



Southam and District Group News and Views

Issue 95

November 2023

Treasurer's Report

In Financial Year 2022-23, we received a Group Allowance from Warwickshire Area/CO amounting to £300. We have no additional income. In total, we spent £94.10 more than we have received. This is mainly because we have bought new stickers for the Harry Green Way. We have a credit balance of £140.46, which is carried forward to Financial year 2023-24.

In Financial Year 2021-22, we had a deficit of £142.08, so there has been a big reduction in our credit balance since the pandemic. Our Group Allowance for Financial Year 2023-24 has been increased to £450, so with maintained prudence, I anticipate our financial position should improve this year.

Members should continue to claim for necessary expenses, for example, for recceing walks, as the funds are there for this type of purpose.

Jeff Round

Editor's Note

Our year on year funds have been affected recently by a policy from central office to reduce amounts held in local groups' accounts. This is because money was sometimes lying dormant for years in small amounts, so now more should be held centrally and we can submit applications for additional funds.

Chairman's Report

At the last Area meeting I attended on behalf of the Southam Ramblers group, it was highlighted that a special Extraordinary General Meeting is to take place on 25th November. It is 10 years since the Ramblers defined their strategic plan as a group and as a charity. This year in April, at the General AGM an EGM was agreed, to take place on 25th November, for the new strategy to be approved. There is a draft proposal, just published. I am happy to share the full document with anyone who is interested. Here are some sound bites from it:

- The Board of Trustees is pleased to share the draft strategic plan, which sets out the refreshed ambitions of the Ramblers as a charity over the next decade. We are using the word 'refreshed', because the strategic plan does not represent an entirely new direction of travel; rather it seeks to continue the excellent work we already do collectively as staff, members, volunteers and with partners. It places a stronger emphasis on those aspects of our work that create the most positive impact for those people and communities who face the least access and most barriers to walking outdoors in nature. We hope that you will join us in endorsing the refreshed strategic plan at the Extraordinary General Meeting in Manchester on Saturday 25 November.

- The coming years will be an exciting time for the Ramblers as together we look forward to playing our part in creating a healthier and more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

- Our ambition, based on our vision of a future where anyone can enjoy walking outdoors and our purpose to campaign for access to the outdoors and create walking opportunities for all, is that over the next ten years, we'll strive to achieve these four outcomes:

- 1 Improved provision, quality and information on access, paths, and rights of way.
- 2 Improved confidence and knowledge to walk outdoors
- 3 Improved participation of communities that have the least access and most barriers to the outdoors
- 4 Improved support for The Ramblers' charitable cause

Hopefully this gives you some insight into the changes taking place at Central office, which will assist us in future. If you want to go to the EGM in Manchester on November 25, then I can provide further information.

I would like to thank all the people who have put time and effort into the day to day working of the Southam Ramblers over the last year, particularly members of the committee, who work hard in their specialized areas, as well as walk leaders, who plan and pre-walk routes for the rest of us to enjoy.

Gordon Smith

Editor's note the photographs, which we add to our newsletter and website, are popular with our walkers. If anyone has any safety or legal reasons for not having photographs used in this way, they should inform a committee member in confidence, or tell the person taking group photographs, or avoid being photographed. Ann Forgan

Webmaster's Report Walks Manager

After many years of devising, planning and discussion, the new Walks Manager was launched on the Ramblers website on the 31st of May. It is now the sole tool for creating and managing Ramblers Group walks and we can use it to manage our walks online and to share these with walkers on the Ramblers website. Walks are then automatically posted and updated onto the new Southam Ramblers website. Our members can now see a listing of future walks, with a brief description of the walk and details of the location and instructions on how to get to the start point.

Website

Our website has been up and running now for more than twelve months and is being increasingly used by our members. In the last 90 days there have been 289 visits to the Walks Programme page
52 visits to the Previous Walks
22 visits to the Summer Strollers page – not the season yet!
18 visits to the Harry Green Way page
15 visits to the Plot Your Own Walk page

The Gallery

The Gallery continues to develop and record photographs of our walks. Many thanks for the input from our members.

Eric Forgan

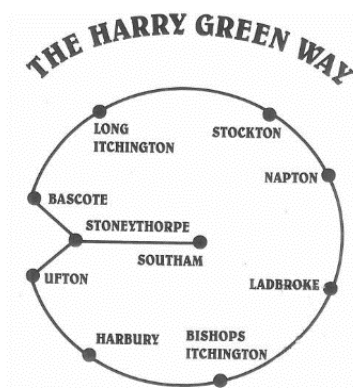
Dates for Diaries

Southam Ramblers AGM, provisional date and place is Thursday 7 November 2024 at 8.00 at the Nelson Club, Stockton.

Area Quarterly Meetings

Area AGM: 10:02:24 (to be organised by Coventry Group)
Area AGM 2025 at Southam.
Area Quarterly Mtg: 02:03:24
Area Quarterly Mtg: 01:06:24

Friends of the Harry Green Way



The Harry Green Way is a long-distance path around Southam, devised by Harry Green, a former chairman of Southam Ramblers, in 1988. Southam Ramblers members ensure that it is cleared and waymarked.

The De Walt hedge trimmer and strimmer have been put to good use on the HGW and also by the group working to clear paths around Southam organised by Councillor Michael Rae

HS2 work at Ladbroke Hill Farm has resulted in a further change in the route, but fortunately this is well signposted and does not add significantly to the walk. We have purchased adhesive signs for the HGW. This is necessary, as more of the wooden stiles and gates are replaced with metal and will let us continue to sign the route clearly.

We received very positive feedback for the walk from a family who did the walk with their 10 year old boys, as an introduction to long distance walks.

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

Southam to Bascote
Bascote to Long Itchington
Long Itchington to Stockton
Stockton to Napton Folly
Napton Folly to Welsh Road
Welsh Road to Ladbroke
Ladbroke to Bishops Itchington
Bishops Itchington to Harbury
Harbury to Ufton
Ufton to Southam

Richard and Vib Clark
Peter and Jay Webster
Jeff Round
Don and Reine-Marie Bates
John Gymer
Bob and Margaret McAulley
Gordon and Dawn Smith
Bob Middlemas
John Maughan
Ann and Eric Forgan



Will anyone who walks any section of the Harry Green Way please advise Eric Forgan at southamramblers@gmail.com with any problems relating to the condition of the stiles, signage, or routing of the path.

It was suggested at the AGM that we try to walk the HGW as a group, over two or three days, during the summer. Watch this space!

Eric Forgan

The elected committee members for 2022 to 2023 are:

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Footpath Secretary
Membership Secretary
Wednesday Walks
Summer Strollers
Newsletter
Webmaster
Publicity
Committee Member

Gordon Smith
Richard Clarke
Jeff Round
John Maughan
Kath Chapman
Nigel Chapman
Richard Clarke
Ann Forgan
Eric Forgan
Richard Clarke, Di Weaver (non-committee)
Janet Green



Publicity

Di Weaver has contributed several accounts of our walks to the Southam District Advertiser and there seems to be a growing awareness of our website. This year's walks have also been advertised on Facebook in Southam News and Views. While only one new member has joined us through Facebook, the postings about the Summer Strollers are regularly read and have attracted a small group of regulars.

For any suggestions that members may have about how we can improve our publicity please contact me.

Richard Clarke

Village Newsletters Publicity

I have emailed the contacts for village newsletters with prepared statements about Southam Ramblers and the Summer Strollers and asked them to include them in their newsletters.

So far, I have received two positive reply, but it is early days.

Any information about local village contacts, to update my research, will be gratefully received.

Ann Forgan



The Wednesday Walks Programme

See also Thursday Strollers on the next page

Date	Leader	Location	Distance in miles	Tel No	Email
6 Dec	Di Weaver	Long Itchington	5	01788 890383	
20 Dec	Bob and Margaret McAulley	Sherry Walk		01788 817136	cymac50@hotmail.com
3 Jan	Jeff Round	To be arranged		07799 771778	jiround77@gmail.com
17 Jan	Gordon Smith	To be arranged			gordonsmith2311@gmail.com
31 Jan	Bob and Margaret McAulley	To be arranged		0178 8817136	cymac50@hotmail.com

Wednesday walks usually meet at an agreed start point at 10.00 a.m., with lifts available from Wood Street Car Park at 9.30 a.m.

As usual we have found just about enough walks leaders to keep the programme going. We rarely need to fill gaps urgently, though sometimes there are only a few walks booked on the programme. With a little encouragement, people always fill in the gaps! At present, we have a programme complete until January.

There are a large number of local walks on the website, which makes it easier for volunteers to choose a destination. There are some fairly local ones, which have not been used for some time. It might be an idea to put them on the programme, though it is interesting to find new locations. 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.

We have occasionally done much longer walks e.g., in the past from Southam to Leamington, or in the Cotswolds for the day. Our thanks go to Jeff Round for organising the Cotswold walk this year.

The Summer Strollers attracted varying numbers of people for the evening walks. Our thanks to Richard Clarke for organizing. Nigel Chapman



For booking a walk slot in the programme

nigelchapman@hotmail.co.uk

Membership Report

There are currently 80 members, as of the end of October 2023. Membership is fairly constant. Four memberships are currently lapsed, though at least one may renew, two members have never walked with us and one member has left the group. A further four members have resigned but have never walked with us. There are 7 new members since 8 August 2023. The membership portal continues to give up-to-date access to information.

We have 2 new walkers, who are not yet on the membership list. After a few walks, people who attend walks are encouraged to join online. All new members have been sent a welcome e-mail with details of the meeting place and website. We have had a few Ramblers' members from other areas, who have joined one of our walks after looking at the website.



Kath Chapman

Some Issues raised at the AGM.

Photographs

It was agreed that a note about photographs should be added to the Welcome Letter which each new member receives. If people have a legal or safety reason for not wanting their photograph in the newsletter or on the website, they should tell a committee member in confidence, or avoid being photographed.

First Aid Training

Central Office has developed statements about group walks and group leadership best practice. This includes on-line group leadership courses. As First Aid has been mentioned, Gordon raised this as an issue at the Area Meeting. It has been confirmed that First Aid boxes should be carried on walks. The one day First Aider course is sufficient training. These courses are offered by Ramblers or St John Ambulance.

Lifts

It was suggested that if you share lifts, it is OK to offer £1 to the driver.

Leaflets

It was also suggested that we post details of our walks in doctors' surgeries, to attract the newly retired.

Website Training

Eric has offered to organise a Training Course, in the New Year, for anyone wishing to make better use of our website.

There will be a presentation to watch, but to get the most out of it, bring a lap-top and join in.

Information on date and place in the new year.

Margaret McAulley

Margaret has retired after being the group's secretary for 5 years. Gordon presented her with a card and gift on behalf of the committee.

Thank you, Margaret, for all of your hard work in your role and for supporting others in theirs.

Summer Strollers Report

The group organised seven Summer Strollers walks of between 3 and 6 miles this year. Attendances ranged from 13 to 5, with an average attendance of 8. While these numbers fall short of those attained on the regular daytime walks, the strolls have proved popular with mostly younger ramblers, who are unable to join us during the working day.

As in several previous years, the walk to the Blue Lias, with a quick stop for a drink, was the best-supported. We have also contributed to keeping open one footpath that would otherwise become hopelessly overgrown on the way to the Blue Lias, and two others where farmers' crops regularly encroach on the paths leading to and from Southam Holt.

Thank you to everyone who has joined in the strolls and, in particular, to everyone who has led them.

I shall conclude with an invitation: this year we had seven Summer Strolls with six leaders. There is therefore a vacancy and, as you know, we are always looking for new leaders for both the Wednesday walks and the strolls. If anyone is thinking about leading walks for the first time, one of the strolls might be a good way to get started. There is the advantage that the routes are already well known, there is no need to think about parking, and I will be very happy to offer any help needed, either with the pre-walk, the risk assessment, or anything else that's needed.

Anyone who is interested, please contact me on a walk, or at any time before I start putting together the Strolls programme at the end of February.

All Strolls start and finish at Wood Street Car Park at 7, or 6.30 (Blue Lias).

Richard Clarke

Provisional Summer Strollers Programme 2024

16 May	Southam Holt
30 May	Ufton Woods
13 June	Bascote
27 June	Stockton Blue Lias 6.30 start
11 July	Lower Fields Farm
25 July	New Zealand Farm Stockton
8 August	Stoneythorpe Estate

Slow Ways Update

Slow Ways is a network of walking routes, developed over the last few years, which connect all of Britain's towns, cities, and national parks.

6,693 Routes were created and the task of verifying each route is well under way across the country, with 1,305 already fully verified.

Southam has 6 Routes, leading to Leamington, Rugby, Daventry, Byfield, Kineton and Whitnash. None of these have been fully verified yet.

If you could help in walking some of these routes, please log into <https://beta.slowways.org/Settlement/Southam> or speak to Eric Forgan