

CHORLEY RAMBLERS' AGM
Tuesday 26th November 2019
Chorley Cricket Club, Sandringham Road, Chorley, PR7 1LG

Mike Wisdom, Chairman, introduced himself and opened the formal part of the meeting.

There were 33 people in attendance at the AGM and 2 apologies were received.

1/ The notice calling the AGM and describing the matters to be considered today was mailed out to all our members in October 2019. Mike asked that someone move that the reading of this notice now be dispensed with.

Proposer - Eileen Entwisle **Second** – Linda Southworth

2/ Approval of the minutes of our last AGM on Tuesday, 27th November 2018. A copy of the minutes can be obtained from our secretary and is also available on our website. Mike asked that someone move that the reading of the minutes held on 27th November 2017 be dispensed with and that they be approved and adopted as presented.

Proposer – Dennis Wilson **Second** – Bob Keyburn

3/ Chairman's Report.

At last year's AGM, Mike said he was pleased to announce that Chorley Ramblers had had a very successful year with a substantial increase in membership, reversing the national trend which is still declining. Although this year we have also had a healthy increase in membership, Mike advised that the committee who run the Chorley Ramblers has declined and therefore we are in a critical state.

During 2019 three committee members and a volunteer, for various reasons resigned and gratefully, three have joined, but we still have a skeleton board. This is not just unique to us, but common to all clubs relying on volunteers. This situation is now exasperated by the increase in retirement age for men and women from 65 & 60 to 67. Women have always formed a large part of our committee and membership.

Mike said that there were matters of concern in that our successful group who enjoy the social activity of walking and the countryside, could fold simply because there are not sufficient people to run the Chorley Ramblers; that if we increase our membership, then we also increase the work as putting together walks takes time and effort; and that the skill sets needed have also changed now requiring a knowledge of Excel and other programmes which are used at area level.

4/ Treasurer's Report Dennis Wilson talked through this year's Accounts. In addition, he advised that:

- a budget is completed every year.
- there was no charge for the Chorley Flower Show.
- all subscription monies are paid direct to the Ramblers Head Office (**Not Chorley Ramblers**) Chorley Ramblers then receive two smaller amounts over the current year based on our submitted budget.
- RWH Travel pay a donation to the Chorley Ramblers based on our holidays booked with them provided Chorley Ramblers are mentioned at the time of booking.

- The self-funded coach rambles have been very popular this year enabling us to keep the cost to each walker at the same level as last year.
- The Terry Lewis Legacy money now stands at £7,308.80 so allowing further kissing gates to be installed once permission is obtained from the landowner.

Dennis placed before the members the Audited Financial statement up to the Fiscal period 30th September 2019 together with the Auditors report. He asked that someone move that the reading of the Financial statement and auditors report be dispensed with.

Proposer – Barbara Joyce **Second**er – Phil Atherton

5/ Election of Officers The next item of business was the appointment of the committee. Mike asked Marian Owen to take the chair for the election of our Chairperson. She asked if there were any nominations for Chairperson. As there were no nominations, she declared Mike Wisdom be re-elected as our Chairman.

The following are committee members in their respective positions elected at the previous AGM or co-opted since and have agreed to stand for re-election to the committee in their various capacities.

Chairman	Mike Wisdom
Secretary	Sue Poynter <i>Joined 2019</i>
Treasurer	Dennis Wilson
Programme Coordinator	Lorraine Eaves <i>Joined 2019</i>
Footpath Coordinator	Marian Owen
Membership Secretary	Eileen Entwisle
Website and Social Media	Mike Wisdom
Publicity and Marketing	Derek Statters <i>Joined 2019</i>

Mike then asked if we had any nominations for committee members. As there were none he asked for a proposer and seconder that the existing committee members be elected en-bloc.

Proposer – Barbara Joyce **Second**er – Linda Southworth

Mike then advised that we need to nominate someone to be our representative at the Area committee meetings and AGM. Derek Statters offered to represent Chorley Ramblers.

Proposer - Marian Owen **Second**er – Lynn Hosegood

6/ Election of Auditor. The next matter was the appointment of the Chorley Ramblers Auditor. Mike thanked John Warner for auditing our accounts and for agreeing to continue to audit our accounts for the next fiscal period. Mike asked someone move that John Warner be the Auditor until the next AGM.

Proposer – Barbara Joyce **Second**er – Pat Hough

Mike advised that the formal part of the meeting had now been concluded and asked that someone move to conclude this part of the meeting.

Proposer – Linda Southworth **Second**er – Dennis Wilson

7/ Other Officers Reports

Eileen Entwisle - Membership Secretary Eileen reported that Chorley Ramblers membership continues to grow! During the year 1st October 2018 to 30th September 2019, Chorley Group had 62 new members join compared to 54 members joining during the previous twelve months, making a total of 332 active members.

Chorley Group is one of the nine groups in Mid Lancashire Area. The other groups are Fylde, Garstang, Preston, South Ribble, West Lancs, Hike on Lancashire, Lancashire Weekend Walkers and Others. At the year end Area had 1,165 paid up members. 28.5% of these members belong to Chorley Group.

Eileen advised she continues to use the chorleyramblers@gmail.com account to send out the Out and About newsletter to members who have requested it by email.

She said a big thank you goes to the volunteer team who help fill the envelopes and distribute them every 4 months. They fill 280 envelopes and hand deliver approximately 80 of these. Without their help it would be a much larger task for one or two of us and more expense for the group.

Lorraine Eaves - Walk Programme Coordinator Lorraine reported that the current walk programme; 1 November to 29 February 2020 was filled with some difficulty, providing a total of 52 walks; three per week. In particular, Sunday walk offers were thin on the ground. It appears that 3 walks per week may becoming unsustainable for Chorley Ramblers. As a result, we cannot guarantee there will always be three walks every week. Members will be advised of any walk changes via email, text or on our website.

Another proposal was to open the walk offer calendar to Walk Leaders inviting them to submit walk offers throughout the year; not just for the next 4-month programme window if they wish. This may prove useful to some walk leaders.

Lorraine advised that we have found that the current programme generator tool was producing duplication of details and in order to minimise duplication and therefore need for extensive editing and long-winded programme entries, walk leaders will be asked to keep the walk description (including Title, Description and car parking location) to a maximum of 30 words. A new template supporting this format will be created for Walk Leaders to use when submitting their walk offers.

The Walk Programme will continue to be printed and the Chorley Walk programme will be posted on the Chorley Ramblers website in addition to appearing on the Ramblers website.

Lorraine concluded by saying that the variety and quality of walks never ceased to amaze her and she thanked the generous people who give up their time and effort.

Mike Wisdom – Website and Social Media Mike reported that our Facebook page continues to grow and that we now have over 500 members to our site. He said that social media is a great way of displaying our activities to our members and thousands of the general public. Mike thanked all the walk leaders for their posts.

Marian Owen - Footpaths Coordinator Marian reported that:

Public Rights of Way (PROW) Checked - 716 (79%) out of 906 PROWs in the Borough of Chorley have been checked by the Chorley Ramblers Footpath checking team in the year from November 2018 to October 2019. This is a great achievement and compares to 67% for 2018 and 66% for 2017. 17 of Chorley's 23 Parishes have had all the accessible PROWs checked.

Footpath Obstructions Reported -

215 obstructions reported to Lancashire County Council (LCC) in 2108 - 2019. This compares to 85 in 2017-8.

Type of Obstruction	Issues Reported by Chorley Ramblers
Obstructions	32
Surface Issue	7
Overgrowth	23
Signpost from the road	40
Bridges	10
Crops/Ploughed	4
Ditch Crossing	2
Waymarking	18
Stiles	69
Gates	1
Steps	0
Other	8
Boardwalks	1
TOTAL	215

Chorley Ramblers have reported 215 issues this year. **Our most reported issue is Stiles with 69 reports**, many of which pose hazards for tripping and falling. **The second most reported issue is Signpost from the road with 40 reports.**

As a Footpath Checking Team we have worked hard to resolve some problems by carrying pocket secateurs etc. and trimming overgrowth which is obstructing the path and obscuring Signposts and Waymarkers. We have also placed some waymarkers, an action which should be done with proper consideration of the Land Owner's views. Taking direct action to improve our Public Rights of Way has reduced the number of obstruction reports that we have had to make.

Brindle Parish Council

Brindle Parish Council has a desire to improve the state of the PROWs in their parish. They asked Chorley Ramblers to undertake a 100% check of PROWs in Brindle and report our findings to them as well as reporting obstructions to LCC PROW Department. This task was undertaken by a team of Footpath Checkers and issues reported to the Parish Council. Brindle Parish has now asked for advice on prioritising these issues.

System for Reporting Footpath Obstructions

In November 2018, Chorley Ramblers, in consultation with LCC PROW developed and implemented a new and simpler system of reporting obstructions. Footpath Checkers have reported obstructions directly to LCC Public Rights of Way Department by email. Footpath Checkers ensure that the Footpath

Coordinator receives copies of this email correspondence for co-ordination and reporting purposes. LCC PROW Department were to acknowledge receipt of obstruction reports and notify the sender when obstructions have been cleared, however staffing shortages and staff absence have resulted in a poor response from LCC PROW Department.

Footpath Checkers

Marian thanked the Footpath Checkers for all their hard work. Our work in clipping back vegetation and waymarking really does make a difference in keeping Chorley paths clear of obstruction and well signed. In addition, the fact that we report issues to Lancashire County Council formally records that these PROWs are used, checked and that there are issues which require resolving.

Footpath Checker Vacancies

Marian thanked Sue & Bob Keyburn and Malcolm & Denny Robinson for volunteering to be Footpath Checkers. There are vacancies in Bretherton, Charnock Richard, Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull, Cuerden, Mawdesley, Withnell

Footpath Checking Walks

We included a series of Footpath Checking walks in the 2019 Walks Programme in the parishes of Anglezarke, Mawdesley, Ulnes Walton and Hoghton; this has helped give members an understanding of what is involved and the importance of Footpath Checking which helps to maintain our network of footpaths across Chorley. Other local walks in Chorley often include a valuable element of Footpath Checking. Thank you to the leaders and walk participants for supporting this initiative.

Progress Report on Miles without Stiles

In 2019 we have successfully launched two Miles without Stiles routes in:

- (1) Clayton-le-Woods/Cuerden Valley - 4 Stiles were converted to Kissing Gates
- (2) Duxbury/ Heath Charnock - 2 Stiles were converted to Kissing Gates

Each gate installed has or will have a plaque with the following words, "This Kissing Gate has been sponsored by Chorley Ramblers using the Terry Lewis Legacy"

In January 2019 we had a successful, but very cold, celebratory walk around the Clayton-le-Woods/Cuerden Valley Miles without Stiles Circular walk and publicity was made available to the local press.

On Sunday 9 February 2020 we will formally launch the Duxbury / Heath Charnock Miles without Stiles Circular with a celebratory walk. We will affix a plaque to each gate and arrange publicity to be forwarded to the media.

By using the expertise and volunteer labour of the Cuerden Valley team in the first project and the Yarrow Valley team in the second we have been able to keep the costs low and have managed to restrict our expenditure to £1691.20 plus the cost of plaques for the Duxbury / Heath Charnock Kissing Gates.

Future Miles without Stiles Plans We are looking to create other stile free routes to access the Chorley Circular and Yarrow Valley Park. One route we are researching for consideration as a Miles without Stiles route would link the Euxton Skate Park to the Chorley Circular at Common Bank. This would require converting 5 stiles to Kissing Gates. All these stiles are on PROW Euxton 22. We are currently in discussions with

Euxton Parish Council and hope that they might be able to help us progress this initiative.

We still have funds available in the Terry Lewis Legacy pot, so please let us know of other potential Miles without Stiles routes that you think we should investigate.

Planning Applications, Closures and Diversions and Modification Orders

Chorley Ramblers no longer has an officer with responsibility for either (a) Planning Applications or (b) Closures and Diversions and Modification Orders. Marian Owen continues to attempt to keep an oversight of these issues. She is the named correspondent for all Footpath issues, including Planning Applications, Diversions and Extinguishments and Modification Orders. However, we are not confident that all issues are reported to us.

2018-2019 Planning Applications

Location and Subject of Planning Application & Chorley Ramblers Response (if applicable)	Chorley Ramblers Response	Reference Number
Whittle-le-Woods 45 & 46 Land bounded by Town Lane (to the North) and Lucas Lane (to the West) Town Lane Whittle-le-Woods. Application for Approval of Reserved Matters for 53 dwellings (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale) following the grant of Outline Planning Permission 13/01055/OUTMAJ (Outline Application (specifying the access) for residential development comprising up to 83 dwellings with vehicular access to be taken from Royton Drive.	PROW Whittle-le-Woods will be affected by this development. Chorley Ramblers have submitted that the rural ambience of PROW 46 and the appreciation of the heritage of Lucas Lane hamlet and Croston Farm House should be preserved.	19/00830/REM

2018-2019 Diversions Report

Location and Subject of Order	Chorley Ramblers Response	Outcome	Reference Number
Chorley PROWs 4 & 19 The public rights of way over the land situate at the Rivington View housing estate, located between the Leeds Liverpool Canal and the M61 motorway. This Diversion Order regularises changes that have already been made. PROWs will be diverted onto footpaths 2 metres in width.	Chorley Parish Footpath Checker, Brian Allman has checked this out and is satisfied with it.	The Public Path Diversion Order was confirmed on 17 May 2019	

9/ David Kelly - Area Secretary David gave a very interesting slideshow presentation highlighting the positive improvements which have been made in Lancashire with regards to stiles and signage. Unfortunately, due to cost cuts and in some cases, vandalism, he also showed that there are still a lot of improvements which need to be made regarding stiles and signage, as well as in other areas such as abandoned play areas. David reported that the Ranger Service manages 90 sites with only one Manager and one Ranger.

David gave an update on the Coastal Path and sadly advised that the date for its completion continued to change and had now gone from the original 18 months to approximately four years.

8/ Any other business and questions. There was no other business.