

LUTTERWORTH & HARBOROUGH DISTRICT RAMBLERS

CHAIR REPORT FOR October 2023 - October 24.

Suddenly it is Autumn and AGM time again and a good moment to reflect on progress of our group over the past year.

Our AGM is a good opportunity for as many members as possible to get together and get their views & feedback as well as do the business. We start the meeting after a short local walk (from Claybrooke Magna village hall this time) & a Soup & Pudding lunch. At the AGM 2022 we agreed to change our name & the club's new name is now Lutterworth & Harborough District Ramblers in order to reflect and attract membership from across this wide area. Many thanks to the Area Group for their support doing this. Some of our members were able to take part in the Area Quiz last November hosted by us, (winning I might add) some also attended the Area AGM in January. I hope to be able to attend more of the Area meetings in the coming year as Lutterworth rep.

Over the past couple of years membership has been increasing to over 100 last year with just a slight reduction this year, currently 99. In order to continue this upward trend we have an annual Open Coffee/cake Morning at Lutterworth Town Hall which has helped with the promotion of our Group and Ramblers in general. This year we have had some publicity about this and our walk programme in the local press which helped us to have a busy morning on Market Day, 12th October. We also now have some up to date banners and a pop up poster to reflect our new name to publicise ourselves and post cards to hand out locally with our contact details.

We have tried to have a varied walk programme with a Mince Pie walk in December, we did 3 summer evening walks with time afterwards at a pub for a meal/drink and a picnic walk at Beacon Hill. We continue to offer Sunday slightly longer walks and alternate shorter Friday morning walks at a slower pace and nearer to the Lutterworth area. Consideration of cost has been a factor this year so we bear this in mind when planning Sunday walks and trips away.

We rely of course on our band of walk leaders who are the bedrock of our walking programme. We never fail to appreciate their goodwill & enthusiasm but the group is not a big one and we occasionally have to miss out a walk as leaders are not available. In order to overcome this we have had 2 navigation training days at Bradgate Park this year with the aim of increasing personal skills of our members and maybe nurturing new leaders for our walks. We also had a 1st Aid course again, it is always a useful life skill, and good back up on our walks if ever needed. Several Rutland & Coalville members joined us for this.

We hope to continue to offer this type of opportunity to our members next year as well as experienced walkers offering to be 'walking buddies' so we don't have to recce walks alone.

There is regular contact between members through 'What's App' and a regular member newsletter by e mail to share info on walks, social events, trips etc. We have an annual Skittles evening at a local pub & a Group BBQ in Claybrooke Village Hall in June, and this year a new venture, an early spring Bring & Share Lunch, which was great fun and lovely food.

In September we had a group of Lutterworth Ramblers & friends go to Jersey for a walking trip, where we explored the island mainly by bus and on foot from exciting coastal walks to the inland joys of farm land, green lanes & the ancient archaeology. A smaller group discovered what Guernsey had to offer earlier in the year so this may be another destination for the larger group in the future.

Our Targets for 2023-24

- Continue with the publicity & press coverage & develop our Members Newsletter.
- Offer a members a survey to complete so our walking, social & trips programme reflect members interests. Also continue to offer appropriate workshops and training.
- Set up a Sub Group to focus on the needs of Walk Leaders and how best to offer members help, experience and support in order to increase their skills. This could include the use of Ramblers workshops on line.
- Explore the possibilities of a more interactive way to plan the walk programme.
- Have a focus on What's App & Facebook to serve the needs of walkers on Friday & Sunday walks as well as a way to contact members in case of last minute changes to the programme. Also explore the on line possibilities of making contact with potential new members.
- A focus on short and longer walking trips away, maybe a Trips Sub Group.

Many thanks for your support. Hope to see you at the AGM on Sunday 29th October at Claybrooke Magna Village Hall. Short walk 10am, Bring & Share Soup & Pud lunch & AGM meeting around 1.30pm.

Anita Mothersole, Chair.