about the proposal for an exceptionally large solar farm on land immediately adjacent to the Coast Path and Saxon Shore Way just east of Faversham. Although solar energy brings many environmental benefits, the massive scale of this project would dominate the landward view of those walking the Coast Path for nearly an hour and he was planning to make an appropriate objection at the expected planning inquiry. He wanted to be sure that the meeting supported this action. After some discussion the meeting indicated that no one present thought that the Ramblers should not object to the application as it currently stands.



PRoW Update

Averil Brice outlined the work undertaken by Kent Ramblers' dedicated volunteers during the year. The meeting was advised that Mike Hayley, who had taken up the post of Area Footpath Officer early in 2018 had resigned early in 2019. She offer thanks to Bill Ripper, recently retired from the Dartford & Gravesham committee, for his many years protecting footpaths. Finally Averil pointed out that one of the Sector Coordinator posts in East Kent remains vacant and hoped that someone would step forward to fill it.

New Area Chairman

Robert Campbell briefly introduced himself.

Puzzle Solution

Robert announced the solution to the puzzle in the Annual Review – seven people belonged to all the three organisations mentioned.

Open Forum

The attention of the meeting was drawn to the Wealden Literary Festival which takes place at the end of June.

Next Annual General Meeting

The next AGM will be hosted by West Kent Walking Group – on 1 February 2020 in Kemsing.

