

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Taunton Deane Ramblers held on Friday 22th November 2024 at 7pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Taunton.

Present:

Val Boswell Chair, Gill Lee Treasurer, Lynda Kearn Secretary,

Joy Williams, Carol Allen, Andrew Norris, Val Norris, Liz Hembrow, Brenda P, Trevor C, Barbara C, Davina C, Michael B, Wendy C, Graham R, Victoria R, Paul P, Tim F. (18 attendees in total)

1. Apologies for absence

Yvonne H, Richard H, Jeanette F, Paul G, Jan R, Sue C-B, Tim K, Philippa K, Phil B, Phil I.

2. Chair's opening remarks

Val welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said that membership numbers are holding up well this year. The group is holding a walk and social event in January to encourage more walk leaders to come forward and to promote the training available on the Ramblers website.

The annual coach trip in July to Swanage this year was really well supported and enjoyed by all. Next year's trip is already being planned and will probably be to the coast of North Devon.

This year has seen the bridleway T2/11 in Bickenhall reopened after many years and also the footpath in Taunton along the river Tone where Poundstretchers used to be.

Val is standing down at this AGM after 4 years as Chair and was thanked for her work in this role.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 24th November 2023.

The Minutes of the 2023 AGM were agreed by those members present.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Annual Report

This was posted on the TDR website prior to the meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report

Gill said that the Accounts for the past year have been signed off by the auditor Richard Stone.

The coach for the Annual trip was full this time; cost of the coach was £695 and the price for drink and cake was £6 a head which came to £234. £975 was received from members so the trip was in credit by £46 apart from the cost of the recce. The costs will probably be similar next year although

Val had been told that it is cheaper to hire a coach in August so it could be worth investigating but everywhere would be busier in the school holidays. The money for the trip was put through the self-funded account but the travel expenses of the recce was taken from the Main account.

Travel expenses of £86 have also been paid towards the replacing of waymarkers on the West Deane way.

Other expenses have been those for the AGM but we are no longer sending out paper newsletters by post, just by email. We also got charged £1.20 for banking cheques.

We receive donations from Ramblers holidays from members who book through them and nominate our group.

Gill has again received the minimum amount from Head Office which this year is £1.01 for each member as well as a lump sum. Some of this will be used for the training event for walk leaders.

Gill and Val N discussed how there is a small discrepancy between membership numbers used by the Ramblers to calculate how much we receive and what our records show. The Ramblers number tends to be consistently about 5 lower.

7. Committee Members' and Postholders' Reports

The following reports were posted on the website prior to the meeting.

- **Membership Secretary**

The membership report shows that our numbers are holding steady at 269 members. This includes 4 lifetime members and 7 'out there award' memberships which are part of a Ramblers initiative to encourage younger members to join.

- **Footpath Secretary**

Michael B commented that the Somerset Walking group had received notification of the proposed diversion of the footpath at Bradford on Tone and new bridge from Somerset Council.

Note: Brenda clarified following the meeting that she had also received this notification.

A new bridge was opened at Trull by the allotments in May 2024. This replaced a bridge which had been closed for 4 years.

There was also a discussion about the path by the river Tone at the old Poundstretchers site which has now reopened as a permissive path. Pressure to have this reopened increased following the removal of the footbridge across the river; this bridge was part of the route of the West Deane way. Gill said that Taunton Deane used to have 22 circular walking routes but many of them are no longer able to be walked.

Tim F commented about the Bickenhall Right of Way (RoW) T2/11 which has now reopened. Two landowners applied to have the RoW on their land closed over a decade ago. The local county councillor, a parish councillor and the Ramblers stepped in to oppose this and the British Horse Society also became involved. The new modified route uses half of the RoW and the remainder is a permissive path. If the landowner decides to close this permissive path then the original RoW must be re-opened. Tim explained that legislation exists to ensure that RoW remain open but Somerset Council say that they don't have sufficient staff or funding to enforce the legislation and the current list will take 30 years to work through.

Paul P said that if a RoW is on the definitive map it has to be protected as a statutory duty by Highways. Questions are going to the Somerset Council RoW team at the next Council meeting to get them to give a statement.

8. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee

Val B is standing down as Chair at this meeting. One nomination has been received for this post. Liz Hembrow was nominated by Joy Williams and this was seconded by Barbara Cooper. Members present at this meeting voted and Liz was elected unanimously.

The remaining Committee members have indicated that they are willing to stand again if there are no other nominations. No other nominations had been received. Val Boswell proposed that the Committee was re-elected en bloc and Carol Allen seconded this. This was accepted by the majority of members present.

Chair	Liz Hembrow
Secretary	Lynda Kearns
Treasurer	Gill Lee
Committee member 1	Joy Williams
Committee member 2	Trevor Coombe
Committee member 3	Brenda Prentice
Committee member 4	Barbara Cooper

9. Election to fill non-Committee posts

Non-Committee post holders are willing to continue if no-one else comes forward. The Short Sunday walk co-ordinator post is still vacant. Vicky R said that she could lead a short Sunday walk occasionally.

Footpath Secretary	Brenda Prentice
Membership Secretary	Val Norris
Website Co-ordinator	Andy Norris
Programme Secretary	Joy Williams
Assistant Programme Secretaries:	
Short Sunday	Vacant
All day Sunday	Carol Allen
Wednesday	Trevor Coombe

10. Appointment of Accounts Examiner

Gill indicated that Richard Stone is happy to continue in this role.

Date of next AGM: Friday 21st November 2025.

Meeting closed at 19.55h