

The Northamptonshire Shamblers
Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting
Held on 5 August 2021 at 7.30pm at Thrapston Church Hall

1. **Apologies for Absence** – received from Graeme White and Angela Folwell.
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 6 August 2020**, which are on the website, were proposed by Jean Mole and seconded by Sue Milner.
3. **Chair's Report**

A copy of the report will be found at the end of these minutes.

Finbarr Finn mentioned the unusual year and lack of walks due to the COVID-19 virus, but hopefully things are now back on track. In particular, the Away Day to Chipping Norton was enjoyed by a good few despite the hot weather.

He mentioned the Away Weekend to Bournemouth this year, and the plans for holding next year's weekend in the Gower Peninsular.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

- 4.1 Jean Mole explained that bringing the membership year in line with our accounting year has had two benefits, i.e. members could renew in July and August when they were more likely to be walking, and it is now easier for her to give a full year's report on finances at the AGM.

- 4.2 At July 2020 we had £508.84 in the bank, and the decision was made, due to lack of walks, to reduce the cost of membership for 2020/2021 to £3 for existing members, but keep the £8 fee for new members. For the current year, again due to missing walks, the cost is £5 for existing members but still £8 for new members.

During the year we had 30 members with an income of £122 (including 7 new members) and 9 guest walkers producing an income of £18. For the coming year, we currently have 17 paid up members, but a further 8 members paid during the AGM, giving a total so far of 25.

- 4.3 Our largest expenditure during the year was £160 for providing website support for our new website. The cost of renewing our Domain name was £26.85 and our Insurance Policy was £63. We currently have £412.37 in our account, but £37 of this was taken from the Charity Box for safe keeping. Actual funds available are £375. This is substantially lower than last year but the website support was a one-off payment so we still have a healthy balance. Future expenses will be Insurance and the cost of Thrapston Church Hall for the AGM.

5. **Election of Committee**

In the absence of any further volunteers to join the Committee, Ruth confirmed that the current Committee have agreed to stand for a further year:

Finbarr Finn – Chair

Ruth Emmerson – Secretary

Jean Mole – Treasurer

Sue Milner & Stuart Emmerson – Committee members

6. Planning for 2022

6.1 The suggested venue for our 2022 Away Day is currently Sandringham in Norfolk, but any other ideas would be appreciated. It was agreed to hold this on 17 July. Jean to find out costs for hiring a bus if there is sufficient interest.

6.2 Finbarr outlined the dates for the 2022 walks and asked for any offers to lead a walk, either on a Sunday or a Thursday Summer evening walk. Several people kindly offered. It was also agreed to have our Picnic Walk on 12 June, which Jean Mole offered to lead.

Finbarr also mentioned possible locations for the 2023 Away Weekend as the Committee will need to reccie any potential walks early in 2022 for this. Suggestions were: Lake District, Northumberland, Isle of Wight, Isle of Man, Minehead, Richmond in Yorkshire, Scotland, or Criccieth in North Wales. There was discussion on whether to hire a bus to take us to a location to save individual driving.

Ruth to send an email to members outlining these suggestions and asking for preferences by November 2021 so that planning can start.

6.3 It was agreed to have our December evening walk in Summer Leys once again. Ruth to check with the Wildlife Trust to see if we can gain access.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Jean Mole offered to give one person a lift to Bournemouth from Thursday 23 September to Monday 27 September. Finbarr could also take one person for the same dates.

7.2 Ruth will shortly be sending more information to members regarding the Away Weekend to Bournemouth, including the itinerary of walks.

7.3 Finbarr mentioned the possibility of visiting Belvoir Castle for the 2023 Away Day.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm – our thanks for all who had attended and those who managed the evening's events.

Chair's Report – 2021

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. This time last year we were meeting through the wonders of Zoom technology, so it is great to see you all in person today. However Covid 19 has not gone away and as a result our walking over the past year has been limited as the club followed the governments Covid guidelines.

After last year's AGM we managed just 3 walks before the end of the year. Our last evening walk from Ringstead was a walk of lakes, ghosts and sunsets. We had a rescheduled Away Day to Carsington Water in Derbyshire. In spite of not travelling by bus we had a good turn out, and we enjoyed a walk through the lovely Derbyshire countryside, great views, friendly Trolls, and a return alongside the beautiful reservoir. Our last walk of the year was from Arthingworth, when a walk that was longer than the norm was enlivened by the rock and roll tunnel.

But then another Lockdown, and the club had no option but to cancel our next 7 walks in line with Government restrictions. I know some of our members walked singly or within their bubble during this period, but we Shamblers are sociable creatures, and it was great to get out as a group again, which we were able to do in May when we met up in Braunston for a lovely canal based walk.

Next we enjoyed an evening walk by the Nene from Wadenhoe. Our June picnic walk was held in Barnwell Country Park where we went orienteering - congratulations to Jean and Tessa on claiming 1st prize. Another evening walk was held in Olney - always a popular out of county venue for the club. Our Away Day moved from June to the July slot due to lockdown being lifted a little, though again without bus transport. Chipping Norton - the gateway to the Cotswolds was our destination, and on a sweltering day a good attendance enjoyed a walk that was split into a variety of distances, which allowed members to choose the walk that best suited them on the day. Hopefully next year we will be back in the bus.

This brings us to what's in store for the Shamblers. Well, for the remainder of 2021 we have 5 more walks scheduled in Northamptonshire, and if you are joining us on our Weekend of Walking based in Bournemouth you will have another 6 walks around the Jurassic Coast / New Forest area to choose from.

Looking ahead to 2022, we are looking for leaders for about 15 walks. Hopefully before the close of business this evening many, if not all, of those walks will have a name pencilled in. For people hesitant about leading a walk the club has many books and maps from which you may draw inspiration. Also the officers and committee are always willing to help. One date next year that is already filled is the 16/17/18 Sept when we are heading to the Gower Peninsula in Wales for our Weekend of Walking. Ruth, Stuart, Sue and myself enjoyed a weekend of recceing there recently and we can assure you of some stunning walks.

So, how do we let people know what the club is up to? The simplest way is word of mouth, at every walk let's tell people about our next 1 or 2 walks. We have our own website, for many years this was maintained by Peter Riches, and Peter deserves a warm word of thanks for all his help and efforts. This year we decided to give the website a revamp. Ruth took on this considerable task. The updated website looks great and is very easy to navigate. Thank you very much Ruth. As Jean, our Treasurer will tell us, this cost a few pounds, but I am sure you will all agree it was money well spent. The Shamblers also has a Facebook page. Walk reports with photos are posted here, also details of

upcoming walks. For those Facebookers out there, hit 'like' and 'share' as often as you can, this helps spread the word. Of course members are always welcome to post photos from their own walks on this page - come on share the joy that walking brings. Thank you to Stuart for his dedication in researching and writing up the majority of our walk reports.

We also use Village Connect magazine who mention our walks in their 'What's on' section. Lastly and I am sure most effectively is the email our hardworking Secretary sends with details of our next walk, where to park and for those interested, dining arrangements.

As Jean, our Treasurer will shortly tell us, we had more expense than usual this year. Our only means of revenue are membership and guest walker fees. We are always glad to see new faces, and it is great to see (Gordon, Sally and Tessa – tbc) here this evening. Tonight we can discuss our finances and try to stay solvent for another year. We also support a charity each year – Northamptonshire Carers is this year's beneficiary. To date over £60 has been collected, so let's try and get to £100 by the year end.

Now a word about safety. I believe our walks are carefully selected and reccied, but there can be occasions where we cross or walk along roads. The club has Hi Vis jackets, never be shy in asking for them. We also have whistles available - phones can run out of charge, and having an ICE (in case of emergency) number on your mobile is a very good idea.

Before I finish thanks to Jean for organising the hall, and the fish & chips. I would like to thank my fellow officers for all their time and efforts over the past 12 months. A special word of thanks to all our walk leaders for providing the great walks that we did enjoy since last year, not forgetting the back markers. And to all our walkers it has been a pleasure enjoying your company on our walks over the year and I am really looking forward to much more of the same over the coming year.

Thank you.