

THE RAMBLERS
LEICESTER & DISTRICT GROUP
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Friday November 22nd 2013

The AGM was preceded by a 45 minute presentation by Phil Laverack from HF Holidays on '100 Years of HF Holidays', followed by a buffet.

MINUTES

Present were: Terry Bates (Chairman), Dave Siddons (Sec) , Bob Collins (Treasurer) John Jackson, Anne Bates, Frank Russell, Cynthia Bollands, Ray Phipps, Phil Freer, Bob Law, Jennie Owen, Brian Jeffs, Judy Souter, Mike Goodrich, Tom Merry, Chris Ambrose, Mary Cooke, Larissa Barker, Chris Grant, Marlyn Grant, Janet Reeves, Marilyn Pile, Penny Bates, Mike Ross, Chris Bancroft, Bob Preston, Steve Peck, Marcus Broughton, John Rhodes

1. Apologies for Absence

Jenny Freeman, Howard Freeman, Dave Bell., Howard Watmore, John Forgham, Eileen Pott, Mary Rooks

2. Minutes of the Previous AGM

These had been circulated, and were passed *nem con*. Proposed by Anne Bates, Seconded by John Jackson.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Frank Russell asked if the shorter Sunday walks had been organized, and Dave Siddons confirmed that they had, and would appear on the next programme.

4. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Terry Bates thanked those present for turning up, and thanked Dave Siddons for producing the printed report, the Committee for their help and support during the past year, and all the non-Committee members, walk organizers and leaders for all they had done to make the Group so successful. He said that the coach ramble was doing well, though Sunday walks needed more support from members. The membership is virtually static at 474 - new members being cancelled out by members not renewing their membership. However, he said that a greater proportion of the membership now appeared to be taking part in our led walks. He also asked for anyone wishing to go on the New Year's Day walk to contact him.

5. Treasurer's Report

Bob Collins, the Treasurer, presented his accounts for the year ending September 30th 2013. He said that the funds remained in a satisfactory state and we had a surplus of £5 in the past year. The coach accounts too were in

a healthy state, though the balance carried forward had been reduced. The accounts were passed *nem con*. Proposed by Frank Russell, Seconded by John Rhodes.

6. Other Reports

The other reports were made available to all members present, and were accepted *nem con*. Proposed by Phil Freer, Seconded by Anne Bates.

7. Election of Officers and Committee (all elected *nem con*)

Chairman/Area Delegate	Terry Bates	Proposed by Frank Russell
	Seconded by Mary Cooke	
Vice-Chairman:	Howard Watmore	Proposed by Anne Bates
	Seconded by Frank Russell	
Secretary:	Phil Freer	Proposed by Chjris Bancroft
	Seconded by Frank Russell	
Treasurer:	Bob Collins	Proposed by Terry Bates
	Seconded by Anne Bates	
Programme Secretary	Dave Siddons	Proposed by Anne Bates
	Seconded by Tom Merry	
Footpaths Secretary	Dave Bell	Proposed by Terry Bates
	Seconded by Howard Watmore (proxy)	
Coach Secretary	John Rhodes	Proposed by John Jackson
	Seconded by Chris Ambrose	
Maps & Statistics Sec	Jenny Freeman	Proposed by Anne Bates
	Seconded by Mary Cooke	
Publicity & Website Sec	Howard Freeman	Proposed by John Jackson
	Seconded by Tom Merry	
Minutes Secretary	Anne Bates	Proposed by Dave Siddons
	Seconded by John Jackson	
Membership Secretary	Ray Phipps	Proposed by Anne Bates
	Seconded by Chris Ambrose	
Social Secretary	Eileen Pott	Proposed by John Jackson
	Seconded by John Rhodes	
Committee Members	John Jackson & Frank Russell	Proposed by Bob Law
	Seconded by John Rhodes	

Geoff Lee was elected honorary auditor, proposed by John Jackson, Seconded by John Rhodes.

8. Statement from Mary Rooks

Terry Bates read out a statement from Mary Rooks in which she appealed for more involvement from Group members in Area matters.

9. Any Other Business

a) John Jackson suggested that the Group organizes an annual coach ramble to take place on a Thursday. There was some discussion about the feasibility of this, and it was agreed that it should be discussed by the Committee.

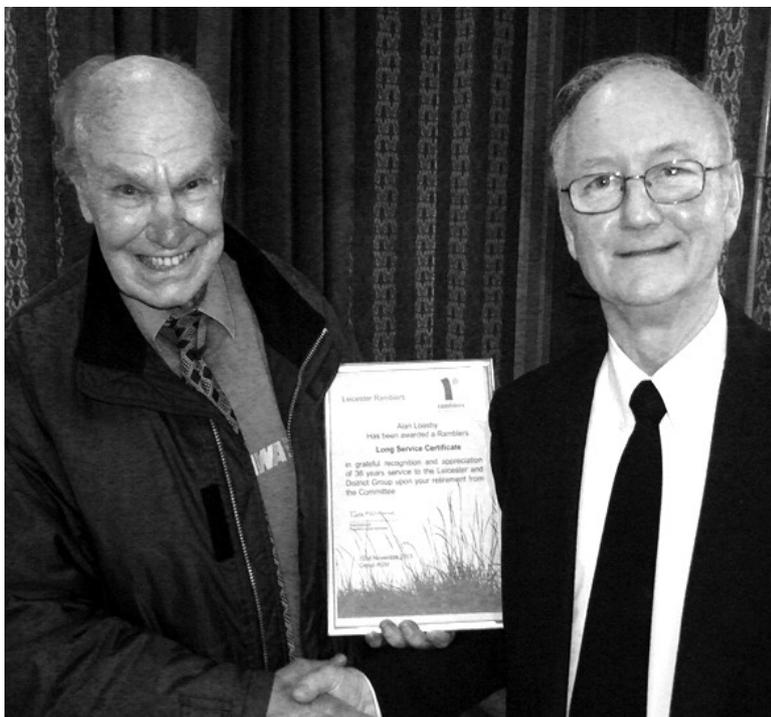
He also said that there had been a suggestion that we organize morning walks on Wednesdays. This too was discussed, and the alternative possibility of a Saturday morning walk was suggested, especially as other walking groups in the county already hold walks on Wednesdays. This too will be discussed by the Committee.

b) Gift Aid. The matter was raised of how members could contribute gift aid to the Ramblers. Bob Collins said that the Ramblers could claim back income tax from members' subscriptions, but the member had to agree this with the Ramblers, and suggested that anyone who was not already doing this should contact Central Office.

c) John Jackson suggested that leaders should take secateurs with them on walks to deal with overgrowth, as he had noticed an increasing problem with this on walks in the county. Obstructions should also be reported.

d) It was also commented that membership subscriptions could be paid for with Tesco vouchers.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm



Presentation of Long Service Certificate to Alan Loasby by Terry Bates at the March Committee Meeting

CHAIRMAN 'S REPORT

I do think we are so lucky to belong to such a thriving group. Our membership may have decreased recently but the number of members actually walking has increased. The coach, Tuesday and Thursday morning walks are very popular. I think we are putting on about 270 walks in 2014. The leaders deserve a big thank you from the group because without them we would not have a successful group.

The youngest rambler award must go to Achsha Bargon at 9 months who came out on 7th November 2013.

Mike Lattimore sadly died in March 2014. He was a member for many years, leading walks and doing committee work. He will be missed.

Our Vice-Chairman, Howard Watmore, was attacked by an alpaca in November 2013 while doing a walkout on a footpath near Markfield. Someone said the alpaca did not like Howards' jokes! When doing the actual walk at a later date I spoke to the farmer concerned. She said a puma or similar large cat had attacked her sheep - 2 died. The alpaca was in the same field at the time. Clearly the animal thought Howard was a puma. Strange because the puma was much better looking than Howard!

Phil Laverack from HF Holidays did a talk/presentation at our AGM in 2013. He also gave us £100. Our thanks go to him.

There were about 107,000 members nationally in the Ramblers in January 2013. At the Area AGM in 2013 there were 15 Leicester members from a total of about 50 who attended the meeting.

2014 started very wet this year. 37 people either walked or had lunch at Cropston after a 6 mile walk. This was the first really wet New Years' Day walk since I led my first one in 1996.

David Worth, who had an accident on a Tuesday walk in March 2013, has still not recovered and may need a further operation in 2015. Our good wishes go to him and we hope to see him out walking again soon.

Howard Watmore's idea of every member carrying a small emergency information card in their rucksack is very good. These will be given out to all walkers. Please carry them.

Finally could I thank all of our committee, the programme sub-committees and the ladies who help with programme distribution and map work. Without your valuable help we would not have such a successful group.

Terry Bates

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I have had a quiet year with only one communication from Central Office enclosing new recruitment leaflets and new membership rates. I did get a lot of emails from Area which were passed on to Ray Phipps and I thank him for dealing with these.

I was involved in trying to get a speaker for the AGM. There were quite a lot of letters to and from various bodies, but in the end Terry sorted out a speaker, Peter Osbourne, who is to talk on the subject of *Walking from the landowner's point of view*.

With good weather conditions this year, there have been good attendances on most of the walks and I have had no incident reports from anyone. The membership over the last year continues to hover around 440 to 450. The new Shorter Sunday All-Day Walks seem to have been a success but the Saturday Morning Walks have not been well attended (I got 3 people on my walk). This might be because it has only been incorporated in the Programme of Walks recently. Conversely, on one of the Thursday morning walks there were just over 40 people! A problem relating to all our walks is pubs closing down by the time the walk takes place. This seems to be getting more frequent.

At the 6th March 2014 committee meeting, a presentation of a long service certificate was made by Terry to Alan Loasby who has retired after 36 years working for the Ramblers.

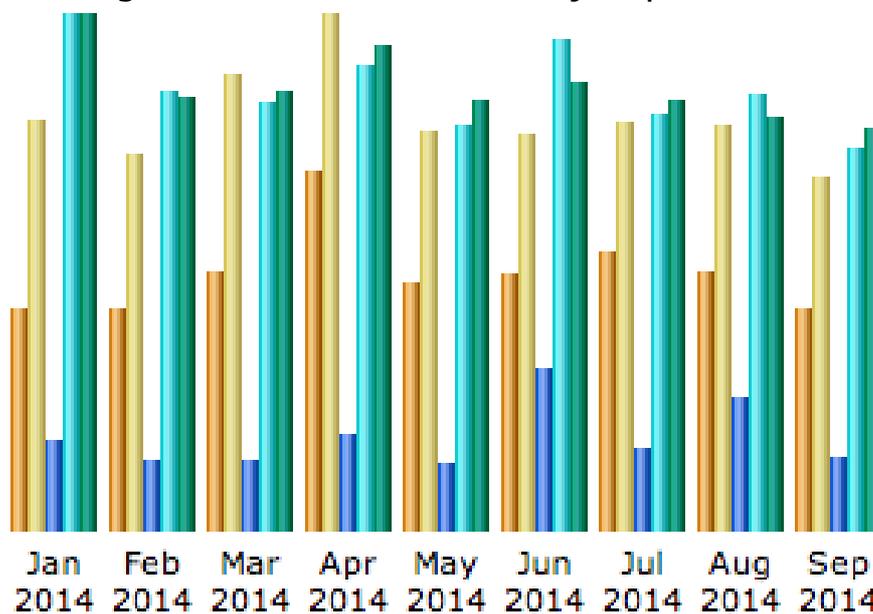
Howard Watmore has piloted a new contact and medical information card which it is hoped members will take with them on walks as it should give vital information in case of any accident.

Phil Freer

PUBLICITY SECRETARY & WEBSITE MANAGER'S REPORT

Website Report

It is possible to obtain a very large amount of information about the usage of the website but I will just provide a summary.



Monthly Usage

Visitors

On average, the number of unique visitors to the website per month averages out at around 600, or 20 per day. Naturally the majority of visitors are from Great Britain, but we do have occasional visitors from USA, China, Russian Federation and about 30 other countries: at least one person in Kazakhstan paid the site a visit in March 2014.

Activity

Activity on the site seems evenly spread within the week, although weekends and Mondays tend to be the most popular. Most visits are made in the early evening, with a peak between 6 to 9.

It is no surprise that most visitors head for the calendar of walks, although the new A4 printable calendar lists are also popular.

Firefox, Chrome and Safari are the most popular browsers used by visitors although mobile phone access is gradually increasing. Google is the most popular site for finding us, although an increasing number of other walking sites are referring us.

Contact Leicester Ramblers

Over the last year around 50 people have used the contact form on the site to ask about walking with us and the mechanics of joining. On top of that number we are receiving an increasing number of requests from hotels, B&Bs and pubs to advertise their offerings to members via the website. In the future we might have a separate page allocated to these, and perhaps levy a small charge from each.

Howard Freeman

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Sadly, I have to report, that this past twelve months has seen the lowest membership activity that I have ever known with a membership rise of only 5 and we have had only 2 new members in the last 3 months. We started this reporting year (September 2013) with 449 confirmed members, with a breakdown of 165 individual, 154 joint, 73 individual concession, 38 individual joint and 20 life members.

We ended the year (August 2014) with 454 made up as 167 individual, 159 joint, 71 individual concession, and 38 joint concession but now with only 19 life members. I have gone through my list but could only find 19 life members at the beginning of the year so perhaps we haven't lost one.

Many years ago when I was "area" membership secretary, a post incidentally I have agreed to do from next January, all of the membership reports came by post in paper form with a floppy disc for the group secretaries that had upgraded to a computer system. Now, as I stated last year, everything comes by email. I get a full

listing at the beginning of each month and a weekly update of new and reinstated members on Thursday of every week, sent usually at about 4am! In April this system failed due to a technical issue at central office. I managed to get the figures I needed from another source but it took many weeks to resolve the issue from Ramblers membership services.

Ray Phipps

MAP LIBRARIAN & STATISTICS REPORT

The number of people out walking with our Group seems to increase every year. Our programme certainly seems to "tick the box"! Thursday morning numbers once again lead with 41 on one occasion but Tuesday morning numbers are creeping up fast.

Statistics- Average attendance on walks

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Sunday full day	12.4	15	14	15	14
Saturday full day	7.8	8	8	9	8
Tuesday Morning		13	12	16	23
Tuesday Evening	17	22	15	21	13
Thursday Morning	20.8	30	23	23	26
Thursday full day	8	8	8	9	9
Sunday shorter day					12
Coach walk	40	39	43	46	43

Maps and Mapping Technologies

Paper maps are always available to walk leaders whether their route is in Leicestershire or out of county to be used for Coach Rambles. Fewer leaders however are using these as they become more familiar with the electronic mapping available on the Internet.

Jenny Freeman

FOOTPATHS SECRETARY'S REPORT

This year has seen 10 reports to Leicestershire CC over damaged or non-existent footpath stiles or signage. Planning notifications from Blaby RDC have totalled approximately 24 - all developments bordering existing footpaths with one exception at Glenfield where a large Wilson Bowden development will involve changes to the footpath access.

Dave Bell

WALKS & PROGRAMME SECRETARY'S REPORT

Our diverse programme of walks continues to attract more and more ramblers and I think the Group can be justly proud of its achievement in producing and maintaining such a variety of rambles that cater for all abilities, from those who just want a short stroll to those who like the challenge of long arduous walks. We have introduced two new walks this year: shorter Sunday all-day walks to cater for those who find the established Sunday walks a bit too long, and Saturday morning walks to cater for those who would like to come on our midweek morning walks, but have other commitments during the week. Owing to lack of support, we have unfortunately, had to discontinue the Saturday afternoon walks.

As the Walks and Programme Secretary I also feel a certain responsibility for walk leaders as a whole, and keep an up-to-date database of all our leaders that is made available to all walk leaders and walk organisers so that they can easily contact each other. *The Walk Leaders' Handbook* continues to be available free of charge to all walk leaders. With the approval of the Committee, I have also initiated a periodic email newsletter *Backmarker* that goes out to all leaders and organisers, and contains news and information that I feel is useful to them. Up till October, there have been five issues.

I am also responsible for the production of the printed programme and newsletter, and for uploading the programme to the Ramblers

website. The printed programme is arranged so that you can easily find the walks that you are interested in; there is no point in having to scroll through all the walks if all you want to know about are the coach rambles, for example. However, there are some activities that could be of interest to everyone – including the AGM, holidays, social activities etc., so it is a good idea if members could look right through the programme when they receive it to pick up details of these other activities. There is no excuse for not knowing about them!

The Ramblers '*Find a Walk*' feature has been redesigned, and I have yet to discover (when I upload the next programme) whether it makes more or less work. I do know that our walks are harder to find on the new Ramblers website

Dave Siddons

REPORTS BY THE WALK ORGANISERS

SATURDAY MORNING WALKS

The new Saturday morning group have enjoyed a variety of walks, from the peace and tranquility of a canal and field walk from Foxton, to the beautiful Groby pool and Bradgate park in June, where we saw fallow deer with amazing antlers. Lovely views of pleasant open countryside from Tilton-on-the Hill on our walk in August, while in September seven of us walked through woodland and over the fields to Beacon Hill before returning to Woodhouse Eaves and a refreshing drink.

I would like to thank all the leaders and people who have supported this new group.

Diana Baxter

TUESDAY EVENING WALKS

This year the Tuesday night walk numbers were down once again, only averaging 13 walkers, possible due to wet weather on a few evenings, and competition from the Football World Cup on TV.

The walk from Newbold Verdon led by Neil Karat, was on an extremely wet day, and Neil organised an alternative route at the last minute on suitable paths, which was appreciated and enjoyed by the five of us who attended. This is why we need to say a big thank you to all the leaders, who give their time doing a great job sorting out the walks, whatever the weather.

On the plus side, it's always great to meet up with old and new friends socially, after a long nine month winter break, and this year we celebrated the engagement of Dave Bell and Shirley Cooke, with a new year wedding to follow, so here's wishing them all the best for the future.

The end of season meal was again held at the *The Black Boy* at Hungarton, with 21 attending a good night out.

Janet Reeves

TUESDAY MORNING WALKS

What a wonderful year of walking! I can only remember one occasion where we had to wear waterproof coats and trousers. We had rain, sleet, snow and hail on a walk from Whetstone, then the sun came out as we got to the lunch venue!

Numbers have increased again, an average of 23 a week, highest number being 32 and lowest 11. We have had quite a few people who walk with us once while they are in the area visiting family or friends.

A recent incident on a walk from Newton Burgoland caused me to hastily update and re-stock my First Aid Kit. A walker sustained a nasty scalp wound, caused by barbed wire. The wound bled a great deal and due to insufficient equipment the injured party walked some way pressing a wad of toilet paper over the wound to staunch the flow of blood! My kit now includes all that is needed to clean and dress such wounds. Perhaps we should all make it an annual or biannual job to review and update our First Aid Kits?

Our Christmas Lunch Walk was fantastic! We enjoyed a walk from Queniborough and tucked into a tasty meal at The Britannia. Several non-walkers also joined us for the meal. A happy time was had by all!

Tuesday morning walkers are very fortunate to have such great leaders. This year we have had the pleasure of welcoming 6 new walk leaders to our programme. Without the hard work and commitment of our leaders we would not have a gathering of happy Ramblers every Tuesday morning. A huge THANK YOU to all our leaders.

Anne Bates

THURSDAY MORNING & ALL-DAY RAMBLES

SHORT WALKS

Attendance on these walks increased again slightly - to about 26 - but there have been some surprising swings in the numbers from 13 to a new record high of 42 and several round the 38 mark. These peaks usually occur mainly at Bank Holiday times, when people who normally work fancy a walk and join us for a midweek stroll.

In December we always arrange a Christmas Festival Lunch following that morning's walk. This time we had a change of venue, trying a different walking area but not too far from Leicester. The number of members sitting down for lunch at Ullesthorpe Court increased this year to 45. Because of the large numbers walking that morning, two walking groups were formed each with a leader who took them on different routes around the area. All returned back about 1.00 pm. A convivial get-together with a drink was enjoyed before the meal with party hats, crackers, and mince pies.

Most of the members who participate in these rambles lead a walk. It is gratifying to know that so many members contribute to these

well-planned walks and it shows that many people are prepared to put something back into the pleasurable pastime they enjoy.

LONG WALKS

These rambles have not been going as long as the morning walks but have now built up a steady following with an attendance averaging about 9, most of whom are now regulars. 10 rambles were on the programme with three out of the county. The out of county walks were more successful than in the past as car sharing arrangements worked better, but still could be improved with better communication between participants.

On the next programme there will be more long walks and more in neighbouring counties now we have the leaders. These will not too far away due to travel costs.

John Jackson

LEISURELY STROLLS

We have continued to put on these leisurely strolls of 3 – 4 miles usually without stiles, though not many people are taking part. The walks run from the same venue and time as the regular short Thursday walks usually about twice a month. For people who, for whatever reason, cannot or don't want to, take part in the longer regular walk, these rambles not only provide the opportunity to do a short leisurely stroll with other fellow rambles, but also gives the opportunity to meet up with the main walk for a meal in the pub afterwards.

We'll continue to organise these walks, though I would like to see more people taking advantage of this opportunity.

Dave Siddons

SUNDAY WALKS

The past year's Sunday Walk programme again featured some favourite and some new venues. Numbers attending have fluctuated from as low as 5 to the mid-teens. We also occasionally get visitors from other areas who find our details on the web site.

It would be nice to attract new people to the long Sunday walks, so if you know of someone who may be interested please twist their arms and get them to come along.

Finally, my sincere thanks go out to my excellent band of Sunday leaders, without their dedicated work we wouldn't have such a varied Sunday Walks programme.

Brian Jeffs

SUNDAY SHORTER WALKS

The newly introduced Shorter Sunday Walks (approx 8 miles) have proved to be very popular, averaging about 12 people each time. We have been fortunate to enjoy lovely weather for most walks although we experienced some challenging conditions underfoot during the first walk.

Marilyn and I would like to thank the volunteers who kindly led some very successful walks and we are really appreciative of their support.

We look forward to many more Sunday Rambles in 2015.

Penny Bates

SATURDAY ALL-DAY RAMBLES & HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

This year we had a mini-holiday in Hawes and did four great full-day walks. Some former members of the Leicester Group now living in Yorkshire joined for a couple of walks. We also had an overnight in Wye Valley YH and did two excellent walks there in brilliant weather.

Jenny Mann

COACH RAMBLES

This has been another good year for our coach trips. Most outings have been well attended with a particularly higher than usual attendance level during the summer months, a period when the level can fall away. This has resulted in our finances being in a satisfactory state, enabling us to meet any contingency. It is to be hoped this will continue but this, of course, is dependent upon your continuing support.

We are attracting new walkers on to our trips and some of these are settling in and becoming regular attenders, this is a most encouraging trend.

Your coach committee has brought out the 2015 programme which we hope everyone will find to be an interesting and varied one. This programme will shortly be displayed on our website.

My thanks to all of our members who have led walks this year and also to those who have agreed to lead walks in 2015.

John Rhodes

**RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
LEICESTER & DISTRICT GROUP
TREASURER'S REPORT 2013/14**

With respect to the main Group Accounts, most of the increase in income over the previous year was due to donations from Ramblers' Holidays in respect of members' holidays with them (which continues in the current year) and a one-off donation from HF Holidays for providing a speaker at our last AGM (which is unlikely to be repeated). Most of the increase in expenditure over the previous year is due to a higher level of leaders' expense claims, to a level similar to that for the 2011/12 year. The result is a higher surplus of £87 compared to the £5 surplus in the previous year, leading to a net assets total of £1,118, which is satisfactory.

Members should note that if they take a holiday with Ramblers' Holidays and they inform them that they are members of Leicester Group, they will donate £10, £20 or £30 per person for holidays taken in the UK, Europe or Worldwide respectively to us.

In respect of the Group Coach Accounts, the deficit of £479 has increased over the deficit of £155 in the previous year, leading to a net assets total of £1,328 as at the year end, which is still at very satisfactory level. The Coach Secretary's report will advise further on the situation.

R F Collins

(Accounts overleaf)

LEICESTER AND DISTRICT GROUP OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2014****INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	2014 £	2013 £
Income		
Bank Interest	1	1
Funding from Area	1360	1320
Ramblers' Holidays Donations	70	-
Miscellaneous	<u>100</u>	<u>9</u>
Total Income	1531	1330
Expenditure		
Walks Programmes	240	230
Walks Related - Purchases of Maps	16	
- Leaders' Expenses	<u>640</u>	<u>531</u>
	656	531
Walks Leader Training	-	19
Newsletters/Publicity	210	199
Publication Costs	34	16
Meetings (including AGM)	250	185
Administration	54	120
Miscellaneous	<u>-</u>	<u>25</u>
Total Expenditure	1444	1325
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	87	5

BALANCE SHEET at 30 SEPTEMBER

	2014 £	2013 £
Assets		
Bank Account	1201	751
Stamps	<u>-</u>	<u>350</u>
Total Assets	1201	1101
Liabilities		
Uncleared Cheques	<u>83</u>	<u>70</u>
Total Liabilities	83	70
Net Assets	1118	1031
Represented by:		
Accumulated Fund b/fwd	1031	1026
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	<u>87</u>	<u>5</u>
Accumulated Fund c/fwd	1118	1031

Treasurer's Certificate

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the schedules and vouchers presented for audit formed a complete and accurate record of the Group's financial transactions for the year ended 30 September 2014.

R F Collins (Honorary Treasurer)
November 2014

Auditor's Certificate

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group independent examination guidelines, I consider the Leicester and District Group accounts to have been properly prepared and give a true and fair view of the Group's finances for the year ended 30 September 2014.

A G Lee (Honorary Auditor)
November 2014

**LEICESTER AND DISTRICT GROUP OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
COACH FUND**

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2014

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2014 £	2013 £
Income		
Coach Fares	5646	6059
Raffle surplus/(deficit)	<u>(13)</u>	<u>(5)</u>
Total Income	5633	6054
Expenditure		
Coach Hire	4960	5020
Drivers	240	260
Leaders' Expenses	868	812
Purchases of Maps	-	66
Miscellaneous	<u>44</u>	<u>51</u>
Total Expenditure	6112	6209
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(479)	(155)

BALANCE SHEET at 30 SEPTEMBER

	2014 £	2013 £
Assets		
Bank Account	1534	1567
Prepayments	<u>80</u>	<u>480</u>
Total Assets	1614	2047
Liabilities		
Fares received in advance	<u>286</u>	<u>240</u>
Total Liabilities	286	240
Net Assets	1328	1807
Represented by:		
Accumulated Fund b/fwd	1807	1962
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	<u>(479)</u>	<u>(155)</u>
Accumulated Fund c/fwd	1328	1807

Treasurer's Certificate

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November 2014

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