

LUTTERWORTH & HARBOROUGH DISTRICT RAMBLERS
AGM - CHAIR REPORT FOR October 2023-4

It is good to have a get together in order to think about how our Group has progressed over the past year as well have a **Soup & Pud lunch** together. When I look at the year gone by I have a strong memory of rain, flooded paths, and the search for interesting walks with solid paths in the Spring, a sunny summer marvelling at how quickly the land and footpaths dried and cracked with a bit of drought and then, a late summer & Autumn which is again very wet. However, in spite of the weather we have managed to continue our Friday and Sunday walks most weeks.

Several of our members attended the **Area AGM** at Glenfield where there was a lively programme including some questions about funding for 1st Aid Courses where it was agreed that Area Group should fund these events as they are now not offered by Ramblers centrally. Thus we had booked a 1st Aid Course in March which Area paid for the venue, Claybrooke Village Hall, and the course provider, Brian Jackson. There was a lot of interest this year and we could not accommodate all the people who e mailed me to book a place. Martin James with his Footpath officer hat on has helped us solve a local footpath difficulty in Ullesthorpe which we appreciated and that Georgina has continued supporting the website when necessary. We thank her for all her efforts on our behalf over the past years and we will miss her.

The **Write of Way** newsletter is also a way which helps members see that they are part of a larger group. We occasionally are able to make a contribution but not often enough so I hope in the coming year we can keep you updated on what is happening in South Leicestershire. Earlier in the year we went through a rocky patch with our What's App communication arrangements with our members which was resolved by us having a What's App Information group which deals with walk info & events & any related information. We hope all members are willing to have this. We also have a What's App Chat Group which is useful information and members sharing local news and ideas and this is working very well & it is a very useful tool to help us keep in touch.

Although Membership has reduced slightly this year, we had another of our **Lutterworth Town Hall Coffee/Cake Morning** to promote our Group and Ramblers in general. Over the past year our Publicity & Newsletter Committee Member has been working hard to keep our name in the local press and a number of potential new members attended this to find out more. A number of our members also attended the opening of the new **Bittesby Country Park Opening** with our banner and promotional material at the ready.

We have tried to have a varied walk programme with a Mince Pie walk in December, we did 5 summer evening walks with time afterwards at a pub for a meal/drink but our picnic walk had to be cancelled this year as Covid reared up again.

Although our band of Walk Leaders has been reducing over the past few years, a number of our new members have been keen to have a go with the **Navigation & Map** training we offer on Bradgate Park and this year we had a new aspect of training (Inspired by Hinckley Group) A **Group Recce Training Walk** which focussed on route finding and group management etc which was popular so we ran 3 for small groups. These were timely as they

happened at the time that the new Ramblers **Walk Leader Guidelines** came out so we could include these in the training. We hope to plan an event to share the new approach with all our members later in the Autumn. It is clear that Walk Leaders are central to all Ramblers groups and we welcome our new walk leaders and thank everyone who leads walks for their enthusiasm and the time given to providing walks which are interesting and well planned.

We continue to offer walking trips away. Some of our members joined with Kibworth Walking Group in the **Isle of Wight**, a short trip to the **Youlgrave & Bakewell** area, and another to the edges in Derbyshire. We hope that one of our members will take on a new responsibility on the Committee by developing our trips programme at our AGM.

We have **Friday morning walks** twice each month and these continue to be popular. The aim is to encourage first time walkers, or for those needing to build up their walking strength/skills so they are 3-5 miles and at a comfortable pace for those attending. We regularly have a pub stop at the finish for a drink or lunch which is now a regular feature of our social calendar. This year we were able to offer two walks with a **local historical theme** which were very popular.

Sunday walks are usually longer and sometimes further afield and offer a progression to new walkers when they are ready as well as a wider variety of walking areas.

It is with regret that I am standing down this year as Chair, a role I have filled for 8 years now. I have enjoyed my time very much and can only thank the Committee members over the years for being so patient and supportive. Especially being willing to read my very detailed Agendas so we can make swift progress at our meetings? Again very many thanks but I will continue on the Committee so they won't get rid of me quite yet.

Many thanks for your support. Anita Mothersole, Chair.