

Report by the Chairman Mike Goodrich

After the 2022 AGM there were several gaps in the committee, which could have caused us serious organisational problems. However, we managed to fill the vacancies fairly quickly, and I'm pleased to say that I believe we now have a committee staffed by a very capable and dedicated team. Not content with plodding along, the officers are all concentrating on improving their function. I thank them for their keen support. I must also express my thanks on behalf of all of us to several people who stood down from the committee last year but are still making a significant contribution.

Early in the year we decided to ask everyone to respond to a survey. Whilst we did not want to make any major changes to the way we operate, we felt that the results of the survey would give the revised committee a mandate. We also asked the membership to devise a mission statement. There were several very good submissions, and we decided that **'Footpaths, Fitness, and Friendship'** from Neil Karet, was the most suitable entry.

Results of The Survey.

- A. Most people were happy with the current programme, but the following additional walks were requested to be included in the programme:
 - 1. A Saturday morning six mile walk – which we ran before the pandemic. As no one came forward to organise these walks I took on this task myself and created a programme to run on alternate Saturdays. The numbers attending have ranged from 3 to 9. To continue we need an organiser and some more leaders. This is a walk that appeals to working people.
 - 2. Themed walks – We have had a few, including a bird watching walk at Cossington Meadows where over 40 species were observed.
 - 3. Longer faster walks. There are a small number of 'hard chargers' who want very energetic walks. For some strange reason one of the members requesting these walks had no intention of organising or leading a walk. We are all lucky that only a few members have this selfish attitude! Chris Bancroft has organised some tough walks including one of 27 miles.
- B. There was a request for a mid-week coach ramble. We ran one to Whinchcombe, which proved to be a great success. We will look for feedback on the coach rambles at the AGM
- C. There is interest in holidays organised by the Ramblers. Eileen Pott is suggesting Scarborough in the Spring. Eileen will issue details shortly. Any member wishing to go can make their own arrangements, and meet there for walks.
- D. There have been requests for more social evenings, specifically Quiz nights, Beer & Skittles, and Meals. We will discuss this at the AGM.
- E. Clothing. What is the best value gear available? Certainly not the overpriced items recommended in the Walk Magazine. Go Outdoors have a good range of equipment and give the ramblers a 10% discount when shown a membership card. Also, we suggest that members use the face book page to recommend good value gear, or warn others of items of poor quality.

- F. The Website. Both Sally and Mel have had to work very hard this year to help us adjust to the revised walks manager system. There have been problems, and head office are still trying to sort them out. Also, the new ramblers' app does not work properly. These problems do not give us a lot of confidence in the ability of the staff at HQ, and we have made our feelings known.

The success of our organisation depends upon many people each doing their bit. We can say that the walk organisers are the heart of the operation, but they depend upon the support of a good number of walk leaders each planning and leading a walk. Now we are in the digital age, we are fortunate that we can rely on our two skilled IT officers, Sally & Mel, to integrate the programme onto the website, and keep the website up to date.

We want to ensure that we respond to the wishes of the membership. We will use the AGM as a sounding board to enable key issues to be discussed.