

Glasgow Ramblers Committee Meeting 13th June, 2023

	Present Frances Arthur (FA), Terry Cassidy (TC), Geoff Der (GD), Yvonne Flynn (YF), Barry Pottle (BP), Jim Riddell (JR), Helen Sweeting (HS), Sandra West (SW).
1.	Interim arrangements - chairing Barry Pottle agreed to chair the meeting (whilst remaining unwilling to accept the title of Group Chair).
2.	Apologies Gareth Morgan, Alan Watt (AW), Catherine Watt (CW).
3.	<u>Minutes of Committee meeting held on 21st March 2023</u> a - Accuracy as record of meeting - Those present agreed the record was accurate and could be approved and uploaded to the website. b - Matters arising (ACTION points from 21st March Minutes not otherwise on the Agenda) re Minutes of January Committee meeting - HS to amend 17th January Minutes (FA present); GD to post Minutes on website - DONE. - All to continue to raise walk leading with members when appropriate – ONGOING. Re #4 Reports and matters arising - FA to ask Ramblers Help Desk whether membership cards continue to be issued (plus what the default contact preferences are for new members – see #6e) – BOTH DONE. FA received confirmation that membership cards are still being issued. She noted that she had not received hers – but SW has, so there is presumably some delay. FA has also asked about contact preferences: our newsletter counts as ‘marketing’, from which many opt-out. Ramblers Central have undertaken to consider whether the initial wording re default contact preferences should be amended to make it clearer to new members what potentially important information they are opting out of. - FA to amend welcome letter, removing COVID info and adding App info (plus re contact preferences and implications of ‘no email’ – see #6e). BOTH DONE – our welcome letter now makes it very clear that receipt of our newsletter is contingent on signing up to email contact. BP wondered what could be done in respect of existing members. HS suggested including the information on the implications of contact preferences with the AGM invite since all members receive this, including those signed up to hard copy info only. FA thought word of mouth was important. GD noted that our website describes how to change contact preferences (https://www.glasgowramblers.org.uk/members-section/newsletters.html) <i>“If you are not receiving the Glasgow group newsletters by email it may be because of the contact preferences set up for you at Ramblers GB. To check and, if necessary, change your contact preferences: Go to the website http://www.ramblers.org.uk/; On the top line either Register or Login; Click on My Account; What would you like to do? Click on Update Profile; Check your Contact Preferences.”</i> - GD to add bold / emphasise ‘a full list’ sentence on home page – DONE. Page now includes “A full list of upcoming walks is given on our <u>Current Walks</u> page.” Re #5 – Walks and events programme - TC to email walk leaders re gap-filling and to consider arranging a June walk leader meeting – ONGOING. TC noted that some leaders responded following the newsletter request for walks and that there are no gaps until late July. He wondered how far ahead we should be filling the calendar? BP suggested walk leaders were now used to putting forward walks less in advance but TC thought it was preferable for members to know well in advance. TC also thought there was probably no need for a meeting specifically about Walks Manager because he has emailed walks leaders re how to set contact preferences and has been helping to sort out a few individuals for whom this has proved difficult. He

	suggested that walk leader contact details could be included in the body of the walk description in case of any issues with the autofeed system. However GD thought this was not advisable because of bots set up to crawl the internet looking for such details in order to send spam. • YF to email September weekend attendees re who is taking cars - DONE. • AW to contact additional potential Arran walk leaders - DONE. Lucy Wallace (former Ramblers Scotland President, now a Vice President, also Arran-based), has agreed to lead a walk. • AW to ask Metrosigns for Mag 11 roundels quote and circulate to Committee for decision – DONE. Forty roundels have been ordered, delivered and passed on to Gary Linstead. • CW to contact Pauline Werninke (PWe) re firming up Summer event (possibility of Lochwinnoch, 17th June, question of who will lead) – DONE. This even has been arranged for 21st June, from Lochwinnoch to Howwood where lunch has been booked at The Boarding House Restaurant. CW will lead the walk. The Committee thanked PWe for suggesting the event and making restaurant arrangements. Re #6 – Other business • FA to include note re contact preferences and implications of ‘no email’ in welcome letter (plus info re App – see #4c) – DONE – SEE ABOVE • FA to ask Ramblers Help Desk what default contact preferences are for new members (plus whether membership cards continue to be issued – see #4c) – DONE – SEE ABOVE. ACTIONS • HS to send pdf of 21st March Minutes to GD to post on website.
4.	Reports and matters arising a – Chair • No report as we do not currently have a Group Chair. b – Treasurer • BP’s report (available on request) noted that he has now received cheque books, records of receipts and payments, and other records from AW (previous Treasurer). • Current account balances as of 9th June 2023 are £1,635.36 (Main account) and £1,148.58 (Social Fund account). There have been no remarkable transactions over the past three months. • On 29th May BP emailed 17 walk leaders who had led walks since Sept 2022 (date of previous recce expense email) inviting recce expense claims and has so far had responses from four. c – Membership Secretary • Our membership numbers are stable – 298 on 9th June 2023 compared with 300 in March. Five new members joined in May and the June new membership numbers are also looking good. d – IT / website • GD noted that the new Walks Manager is correctly feeding walks onto our website and the new Ramblers Central website is listing local groups in a better way than before. However, he suggested that we consider providing better words since currently all groups listed say “<i>We are the [GROUP NAME] Ramblers. We open the way for everyone in our local community to enjoy the pleasures of walking</i>”. He noted tight word-limit requirements for this. e – Access • SW has been contacted by someone re a fenced off area along the Seven Lochs Way. JR provided contact details for the relevant local access officer and this is now being dealt with. ACTIONS • GD to draft improved wording in respect of Glasgow Group for Ramblers Central website.
5.	Walks and events programme

	a – Walks programme - SW provided information on the Mag 11 anniversary walk provided by AW: this is likely to be quite a significant event as invites have been sent to: Zahrah Mahmood (Ramblers Scotland President); Danny Carden (Ramblers Scotland Engagement & Communications Manager); a local visually impaired member; and Gary Linstead will liaise with local 'Friends of' groups who may wish to come along. b – Any incidents or anything to report - None c – Dog walks - FA has contacted the three other local Area groups which run / are interested in dog walks. Bearsden/Milngavie have had the same experience as her – i.e. low demand. Neither Glasgow Young Walkers nor Helensburgh/West Dumbarton replied to her query. It was agreed that FA should liaise with Bearsden/Milngavie to organise the occasional dog walk. d – Weekend away in September - Nothing additional to report. e – Walks Manager - BP noted dissatisfaction with: (1) the need to state a start point as well as meeting place, since this means some may go straight to the start without bothering to contact the leader – which in turn could mean they miss out on walk-related updates; (2) the requirement for an estimated finish time since this is hard to predict but may encourage walkers to make post-walk plans which they then end up missing if the walk is slower than expected. GD thought this was feedback which we could collate. BP noted that TC has already sent feedback re finish times but it is unlikely Ramblers Central will change the system unless large numbers of groups complain. - FA noted that on auto-transfer from GWEM to WM all photos for her walks were lost. GD thought adding a photo to a walk description is always a good idea since otherwise there is just a rather dull generic placeholder image against the walk description on the Ramblers Central website. f – Glasgow Ramblers summer event - Already discussed (re 3 – re #5).
6.	Other business a – Diversity continued - AW had contributed thoughts re our website and potential opportunities for future discussion prior to the meeting – see attachments. - SW had also been wondering about perceptions of our website and the possibility that it might include something in respect of a local visually impaired member who has joined recent walks. - There was discussion about how walkers with impairments or disabilities might manage and how – potentially – to say no to someone (NB UK Government Equality Act 2010 defines disability as <i>"if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities"</i>). There might be particular issues with less experienced walkers who may require a lot of help from the walk leader, so diverting their attention from other things. It was agreed that it would be best to ask other walkers to take turns with assisting, however this may not be something that some people would be keen on. - SW wondered about actions in respect of diversity and inclusion, noting that although it is something we have discussed as a committee, it has not been discussed with walk leaders – should we be informing them and discussing how best to handle approaches from anyone with specific issues? - YF highlighted potential risks and the responsibilities which might deter some walk leaders. - HS thought it was important that walk leaders were very clear about paths, hazards, etc when writing their walk descriptions. - HS also wondered whether we should ask for help and policy guidance from Ramblers Scotland / Central. BP agreed, and thought this should also include how to handle the

	broader issue of diversity and inclusion. It was agreed that SW would contact Jeannie Cranfield (Ramblers Scotland Delivery Officer). - SW also wondered about tackling our image as white and middle-class. YF thought this might be best done via images. GD suggested that if anyone could identify some good candidate photos from past walks then he would post them more prominently on the website. b – Scottish Walking Awards - results - CW had sent a note to say that none of our three nominations (Research and Innovation - Prof Deirdre Heddon and walkcreate; Public Walking Champion - Gary Linstead; Most Improved Route - The Magnificent 11) was successful although the Mag 11 received a Certificate of Recognition. We did not nominate Carmunnock Community Council as they did not reply to emails. c – RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards - CW had sent a note to say that she and Gary Linstead had decided not to go ahead with the request to submit the Mag 11 because it would have required setting up a Twitter account. d – Hosting the 2024 Area AGM - BP reported that the Area AGM can be held anywhere but looks for a local Group help to: suggest a venue; provide volunteers (e.g. vote counting) and offer an afternoon walk. He asked whether there was interest, but noted that in fact another Group had already offered. It was agreed that in that case we should consider this for a future occasion. e – Risk Assessments - SW noted an 18th May email highlighting that a Ramblers Central project team is looking to improve the approach to risk assessments. She will keep us updated. f – Social events - SW reported that PWe has said she is happy to organise more social events, maybe not always including a walk, but wanted to check how the Committee felt about this. It was agreed to let her know that we were happy with the idea. g – How can we use creative walking to bring communities together? - SW noted this talk to be given by Prof Dee Heddon on 20th June – CW will attend. ACTIONS - SW to ask Jeannie Cranfield re diversity and inclusion policies and advice. - ALL to look for potential website photos to highlight inclusion. - SW to let PWe know that the Committee is happy for her to organise further social events.
7.	Next meetings COMMITTEE - Tuesday 19th September, 7pm – zoom meeting. AGM – provisionally Tuesday 14th November – zoom meeting since it was agreed that this seems to increase attendance. SW reported that CW may have some speaker suggestions.
8.	AOCB None.

SUBMITTED REPORTS

Chair's report – none as no current Group Chair.

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Treasurer's Report – available on request.

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Membership Report

Since 20/03/2023 membership figures are as follows:

New to Ramblers	17
Members who have moved to Glasgow Ramblers	2
Reinstated members	1

(Of these new members 11 joined in May)

Leavers:

Members who have resigned	9
Members whose membership has lapsed	8
Members who have moved Group	2

(Leavers by date joined: 2022 – 8, 2021-5, 2019 – 2.)

On **09 June 2023** the total membership for Glasgow Ramblers is **298**, this is a small decrease of 2 since the last Committee meeting in March 2023.

Frances Arthur
Membership Secretary, Glasgow Ramblers
09/06/2023

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IT / Website Report – nothing significant to report.

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Access Report – nothing significant to report

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Thoughts on diversity and inclusion – summary of note from Alan Watt

Our website home page says "*Glasgow Ramblers is a friendly walking group for people of all ages who enjoy walking in the countryside or the city with others who share their enthusiasm*". This appears to be an inclusive statement (although we cannot know how it is judged by others) and, to

our knowledge, we have never turned away or been unhelpful to anyone with a specific issue or from a protected group and are unaware of any complaints.

However, it is clear that our membership is not fully representative of the local Glasgow population in a number of respects and we do not know who might have been put off joining because of how they may view us. There are a number of organisations that are or seem more explicit in targeting under-represented communities eg 'Boots and Beards' and 'Bonnie Boots'. There are also successful women-only groups and groups aiming for a younger membership. These may have some impact on our own membership profile but we will continue to welcome new members from all sections of our local community.

The fact that visually impaired members have joined some recent walks represents a positive step and, if the new Ramblers Scotland President, Zarah Mahmood, joins us on the Mag 11 walk, this might be an opportunity to engage on one important aspect of diversity and inclusion.