

# Oswestry Group of Ramblers

## Annual General Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

This is to give notice that the Annual General Meeting of the Oswestry Group of the Ramblers will be held at Whittington Cricket Club, Babbinswood Road, Whittington, on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, commencing at 7.15 pm.

*The AGM will be followed by 'Bring a Plate' Supper*

As per the Constitution, the committee, comprising the Honorary Officers and ordinary committee members, stand down at the AGM. All are eligible for re-nomination/re-election. The Officers and Committee cover the following roles:

Chair	Secretary	Treasurer
Deputy Chair	Membership	Footpath secretaries
Area Representatives (max 2)	Social	Walking environment and access
Programme (Sun x2 and Thurs)	Press and Publicity	Web Master
Ordinary Committee Members (without specific responsibilities)		

**Nominations for the committee are requested:**

**I (name) nominate** -----

**Name (s) of Nominee(s)**                      **Nominee(s) Signature**                      **Position nominated for.**

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Nomination slips to be returned (no later than November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016) to

Jackie Knight, Secretary, at Trefonen Hill, Trefonen, Oswestry, Shropshire. SY10 9DS

# **OSWESTRY GROUP OF RAMBLERS**

## **ANNUAL REPORT – 2015 -2016**

This report covers the period October 2015 to September 2016

### **Chairman – Colin Chandler**

#### **THE YEAR'S REPORT by CHAIRMAN OF OSWESTRY RAMBLERS**

This year has been quite a busy year or so it would seem. Our programme of walks for both Thursday and Sunday has been full and varied and has drawn a certain amount of comment---that is to be expected. The committee has seen some changes and as we approach our AGM we need your input and ideas for the future.

I must thank all members of the committee for their work and effort and their support to me through the year. THANK YOU!! We all would like to thank the walk leaders for their time and effort in putting forward the range of walks for the programmes. THANK YOU LEADERS!!

I have completed my turn as your chairman for the past 3 years and look to someone else coming forward to take my place. Linda and I have a very full year of personal and family activities and I feel it would be unfair to put more work on the shoulders of the committee so we really do need someone to come forward to take the role of chair person.

Thank you to you all for your support and encouragement over these past 3 years. I wish you all good health, happiness and great walking in the year ahead.

Colin, Chair of Oswestry Ramblers.

### **Footpaths – Peter Carr and Chris Jenkins**

#### **Planning**

There have been no significant planning applications that affect Rights of Way during the last 12 months.

The outline proposals for the development of 600 houses on the outskirts of Oswestry between Shrewsbury Road and the A5 indicate that a bridge over the A5 will be provided approximately on the line of the existing Right of Way. This will be of great value providing safe access to the paths on the Middleton side of the A5.

#### **Diversion orders and DMMO's**

There have been no significant diversion orders.

The paths added to the Definitive Map as a result of the Llanyblodwel Public Enquiry have now been implemented on the ground. However, there are a number of issues that I have raised with the council that need to be addressed before I would consider that the paths are generally useable.

## **Path Problems**

We have identified a number of problems over the past year and are working with the council towards a resolution. The most significant are:

- 0307/143/2 just North of Trefonen. This path has been deliberately obstructed by the owners and stiles and finger posts removed. Following strong representation from the Ramblers, including from Central Office, the Council has now reached agreement with the owners to resolve the problems. This will result in the whole path being gated (rather than stiles) and will be implemented as soon as permission is granted by Historic England as part of the required works is on Offa's Dyke.
- 0307/31D/1 – Woodland View - West of Dummy Wood. It appeared that a stable had been built over the line of the path. The Council was eventually persuaded to investigate and found that in fact the path on the ground was actually incorrect. The Council is now in the process of installing gates throughout the length of this path on the correct legal line
- Coed-y-gaer – Pentregaer Issa area. We have identified numerous problems in this area that prevent users accessing and using the paths. I have done a survey of the main issues and as a result the Council have taken on board that there is a major set of problems that must be addressed. They are now carrying out their own detailed survey and also looking at the original Definitive Map claims in this area as it appears that there may well be a number of mapping errors also. The Council aim to have a clear action plan within the next 12 months, it will take that long due to the complexity of the issues and the number of land owners involved, and then will hopefully be in a position to start to resolve the problems.

## **Ploughing and Cropping**

This year the Council and the Ramblers together have conducted an intensive inspection and enforcement campaign to get crops cleared from paths. With a limited number of volunteers prepared to conduct the inspections we could only concentrate on paths known from previous years to have not been cleared. I am pleased that as a result of the efforts of both the Ramblers and the Council enforcement letters around 70% of the paths we inspected were cleared before harvest time. We had a very late start to the planting season, so whilst we might normally have expected to checking paths in early April, it was mid May to early June before some were planted. This gave a very short window for inspections and enforcement. During our inspections we also identified other paths obstructed by crops that will be also subjected to inspections and enforcement next year. Overall, the programme was successful with a number of paths cleared, that in previous years have not been. In addition the message is getting out to the farmers that they will no longer be able to get away with not clearing paths of crops. Note, it is both the law, and a condition of receiving their grants that the farmer keeps paths clear of crops.

## **P3 Report – Peter Carr**

Whilst the Oswestry P3 Group is not part of the Ramblers, most of its members are Ramblers members so this report is included for completeness.

The group covers Oswestry Town and Oswestry Rural Parishes except for the area around and to the West of Trefonen. Trefonen has its own very active P3 Group that was formed last year.

Our group has been active on survey and clearance work and has over the last few months begun to undertake repairs to stiles and the installation of kissing gates and sleeper bridges. To date we have installed two bridges and five gates and replaced a number of step boards. We have also improved way marking where necessary. Subject to obtaining permission from the land owners we have a stream of work to install gates going forward into the next year.

One of our biggest problems is identifying the land owner and getting permission for work. We cannot just go in and do things, even major clearance without permission.

At present there are just six of us covering our patch although we did manage 313 hours of work between us over the last 12 months. We could certainly use more volunteers, if only to walk all of the paths on a regular basis and report problems to us. If you would like to get involved or would like more information please phone me on 01691 780722.

## **Programme**

### **Sunday walks – Diane Smith**

57 Sunday walks were offered over the three programmes. Walks took place in at least seven different counties in both England and Wales, ranging from North Wales, down to South Shropshire and across into Cheshire. The weather generally was good for most walks providing us with superb views of the countryside.

George once again led his four mystery walks presenting members who completed all four with a certificate and copy of the walks on a C.D. taken by him.

I would like to thank all members who give their time walking the routes, sometimes two or three times prior to leading them, enabling members to enjoy the lovely countryside and each other's company. A special thanks goes to Phil Vale who has decided to retire from leading but will still enjoy walking with the group.

### **Sunday afternoon walks – Pat Harper**

This season we have had some enjoyable afternoon walks, with up to thirteen walkers participating. Thanks to all our leaders for their efforts. Next year we plan to have one afternoon walk a month as a trial.

### **Thursday Walks – Ceinwen Danby**

We have had many kind and enthusiastic leaders who have offered a total of 50 walks this season. We are most grateful to you for all your time and commitment. Our walks totalled 264 and a half

miles, which includes the walks at the Christmas lunch, the Summer lunch and the visit to Chatsworth.

This year we have run 2 highly successful and informative courses. One in Feb for walk leader training and recently the Map Reading session which saw 28 people attend. We would like to think that these sessions will encourage more members to offer a walk for next year. The walk does not have to be a new one or far away, so please use a walk you know, or like, or from one of the many books that can be found. Thank you for any help you can offer.

## **Social – Pat La-Garde, Jane Hadlow, Barbara Pryce Jones**

Below are the events organised by the Social Committee: Pat La-Garde; Jane Hadlow, Barbara Pryce Jones, with help from Ceinwen and Peter Danby.

OCTOBER 2015 HF Holiday, Sedbergh Jane Hadlow organised our first Group HF Holiday. Eighteen members enjoyed a very successful 3 night stay in this lovely part of the Yorkshire Dales with good autumnal weather. Thank you Jane for all your hard work.

DECEMBER 2015 Christmas Walk and Lunch. Once again Ceinwen and Peter Danby kindly organised this successful event for 45 members at the Chainbridge Hotel, Llangollen. Lovely weather added to the enjoyment. Thanks to Ceinwen and Peter.

FEBRUARY 2016 Peter Carr lead an informative Walk Leader Training Day, based at Trefonen Village Hall with a walk after lunch to enable members to put into practice what they had learnt in the morning session. Thank you Peter.

MAY 16 – 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 Three day walking holiday based in Aberaeron. Lovely walks, initially reconnoitred by George Swift. On 25 – 27 April the Social Committee, plus George Swift, Ceinwen & Peter Danby and Dave Matthews, travelled down to check out the walks, with a new one heading south from Newquay. This second recce ensured that there were sufficient leaders and back markers. The weather overall was lovely, and everyone said that they enjoyed themselves. A group dinner was arranged by Pat La-Garde and held at the Harbourmaster Hotel in Aberaeron. Thank you to Barbara Pryce Jones.

JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> 2016 Summer Walk and Lunch. Thirty members enjoyed a summer walk and lunch at The Sun, Trevor. Organised by Ceinwen and Peter Danby with the opportunity to walk up in the hills or along the canal to Llangollen and back. The return visit to The Sun after a couple of years of BBQs proved to be popular. Once again, thank you Ceinwen and Peter for your hard work.

SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> 2016 Chatsworth Coach Trip – Away Day. This event was organised by Diane Smith and provided members with the opportunity to walk or enjoy the garden and Chatsworth House. The walks were lovely, great views, with everyone enjoying a good day out.

OCTOBER 14 – 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 HF holiday is based in Coniston in the Lake District and once again Jane Hadlow was the organiser. Another very enjoyable and successful 3 night stay in a lovely area, despite the slightly damp weather.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR 2016 and 2017

CHRISTMAS WALK AND PUB LUNCH will be on the 8<sup>nd</sup> December 2016 to be held at the Chainbridge Hotel, Llangollen. Ceinwen and Peter Danby taking bookings.

SPRING WALKING HOLIDAY will be on the Isle of Anglesey, 15 – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Details available from Barbara Pryce Jones.

AUTUMN WALKING HOLIDAY will be in October 2017 at the HF hotel in Dovedale. Details from Jane Hadlow.

## **Membership – Barbara Pryce Jones**

Membership, as at September 2016, stands at 162 and this figure is also the average membership for the last 12 months.

The wording in the Gift Aid section of the membership forms had to be altered this summer to comply with new rules. Membership fees and concessions were not altered and are valid until September 2017.

## **Treasurer – Pat Harper**

Our book sales this year are now down to around £200 this year so our finances will not be so flush next year.

Practical footpath work has been carried out with money from Shropshire County Council for the PPPs. With £433 left over from last year and a grant of £100, £264 has been spent on clearing and repairing stiles organised by Peter Carr with Ramblers volunteers.

This leaves us with a surplus of £1161. Of this £270 belongs to the Parish Paths Partnership (Rights of Way work). Social and holidays have now been moved to a separate account.

Our general group income was £313.50 this year and our expenses were £1067 (£185 spent on walk leader training and map reading, £100 on taking out HF Holidays membership and £418 on PC laptop and software for website) but this shortfall has been covered by the walk's book income. Next year our budget from Shropshire Area will be £313.50. This, together with the remainder of the surplus (£891), will take us over the Ramblers aim of a reserve of only 40% of expenditure.

We are going to spend some of this surplus next year by improving the Oswald's Trail footpath behind Travis Perkins.

Final audited accounts will be available at the AGM.

## **Press and Publicity – Peter Danby**

OVER the last year reports of our activities have appeared weekly in The Advertizer and Shropshire Star.

However with the almost total demise of newspaper photographers in favour of contributed pictures, we now have an opportunity to raise our profile in a slightly different way.

Walk leaders and others with a camera could take photo. As they say a picture is worth a thousand words and I am not inclined to write a thousand words every week. A picture would remind those who need it, of the beautiful surroundings we encounter week in week out on our walks.

Although pictures have appeared of Oswestry Ramblers, they have been almost exclusively our members of the P3 group who have been busy keeping paths walkable, but that is no doubt the subject of a separate report.

Photographs of the group out on the walk particularly when there are some picturesque surroundings as a backdrop, would be useful.

In summary I would like to thank those group leaders who have provided reports for me via e-mail, (which is the preferred option) when I have not been available to go on the walk in person.

### **2015-2016 Committee members**

Chair	Colin Chandler
Treasurer	Pat Harper
Secretary	Jackie Knight
Deputy Chair	Pat LaGarde
Footpath secretary	Peter Carr and Chris Jenkins
Programme	Diane Smith (Sunday)
	Pat Harper (Sunday afternoon)
	Ceinwen Danby (Thursday)
Press and Publicity	Peter Danby
Social	Pat LaGarde, Jane Hadlow, Barbara Pryce-Jones
Membership	Barbara Pryce- Jones
Web	Jane Hadlow
Access and Countryside (Walking environment)	Bob Kimber
Area Representatives	Bob Kimber and Colin Chandler
Committee Member	Huw Jones

### **For 2016 -2017**

All committee members will stand down at the AGM and then are eligible for re-election, along with any Rambler members who would like to volunteer for any of these posts.

We also need volunteers to serves as Ordinary Committee Members. This is a useful way of learning more about the Ramblers both locally and nationally before perhaps taking on a specific role.

## **Above All Else**

**We need more and new walk leaders to enable us to maintain our very full and varied programme of walks. Age and injury mean that a number of our experienced walk leaders are having to drop out. You do not need to be able to read a map, although it is a useful skill, full training and mentoring will be given to any volunteer new to walking.**