



## Torbay Rambling Club

### AGM

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Churston Golf Club

There were 58 members present and apologies had been received from 14 members. The meeting was chaired by Club Chairman, Rod Wilson.

#### 1. Welcome

Rod welcomed members and gave a special welcome to new members attending their first AGM.

#### 2. Minutes of 2023 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 had been previously circulated to members. They were approved by the meeting. There were no matters arising.

#### 3. Chairman's Report

Rod said that the past year had been a successful one with a full programme of walks and social events. He thanked all those involved in organising and running these. Membership had remained constant, enabling the Club to keep the yearly subscription down to £7 – great value for all that was on offer.

November 2025 would see the completion of our 75th year of existence and there were many events planned to celebrate the anniversary year.

The past year had been overshadowed by issues involving the Club's former webmaster. It had been an extremely difficult year for Committee members and several had been considering their positions on the committee. Had they decided to resign it would have left the Club in a very serious position. Fortunately, this did not happen despite the fact that the situation had dragged on for several months.

The previous webmaster having withdrawn his services, the Committee had, at their last meeting co-opted David Lamb onto the Committee. We were grateful that he was still prepared to take on the operation of the website, even though the personal handover and a measure of ongoing support which he had requested were not forthcoming. David would be standing for election at this meeting to the office of Webmaster.

The situation Rod had described had led to changes to Club policies and the Committee was also proposing amendments to the Constitution which would give the Club a clear procedure for

dealing with members who did not abide by the code of conduct contained in the Safe Rambling Code.

Despite this problem, Rod reiterated that he believed that the last twelve months had been a successful time in our Club's history and we could all look forward to the coming year in good heart and with enthusiasm.

#### **4. Financial Report**

Chris Brennan, Club Treasurer, had prepared detailed and summary financial statements which had been circulated to members and are attached to these minutes. Chris gave the following report for the year 1st November 2023 – 31st October 2024 (23/24).

At first glance our bank balance looks extremely healthy at £8213.24, however, as you can see from the 'SUMMARY Finances' £5063.25 of this is money members have paid for this year's Christmas Party or next year's France Trip.

That leaves Club money of £3150.09. It is a decent amount to have, to keep us financially secure in the medium term. Last year we finished the year with uncommitted money of £2701.82, so we are £450 better off. Reasons for this include spending less than expected on reccies and Walk Leader training, taking in more 24/25 membership subscriptions and a contribution of £164.25 from the Events surplus. We have also paid out the £150 deposit for our 75th anniversary cream tea which isn't until 25/26.

Given our finances, we could consider increasing our annual donations to Dartmoor National Park and the South West Coast Path Association and donate to the Dartmoor Rescue Group.

At last year's AGM we heard of the passing of a previous much-loved Chair, Derek Hexter. We have heard from his solicitors that he has left a £1000 legacy to the Club, which, once probate is complete, the Committee plans to spend on 75th Anniversary social celebrations.

I am very pleased with our Lloyds Bank account, which comes with free software to manage our income and expenditure which I am using this coming year and should be very helpful for anyone who is Treasurer. However, the bank has written to say that on 14th January 2025 our account will change from a Treasurer's Business Account (which has no charges) to a Community Account which will charge £4.25 a month, 100 electronic payments will be free every month, but after that 10p each, and cheques paid in will be 42p. This year that would have amounted to total fees of £60.20. [(12 x £4.25) = £51+ £2.90 (October had 129 payments) + £6.30 (15 cheques @42p)]

And finally, a request please to pay up promptly, for events or membership. What can be a dribble of payments over months, with lots of chasing, is a right pain in the gaiters! And, if you are paying for someone else, please either make that clear on the reference or let me know by email or phone.

## 5. Social Secretaries' Report

Anne-Marie gave the following report:

Another busy and very enjoyable year. It has to be remembered that we wouldn't have such a vibrant social calendar without the help of you, the members pitching in. This report includes special thanks for those of you who have helped to stage each event of make them so successful.

In addition, we need to remember the hard work that goes on behind the scenes and give a special thank you to Maureen, our hard-working secretary, and to Chris Brennan, our club treasurer who does a stellar job taking payments and making bookings on our behalf in order for each event to take place. Over the past year, we have held the following events:

### Oh So Easy walks

These monthly walks are increasing in popularity. Many thanks to Helen, Maureen, Paul S, Sylvia and Kevin for leading.

### Friday 23rd February: Barn Dance

40 people Thanks to Ann for taking the numbers, Paul for opening up and supervising the catering and Teresa for selling the raffle tickets.

### Sunday 24th March

Easter meal at the Riviera Hotel. Thank you to Hazel

### Friday 13th April: Skittles and Fish and Chip Supper at St Mary's Bowling Club in Brixham

20 people. Thank you to Annette for organising the event and to Chris H for sorting out the Fish and Chip suppers.

### Friday 19th April: Ten Pin Bowling at Hollywood Bowl in Torquay

12 people.

### Friday 3rd May: Music and Dance Evening

This was a fun evening. We danced a couple of Scottish reels with Anne-Marie calling out the steps. Then Paul ably led us through some Line Dances. During the break, Howard entertained us with a range of great songs accompanied with his guitar. Who knew that we had such talent among us! A big thanks to Paul and Howard.

### Saturday 1st June: Boat excursion Plymouth to Calstock

39 of us enjoyed this truly a magical day out helped of course by the fabulous weather. The scenery was amazing and the company great. On arrival at Calstock, they had even put the bunting out for us!! It has to be said that the food in Calstock was superb from homemade pasties to delicious ice cream and cakes.

### 24th to 28th June: Penzance holiday

A big thanks to everyone who helped to make this such a successful event.

- Rod and Maggie for organising the evening meal. An Italian buffet to be remembered! Highly recommend.
- To the walk leaders who went to great lengths to ensure that the walks were reccied and safe including; Rod and Maggie, Maureen, Chris P, Adam, Gail, Kevin and Anne-Marie.

It has to be remembered that an awful lot of work goes on behind the scenes prior to the holiday, much of it unseen. For instance, a great deal of research was carried out (particularly by Chris P) to find a second venue for a meal. Unfortunately, despite research, nothing was suitable could be found.

#### Friday 5th July Crazy Golf

Unfortunately, we were rained off. However, a very pleasant afternoon was spent in Wetherspoons instead.

#### Saturday 7th September: Coach trip to Fowey

Another lovely day out. We filled a 53-seater coach. We were lucky with the weather which held out until we returned to Fowey at the end of our walks. A special thank you to Teresa and Kevin for leading alternative walks. With their help, we were able to offer a choice of three walks of varying lengths and difficulties.

#### Friday 1st November: Crazy Golf

This was a very pleasant afternoon. 16 of us enjoyed a round of golf followed by meals and drinks in Wetherspoons.

We also, as Rod has said, have plenty of events planned for the coming year:

#### 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 Christmas Party

Chris H has done a fabulous job arranging this. 44 of us are really looking forward to the party which was such a huge success last year. Some of us have booked to stay at the hotel. Last year, sharing breakfast and memories from the night before was especially enjoyable.

#### Monday 12th to Friday 16th May 2025 Trip to Brittany

This trip is now booked. 20 of us are looking forward to this fabulous break in Brittany. A huge thank you to Chris B for spending a great deal of time making the booking with Brittany Ferries.

#### Saturday 21st June 2025 Canoe trip on the Dart

Thank you to Denise for organising this. Details will be sent out nearer the time.

#### Saturday 28th June 2025 75th anniversary celebration party at St George's church hall

Thank you in advance to Howard who will be singing and playing for us. I'd like to make this into a traditional event that will bring back memories from your youth so we will be playing games from the past such as Pass the Parcel. We are looking for anybody who can help with lawn games and party games such as croquet, tin can alley, pin the tail on the donkey, skittles, hoopla etc. Maureen has already managed to find us some quoits. If anyone is handy with scraps of wood and could make us some games, let me know as I have some ideas. Afternoon tea will be buffet style. Booking details will be sent out nearer the time.

#### Thursday 10th July 2025 Boat trip on the Dart

Leaving from Steamer Quay, Totnes. £19.50pp. Priority to members. Thank you to Gail for arranging this super event. Please note that this will not be on the paddle steamer as originally hoped but should still be a great day out. Details to follow.

#### Monday 6th to Friday 10th October 2025 St Austell Holiday

27 of us have already booked accommodation so if you are interested in this holiday don't leave it too late as numbers will be capped very soon. Kevin and I have already been down and found some short walks. Thank you to Maureen, Teresa, Hazel, Christian and Chris H for offering to lead walks. Chris H has kindly offered to take some walk leaders down to recce the longer walks. Ideally, we need two walk leaders for each walk in case somebody is unable to lead at the last minute so if you have booked to go and would be happy to lead a walk, please let us know and we can include you in recce events.

As we have found out in the past, and as Kevin and I found out recently on our reconnaissance of the area, a walk on paper is often very different on the ground so more than one walk often needs to be tried and tested before it can be added to the programme. This is a considerable commitment for anyone who organises a club holiday. As such, moving forward for future holidays, the club may need to make use of organisations who specialise in group walking holidays (as South Devon Ramblers use). The downside of this is that it makes the holiday more expensive but on the positive side it opens up areas of the country that we would otherwise be unable to visit.

#### Saturday 15th November 2025 75th Anniversary Cream Tea at the Livermead House Hotel

Thank you to Teresa, Hazel and Chris H for organising this. Details to follow

So, to summarise, the events wouldn't happen without your support, you the members who throw yourselves in with enthusiasm to anything offered. If you are able to help, put on other events, have ideas for events or are happy to lead on a club walk, please let us know. Also don't forget that we need some help preparing games for our garden party.

Anne-Marie went on to ask members to indicate by a show of hands whether they would be interested in the following events

- A board games evening/afternoon
- A technology training event
- A talk by Dartmoor Rescue
- A talk by The Seal Project
- Music and dance evening

There was sufficient interest shown in all the events for them to be added to the programme. The board games event would be held at a pub on a Sunday afternoon, so members would have the opportunity of enjoying Sunday lunch together before playing the games.

## **6. Safety Officer's Report**

Chris Price said that he had interfaced for 3 months with the Club's insurance brokers following an accident on a walk which led to concerns that a member might sue 2 officers of the Club.

He went on to criticise the Club's risk management procedures including the risk assessment form and the pre-walk talks delivered by walk leaders, which included reference to the Club's Safe Rambling Code. He also criticised the Walks Leaders Training delivered by Peter Hancock, Wednesday Walks Co-ordinator, as being inadequate. Peter rejected the criticism and was backed up by Club members. Chris Price was asked what he had achieved during his year as Safety Officer and said that he was proud of the 'yellow card' (the In Case of Emergency Card he had revised in October 2023) but noted that the responsibility for this had been removed from the Safety Officer's job description which had recently been circulated to members.

Chris had made reference to the instruction in the Safe Rambling Code to 'walk behind the leader'. Hazel Langford said that some walking groups hold that anyone walking ahead of the leader is deemed to have left the walk. It was confirmed that this is also the case with Torbay Rambling Club. Mandy Lindsay pointed out that some walk leaders prefer to lead from the middle of the walk, rather than the front. Maureen Chivers, Club Secretary, said that this issue had been raised at a Committee meeting and the Committee had confirmed that ALL Club walks should be conducted in accordance with the Club's Safe Rambling Code, with the leader at the front. Chris Hawes voiced his support for this decision. Barry Mathews said that some walks were becoming very spread out. Rod Wilson said that walk leaders should pause to enable slower walkers to catch up. Jenny Saxelby spoke of the perils of shared-use paths and mentioned a collision she had witnessed (not on a Club walk) between a cyclist and a walker who was chatting at the time. Maureen said that this was an issue covered in our risk assessment form and walk leaders would mention it in their pre-walk talks where the walk included shared-use paths. John Nyman asked whether more information on the pace of walks could be included in the programme. While walk leaders do sometimes include such information, the Club generally relied on what the Safe Rambling Code said, i.e. 'walk at a reasonable pace'.

## **7. Walk Co-ordinators' Report**

Peter Hancock, Wednesday Walks' Co-ordinator, read out reports from each of the walks co-ordinators, starting with Rod's report as Saturday Walks Co-ordinator:

### Saturday Walk Co-ordinator's Report

Sadly, this is the last Saturday Walks Co-ordinators report that I will write as I am stepping down as of this meeting. Some 12 or 13 years ago I volunteered to produce the Saturday Walks programme, firstly for Bay Walks and then for Torbay Rambling Club when Bay Walks Saturday programme was no longer funded and the Saturday walks became part of Torbay Rambling Club. It has been a job that I have enjoyed very much and one that I am sure I will miss. I have been lucky in that most of my walk leaders from Bay Walks joined TRC and continued to volunteer to lead walks for us. This made it a lot easier for me to produce the Saturday Walks programme as I already had a team of willing volunteers to help me out.

This year I have been unable to attend many walks owing to some health issues that have arisen so I have not been as active in this area as I would have liked. Nevertheless, I have endeavoured to keep abreast of the programme and been keen to hear from walk leaders how their walk went. As I remarked in my Chairman's report, this Club could not exist without our valued walk leaders and their back markers so I would like to say a sincere "Thank You" to everyone who has

volunteered to lead a walk on Saturdays and for their loyal support over the years which has made my job so much easier.

Although I am stepping down from this role, I am pleased to say that Teresa Allden and Hazel Langford have offered to take over this role jointly and are standing for election today. Thank you, Teresa and Hazel, for volunteering to take over this important task.

Thank you one and all.

Rod Wilson, Saturday Walks Co-ordinator

#### Sunday Walk Co-ordinators' Report

Denise and Adam would like to acknowledge all the hard work and effort that Sunday Walk leaders have put in during the past twelve months.

Particular mention should be given to both Paul H and Richard W for their efforts in finding new walking routes to follow and for trying them out beforehand. One of Paul's walks was from East Prawle on the South Hams coast, which people really enjoyed. He has mentioned to Adam that he has a new walk in mind from East Portlemouth to East Prawle and back, eight or nine miles. He proposes that we park in Salcombe and take the passenger ferry across the Kingsbridge Estuary.

Earlier this year, we found a circular walk at Manaton in Dartmoor which includes the North Bovey Valley. We have now got a winter version of this and a summer version to include the path beside Becky Falls and onward to Water.

More recently, we have been looking into offering a linear walk from South Brent to Ivybridge over the moors and to the disused mineral tramway. We would use the Gold Bus to return to South Brent. Adam would like to thank Kata for her company when we did the pre-walk a couple of weeks ago in brilliant sunshine.

Both Denise and Adam are open to new ideas for walks from members and we are most grateful for people's support.

Many thanks

Adam Smith and Denise Moore, Sunday Walks Co-ordinators

#### Wednesday Walk Co-ordinator's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank all the walk leaders who have volunteered their time and continued support to myself and the club, thus enabling us to continue to make a varied supply of walks to maintain the walks programmes throughout the year. Also thank you to the members who have supported us, especially when weather conditions have not been so favourable.

We have a variety of walks from local towns, along the South West Coast Path and on Dartmoor. In August we tried a walk with a difference, walking from Totnes to Berry Pomeroy Church, where I gave a talk on the history of the church and village and we all enjoyed a cream tea prepared by members, before setting off back to Totnes. Members attending were invited to make a donation and, after expenses were taken out, we were able to give a substantial donation to the church in gratitude for the use of their building and kitchen. This event proved very popular and there were requests that we do it again.

Numbers taking part in walks have been between 5 and 21, the local walks being more popular. I would encourage those members who would like to travel to those walks which are further away to liaise with other members in their area to build up a car share group, thus sharing expenses.

Through age and health issues we are losing some of our more experienced walk leaders. I am, therefore, planning on doing another walk leaders training course, probably in February or March.

I endeavour to give you the confidence and skills to help you on the way. We meet at 10.00am at The Inn on the Quay at Goodrington where I explain over a coffee what being a walk leader entails. After a couple of hours, we take a short walk so that I can give you any pointers regarding issues we may encounter en route. We finish around 2.00pm. I will then assist and help you with your first walks, so you are not on your own.

I finish with another thank you to my fellow committee members for their continued support especially Maureen for the help when problems have occurred.

Peter Hancock, Wednesday Walks Coordinator

Peter asked for members to indicate whether they would be interested in participating in the walk leaders training. It was clarified that the training is not compulsory and we do have a considerable number of walk leaders who have not done it. However, it was recommended and gave new walk leaders the confidence to undertake the role. Teresa Allden had done the training. She said that it had been very good and had given her confidence. She had also appreciated Peter's support on the first walk she had led.

Peter said that he was organising a repeat of the Club's inaugural walk in 1950. This would take place in November 2025 and he hoped to use it to raise money for Children in Need. Members could make a donation or even seek sponsorship. As BBC Countryfile organises the Countryfile Ramble for Children in Need, he would be in touch with the programme makers to see whether they would like to do a feature on the Club and the fact that we were celebrating our 75th anniversary.

## **8. Election of Officers**

Rod said that the following members of the current Committee were standing for re-election:

Chair – Rod Wilson

Secretary – Maureen Chivers

Treasurer – Chris Brennan

Membership Secretary – Susie Cormac

Social Secretary – Anne-Marie Cochrane and Kevin Cochrane (job share)

Sunday Walks Co-ordinator – Adam Smith

No other nominations had been received for any of the above offices. Rod suggested that, in accordance with previous practice, we vote for those offices en bloc. The meeting was content to proceed in this manner.

**Proposal: That the above-named members be elected to the offices stated against each name**

Proposed: Helen Urquhart

Seconded: Carol Hancock

**The proposal was carried.**

#### Webmaster

**Proposal: That David Lamb be elected Webmaster of Torbay Rambling Club**

Proposed: Mandy Lindsay

Seconded: Maggie Wilson

**The proposal was carried**

#### Wednesday Walks Co-ordinator

**Proposal: That Peter Hancock and Paul Hover be elected Wednesday Walks Co-ordinators for Torbay Rambling Club on a job-share basis**

Proposed: Teresa Allden

Seconded: Hazel Langford

**The proposal was carried**

#### Saturday Walks Co-ordinator

**Proposal: That Teresa Allden and Hazel Langford be elected Saturday Walks Co-ordinators for Torbay Rambling Club on a job-share basis**

Proposed: Angela Poulton

Seconded: Angela Staples

**The proposal was carried**

#### Safety Officer

No nominations had been received for the Office of Safety Officer and no volunteers were initially forthcoming. Chris Brennan offered to keeping a watching brief on the role in the hope that the Committee would be able to co-opt a member to fill the role in due course. However, David Balgobin then expressed a willingness to take on the role, with Chris Brennan's support in the initial stages.

**Proposal: That David Balgobin be elected Safety Officer for Torbay Rambling Club**

Proposed: Sharon Collett

Seconded: Bernie Heaton

**The proposal was carried**

### **9. Appointment of Auditor**

David Balgobin had served as Auditor for the past year and was willing to continue to serve in that capacity.

**The meeting appointed David Balgobin as Auditor for the year 2024-2025**

### **10. Proposals to amend the Constitution**

The Committee was proposing several amendments to the Constitution. These proposals had been circulated to members four weeks before the meeting, together with an explanation of the reasons for the amendments. Chris Brennan introduced this item and explained that

1. The annual membership subscription was payable in advance before 1st November. The current grace period was 2 months before membership ceased on 31st December. The proposal was to reduce this to 15 days. This meant that membership could be renewed in the 2½ months from 1st September, rather than the 4 months from 1st September to 31st December and would

confirm that anyone who had not renewed would be ineligible to attend the AGM at the end of November.

2. The power to expel a member from the Club was being clarified to require members to comply with our Safe Rambling Code and treat other members with respect. A detailed procedure had been added to the Club's policies.

3. The descriptions of the roles of Committee members were being improved and job-sharing of Officer roles specifically allowed.

4. Our Constitution had not previously had a finance section. One had been added, mirroring many of the requirements in the Charities Act 2011, though the Club was not a charity. Some additional financial guidance was now contained in our Policies (Rev. 8 Oct 24) and covered recee expenses.

Angela Staples asked why any grace period need be given, rather than any member who had not paid by 1<sup>st</sup> November being removed from the membership list. No other questions regarding the proposed amendments were forthcoming and the meeting was content to vote on all the proposed amendments together.

**Proposal: This meeting adopts the revised Constitution dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Proposed: Torbay Rambling Club Committee

As the Constitution states that any amendment to the Constitution requires a majority of at least two-thirds of the members voting thereon, a show of hands was asked for, so that votes could be counted. 49 members voted and all were in favour of the proposal.

**The proposal to adopt the Constitution as amended was, therefore, passed.**

**11. The Club's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025**

Rod said plans for the anniversary year had already been covered in the Social Secretaries' report. David Lamb asked about the anniversary brochure which had been proposed but which, he understood, was not going to be produced. Chris Price explained that he had wanted to produce such a brochure but other members of the Anniversary Working Party had not been in favour of the idea. He had, nevertheless, taken the proposal to the Committee which had decided against it. Two factors had influenced the decision. These were the £500 cost involved and the lack of demand for such a publication, times having moved on since the 50th anniversary publication '50 Years of Rambling'.

**12. Donations to Other Organisations**

As Chris Brennan had indicated in the Treasurer's Report, the Club's financial position was such that we could increase our gifts to Dartmoor National Park and the South West Coast Path Association. In the 2023-2024 financial year, we had given £50 to each of these organisations, an increase on the £25 given to each organisation in previous years. Chris suggested that during the current financial year, we give £75 to Dartmoor National Park and £75 to the South West Coast Path Association. This was agreed on a show of hands.

Earlier in the meeting, members had indicated that they would like a talk on the work of the Dartmoor Rescue Group. Chris said that this would be a fundraising event and the Club could possibly top up any money received from members for this charity.

### **13. Social Media**

An offer had been received from a Club member to set up and run a social media account or accounts on behalf of the Club. The Committee had discussed this and decided that a social media presence could be of benefit to the Club, but wanted to canvas the views of members before proceeding further. Members acknowledged that having a Facebook page, for example, could raise our profile and aid recruitment. However, no real enthusiasm for the idea was shown. Susie Cormac, Membership Secretary, said that we had had 29 new members in the past year, so recruitment of new members was not a problem. Hazel Langford said that people keen to join a Rambling Club could easily find us online and Teresa Allden pointed out that a considerable number of Club members were members of the Torbay Walkers Facebook Group and used that group to signpost people to Torbay Rambling Club.

**In view of the lack of interest from members, it was decided not to pursue the idea of setting up a social media account.**

### **14. Open Questions to Committee**

John Nyman asked for advice regarding the visa that he understood would be required for members participating in the Brittany holiday. Anne-Marie said that holiday participants would be invited to a meeting at which Paul Scott would be available to help with visa applications. Chris Brennan explained that the proposed visa was to be an electronic one lasting for 2 years. However, the visa requirement did not apply to those over the age of 70 and there was some doubt as to whether it would be introduced before the holiday took place.

Don Frampton asked whether the Club had a Publicity Officer and encouraged the Club to make use of the Community pages of local publications to promote the Club and its activities. He was advised that we did not have a Publicity Officer as such, but Rod had, in his capacity as Club Chairman, been a guest on local radio station Riviera FM and Chris Price had got an article about the Club's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the October-November issue of English Riviera Magazine. Maureen said that now that the website was being kept up-to-date we would again be looking to promote the Club and would take Don's suggestion on board. Member Paul Scott was now a presenter with Riviera FM and able to promote the Club through that medium. Wanda Hollingworth said that she had a useful contact at Radio Devon.

### **15. Any Other Business**

Mandy Lindsay reminded members that she had Club merchandise, including polo shirts, which members were welcome to take free of charge.

Chris Brennan said that reference had earlier been made to concerns that a member might sue 2 officers of the Club. The Club itself could not be sued as, as an unincorporated association, it did not exist as a legal entity. The Club had insurance that covered Committee members and also 'Employees' which included volunteer walk leaders. The insurance required us to demonstrate that reasonable care had been taken and this was one reason why Club policies should be adhered to and risk assessments undertaken.

Maggie Wilson expressed thanks to the Committee for all the time and effort they put into their work for the Club, especially during the last year which had been a very difficult time for Committee members and, indeed, for their partners. Members responded with applause.

Signed: ..... (Club Chairman)

Date: .....