

Walk Leaders

Need to register as volunteers

All walk leaders need to register as volunteers now, in order to comply with insurance regulations. The committee are discussing the best way to implement this.

For all walks, walk leaders need to conduct a risk assessment and fill in the form for this and they need to keep an attendance register

Kath Chapman, the Membership Secretary, has to retain these documents. See her article on P3.

Walk Leaders and Group Behaviour

After a discussion at the AGM, it is clear that we need to change our behaviour as a group when out on roads. See the article on the inside column on P3.

Walk leaders are usually very good at reminding people to walk on the right and in single file, except on a sharp right - hand bend. It's just that we do not always obey!!

I thought I would look up the Highway Code and was surprised by Rule 5, as I am sure that many of you will be. I think this one also warrants more discussion by the committee, since Ramblers' national office have also published rule 5 on their site.

Ann Forgan

Chairman's Report

When you read my report to the area you will see that I finish by saying that I had not been able to join any walks over the last 12 months. That is not strictly true as I did do the whole of the Stoneythorpe walk back in March, I drove out to Combrook to say 'hello' and I joined the very last leg of Vib and Richard's walk to Southam Holt.

Although I haven't been walking very much, I have been in touch, particularly with the committee, who have done a sterling job keeping things going during difficult times. I would like to thank Nigel and Kath for hosting our committee meeting at their home, as well as the cajoling they do, to ensure we have been able to continue to walk every other Wednesday. Thanks also to those they cajole.

I would also like to thank Eric and the 15 Southam Ramblers who have become 'Friends of the Harry Green Way'. As some of you know, my eldest daughter, Alison, and a friend ran the HGW one Saturday in September, with other friends, including Eric and Ann's daughter in law, Sally, also doing sections. Thanks to the members who provided comfort stops along the way.

Without much publicity Summer Strollers went well, with turnouts ranging from 3 to 16 and only one having to be cancelled. A total of 25 different people went on the strolls.

One bit of publicity that we did have, as we came out of one of the lockdowns at the end of March, was that some of our members were interviewed on the Burton Dassett Hills by Giles Latcham, from the BBC, with the footage being aired on Midlands Today. Southam Ramblers had our few minutes of fame.

Finally, I am pleased that we have recruited new and active members this year and hope that I will at some point be able to meet you all.



Bill Pease, November 2021.

Editor's Note

**A big THANK YOU to Bill and the committee for all of their hard work.
We wish you a speedy recovery Bill.**

Thank you also to everyone who contributed to the newsletter.

It was nice to attend a real AGM this November, after the 'virtual' meeting of last year. Two of the issues discussed at the AGM were the way that the group walks on country lanes and walk leaders claiming expenses. These issues are picked up in various articles in the newsletter.

Ann Forgan

Webmaster's Report

The Southam Ramblers' website is continuously updated, with the programme of walks and pictures from our walks. Please log on to the site, using the email link sent to you, in order to view the pictures.

I am still trying to create a gallery of members' photos, as this is useful for new members, (and some older ones!) to put a name to a face. So, if you have not done it already, do not be shy, send me a photo!

All of the routes for the last three years' walks are published on the web site. If anyone needs help to download them, or would like a copy of a particular walk, just email me

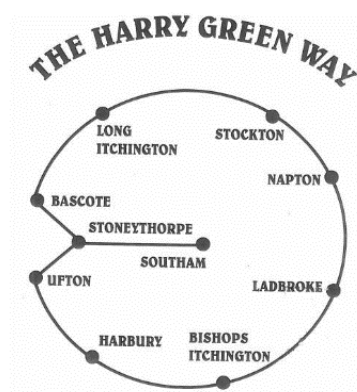
The Ramblers are in the process of updating the national web site and the National Walks Programme and this should make the site more user friendly, for members and Web Masters.

The 'Don't Lose Your Way' initiative is ongoing, and the Ramblers are looking for volunteers to help get paths, which were identified in the recent exercise, added to the definitive map for the county. Nearly 49,000 miles of paths could be lost unless we work together to save them.

Eric Forgan

eric@4gan.com

Friends of the Harry Green Way



Many thanks to the 15 Southam Ramblers who have helped to keep the HGW footpaths as clear as possible. This was no easy task, as the summer rains caused a huge amount of extra growth in the countryside. The updated brochure and some added publicity have resulted in reports of more people doing the walk, either the full distance or in parts. Our chairman's daughter and some friends even ran the whole 20 plus miles. Discussions with HS2 personnel resulted in a practical deviation of the path on Windmill Hill near Ladbroke.

Friends of the Harry Green Way will aim to walk a section of the route twice a year, identify any problems they encounter on the walk and carry out 'gardening', where practical, to keep the walk open for everyone. They also advise if any additional signs are required, or need replacing, if the walk is blocked or diverted, if it becomes impractical to follow the signed walk, or if any stiles or gates have become unsafe.

The friends of the Harry Green Way who have volunteered to "adopt" a walk are:

Southam to Bascote

Richard and Vib Clark

Bascote to Long Itchington

Peter and Jay Webster

Long Itchington to Stockton

Jeff Round

Stockton to Napton Folly

Don and Reine-Marie Bates

Napton Folly to Welsh Road

John Gymer

Welsh Road to Ladbroke

Bob and Margaret McAulley

Ladbroke to Bishops Itchington

Gordon and Dawn Smith

Bishops Itchington to Harbury

Bob Middlemas

Harbury to Ufton

John Maughan

Ufton to Southam

Ann and Eric Forgan



We always need more volunteers to help! Will anyone who walks any section of the Harry Green Way please advise Eric at southamramblers@gmail.com with any problems relating to the condition of the stiles, signage, or routing of the path.

Notes from the Treasurer's Report to the Southam Ramblers AGM

The Main Account currently has £394.94 in the bank and £1.23 in cash, less an as yet uncashed cheque of £19.60. Expenditure for the year was £81.91. **The Treasurer and the committee want to encourage walk leaders to claim their expenses for pre-walking, as few do.** Based on 2019 activities, a proposed funding allocation of £315 for the year has been requested from the region.

The elected committee members for 2021 to 2022 are

Chairman

Bill Pease

Secretary

Margaret McAulley

Treasurer

Ann Hayes

Footpath Secretary

John Maughan

Membership Secretary

Kath Chapman

Wednesday Walks

Nigel Chapman

Committee

Janet Green

Summer Strollers

Bill Pease

Non-Committee Roles

Publicity

Di Weaver

Newsletter

Ann Forgan

Webmaster

Eric Forgan



Walking on roads

Some concerns were raised at the AGM about our behaviour as a group on lanes and roads and that walk leaders should be obeyed when, because there is no path, they ask us to walk on the road on the right, in single file and facing the oncoming traffic. The only exception should be where a sharp right hand bend limits visibility and it is preferable to go round on the left, having crossed to the left well before the bend. I thought that I would look up and share the relevant sections of the Highway Code. Rule 5 needs further discussion! Meanwhile, we should obey 1-3.

Rule 1 Pavements should be used if provided.

Where possible, avoid being next to the kerb with your back to the traffic. If you have to step into the road, look both ways.

Rule 2 If there is no pavement, keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic.

You should take extra care and be prepared to walk in single file, especially on narrow roads or in poor light and keep close to the side of the road.

It may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you. Cross back after the bend.

Rule 3 Help other road users to see you. Wear or carry something light-coloured, bright, or fluorescent in poor daylight conditions. When it is dark, use reflective materials which can be seen by drivers using headlights up to three times as far away as non-reflective materials.

Rule 5 Organised walks. Large groups of people walking together should use a pavement if available; if one is not, they should keep to the left. Look-outs should be positioned at the front and back of the group, and they should wear fluorescent clothes in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark.

www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-pedestrians



The Wednesday Walks Programme

In the past few months, we have been able to revert to our normal pattern of being one group with one leader, rather than having to split into two groups. This makes life much easier as we don't have to find two leaders every time!

Our programme is usually kept up to date, as there are just about enough members willing to act as walk leaders. For example, we currently have walks booked through to the end of February, (apart from Dec 29th, which is understandable). Most walks are around 4 to 5 miles in length, though some of the group would like to walk further, whilst others would prefer 3 to 4 miles. Perhaps the programme should reflect these differences.

As well as locally based walks, we have walks starting up to 20 miles or so from Southam, for example, there have been walks near Clifford Chambers, Chipping Warden and Broughton, near Banbury. Both near and far walks attract numbers around 30. The weather has been interesting at times, with one walk in particular being held in torrential rain, attracting just a few hardy walkers!

Upcoming Walks

1 st Dec	Richard and Vib	Rowington	5	richvib@hotmail.co.uk
15 th Dec	Bob and Margaret McAulley	Sherry Walk Grandborough	5	cymac50@hotmail.com
12 th Jan	Kath Chapman and Pam Mac Connell	Stockton		pamz101@hotmail.com
26 th Jan	Di Weaver	Flecknoe		
9 th Feb	Ann and Eric Forgan			eric@4gan.com
23 rd Feb	John Maughan	tba		

Walks Programme Co-Ordinator Nigel Chapman nigel.chapman@hotmail.co.uk



Membership Report

The Ramblers' web portal continues to provide information and has been a good reference during the pandemic. As of October, we have 82 members in total - 10 of whom are new members. All new members have been sent a welcome email and asked if they wanted to be included on the list for walks etc. Some did reply - others did not and some are actively walking.

The Ramblers still require us to keep a register of walkers, for 3 weeks. This is now an informal tick sheet. We are also required to complete a risk assessment for each walk, in order to comply with insurance requirements. These need to be kept for 3 years and I have a file for them! Everyone should have one-copy - it's quite generic, with regard to hand sanitiser etc. So please, take a look if you can. Walk leaders please let me know if you can't print a copy. Generally, walks have been well attended. There are currently 50 names on the list with an attendance of 25-30 on most walks!



Kath Chapman, Membership Secretary

The Slow Ways Project -Update

Slow Ways is a website launched in 2021 which enables users to plot a route between two settlements in the United Kingdom. The routes are not intended to be the fastest route possible, but rather encourage walkers to rediscover unused footpaths and engage in more leisurely walks.

There are currently 7,000 Slow Ways and the challenge now is to walk, review and verify them all - checking over 100,000km of Slow Ways routes across the country. There are 6 Routes starting in Southam. Volunteers are asked to walk and review the routes and confirm their suitability to be in the network, or to suggest improvements.

For further information visit, <https://beta.slowways.org/> Further Information about the project at: <https://ravenellison.com/portfolio/slow-ways/> or speak to me.

Eric Forgan

Dates for the Diary

Southam Ramblers AGM

Thursday, 10th November 2022

Social Event

At the AGM it was decided that we should plan an evening meal in a local pub, to be held in March. Ann Forgan and Margaret McAulley will be in touch with a proposed time and place in January.

Warwickshire Area Quarterly Meetings 2021 Dates

Saturday 4 December 2021 at the Friends Meeting House in Warwick

Warwickshire Area AGM

Saturday 5 February 2022 in Coventry

Please contact Bill or Margaret if you wish to attend any of these meetings.

Footpath Secretary's Report

Development Plans Southam Ramblers were invited to read the 75-page Southam Development Plan and the Long Itchington to Bascote Neighbourhood Plan.

Footpath Diversions Dog Lane Fishery applied to build a manager's house across footpath SM42c. We objected. SM 81-191-193 have been diverted to suit the Gaydon to Lighthorne housing development. Dallas Burton has submitted an application for a camping site, for touring vans, yurts, and tents. SM 19 HGW footpath is not affected. Bridge Nursery, on Tomlow Road, want to expand across the public footpath leading to Napton Reservoir. In anticipation of permission being granted, they have put up a sign inviting the public to ignore the footpath and follow the hedge line around the field. The locals are concerned about this and ask that we ignore the sign.

Update on Long Itchington Parish Plans to establish a footpath on Cemex land

Cemex have recently installed large gates blocking off the entrance to the old railway line. There is still access near to the old bridge. We are still being encouraged to use this attractive route to Stockton Reservoir, returning by the canal. It is believed that if Cemex wanted to close the route, they would have put up notices. However, this land does belong to them, so we could be seen as trespassing. I have route maps.

Update on HS2 HS2 has given notice of closure at Radbourne – footpaths SM96/1 – SM 96/2 8SM 96AL. HS2 says a safe diversion is not possible here, so closure starts on 29 November, for 3 years. Eric met with the HS2 representative.

Solar Farms some large areas of solar farming have been requested - Chesterton Fields 230 acres alongside the M40, Eastfields, near Deppers Bridge and Harbury 150 acres, Middle Road, multi field application, near Harbury and Ufton Hill.

Michael Bird, Footpath and Countryside Secretary for Warwickshire Area Ramblers has written to object to development on this scale on county preservation grounds and the threat to the Feldon Landscape and views of it. He hopes for our support. I have copies of the maps showing the extent of this.

John Maughan, Footpath Secretary

Southam Ramblers received the first news bulletin about the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The Commonplace survey they carried out had over 2,000 comments and over 7,000 contributions. The key issues and suggestions are summarised here.

Respondents 53% of all respondents identified as a leisure cyclist/ walker, 39% were residents living along the route they were commenting on. 53% usually travel on foot in and around the area, 47% usually cycle. 45% usually drive a car

Types of location 26% of comments were about the road, 21% of comments were about pavements, 18% of comments were about existing cycle routes

The top 5 problems or issues were No dedicated cycling route (622), Cycle route needs improving (475), Traffic volume or behaviour (473), Insufficient space for all users (431), Poor surface (343)

The top 5 proposed improvements for walking and cycling were Provide a shared footway/ cycleway (575), Create more space for cycling (542), Create more space for pedestrians (416), Provide a safe crossing point (362), Improve on-road facilities for cycling (312)

Other feedback They received lots of detailed comments about specific locations and some great ideas for future improvements. Some issues were identified which may be 'quick fixes' but they need some more details (this includes potholes, overgrown vegetation and obstructions on rights of way). If you are able to provide more information about these issues, including photographs, then please report these directly. '[Voice of Warwickshire](#)' is a new residents' panel.

Next steps They are drafting the Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and using the feedback to develop cycle network plans and identify priorities for walking and cycling projects. They have also been discussing plans with local stakeholder groups, councillors and other partners and hope to consult on a draft LCWIP early in 2022. In the meantime, there are ongoing programmes of walking and cycling improvements. For more information, please email tpu@warwickshire.gov.uk