

TAKE A HIKE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

7.30pm Sunday 21st November 2021

Via Zoom

Committee attendees:

General Secretary:	Susan Wilkinson
Walks Secretary:	Steve Noble
Footpath Secretary:	Steve Fleming
Membership Secretary:	Angela Bailey
Web Master:	Dave Husband

Member Representative:

Vicki Wilkinson

Apologies:

David Catchpole, Richard Forrester, Laura O'Neil,

Meeting opened at 19:33

Susan Wilkinson welcomed everyone attending the meeting. She thanked everyone who had led a walk or event throughout the course of the year. Susan set out the agenda for the meeting.

Minutes of the Last meeting/matters arising.

Suzanne McRobbie proposed the minutes and Michelle Gardner seconded them. It was agreed that the previous minutes were a fair and accurate record of last year's meeting.



TAKE A HIKE

General Secretary Report

I would like to thank my fellow committee members and walk leaders who have worked hard again this year to keep the group walking. The diary remained busy and varied throughout. Particular thanks goes to those who led multiple walks or those who led for the first time. TAH is always in need of volunteers to lead walks. If you know a route you could lead, or have any questions about doing so, let the committee know. Please don't be put off by talk of risk assessments and registers, they are straightforward and the main thing is knowing the route and making sure people enjoy themselves.

As a group we have continued to welcome a mix of new people, familiar faces and people who haven't walked with the group for a long time. Membership numbers have improved which is great news.

Whilst our group continues to be the 'young' Ramblers group in the Area there is no denying that the 20's and 30's are under-represented in the active membership. This is perhaps not that surprising considering that TAH originated as a 20's/30's group back in 2002 and people have discovered the group at different ages over the years, had a fantastic time, made friends/partners and continued to walk with the group. We have our very own TAH community and that is fantastic.

The Area is keen to ensure that people in their 20s and 30s still have the opportunity to walk with people their own age and become the Ramblers of the future. We recently put out an appeal for people in their twenties/early thirties and invited them to register their interest in potentially setting up a new group focused on that age range. About a dozen people have come forward which is encouraging and many are new to both TAH and the Ramblers. I am working with those who have come forward to see what they want to do, initially inviting them to come along to TAH to get a feel for group walking and take it from there. The outcome may not be the creation of a new group, that is just one potential option. I would like to stress that coming forward for the new initiative in no way affects a person's involvement with TAH and everyone is welcome and will continue to be.

While the scope for socials in 2020 has mostly been limited, the much-loved tradition of the Leeds city centre pub meet made a welcome return in October thanks to Steve and it will continue to be a regular feature. A group meal at the beginning of October was well-attended and there are a couple more socials leading up to the end of the year. It's great to see that there is a nominee for Social Secretary for 2022. It should prove to be a much more sociable year, with the potential for some bigger gatherings again too. If you have an idea for a social you would like to organise, or a suggestion, please contact the committee.

Susan Wilkinson

Treasurers Report

TAKE A HIKE FINANCES 2020-21 (1st October 2020 to 30th September 2021)

MAIN

Income (Ramblers Funding & Donations)		Expenditure (Running Costs)	
Funding from the Ramblers (Jan-21)	£ 276.00	None	£ -
Bank Account Interest	£ -		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£ 276.00		£ -

Notes

Standard Ramblers funding received. (Funding is provided annually on a pro rata basis per member of the Take A Hike Group, unless a special request for funding is submitted).

No expenses during this period. Previous costs such as meeting room hire were not incurred as meetings took place on Zoom due to the pandemic.

Zoom & Meetup Subscriptions are not listed because payment is made by the West Riding Area rather than the Take A Hike group. Website running costs are also covered by Area.

SELF-FUNDED

Income (Social Event Ticket Sales)		Expenditure (Social Event Costs)	
None	£ -	None	£ -
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£ -		£ -

No social events took place during this period due to the pandemic.

GRAND TOTAL

Bank balance brought forward 1st Oct 2020	£ 923.60
Total Income (Main + Self Funded)	£ 276.00
Less Total Expenditure (Main + Self Funded)	£ -
Total Income vs Expenditure for the year	£ 276.00
Bank balance as at 30th Sept 2021	<hr/> £ 1,199.60

Summary

Main: Ramblers funding is for Group running costs, publicity and training etc. No costs were incurred during this period.

Self-Funded: No transactions during this period. Surplus from previous events continues to be held as a buffer to offset/subsidise future events.

Overall: Bank balance at 30th Sept 2021 is made up of £813.83 accumulated Ramblers funding and £385.77 self-funded (accumulated Bash surplus).

TAH should look to reduce the amount of accumulated Ramblers funding in 2021-22. Subsidised first aid training for TAH members is being investigated for 2022.

Richard Hall proposed the accounts and Dawn Leggott seconded them.



Walks Secretary Report

Since the last AGM where we had entered a second lockdown, we resumed our walks on the 5th December 2020 but this was short lived as the country went into its third lockdown on the 6th January 2021. The group walks were able to resume in April 2021, with the first being on 7th with all walks still requiring people to book a place on to the walk.

Despite the restriction of not walking as a group for 3 months we managed to put on 115 walks between 5th December 2020 and 31st October 2021. In October the booking system for a walk was no longer required but a walk's register of who was on the walk had to be taken and kept for 21 days for Track and Trace. The booking system continues as an option and at the discretion of the walk leader if they require one for their walk.

This year putting on walks has been a challenge for all the walk leaders, both our regulars and new ones. Without your efforts the 115 walks over the 11-month period of which 3 months was in lockdown could not have been achieved. I would therefore like to say a big thank you to all the walk leaders that have taken the time to get involved in putting on Covid secure walks for everyone.

Stephen Noble



Membership Secretary Report (Figures as at 28th October 2021)

The number of Take a Hike members has recovered from the drop to a low of 165 in Mar-21 and are now consistent with pre-pandemic levels, the largest net increase in membership numbers were seen in April 2021 (+14) and May (+8), following the easing of restrictions.

As seen in previous years, the 3 monthly average figures now show approximately equal numbers of leavers and joiners, with some small variations. In the period Aug - Oct 21 we had 5 new members, 5 re-joiners and 7 leavers.

Over the past year, 35 of the new joiners to TAH were entirely new to The Ramblers showing that the recovery of membership levels is not by any means due to the re-instatement of existing members who let their membership lapse during the pandemic.

The average age* was 44 in 2019, 45 in 2020 and 47 in 2021, so increasing every year in line with the age of our core members. The data does show that we are really a 30s, 40s, and 50s group now, with only 3% of our members aged 20-29, 14% are 30-39, 37% are 40-49, 21% are 50-59, 1% are 60+ and 24% unknown - still, much younger than the national average of 67!

Angela Bailey

*Of all members registered with Take a Hike, whether currently active in the group or not

Footpath Secretary Report

Footpath Officers around the area have been busy despite Covid19 restrictions in the first part of the year. The higher level of use of paths noted in 2020 gradually fell away. There were frequent reports of difficulties with muddy surfaces, strongly affected by the very wet opening to 2021. Later in the year vegetation growth was notable, and as authorities have cut back on mowing. The Area Footpath Committee has continued meet online throughout the year and address the backlog of footpath issues in most areas of Yorkshire. A new Ramblers footpath officer has been appointed for the Bradford District. Local authority Rights of Way teams have been operating from home for much of the year and in many cases losing more staff members which has impaired their ability to carry out site visits and do maintenance work.

While the frequency of standard cases such as diversions did not seem to be much affected, public Map Modification Order meetings disappeared and therefore the extensive backlogs of cases in most authorities grew even longer. Footpath officers dealt with numerous planning applications which affected footpaths and, less frequently, consultations on the extinguishment of portions of highway.

Take a Hike members have been busy reporting footpath issues during the course of the year while reconnoitring routes and getting out and about on less well walked paths.

Specific issues have included signing and path condition in the Leeds area with some extremely muddy and almost impassable paths in north and east Leeds. A member had become aware of a series of problems with path signage in Barwick & Scholes Parish. Signs appear to have been removed or obscured. Also signage problems were reported in Garforth on the Leeds Country Way. These have been reported to PRoW for investigation.

There was a serious issue with a couple of dangerous crossings of the A64 in the Thorner area where overgrown trees were making it almost impossible to cross with any degree of safety. In addition an adjacent path near Kiddal Bridge is in a poor state and was also reported as an issue. There was another problem in the Normanton area south Altofts where a lake had expanded over time to the extent where the nearby footpath had been completely submerged.

Previous problems nearby Leathley Hall have now been resolved with broken stiles having now been fixed, undergrowth having been cleared and a very large tree having been cleared from obstructing the paths.

An overgrown footpath in Cowcliffe near Huddersfield has now been cleared after becoming almost impassable at one stage. Also the towpath at Horbury Bridge on the Wakefield Way has now reopened after a fairly long closure.

Deliberately blocked footpaths were an issue in some places including Woodside and Riding Hill Farm near Bradford and these were all reported.

A significant number of problems were reported in North Yorkshire. Cropping problems had been noticeable, for example in the Yearsley area, at Ryton and Malton.

Problems were also found in the Lothersdale – Cowling area.

The Don't Lose Your Way project continues with paths being added to the definitive map in Bradford. Lower Wharfedale group getting involved in looking for lost ways and Ripon group pursuing 75 paths that may need to be added to the map. The 2026 cut-off date is coming closer and any paths not yet on the definitive map as rights of way could potentially be lost.

Steve Fleming



Member Representative Comments

A few words from me as Members' Rep. Once again it has been a difficult year for Take a Hike due to Covid - lockdowns, limits on numbers and even different rules for different members due to postcodes. However, the membership is looking really good and it has been great to welcome lots of new people into the group.

It has also been nice this year to have bigger walks back, which has allowed long time members to meet some of the newer recruits. I think many of us have enjoyed being able to go to pubs/cafes after walks again too! I would like to thank Susan and the rest of the committee for all of their hard work and commitment to keeping the club going despite lots of challenges being thrown at us.

You may be aware there is space on the committee for multiple Members' Reps - it is a great way to be part of shaping the club now and for the future, without the pressure of an official role. If you want to ask me any further about this, please do. We have lots of plans for the club next year and hopefully all can go ahead as planned this time round!

Vicki Wilkinson



TAKE A HIKE

Election of the Committee for 2022

Susan explained that most of the current committee members were happy to put themselves forward for re-election and in addition Dominic Hand put himself forward for the position of Social Secretary for 2022. Also, Phil Bruce put himself forward as a member representative for the new committee.

David Husband was also willing to continue in the technical post of Webmaster which is a role appointed by the committee.

Dominic stated that he was looking forward to getting everyone together again after all the issues with COVID19 and that summer and winter bashes were something that could now be planned.

Phil Bruce said that he was interested in helping to organise more walks with public transport and accessibility options and also the Dales Highway route as a possibility for 2022.

Craig Divers proposed that all the nominees be elected and Richard Hall seconded this. This was then agreed unanimously by the meeting.

The committee members were elected as follows:

Role	
General Secretary/Treasurer	Susan Wilkinson
Walks Secretary	Stephen Noble
Membership Secretary	Angela Bailey
Footpath Secretary	Steve Fleming
Social Secretary	Dominic Hand
Member Representative	Vicki Wilkinson
Member Representative	Phil Bruce

Susan then read out a message from Laura O’Neil thanking all the committee members for their work in 2021, saying that it was much appreciated.

Susan Wilkinson thanked everyone for their contributions. The meeting was closed with no fighting having occurred.

Author: Steve Fleming 28/11/2021