

The Northamptonshire Shamblers
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on 9 August 2018 at 8.00pm at Thrapston Church Hall

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ruth Gifford-Page, Pat Goff, Michelle Lowe and Peter Riches.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 10 August 2017, which are on the website were proposed by Jean Mole and seconded by Sue Pearson.

3. Chair's Report

A copy of the report will be found at the end of these minutes. In summary, we have averaged 15 on our Sunday walks but we still need new members and any suggestions for attracting them would be gratefully received. We have enjoyed a variety of walks this year and a reminder that the walk leader could pass their notes to Ruth Emmerson to help with the walk reports and also any photographs taken on the day would be useful. It is also very useful to use the ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact details in mobile phones. Membership renewal is in January each year.

4. Treasurer's Report

4.1 Jean Mole confirmed that at the end of 2017 we had a bank balance of £437.25. During the year we had 31 paid up members and 7 guest walkers. The Away Day to Norfolk made a profit of £100. Expenditure included £137.50 for Insurance, Web Hosting of £57 and AGM costs of £33, after which we had a profit of £128.35 for the year.

4.2 We raised £100 in the charity box for the Northamptonshire Carers, but this was doubled by an anonymous donator to the Northamptonshire Carers to £200.

4.3 This year our members currently stand at 26 members (one new members joined us this evening), which is a drop of 20% from last year. Income from this is £228 and we had a small loss of £20 from our Away Day to Bewdley. Web Hosting costs this year were for two years so no more payments due until 2020. With our other expenses we expect a projected loss of £100 at the end of 2018.

4.4 Despite this, we still have £460 in the bank so do not need to increase our annual membership, which will remain at £8 per person with £2 for guest walkers.

5. Election of Committee

Finbarr Finn has volunteered to be Chair. This was proposed by Jean Mole and seconded by Mike Loft.

Ruth Emmerson will continue as Secretary.

Jean Mole will continue as Treasurer.

Sue Milner and Stuart Emmerson have volunteered to stand on the Committee for the next year, so many thanks to them.

Jean Mole proposed a vote of thanks to Eileen Plowe and Ruth Gifford-Page for their help in serving on the Committee.

6. Planning for 2019

- 6.1 Members were asked if they were willing to lead any walks next year, with or without the help of the Committee. Several people put their names forward, which was recorded by Jean. The list will be finalised and added to the website at a later date.
- 6.2 There was discussion on suggested venues for our Away Day in 2019, and these included Framlingham or Lavenham in Suffolk, Sherringham in Norfolk or Carsington Water in Derbyshire. Finbarr had provided maps of walks in these areas for people to view. The Committee will ask members for their preference by e-mail at a later date.
- 6.3 It was also suggested that we have a Weekend Away in September or October, after the summer holidays and before winter. The Committee will look into this possibility and advise members accordingly to get feedback.

7. Election of Examiner

Jean Mole mentioned that Terry Needham had previously checked the Shamblers records, as an external Auditor was not a legal requirement. However, Terry is unable to do this so another volunteer is required. Jean will pursue this with members at a later date as nobody offered during the meeting.

8. Results of Member Survey

Jean Mole reported that she had received completed reports from 11 members and briefly summarised the findings. A summary will be circulated to members later. The Committee will take these results into consideration when planning our future walks.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 Suggestions for our charity box for 2019 were made and it was agreed to collect for 'Away With Pain'. A charity box will be obtained by Phil and Josie George.
- 9.2 Jean and Ruth thanked Mike Loft and Chrissie Chapman for their contributions in the past and wished them well in their new life in France and gave them a card signed by members. They will be missed but promised to keep in touch in the future.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm – our thanks for all who had managed the evening's events.

Shamblers Walking Group AGM - 9 August 2018 - Chair's Report

Welcome and thank you for coming this evening. Apologies to long-standing members if some of this report seems familiar from previous years but some items do need to be repeated not least for newer members. Since the last AGM we are pleased to report that there continues to be a steady trickle of new members and an average attendance at the Sunday walks of 15 but, as our Treasurer Jean will report, the numbers are down once more and we still need to attract new members make up for the natural wastage in any group. To this end we have revamped our website with the help of Peter Riches who continues to give his time generously in website matters. If you haven't seen the new look website do pay it a visit and you can also "Find us on Facebook".

May I remind members that the annual subscription is due on or before the first walk in January, together with the freshly filled in application form which confirms your contact details for the coming year. Even if handing in the subscription on the January walk by hand, the form and payment need to be in an envelope so that they can be easily collected by Jean, our Treasurer, or indeed any committee member should Jean be unable to attend.

As for other forms of advertising, it is our impression that new members have more often found out about us through word of mouth and also through Mr. Google and the website. Hence the decision the re-vamp. Our information is still with local libraries in the form of posters in their events/groups folders and/or leaflets. A general notice of the upcoming third Sunday walk still appears, space permitting, in the regular events section of the Nene Valley news where our feature article attracted many new members a few years ago. We also advertise the individual walks in the bi-monthly Village Connect magazine, which covers an area as far afield as Great Oxendon to the East and Stoke Doyle, near Oundle, to the west. I have also been sending our events to BBC Northampton to be mentioned on one of their regular "What's on" slots, but there are so many groups competing for attention there is no guarantee that any one event will make it to the airwaves and you would have to regularly listen to BBC Northampton to be able to check up on this. Any other ideas as to how to attract members will be gratefully received.

As always, we have enjoyed a wide variety of walks and lunch venues. Many thanks to those who have either led or back marked walks this year. For ideas for walks please have a look at on the table over there at our library of books and maps, looked after by Finbarr who brings them to every walk. The form for offering to lead walks has been sent out to members and additional copies are available over there. We would ask you to seriously consider leading a walk. If we can put a name against each date, this gets us off to a good start. Details of a proposed walk can follow. It is really not a difficult task to lead a walk. The committee are happy to suggest walks and on the website under Documents you will also find our Walk Leaders Guide to planning walks for leaders and back markers and a list of the books, maps etc looked after by Finbarr.

As leaders have made notes for the route and introduction at the start of the walk, these will form the basis of a brief write up of the walk, preferably by the walk leader or failing that the notes can be passed on to our Secretary, Ruth, for someone else to do. This would share the load as no one person can be expected to attend all of the walks. We have to

thank Stuart Emerson who has been doing almost all the walk write-ups for the website and, without notes, this involves a deal of research. As for photographs for the write up all are welcome to send theirs in. It all goes to emphasise our walk for enjoyment ethos and hopefully attract like-minded walkers.

For various reasons, including an operation in April to fuse the joint on my big toe, I have not been able to do many walks but I have enjoyed reading the write-ups on Facebook and on our Website. Ruth, our Secretary, has provided me with her impressions of walks since the last AGM.

The group have enjoyed some lovely walks, ranging from Braunston in the west of the county, Kimbolton to the east, Sudborough to the north and Olney to the south. Each have been varied and interesting, although some came with certain challenges. The Shamblers have walked through fields of bulls, cows, sheep, horses and even alpacas - all without mishap. Unfortunately, due to extreme weather conditions we had to cancel our pre-Christmas evening walk in Summer Leys in December, but we hope this year the elements will be kind to us and we will try again. In January, the walk from Harlestone was attended by 9 hardy walkers who were prepared to venture forth in the snow. Although the snow made it quite difficult, it was a very pretty walk but they were pleased to get back to the Garden Centre to warm up and have lunch. The Sunday walk last month was interesting in that our group had to pass along a lane where a Rave had been taking place since the night before. There was no less than 70 cars parked along the lane, which was a challenge in itself, but everyone was friendly and welcoming, although the booming music was rather loud at times. However, they passed unscathed and carried on their walk in 28 degree heat. Again, the Vane Arms in Sudborough was a welcome sight on their return. Our Away Day to Bewdley was a great success especially as the weather was lovely that day and not too hot. Having just about recovered sufficiently from my toe operation, I was able to go along for the day out if not the walk. The often shady walk along the River Severn between the river and the Wyre Forest led the walkers to the pub at Arley who provided a lovely lunch. Returning to Bewdley on the steam train was quite an adventure but was over too quickly.

We trust that by now you are making a habit of carrying your personal emergency contacts, preferably in the form of an up-to-date 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) contact on your mobile phone. Although we keep a list of members' emergency contact numbers, we cannot rely on there being a member of the committee on hand, especially on the summer Thursday evening walks. The 'ICE' acronym is widely recognised by paramedics etc who, even if you are unconscious, will look for it in your phone. Some phones have a password but I am assured that there is usually a facility to allow access to specified numbers. There is also the not so well-known international 112 service programmed into mobile phones where you can even bypass the security on the injured person's phone should they be unable to use it themselves. See the document page on our website on how to register for this.

On behalf of the group I would like to thank the committee for their work this year. We are also indebted to Michelle Lowe and her IT contact who helped Peter Riches with protracted stalemate with the web hosts regarding the updating of the site. And of course we have to thank Peter Riches who continues to act as our Web Person, his preferred title.

As you will probably know, after several years on the committee, I am standing down. Fortunately this year, unlike last year when I agreed to stay on for another year, we have someone willing to take over as Chairman. I have enjoyed our Sunday walks and lunches each month for more than ten years since shortly after the founding of the Shamblers walking group. I trust the Shamblers will continue to enjoy their sociable Sunday outings exploring our county's beautiful countryside and beyond for many years to come.

Eileen Plowe
Chair