



## Report for the Eastleigh Ramblers AGM to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Since the proposal to amend the Eastleigh Group Constitution was agreed at last year's AGM, most of you will be reading the officers' reports in advance of the 2017 AGM. Those who still receive postal notices will also have received these. That being the case I hope you will all have had time to read them. Should you want to have any questions answered by the officers, you will have that opportunity later in the meeting.

The time saved by doing this last year, afforded us time to enjoy Gerald Ponting's talk on The New Forest. We all agreed that this was very interesting, the photos of the Forest were stunning and a much better way to spend the afternoon.

This year we are adopting the same format; the meeting will be followed by an interval for refreshments. Then, we have invited Colin van Geffen to give an audio-visual presentation on 'The Airfields of The New Forest' which will last about an hour. We aim to complete the afternoon's business and be clear of the hall by 16.30.

I hope that you will all try to attend the meeting, as the Group needs your support.

You will see from the Treasurer's report that the finances are looking very healthy, thanks in part to an additional contribution from Area following our plea earlier in the year. We were struggling to pay the postage and printing costs of the quarterly programmes. Additionally, we wanted to get involved in more footpath improvement works. Now that most of you can access the walk programme on line and with e-mail notices to those who request up to date information regarding mid-week walks, dinner club dates and so forth, we have managed to save on the cost of printing and postage.

Surplus money will now be spent on footpath improvements as and when these arise. For example, the working party installed an Aston Gate to replace an awkward stile at Fair Oak in August. Luckily the County paid for the gate. Additional costs came from the Group fund. Further projects are in the pipeline, and will be carried out as and when the necessary permissions are granted.

Volunteers for these projects are always welcome, thanks to those of you who have already given up your time and offered your expertise.

After several years serving on the Committee, I regret to say that Chris Bond has decided to stand down. I am thanking her on your behalf for all the time she has so generously given. Chris, please continue to stay an active member of the group.

Since our AGM in 2016, (is it really a year ago), we enjoyed the Christmas lunch at The Dog and Crook, Brambridge. The pre-lunch walk, led by Dave and myself was along the Itchen Navigation and through Otterbourne Park Woods. There was a festive atmosphere in the pub added to by the fancy hat competition. Some of the brave ones entered, the more reserved amongst you got to choose the best hat. Carol Bradbeer's hat won the vote. Thanks Carol for always entering into the spirit of things. We all shared the prize box of sweets. If anybody wants to come up with an entertaining idea for this year's event (on 9<sup>th</sup> December) please let me or Chris Bond know.

The early part of 2017 began with plans for a barge trip on the Basingstoke Canal and arrangements for walking the Two Moors Way in Devon.

The Barge trip, planned for May, was cancelled due to collapsed banks. Once the work was completed the 'event' finally took place in September. It rained most of the day, so there was 'water, water everywhere'. However, it was a fun idea and I am sure those 17 people who came enjoyed the day.

Pauline Francis had proposed the Group undertake the Devon walk, which was arranged in two parts. Unfortunately, she was struggling with a hip condition and couldn't make the first half. Eight walkers took part. By September when the second stage was walked, she was able to join in. Thanks, Pauline, for putting forward your idea. Any more suggestions for similar walks away are always welcome.

Next year we already have two options. Martin and Lee Armstrong are proposing a May Bank Holiday weekend away in Swanage. In September 2018 several members have already committed to joining Angela Holidays coach based trip to The Dordogne. Walks can be undertaken there independently of the company, but the excursions look so good many are tempted to do some of them too.

The walks programme is now accessible on line, and this allows leaders more flexibility to put walks on at shorter notice. Make sure you keep an eye on the Group website for later additions. As always, I

want to encourage all of you to give us at least one walk in the year. Same old cry, I know. Please, if you haven't already put on a walk at some time, now it's your turn. Thanks to those of you 'old faithfuls' who continue to give so much enjoyment in the variety of walks on the programme.

Shorter walks mid-week are attracting as many walkers as the weekend ones. We have aimed to avoid clashing with Bishop Waltham's Wednesday walks. It was agreed by the Committee to suggest a walk on either a Tuesday or Thursday. So far, they have been on Thursdays. If this isn't convenient to some of you, Richard Kenchington would like to hear your proposals for Tuesdays.

The Footpath Secretary has been working overtime ensuring that Rights of Way in the Borough are protected from erosion due to the need for more housing and all the proposed future developments contained in the Local Plan. Thank you, Richard. I know there is so much to say and all your reports throughout the year have been so comprehensive. Richard has been issuing a weekly letter detailing the developments relating to footpaths along with the information for the mid-week walk. Anybody who wishes to receive this weekly update can ask to be added to the e-mailing list.

My thanks to all the members of the committee, and to all of you who give up your time to support Eastleigh Ramblers.

***Roni Sansome, Chair***

#### MEMBERSHIP

1/10/2016 204 members

30/9/2017 190 members

As you can see we have a loss of 14 over the year although we had 18 new members over the spring, but with an ageing group and ill health older members are not renewing, also there is more movement between groups now, we can only do our best with a good range of walks.

***Cyril Nias, Membership Secretary***

#### FOOTPATH REPORT

Every week there is some important news on the Footpath front. To keep members up to date I have developed the Group's web site to include all the relevant information together with links to important letters and documents. Those of you who want the detail please go to <http://www.eastleighbrowsers.org.uk/> I will be happy to take questions at the AGM or by email.

Each weekend I am circulating by email details of the forthcoming mid-week walk which also gets added to Walks Finder at short notice. This email gives me the chance to add information of the latest footpath and other Group news. If you wish to receive this email ask to be included by sending an email to [eastleighbrowser@aol.com](mailto:eastleighbrowser@aol.com)

***Richard Kenchington, Footpath Secretary***

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

I'm pleased to say that Eastleigh Ramblers continue to be solvent. We can see the benefits of encouraging members to receive information via the web site as photocopying and postage costs have reduced from £369 last year to £153 this year. Thanks are due to Cyril Nias for taking on the copying and despatch of the programme which has also reduced our costs in this area. Thanks also to those Members who took a holiday through Ramblers holidays this year- by nominating Eastleigh Group we received £120, up from £40 the previous year

As far as work on improving footpaths is concerned, we anticipated a continued spending on Footpath improvements and with this in mind applied to HQ for a grant of £1000 to cover our footpath work and other expenses of running the group. No grants were awarded to any group for footpath work by HQ but to recognise our ambitions, Hants area made up our grant to the requested £1000. However, in the event there was a big drop in our footpath expenditure (2016 £665; 2017 £54) as much of the material (gates, mesh etc) we expected to purchase was in fact supplied free of charge by HCC. We expect the large surplus this has produced this year to be spent in the coming year.

Next year, I expect our grant from RA to reduce further as this is based on membership numbers.

***Bob Battle, Treasurer***

## RAMBLES SECRETARY REPORT 2017

This year we have completed 822.30 miles and led 94 walks. These figures include the Two Moors Way of 122.36 miles and 12 walks. Local walks 699.94 miles and led 82. Making the average mileage 8.3

We have started to lead shorter walks on a Thursday which normally include a tea room stop. These walks are put on the website a week in advance. It will be decided at the AGM if these walks will continue.

Once again, many thanks go to the Leaders who put in so much effort. I would also like to thank our new Leaders Martin and Lee who have contributed a lot of interesting walks.

We are in desperate need of new Walk Leaders, I am finding it very difficult to fill the programme but we have managed a walk most weekends. Thank you to Leaders for coming up trumps at the last minute. Please check the website for late entries.

After serving on the Committee for about 12 years, and 9 of those as Rambles Secretary, I have decided it's time to step down. I would like to thank all of you for your support over the years.

*Chris Bond, Rambles Secretary*