



Norwich Group

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE UNTHANK ARMS NR2 2DR
Wednesday 26th February 2025

Present were: Nigel Whitlam (Chair), Peter James (Secretary), Jonathan Wilby (Treasurer), Gerald Brooker (Walks Co-ordinator), Marita Bulto (Communications Officer), Judith Thomas, Barbara Whitlam, Heidi Elliott

The Chairman welcomed the three new members of the committee.

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies received.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held 6th November 2024

Peter distributed the minutes of the last meeting, but these did not include corrections made to the first draft, which he had not received. The correct version will need to be put on the website. The main change was to delete solar panels and insert "Access to Nature Bill". Nigel cannot sign the minutes until he receives the corrected version. These have since been received and accepted.

3. Matters arising from previous Minutes

- Regarding the Access to Nature Bill, Nigel has still not received a response from his MP.
- Under Treasurer's Report there is a reference to money still to be paid out. This will be covered later.
- Under AOB there was a query about another group coming to Norfolk to walk. Marita said they have decided against the visit.

4. Chair's Report

The AGM held on 17th November went well. Although we lost one committee member who decided not to re-stand, we gained a further three members. Only marginally more people present than last year so must reconsider the extra expenditure involved in trying to make the occasion more appealing with a bar. Probably we should continue to hold the AGM after a Sunday walk to try to maximise the attendance. To be discussed under Item 15 on the agenda.

We are still struggling to get walk leaders to enter walks into the programme at an early date. The walks programme currently looks rather sparse going forward and we need to discuss under item 7 on the agenda what additional steps we can take.

The socials events continue to be ticking over.

The walks being held on 29th June, organised to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Ramblers, will provide us with an excellent opportunity to get media coverage, with most Norfolk groups, together with Area, supporting the event. Again, this will be discussed further at item 14 on the agenda.

5. Secretary's Report, including Membership

Currently 547 members, so holding up well, as is Area. Several people who walk with other groups are actually Norwich members.

6. Treasurer's Report including Trips Away funds from last year

The bank balance was standing at £1015.34 with £5 held in cash, which is rather lower than reported at the AGM when it was £1,480.92. However, Peter has transferred in £638 just prior to the meeting which is not included in that figure.

The main change since the AGM has been the reimbursement of some of the trip walk leaders' expenses based on a payment of £9 per night away. The total amount repayable was approximately £780. In practice less was reimbursed as a couple of walk leaders donated their allocation to Norwich Ramblers. In addition, Norwich Ramblers received £100 from Ramble Worldwide Holidays, and the reimbursement of a £100 deposit payable for room hire for the AGM.

From 2025 we will not be charging a registration fee to the walkers for trips away, as previously agreed. The initial reason for the £5 fee was the need to pay travelling expenses to leaders from other groups recceing walks for our trips away in their location, as one group had claimed expenses in 2022. In the current year reccees are being undertaken by the Somerset and Wiltshire groups for the respective trips. They have been invited to claim travelling expenses. For the present it has been decided that only walk leaders from other groups (recceing for our group in their local area) can be compensated, up to 20 miles each way at 45p per mile for walk reccees. At a later date funds will be reviewed to see if there is any opportunity to pay all mileage from home. Any compensation will come from the Ramble Worldwide Holidays pot.

Only other items to note

- £23 from the AGM raffle
- £20 additional AGM expenses

7. Walks Co-ordinator's Report

The March programme is bereft and has not yet been uploaded to the national site in the hope of getting more walks. Must badger people on the walks. Peter suggested Nigel email walk leaders rather than Gerald. Gerald to make sure the list of leaders he sends to Nigel is accurate, and includes only local leaders. Heidi queried whether people knew there was support for them if they were willing to lead. This should be reinforced at the beginning of walks. Nigel will put something on Facebook and Marita will ask Phil to put something in an obvious position on the website.

8. Trips Away Review – current situation

This year the trip to Keswick is in May not June. The trip organisers had to close the trip at 67. They let it get that high on the assumption not everyone will walk every day. There are currently 25 for Wiltshire (itineraries for that and Dorset are already sorted), 27 for Dorset, and Mark confirmed 26 for Derbyshire. Next year Keswick is again being organised by Jane and Jim (date tbc) and Mark is again undertaking Derbyshire. It is possible the September trip will be to the Brecon Beacons (date tbc) and there may be a repeat of Mendips.

9. Communications Officer's Report

It was suggested to Marita that we could put the minutes of the AGM and the committee meetings on our website, as well as writing who is in the current committee on our home page. Marita discussed by email with the committee members who were in agreement. The unconfirmed minutes of the last committee meeting and AGM were uploaded last month. Marita also updated our website homepage, including details of the current committee members.

Marita also discussed the Ramblers liability and personal accident insurance in item 10 of the Agenda.

10. Ramblers Insurance

There was an article about Ramblers Insurance in the last Norfolk Area Newsletter, stating that walk leaders need to be registered as volunteer walk leaders with the Ramblers national office to be covered by the Ramblers Personal Accident insurance, and also the walks/activity needed to be advertised for the leader to be covered. This prompted Marita to contact the Ramblers head office to make sure that our trips away leaders were covered, and that leaders were covered for their recces, as neither are advertised as single walks. She was told that you have to be registered for each group you lead for, so this affected leaders for trips away from other groups. She also discovered that a large proportion of our regular leaders were not registered with head office although they were on our leaders page and had, at some point, been registered with head office. Marita confirmed that all leaders who lead for our group, whether local or from other groups, are now registered volunteer leaders. The other queries have taken head office months to resolve, until yesterday. In summary:

1. Walk leaders are covered for liability and personal accident for their recces and their leading;
2. If you recce with another leader you are both covered. If you recce with a member, they will only have liability cover. Non-members will not be covered at all.
3. It has been confirmed that walk leaders are covered for walks on away trips, even though they're not advertised.
4. Leaders are covered on the way there and back for personal accident but not liability.

Marita did not receive a response about back and middle markers, and will chase this up. Marita will update walk leaders as a follow up to her original email, once Peter confirms that this is a new policy covering walk leaders. Peter was already shown the document before the end of the meeting and Marita emailed it to the committee for their information.

Heidi queried whether people are aware they need to take out their own travel insurance to cover themselves when they are on the trips away. Marita will add this to trips away page, to advise people they are responsible for their own welfare, and will ask trip organisers to add to their welcome email.

11. Social Events

Socials are still being organised every month, with random activities. Heidi is planning a short walk followed by fish and chips. She queried whether she needed to recce the walk, or carry out a risk assessment as it's being done under the auspices of the Ramblers. No need to recce or risk assess again, as Heidi has done the walk many times, but as it is a Ramblers activity and she will be leading a walk, Heidi will need to be registered as a volunteer leader, for insurance purposes.

Peter asked if anyone was looking at evening walks, and if so they needed to start earlier than last year, as the evenings start to get longer. Mark volunteered to coordinate a programme for evening walks, not to clash with socials. Suggested 2nd and 4th Friday of each month, April to September. Gerald to insert rows in the programme. Suggested a maximum of 6 miles. Jonathan Smith is going to lead a ghost walk.

12. Reports on Area

Area AGM on 15th January, with 35 people. They put in a motion to National for an email system. Richard May has been fighting for it for years. Other groups also asking.



13. 90th Anniversary Walks

Nigel has already sent out an email on this event which will be on 29th June. Originally a 9 mile walk, but since have added a 6 mile one and now also a 3-miler, with staggered starts and all meant to end at roughly the same time. Area are paying for the hire of the hall at Watton at the end of the walk. Encouraging people to bring cakes etc. Being put in programme or advertised by at least six Norfolk groups, including Legstretchers, Hike Norfolk, Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Fakenham and Wensum. The original email was sent by Area due to email access, asking people to respond to Nigel or Adrian. As it will be advertised outside Ramblers it will not be possible to know how many people will be taking part. Good opportunity to publicise Ramblers and get more members. Any merit in having the Ramblers stand there? Yes, Peter will bring. If numbers are too large will split into more groups within the mileage. Marita has put on Norwich and Norfolk Area Meetups and the walks are already on our website. If press are going to be there it needs it to be successful. Will probably come up at next Area meeting.

14. AGM November 2025 – venue/date/format

Stick to Sunday. Peter suggested a longer walk and a later meeting, but it was thought people would just want to get home.

16th November? Venue: Wymondham? Free car park. Possible halls – at least three. Timing: 13:00 – 16:00. Meeting starts at 14:00. 8-9 mile walk, starting at 10:00.

15. AOB

Mark does not have distribution list to send out re evening walks.

Nigel thought it would be useful to have an indication re committee posts going forward, how long people plan on staying in post. Nigel, Peter, Gerald and Jonathan all happy to remain after the next AGM. Advance notice of change of plans would be helpful.

16. Dates for next meetings

25th June
29th October

Meeting closed at 20:25

Signed

Nigel Whitlam: Chair