

Welcome to those of you who have “clicked on” to this bit of our website. This is the first time we have put a summary of our Group Committee meetings on our web site, but it was felt it would be a good way of letting members know what happens at these meetings and hopefully encouraging more members to attend. So please do get involved, either come along to the meetings or via the web, your comments, views, ideas etc would be most welcome.

Summary of Group Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3 June 2008 at St Marys Centre (Lock Street Club) Lock Street, Oswaldtwistle, at 7.00pm

Present: Trevor Whittaker (Chairman), Sue Baxendale (Secretary), Pauline Hughes (Membership Secretary), Phil Bedson (Webmaster), Paul Brown and Tom Errington (Committee members).

Apologies for absence were received from June and Dave Tattersall (Footpath Secretary), Jean Jeffery (Treasurer) and Kath Dwyer (Minute Secretary).

A discussion of the minutes of the April meeting was not possible as this had been cancelled and the minutes of the February meeting were not available.

Moving on to the Secretaries’ report. Sue had previously mailed out to all the committee various documents received from Ramblers Association central office. These included the Spring 2008 newsletter for Group Secretaries, a summary of the meeting of General Council at the University of Winchester 4-6 April 2008 which she had attended, and a copy of “Fresh Air, Firm Ground” which is the RA Strategy 2008 to 2013 and had been accepted at General Council. (Copies of any of these documents are available to any member who would like one). It was noted that the newly opened cycle route “The Hyndburn Greenway” had been short listed for a national award.

There was no footpath report to give but it was thought no problems had been reported to LCC since the last meeting.

Pauline reported that the latest membership figures for the Group were for the end of March 2008 showing that the Group had 184 members at that time. This showed a decline as at one time we had over 200 members. A short discussion took place as to why our membership numbers are not growing as we often see new faces on the walks and most people do join, however we must obviously be losing members through non renewal. We had all received the questionnaire included in the current edition of Walk magazine and felt it was not an easy one to complete as the questions were not simple to respond to using the criteria given. Image is obviously seen as important by Central Office and it was felt this questionnaire was not a good way of sourcing members’ views on this complex topic.

Our next item was “Publicity”. Each week the Sunday walks are listed in the Accrington Observers’ “What’s On” column and it was agreed that Kath would be asked to also try to have the Wednesday walks listed. Sue asked if anyone had one of the black notice boards, organised by the local Prospect Panels, in their vicinity to let her have the contact number for it and she would try to have one of our posters displayed. She has already contacted the organisers for the boards in Church and in Rishton. The walk led by Sue Larder on 25<sup>th</sup> May had brought a local photographer to Plantation Street and the Citizen newspaper the following week showed us on the front page in glorious technicolour. This was Sues’ first lead for the Group her walk was the first half of the Huncoat Trail. The walk was made even more enjoyable by her local knowledge of the area. She will lead the second half of the 9 mile trail on Sunday 17 August.

The 2009 Walks Programme. Sue had spoken to Brenda Wheelan and she had agreed to collate the walks programme and Phil Bedson agreed to type it up and liaise with Christine Harrison to submit it for inclusion in the area programme. The walks planning meeting will be held on Monday 15 September at 7.30pm at the Lock Street Club, Oswaldtwistle, but for those who cannot come to the meeting Sue will include, in the July edition of Area News, a form for leaders to complete and send to Brenda. We then discussed the amount members are asked to donate towards petrol costs etc. to those who offer lifts to the start of walks. It was felt that the current charge of 20p per mile on the outward journey was sufficient, although it would be discussed at the AGM in November. We agreed that next year leaders should be encouraged to try to do some walks either from Plantation Street, and/or by using public transport.

Regarding the web site Phil commented that unless recent information is available for viewing it looks as if the Group is not active. It was agreed that all walks leaders should be encouraged to send him a report on their walk and that a summary of the committee meetings be posted. Also if anyone sees anything in the local press etc. that may be of interest this could be included.

We then discussed the proposed wind farm on the moors between Oswaldtwistle and Haslingden Moors. It was agreed that we would contact RA central office to see if there is any firm policy on wind farms and also Hyndburn Council to see if they would give information as to when the planning application will be submitted.

This brought the meeting to a close with the date of the next meeting confirmed as Wednesday 6 August 2008.

Sue Baxendale, Group Secretary.

Well all you avid readers out there – what do you think? Has this been of interest to you? Has it inspired you to enter the date of our next meeting in your diary and to come along? Any response to the request for walks leaders for 2009 and walks using public transport? Any comments on the proposed wind farm on our moorland? Do let's hear from you.