



**ramblers**

at the heart of walking

# Ramblers Suffolk Area

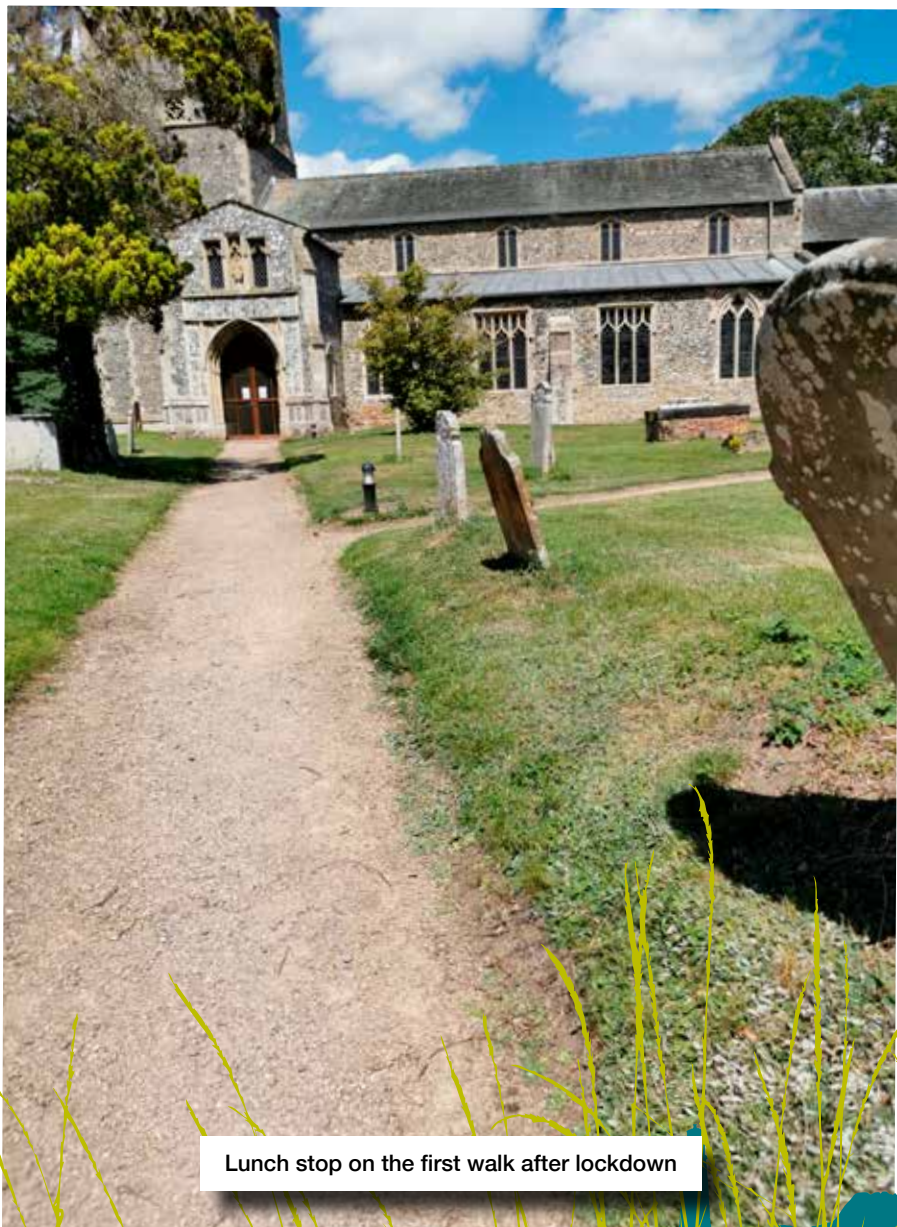
**Autumn 2020**

*Upton Village Sign*



**Newsletter & Annual Report**

**Issue 47**



Lunch stop on the first walk after lockdown



## **Suffolk Area AGM by Zoom, 10am, 6th February 2021**

The arrangements for the 2021 AGM have been altered to take account of the Covid crisis. The following will apply.

1. The annual reports are as usual contained in this magazine. They will be published on line via the Suffolk Ramblers Web site and updated as necessary at least 28 days prior to the meeting.
2. In the event of any questions from members concerning the content of the reports, in the first instance, members are asked to put their questions to the author of the report by email via the Secretary of the Council no later than 14 days prior to the meeting. If the answer to those questions are felt to be inadequate and/or require discussion over a wider area of the membership, they will be included in the live debate via Zoom on the day of the meeting.
3. The election of Committee members will take place during the Zoom meeting. Prior notice of at least 14 days will be given for nominations and seconding of all candidates to the Area Secretary. Details of those nominated will be published on the web site.
4. The Zoom meeting will be open to all Suffolk Members. Those wishing to attend should email the Secretary giving their name, group and membership number, if known. The Secretary will email those members wishing to attend a link and password the day before the meeting.
5. The agenda will be published for the meeting at least 14 days before the meeting is to take place. The meeting will follow the usual format. The above arrangements have been made to allow the meeting to be as free flowing as possible by dealing with as many matters possible prior to the meeting
6. Members will be asked to vote on an acceptance of the annual report, an acceptance of the annual accounts, the appointment of council members, and delegates for the National Council. Normal rules will apply for voting by those present at the meeting.
7. Subject to availability efforts will be made to obtain a guest speaker as would be usual. Details will be published on the web site as soon as they are available.

Anyone with any questions concerning these arrangements should speak in the first instance to their Area representative.

The Secretary's email is: [walkingtop@yahoo.com](mailto:walkingtop@yahoo.com). If anyone would like a trial run of Zoom please let the Secretary know and this will be arranged a few days beforehand.

The AGM is an important day in the calendar of the Area and your Council hope that by this means members will feel, despite the difficulties Covid has imposed on us all, those who wish to can still meaningfully participate in the proceedings.

# Ramblers - Suffolk Area

|                                             |                                                                                                                     |               |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chairman</b>                             | Roley Wilson<br>Email-chairman@suffolkramblers.org.uk                                                               | 01449 672945  |
| <b>Vice Chairman</b>                        | <i>Position Vacant</i>                                                                                              |               |
| <b>Secretary</b>                            | Jan Palmer<br>Email-secretary@suffolkramblers.org.uk                                                                | 01449 723997  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                            | David Holmes<br>Email-treasurer@suffolkramblers.org.uk                                                              | 01728 454146  |
| <b>Footpath Secretary</b>                   | Jim Richards<br>Email-footpaths@suffolkramblers.org.uk                                                              | 01728 454146  |
| <b>Area Access Officer</b>                  | Jenny Tyson                                                                                                         |               |
| <b>Coastal Access Officer</b>               | Nigel Meadows<br>Email-coastlaccess@suffoolkramblers.org.uk                                                         |               |
| <b>Membership Secretary</b>                 | Jan Palmer<br>Email-membership@suffolkramblers.org.uk                                                               | 01449 723997  |
| <b>Area Campaigns and Publicity Officer</b> | Mary Moore                                                                                                          |               |
| <b>Recruitment Officer</b>                  | <i>Position Vacant</i>                                                                                              |               |
| <b>Countryside Officer</b>                  | <i>Position Vacant</i>                                                                                              |               |
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| <b>Rights of Way Advisor</b>                | Nigel Meadows<br>Email-nigel.ramblers@yahoo.co.uk                                                                   | 01728 746698  |
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# Editorial

Borrowing words from our gracious Queen, this has been an Annulus Horribalis. Coronarvirus has most certainly been devastating in many many ways. I hope therefore that you will indulge my thoughts and feelings regarding our county of Suffolk.

## Poem: Suffolk

Suffolk the county of my home  
where I'll return where ere I roam.  
A county full of grace and charm,  
where people seldom come to harm.  
(statistically Suffolk is one of the safest counties in the country.)  
Suffolk is full of history, just look around and you will see.  
Earl Bigod was once a great big cheese, till Henry 2nd. brought him to his knees.  
There still remains a walk called Bigods Way [5.5 miles]  
but the poor old Earl has had his day.  
Ipswich has a football team, and though they may not be the cream  
well you should hear the rousing noise, if a goal is scored by the TRACTOR BOYS.  
Suffolk, a county of country and coast, with so much to see is a wonderful host.  
If with opera you are smitten, then see the late home of Benjamin Britten.  
If of culture you are tired of hearing, perhaps of interest is that fellow Ed Sheeren.



## Some facts that probably most people do not know.

Artists; **John Constable** (possibly the counties best known landscape artist) was born in East Bergholt on 11th June 1776.

**Thomas Gainsborough** (a renowned portrait artist, and a founder member of the Royal Academy of Arts) was born in Sudbury on 14th May 1727.

**Sir Alfred Munnings** was born in Mendham in 1878. Famous mainly for his horse paintings. There is an 8.5 mile walk starting from Mendham called the Munnings Way. Although the late **Admiral Lord Nelson** (perhaps the most famous Britian) declared himself a Norfolk man, many people may not know that his mother Catherine Suckling was born in Barsham Suffolk on 9th May 1725.

**Enid Blyton** before she became famous as a writer of childrens' stories, was trained as a kindergarden teacher in Ipswich. (Not a lot of people know that-with apologies to Sir Michael Caine.)

Inventors. Possibly the most recent memorable invention is the Hovercraft. This, of course, was invented by **Sir Christopher Cockrell** in Suffolk in the 1950's. Therefore from Lowestoft in the East and North to Bury St. Edmunds in the West, Ipswich in the South, and all areas in between, we should think ourselves lucky to be living in a delightful county such as Suffolk.

Our area chairman Roley will not be standing for re-election this year. For myself and many many others, I would like to thank Roley for all the hard work he has done over the years.

Enjoyable walking to you all.  
*David Harmer [Editor]*

# Area Footpaths

## Secretary's Report

There is little to report because of the relative inactivity during the COVID lockdown.

At the time of writing, we still have heard nothing following the Public Inquiry into **The Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order**.

I gather there have been further difficulties regarding the Extinguishment and Diversion Orders to give effect to the closure of the crossings at and near **Gipsy Lane, Needham**.

**East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm and East Anglia TWO Offshore Windfarm** – Scottish Power Renewables' application for a Development Consent Order went in earlier this year. They are proposing to bring the cabling ashore at Thorpeness and to site the huge sub-stations at Friston. We have submitted our written representations. This is a huge and disruptive development. Apart from the offshore turbines themselves, the project involves some 4 miles of underground cabling and three large substations at Friston where it will be connected to the National Grid. Some of the cabling will be laid using horizontal drilling but there will also be large sections of cut and cover through the AONB. The work involves both temporary and permanent changes to the ROW system. The temporary closures appear to be fairly brief. In our representations we have concentrated on the permanent changes to the ROW network and have demanded specific rights of way improvements in the general area by way of planning gain should consent be forthcoming.

The application for a development consent order by NNB Generation Company (szc)

Limited for the **Sizewell C project** has now gone in. Last year I mentioned that 12 foot crossings over the East Suffolk Line were threatened with closure if the development were to proceed adopting the rail-led option. A hybrid road and rail option has been preferred so those threats have been removed. We will be making Written Representations to the Examination. These will, of course, be restricted to matters within the Ramblers objects so will be about preserving the beauty of the countryside and the effect on the rights of way network. We will say we believe the development is inappropriate in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but will concentrate on demanding improvements to the path network if it has to happen. Alde Valley members have drawn up a wish-list.

**Sunnica Energy Farm** (Freckenham, Worlington, Chippenham and Snailwell)- I mentioned at the 2020 AGM this joint venture between Tribus Energy and PS Renewables. Those of you in the west of the county will be aware of this proposal which, we are told, would be the biggest Solar Farm in the UK. This is still in the non-statutory consultation stage and volunteers in our Newmarket Group will initiate our responses. The application is expected to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2021.

Last year I mentioned the **bridge at Earsham on the Angles Way** recreational route which collapsed over four years ago now. This has still not been resolved but we hope soon to have good news. Our thanks go to David Harmer of the Waveney Group who,

with counterparts in Norfolk Ramblers, got members of Parliament involved.

You should all have become aware of the Ramblers “Don’t Lose Your Way” campaign (more at:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way-2026.aspx> ). This has been set up to try to save historic rights of way that existed before 1949 but are not protected by being on the Definitive Map. Such ways stand to be lost if not claimed by 2026. People all across the country have been comparing maps from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to see what paths appear but are not on current maps. The old maps show many, many paths marked “FP”. Whilst that is a good place to start, unfortunately that does not prove they were *public* footpaths. To found a successful claim, much stronger evidence must be discovered, notably Inclosure records, Tithe records, Inland Revenue valuation records, early County maps, etc. etc. Even when such evidence is found, Court records and Statutory Orders may reveal that paths have since been lawfully stopped-up or diverted.

In Suffolk we are extremely fortunate to benefit from the work of John Andrews who, over five decades, secured the addition of hundreds of routes to the Definitive Map. Although there may be routes John has not researched, it would not be easy to find them. From his Scottish base, he is still helping us with some of the unresolved claims he made years ago. Indeed, John has said that he spent something like 35 years researching all the archive material which had any reasonable chance of providing the necessary kind of evidence and he thinks he can safely say that that area of interest has been fully covered. He doubts that there is much chance of discovering good evidence of unrecorded rights of way that have not been the subject of claims already submitted.

However, it is possible that some ways are still in danger of being lost and we still have concerns over:

- a. the large number of claims submitted in the aborted 1979 Review and which have lain untouched on the County Council’s shelves since then and
- b. the substantial number of old unsurfaced roads that are on the CC’s ‘List of streets’, but still absent from the Definitive Map.

So far, I have received indications from half a dozen or so Suffolk Ramblers members who are willing to help with the DLYW project. If this sort of research seems just up your street please get in touch.

I would like to repeat my plea that you report any **path problems** that you find to the County Council. This can be done easily on-line at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/report-a-public-right-of-way-issue/>

Do let your group footpaths secretary know of any major problems that you find. Remember that to ascertain the path number the working copies of the Definitive Maps are available online. They can be downloaded at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way-in-suffolk/definitive-maps-of-public-rights-of-way/>

Lastly, we should again thank all to the **group footpaths secretaries** who continue to monitor proposed changes in the rights of way network, make appropriate representations and generally help to improve the network. They are Lynn Bambury and Jenny Bradin (Bury Group), Robert Newell (Waveney Group), Phil Prigg (Newmarket Group), Geoff Knight (Ipswich Group), Bob Boardman (Stowmarket Group), Phil Snelling (Sudbury Group) and myself (Alde Valley Group). We are all contactable via the Suffolk Ramblers website.

**Jim Richards**  
Area Footpaths Secretary  
[suffolkramblersafps@gmail.com](mailto:suffolkramblersafps@gmail.com)

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## Chairman's Report

I know this will have been a worrying and difficult time for many of you.

One direct result of the Covid lock downs has been a surge of people taking their exercise on local footpaths. Both seasoned walkers and those new to walking have been discovering the joys of what has always been on their doorstep. That is not just good news for them. If just a small number of those new walkers choose to join us, the Ramblers, the one organisation that campaigns for the rights of walkers and ensures those very paths remain open and assessable to all, we will be able to continue and expand our vital work, both locally and nationally. At a time when people have not been able to get out and obtain the full benefits of membership of organisations some have taken the option to cancel or not renew their membership. Our thanks to all of you who have stayed faithful to us and recognised that your contributions are probably more important now than ever before.

While we have all been justified in thinking our life's are on hold it has been a very busy time for the Ramblers keeping up with the latest government statements and taking every opportunity nationally to influence the debate around Covid safety for walkers and volunteers. Do take time to read the many emails you will have received. More detailed information is available on the web site. Whilst restrictions on our activities remain it is the responsibility of every member to keep up to date with the advice and guidance.

During lockdown the roll out of our exciting new Assemble site has progressed. This will when complete be a one stop shop for all our Ramblers needs. Those of you who are part of our army of volunteers will I am sure already be familiar with it.

The publication of this magazine was delayed to enable us to make decisions about the form of the AGM this year. You will find details of what we will be doing within the magazine.

Prior to the Covid crisis I had made the decision this would be my last year as your Chair and I have informed the Area Council of my intention to not stand again for election. I wish to stand down now not because I lack enthusiasm for the role or the direction we are going in. It is rather that now is a good time for me and a good time for someone new to bring their flair and character to the post. My very best wishes to whoever takes over from me. It always sounds like a cliché to say this but it is non the less true, it has been a privilege to have been elected as your Chair for so many years. My thanks to all those who have been a part of the team over this time for your support and enthusiasm. You really have been making a difference for walkers in Suffolk and I am proud to have been associated with you.

*Roley Wilson*  
*Chair Ramblers Area Council*

# Alde Valley/ Alde Valle Working Party Groups

Our walks programme for 2020 was going well until the COVID lockdown. At the time of writing (late August) we have not restarted formal walks but hope to very shortly.

Similarly, our working party continued to help maintain and waymark paths in cooperation with the County Council. Work before the lockdown included 3 sets of steps (two at Sweffling and one at Cratfield-pictured below) and comprehensive signage on the paths at Thorpeness and Woodbridge Golf Courses.



In November we “trespassed” into Ipswich & Dist Group territory where, joined by some of their members, we forged a way through Melton Footpath 22 which had been totally impenetrable for many years. Since then a further party has been and made further improvements making what is now a very clear path.

For our Christmas walk we did the Ufford Heritage Trail and lunched in the Crown.

Whilst most of our walks are described as taken at a leisurely pace, for a variety of reasons, many of members now find they are walking considerably slower than in the past. For this reason we have decided to split some of our walks whereby the “Amblers” will, after a mile or two separate from the rest and possibly take a shorter route. As on all of our walks, we will always be delighted to be joined by members from other groups so, if that sounds like your cup of tea, do join us.

On the Committee we have welcomed Archie Bhatia as the new Membership Secretary. From our AGM (scheduled for 16 November) we will have lost the services of Anne Hubert-Chibnall (Secretary) and Pauline Nettleingham (erstwhile Membership Secretary) both of whom have decided to stand down after 15-year stints. Both very difficult acts to follow and we thank them enormously for all the hard work they have put in.

In December we had some excellent media coverage when, in an interview with Sarah Lilley on Suffolk Radio, our Publicity Secretary, Graham Howard very ably publicized the activities of our group and the walks that all the Suffolk groups were laying on as part of the Ramblers Festival of Winter Walks.

Jim Richards  
Chairman, Alde Valley Group  
<http://aldevalleyramblers.onesuffolk.net/>  
[aldevalleyramblers@gmail.com](mailto:aldevalleyramblers@gmail.com)

# Bury St Edmunds Group

The year got off to a great start with our Festival of Winter Walks which we had promoted by creating Facebook Events on the Suffolk Ramblers Page.

This resulted in additional interest and increased numbers culminating with our “See the Seals at the Seaside!” walk from Winterton via Horsey at the beginning of January which attracted 7 non-members, 11 members from other groups, with a total of 46 walkers, carefully maintaining social distancing from the seals and their new-born pups for their safety!



It was our pleasure to host our Area AGM in February this year. Our guest speaker Aynsley Jardin, a Ramblers Trustee, had driven up from Windsor that morning and treated us to an interesting and well-illustrated presentation, and joined us for our after lunch walk led by Ron West via Nowton Church on the St Edmund Way, with its amazing collection of late medieval glass, then returning through Nowton Park – as described in a walks leaflet we published at the end of last year as part of the Discover Suffolk series.

The best laid plans... !

As we then distributed our Summer Programme with its full and exciting range of walks and events, including our planned April Break on the Isle of Wight (by double-decker coach!) our Flexi-Break in the Peak District, and our Long Distance Walk “from Coast to Cloisters” – linking in with all the planned celebrations marking 1,000 years since the founding of the Abbey of St Edmund – we had no concept that 2020 would be a year of un-ramblings!

But our disappointments cannot be compared of course with the loss of lives and livelihoods which we are continuing to see, and our thoughts are with those most affected by Covid 19 – as we re-group in different ways.

We are indebted to all who contributed to a highly successful restart of walks beginning with groups of six which, although the amount of work involved initially seemed out of proportion to what would be achieved in relation to our large membership, meant that we were well prepared to increase numbers up to thirty when that time came.

Special appreciation goes to those who have so generously used and shared their technological know-how, both at group and area level, at a time of specific need (thank you Dave H and Gav!) and those who have put on extra “pop-up walks” increasing walking opportunities for others.

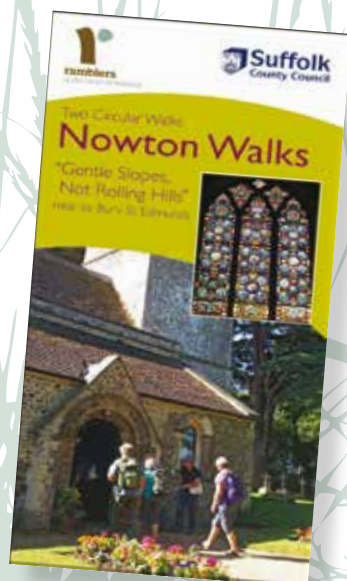
It might have been tempting with the given limits to feel that our walks should be restricted to our members only, but this continues to be a time when it is more important than ever to be as open and welcoming as always, and it's been rewarding to see a number of new members recently.

Happy Walking!

*Rosie Perham, Chairman Bury Ramblers*

This leaflet with two walks from Nowton Park in Bury St Edmunds, produced by Bury Ramblers in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, has been distributed to Tourist Information Points and copies are also available from [rosieperham@outlook.com](mailto:rosieperham@outlook.com)

Front cover picture: Members of Bury Ramblers at Nowton Church, during St Edmund Way Walk 2019.



# Ipswich & District Group

Like all groups we had been enjoying many walks, lunches and visiting new paths. Until March 23rd when all that was put on hold. Unable to walk together we started a new Facebook group, for members only, to share some light relief. We have had lots of wildlife photos, been asked for identification of crops and insects, well known places and 'do you know where this is' tests. We've enjoyed seeing how people have decorated houses and trees celebrating events and praising NHS and Key Workers.

Our planned holiday to Winchester was cancelled but memories of holidays past were shared and we look forward to going next year, hopefully. We have kept in touch with emails and phone calls, and been delighted to bump into other members, 2m apart, while out on our daily exercise.

Back in early March a group joined Alde Valley members and helped clear a footpath in Melton. 2 hours work by 21 people had a big impact. 3 months later our footpath secretary was able to revisit and was pleased to report that it had obviously been well used during lockdown, so all the early hard work was well worthwhile.

As things start to relax we have had some group led walks following Ramblers guidance. It has been great to see old faces and have a chat, some with a cafe stop at the end. We have had a number of new members join in the last couple of months and it has been nice to meet them and introduce them to Ramblers in a much more personal way on these small walks.

Despite the restrictions we have been able to move forward with plans for a memorial bench for Geoff Pratt which we hope to be installed on the Fynn Valley in the next month.

What of the future for the group? its difficult to say but we will continue to walk together when we can and by ourselves when we can't. We are fortunate to live so close to some lovely paths and to be able to enjoy the Suffolk countryside.

*Jo Mann  
Ipswich and District Ramblers*



# Newmarket & District Group

In the interests of the environment and saving forests this report from Newmarket will be short! What a strange year!

From a rambling perspective it started very well and I could, indeed do, lament the things we have missed, such as the planned spring break in the Lake District. I think the weather would have been good too: amazing two years' running.

As ever we have published two six-monthly programmes and again our huge appreciation to Phil and Sue Prigg for so ably gathering and organising the information from leaders and producing a document that is really useful to our members. It couldn't be achieved without our marvellous walk leaders who between them give us enough walks to cover Wednesday and Sunday mornings. It does seem that we generally do not have enough walk offers now to cover a long (10 mile) and a short walk (5ish) on a Sunday. We very much miss our longstanding member Kate Whisson who died during the year. Kate had led a wonderful range of short walks over the years; she very generously wrote them up and passed them to fellow walkers who can now lead "Kate's walks". There's a lesson for us!

In September Hilary and Peter guided us on a great day's walking around the King's Cross/St. Pancras area of London. We went by train and were forced to dash into a crowded pub at lunchtime to avoid a downpour: two things that are hard to imagine us doing now! Many thanks to our leaders for making it so varied and interesting. Another London walk in the summer fell victim to Covid-19 concerns. Another time .....?!



We hope we can pick up the walks that could not take place this year and production of the winter programme is well under way. We are all naturally feeling cautious, but ever grateful that our favourite activity of walking is officially 'on again'. It's a wonderful outdoor (and therefore safer) activity, gives us many friends to share our experiences and we hope that those who have discovered the benefits of walking during lockdown will feel able to join us soon too!

*Angela Ratcliffe, Chairman*



*Socially distanced walkies*



# In Memory of Anne Hewlett

My mother and I arrived in Stowmarket in 1972. My mother Ann V A Hewlett, had successfully obtained a job at Stowmarket High School as Teacher Librarian. Previously we had lived in Norwich, East London, Leeds and Belgrade. Due to her experience of travel and academic study, Ann brought with her a wide range of skills in research, organisation, history of art and literature. My mother transferred this knowledge to her enjoyment of local history and the countryside. So it was only logical that she would seek to set up a local branch of the Ramblers Association in Stowmarket; previously she had been a part of the association in Norwich.

As was usual to my mother's approach, she set about doing this in a clearly defined way. Having contacted Head Office of the Ramblers Association, to gain their support, my mother then put an advert in the EADT with the title, Ramblers Association Branch may be formed [1973] The purpose was as a call for interested people to come forward. By 1974 my mother had arranged a public meeting "Paths for the Public" at the United Reform Church Stowmarket. On 21st September 1974 the Stowmarket Ramblers was formed. My mother became Pathways Secretary, a role she held for several years. She really enjoyed those pioneering years working with the council, farmers and local people to open up the pathways that had been forgotten for sometimes centuries. During the 70's much pioneering work was done uncovering footpaths, collecting an archive of local maps and organising regular walks in the local area. The Mid Suffolk Ramblers even went further afield to walk Offa's Dyke and the North and South Downs. Eventually due to arthritis my mother had to give up her role with the Association she had helped to found, but she often missed the countryside and her work in finding new pathways to investigate and open up. She was particularly fond of the walk from Stowmarket to Great Finborough passing St. Andrew's church; a church she loved with a spire that can be seen for miles.

On 11th October 2019 my mother passed away in her own home, the house where she had started all this work for the Mid Suffolk Ramblers. She is now buried at St. Andrews Church, near the walk she loved. Just two minutes walk from her house in Stowmarket, the spire of St Andrews can be seen as a reminder of her pioneering work for Mid Suffolk Ramblers all those years ago.

*By her daughter Dr. Katherine Hewlett*

# Sudbury Group

Not a lot to report over the last few months! For some years now I have been emailing out a regular monthly newsletter/update, which is mainly used for keeping members up-to-date and to issue out reminders or changes to walks.

Since the lockdown it has been an invaluable tool to keep in touch with members. It is our 50th Anniversary this year and all the celebrations and events we were planning have now been postponed until 2021. The following is a copy of the May edition of our update which was done to mark our 50th.



## Happy Anniversary

***Sudbury Ramblers 50 years old – May 1970 – May 2020***

The above photo was sent to me by Roger Wolfe and shows some of the original members of our Group, taken at Long Melford just before a walk from Melford to Clare at the beginning of 'National Footpath Week'.

The picture was published in the Suffolk Free Press on Thursday May 21, 1970. Roger Wolfe is in the centre looking at the map with his daughter Helen next to him. Roger's wife Stella is standing behind Helen. The man kneeling on the right is Malcomb Peddar and Roger thinks that the man in glasses at the back is Andrew Rollings?

However, if you think you might know who any of the others are, and where they are now, then do please let me know.

## Need for Ramblers' Association

THE recent correspondence about the sad state of many local footpaths prompts me to suggest a way of ensuring that the problem becomes no worse. The Ramblers' Association exists, among other things, to protect the interests of ramblers. The establishment of a local branch of this Association in Sudbury would enable those who joined its activities to help prevent the loss of even more paths. It might also be possible for its members to secure some improvements by pressing for the implementation of the new Countryside Act which gives clearly defined protection to public paths. Such a club might also be of general social value. I would be pleased to hear from anybody who is interested.

**R. D. WOLFE**

Hon. Local Footpaths  
Secretary.

26 Meadow View Road,  
Sudbury.

My wife Stella and myself are indeed founder members of Sudbury Group of the Ramblers and so far as I am aware, sadly now the only survivors of those distant times. The others I can recall were Doug and Joyce Norton, Bill Platts and Andrew Rollings, both of Boxford, Cliff Willson (sic) of Middleton and a Mrs Rankin of Long Melford. I kept the papers relating to the creation of the group for many years before passing them to David Holden, then group sec. on what might have been the 20th or 25th anniversary of the group's formation c1969/70, but I can't be certain of the dates. David has long since passed away and what happened to the papers since is unknown to me.

Stella and I moved to Sudbury (from Cambridge) in Dec 1968 and soon began to explore the local footpath network. We were dismayed to find it in a much neglected state and very much under-used. There were about six other members of the RA in the whole of the former county of West Suffolk, one of whom acted as hon. footpath sec. On my arrival he couldn't hand over the job to me fast enough! Public rights of way were viewed by officialdom as an obsolete relic of a past way of life as seemed to be locked in a vicious circle of decline. In many parts of West Suffolk village populations were still in post-war

decline, farms were being amalgamated and hedges removed at alarming speed to accommodate mechanisation, taking with them the last vestiges of the old footpath network. It was rare to find a footpath in easily walkable condition and there seemed to be no prospect of any improvement.

I have to admit that I found it all very depressing and it was a very difficult job to do single handed. In any case there seemed no point in trying to preserve paths if no one was going to use them, so together with a few others we started an informal group of walkers and drew up a programme of week end rambles.

After a year or two it became apparent that a more formal organisation was needed so we got in touch with RA HQ in London to advise on the formation of a properly constituted local group. This initiative pre-dated Suffolk Area; we were then members of RA Southern Area which included London and the

## A PUBLIC MEETING SAVE OUR PATHS

Saturday, May 23rd, 1970  
at 3.0 p.m.

in  
**NORTH STREET PRIMARY  
SCHOOL HALL, SUDBURY**

when it is hoped a South West Suffolk  
Group of the Ramblers Association  
will be formed.

Chairman: Councillor Miss Mildred Head  
Mayor-elect of the Borough of Sudbury.

Speakers:

J. M. Gorst, C.Eng., M.T.P.I., M.I.Mun. E.  
(West Suffolk County Planning Officer)

V. W. Morecroft, Hon. Secretary,  
Ramblers Association, Southern Area.

ALL INTERESTED IN OUR COUNTRYSIDE AND  
ITS FOOTPATHS WILL BE WELCOME.

0-23

South East, a huge area basically defined by a line from the Wash to the Solent. Rural East Anglia was even more of a backwater than it is now!

The inaugural public meeting of Sudbury Group took place in Northgate St Primary school (now a car park?) and Cllr Mildred Head, Mayor of Sudbury presided. Doug Norton was elected Chairman, myself Hon. Sec. and Cliff Willson served for many years subsequently as Hon. Treasurer. I wish I could recall the exact date but c1970 seems likely. I think that younger generations of the Norton family are still local residents (White Horse brewery in Edwardstone and one of the Boxford pubs?) and they may have more info. Stella and I moved from Sudbury to Ipswich in 1972, by which time I think Suffolk Area had come into being and we attended the inaugural meeting of Ipswich Group.

## AREA NEWS

**B**ESIDES THE THREE new Local Groups formed in National Footpath Week (see preceding column) groups have also been launched for South Bedfordshire, West Essex and Sudbury and District (Southern Area) and for Sleaford and Boston (Lincolnshire Area). Also in Southern Area the former Brentwood and District Committee has now acquired group status. The Area has formed seven new groups so far this year bringing its total to 16.

As Area News has from time to time reported group formation has picked up in the last year or so and in many places groups are now spear-heading R.A. activities at local level. During National Footpath Week some groups had bigger and more successful programmes than entire Areas. Lake District Area report that their new groups at Millom and Kendal are now active and that the Preston & Fylde Group has launched its own newsletter under the title *Pathfinder*.

Before the official formation of Sudbury Group I recall meeting Pat Rattenbury of Bury St Edmunds, who was working along similar lines at the other end of West Suffolk. So far as I recall the inaugural meeting in Sudbury pre-dates that in BSE, so Sudbury can claim to be the first RA Group to be formed in Suffolk! No doubt press archives could confirm this, if anyone has time and interest to do the searches.

An anniversary I can definitely recall is that it is now exactly 50 years since I first suggested the creation of the Stour Valley Path. The idea was to create a need for some of the under-used and under-maintained rights of way by forming a long distance trail through some of the most attractive

countryside in East Anglia. Southern Area of the RA was supportive; local authorities in West Suffolk and Essex were not! What happened since is another story.

I'm so glad that Sudbury Group is still alive and that its activities continue to give pleasure to local walkers.

Roger Wolfe

***I have asked for past Chairmen to give me some reminiscences during their time in office. Here is the first one and there will be more to follow;***

## Reminiscences – by *Iain Taylor*

Keith has asked me for some reminiscences about the time when I was a lot younger with the Sudbury Ramblers Group. Now I am going to admit that I am a little hazy on the dates but I'm sure that some of the longer standing members will know to what I am referring.

I first became aware of the Sudbury Ramblers sometime in the early seventies and took part in a few local walks around Hadleigh. Mary and I also brought our two small daughters along for one of the all-day walks; I think it was part of the Essex Way, where the coach met us at frequent intervals. It was only when the girls were older and we could leave them for a while that Mary & I started to be able to walk regularly.

What walks stick out in my memory? Laurie Burroughs leading us on the Princess Diana Walk through the London Parks. As we came near to Buckingham Palace one of the Guards Regiments marched by with their colours on the way to Changing the Guard. All us men who were ex-military took off our hats and stood to attention.

There are Three levels of holiness: God; The Queen and The Colours. Laurie led several walks in London and always we had fine weather.

It must have been in the early to mid-1980s that I was hijacked at the AGM into becoming Chairman - which I remained until 1999.

There had been talks about weekends away and in the end I decided to organise one. Mary & I went up to Sheringham and found a couple of suitable walks, put them in the programme and that was the start of a number of weekends away. I remember one where it was myself, and around a dozen ladies. We raised a few eyebrows and I did tell one enquirer that two were wives and the rest concubines. I think he believed me!





*This photo was taken in the Cotswolds, Iain is not sure of the people in the snap, Barbara Stewart tells me her best guess is, from the right, Jane & Brian Penson, Iain, Barbara, Margaret Smith, Janet Weeder, ?, Mary Hazelden, Mary Tatum, ?  
If you know who the missing ones are then let me know.*

Other weekends away were in the Cotswolds and Surrey. Interspersed were weekends away organised by John D'Eye up in the Peak District, once from Castleton and another from Hartington.

I represented the Sudbury Group for a number of years on the Suffolk Area Committee and on two occasions represented the county at the annual conference.

I gave up the Chairmanship of the Sudbury Group in late 1999 due to personal circumstances and did not start walking again until sometime in 2000. Then I was walking regularly with the group but in the Spring of 2007 I had to have an artificial heart valve fitted which took me out for about six months. During this time I had teamed up with Ingrid and moved to Great Cornard.

Our walking continued but then in 2010 Ingrid became ill and sadly died and after that I somehow lost my enthusiasm and I found that now being in my 70s I could not keep up with the walkers. The final straw came in the Spring of 2014 when I had to have a second heart valve and a pacemaker fitted.

All in all I must say that I enjoyed my walking and have many happy memories of the places and people that will always stay with me.

*Iain Taylor*

## **A Blast from the past –**

Here are a couple of photos from earlier days with thanks to Barbara Stewart.



*Keith Brown*

# Waveney Group News

Like all other Groups, I could start with a list of this year's postponed or cancelled events, due to the pandemic, but thought I would concentrate on what we have done.

At our 2019 AGM a full Committee was elected, with the new post of Technology Officer, being ably filled by Neil Bauers. Little did we think then that our Committee meetings would rely so much on technology.

In early March a few of us joined Nigel Meadows on his Area Path Maintenance working party at Woodbridge, to help re-establish the correct, and very overgrown, route through woodland. We quickly saw the fruits of our labours, the biggest challenge being remembering where we had left our tools and coats. We hope that others may join the team when this activity recommences.

I am pleased to say that when Ramblers advised us that small groups of up to six could walk together our Members stepped up to lead, participate and advertise such walks. Prior to that, we had to be content with following photographic records of lone walks on the Waveney Ramblers Facebook page. We were so lucky with the beautiful spring weather, and nature put on a fantastic show for us all to enjoy. It truly lifted the spirits.

Following on from this, the advice that we could incorporate larger numbers, was instigated in line with Ramblers guidelines. Walk Leaders and Members are encouraged to do only what they feel happy with, understanding completely everybody's situation and feelings. The result has been an ever changing programme of our usual variety of walk distances and landscape. Each walk has to be planned with an emphasis on choosing less crowded areas, with as few gates, stiles and pinch points as possible, in which the Ramblers risk assessment template has proved invaluable.

Our walks continue the Group's theme of covering long distance paths, either as successive linear walks, or as a series of circular walks which incorporate sections. For this we have to thank David Harmer, for instigating the idea, and Neil Bauers for continuing it, producing even more Waveney Ramblers' Walks and Guide Books in the process. As a Group, we have an enviable number of walk routes on our website available to everyone, with a big thank you to all contributors.

Hopefully, following on from the National Press reporting a rise in the numbers taking up walking during the lockdown, we shall be able to welcome new walkers to the Group.

In August I gave a talk, on Zoom, to the Lowestoft Rotary Club, on the theme "What is a rambler, and who are the Ramblers?" Chris Addison invited me to do this before Covid was a word on everyone's lips, but of course the event had to be adapted. It was an interesting experience; with the audience all being muted, it was difficult to gain an impression of how the talk was being received, and a lack of any laughter at my jokes was a little disappointing. However, on a personal note, putting together the information on the Ramblers was both informative and interesting, and taking a look at how ramblers are perceived was thought provoking.

I am sure that like all Suffolk Groups, the smooth running of the Group has only been possible due to the adaptable approach of its Committee and other volunteers, and I thank them all for this. We still have to negotiate our Group AGM in November, and the Area AGM next February. As for other future plans, hopefully David Harmer's coach trip, the Group holiday in Oxfordshire, leading a walk in the Lowestoft First Light Festival and our annual tea-party will be able to go ahead in 2021. There, now I've mentioned the postponed or cancelled events!



# Suffolk Area Membership 2020

| Group            |      | Jan | Feb  | Mar  | Apr  | May  | June | July |
|------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | [SK] |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Bury St. Edmunds | [1]  | 399 | 401  | 402  | 397  | 392  | 391  | 388  |
| Ipswich          | [2]  | 318 | 312  | 311  | 315  | 313  | 319  | 309  |
| Newmarket        | [3]  | 174 | 168  | 169  | 167  | 165  | 167  | 162  |
| Stowmarket       | [4]  | 127 | 128  | 125  | 130  | 131  | 126  | 127  |
| Sudbury          | [5]  | 149 | 149  | 145  | 146  | 148  | 146  | 149  |
| Waveney          | [6]  | 226 | 222  | 223  | 219  | 215  | 216  | 221  |
| Alde Valley*     | [7]  | 131 | 133  | 132  | 132  | 129  | 128  | 132  |
| Stour            | [50] | 29  | 33   | 33   | 32   | 31   | 31   | 30   |
| Others           | [96] | 56  | 56   | 56   | 54   | 53   | 48   | 50   |
| Total            |      | 609 | 1602 | 1596 | 1592 | 1577 | 1563 | 1568 |

\* includes Alde Valley Working Party [SK70]

|                |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| National Total | 101833 | 101655 | 100788 | 99333 | 87830 | 97228 | 97616 |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

**Footnote FOR Aug.aREA Meeting:** it is encouraging to see that both Nationally and by Area there has been a slight increase in membership numbers this month. This could be as a result of the easing of lockdown measures during the pandemic.

I remember a few years ago that on an Alde Valley walk using the river wall between Walberswick beach and the bridge crossing the river a furious argument took place between one of our more articulate members and a number of cyclists who were trying to push us aside to keep cycling along the narrow path. They were surprised and indignant when told they had no right to cycle on a designated footpath - walkers only. It is not a bridle way

Apparently with lockdown this problem has got worse and has been highlighted by Griff Rhys Jones in articles in the EADT and a national newspaper. He is objecting to a surge in cyclists using (or misusing) the Stour and Orwell Walks that cross his garden.

In response Suffolk Highways (who particularly mention river walls) said "it is not an offence to cycle on a public footpath but doing so without permission from the landowner is likely to be trespassing. Signs can be set up by landowners to discourage cycling but it is not a legal option to put up barriers". They then state it is an offence to cycle on public footpath if a Traffic Regulation Order or no-cycling bylaw is applied.



Jennifer Tyson

# RAMBLERS' SUFFOLK AREA

## The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Saturday 1 February 2020, 10.30 a.m at the Southgate Community Centre Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk hosted by Bury St Edmunds Group

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for absence**

Rosie Perham welcomed 38 people, including our guest speaker Aynsley Jardin, Trustee, Central Office to our meeting and handed over proceedings to the Area Chair, Roley Wilson. Apologies were received from Susie Dunham, Angela Ratcliffe, Phil Prigg, Dot Richards, Anne Hubert-Chibnall, Len and Dave Bambury, Lawrence Sturdy

### **2. Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Saturday 2 February 2019**

Acceptance of Minutes proposed by Linda Wilson seconded Ron West

### **3. Matters Arising Any matters arising will be raised during meeting.**

### **4. Presentation and Acceptance of Annual Reports**

#### **4.1 Chair's Report**

Roley gave an update to his report contained in the Area Newsletter produced last summer: I continue to represent walkers at the Suffolk Local Access Forum. On the 24th October we were given a presentation on the planning process by a representative from East Suffolk. Increasingly there is a recognition that major planning agreements should include a proper assessment of the impact on the existing infra structure for transport - and methods to enhance and improve it that include, walking and cycling needs, both for leisure and sustainable transport. There has been agreement that before 2032, 66,000 new homes will be built in Suffolk. 19,000 of those will be in East Suffolk. There is clearly a major role for us to play in scrutinising these often massive planning applications with a view to supporting the call for adequate provision for walkers.

Our local access forum in Suffolk seeks to be a prominent and active force in consultations. Something which does not necessarily happen in every county. I sit on that Group as a representative for walkers. Specifically as well as my position within the general forum, I sit on sub committees dealing with, Network Rail, Sizewell C, Coastal Erosion and Open Access, and the ROWIP which has been recently published.

We continue to have a good working relationship with Suffolk County Councils Rights of Way Department. They do however face difficulties like all councils with resources. In many cases the councils stance with regard to particular issues mirrors our own, for example network rail crossings. However, where we differ we are always willing to put our arguments forward. We will also challenge and if necessary, as a last resort, seek legal redress, if we believe it is reasonable to do so.

You will have an update later from Jim on the work which your Footpath Committee has been doing. I would like to thank them all on your behalf for the work they have done and continue to do for us all here in Suffolk.

I have been attending the Walkers are Welcome Alliance Meetings, together with Mary who has a particular interest in the Needham Market proposals. We currently have three Walkers are Welcome locations in Suffolk, with proposals for four more. I believe it is important we are seen to support these as we are the one body who can provide the expertise and local knowledge that is so often required. Ideally that help should come from the local Group. It

very much aligns with our own aims to get more people out walking and ensure the places that are available to them are maintained to a high standard.

Following our decisions made at the Council meeting in August we now have three new posts on the Council and matching Action Plans to take forward their work. Your Groups have had the Action Plans distributed to them and I know that personal contact has been made with many Groups already. I am extremely grateful to those who have agreed to take on these new challenges.

So we have three exciting new roles but there was a fourth. I presented a proposal to your council for the role of a Volunteer Training and Recruitment Officer. Increasingly provision is being made for training by Central Office nearer to home. I have asked your representatives on the Council to go back to your Groups to see if we can identify a volunteer for this new role. The post entails coordinating training, not its delivery.

Before I leave the topic of training the Chairs of your Groups will have received a recent email about training for Walk Leaders. This is available on two dates and two locations here in Suffolk The First Aid Training provided for us received positive feedback and we are hoping to run another course. Please circulate this around your Group to see who would be interested.

Richard Sharp our National Area Support Manager attended our Council meeting in August. We are working together with Richard and Nicky Wilson, the Area Support Officer for the Southern Area, in developing and achieving our goals. The joint liaison meetings with our neighbours in Norfolk and Essex have been particularly helpful in exchanging ideas on future areas for joint working.

If you have signed up to receive updates from our National Office you will from time to time be asked to support campaigns, to write to your local MP, or sign a petition. I am sure there will continue to be such calls in the future.

The Ramblers made representations in respect of the Agricultural Bill which was circulated prior to the election. That election which has now sealed our fate in respect of the EU. We can not now expect any of the protections that the EU gave us on the Environment. There were warm words in the Bill but little substance in commitments. It is perhaps telling that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers did not mention public access to the countryside and nature once in her speech to the recent Oxford Farming Conference.

The Government pledged in 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan, to Improve the Environment' to "open up the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world to people from the widest possible range of ages and backgrounds". The Government also pledged to "take into account the often hidden additional benefits in every aspect of the environment for national wellbeing, health and economic prosperity, with scientific and economic evidence to the fore" We must keep up the pressure to ensure the Government delivers on its promises.

We live in a wonderful county for walking and as Ramblers we all contribute to making sure those walking opportunities are maintained and improved. Be proud of yourselves you are doing a great job.

## 4.2 Area Footpath Officer

Jim Richards provided the following update to his report in the Area Newsletter.

### **Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order.**

We still await the decision.

**Rights Of Way Improvement Plan** – The new ROWIP is now published and available online.

**Definitive Map Consolidation** - The definitive map and statement for the former rural district of Blyth was updated on the 1st October 2019. The working copies of the new maps are available on- line through the Suffolk Rights of Way website.

**East Anglia One North And East Anglia Two Offshore Windfarms** – Scottish Power Renewables are proposing to bring the cabling ashore at Thorpeness and to site the huge substations at Friston. The projects are what are now known as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and the formal applications for DCOs (Development Consent Orders) have now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State). We have registered as an interested party and made representations mainly on the ground that the proposed substations are in the wrong place and should be on brownfield sites elsewhere. The project involves some 4 miles of underground cabling and three large substations at Friston, where it will be connected to the National Grid. Some of the cabling will be laid using horizontal drilling but there will also be large sections of cut and cover through the AONB. The work involves both temporary and permanent changes to the PROW system. If the development has to go ahead, the diversions proposed are considered to be fairly reasonable. We have concentrated on demanding specific rights of way improvements in the general area by way of planning gain along the lines previously put forward in regard to the Sizewell C nuclear power station consultations.

**Gipsy Lane And Willow Walk Railway Foot Crossing, Needham Market** The Extinguishment and Diversion Orders to give effect to the closure of the crossings at and near Gipsy Lane have now been made and confirmed. The Order Decisions following the public inquiry can be seen through the Planning Inspectorate's website.

**Don't Lose Your Way Campaign (2026 Cut Off).** Ramblers are about to enter into the next stage of this campaign to save lost ways at risk from being extinguished in 2026. They are looking for volunteers to help identify unrecorded paths and to engage in the necessary research. As I'm sure you all know, we are very fortunate that in Suffolk we benefit enormously from the extensive, if not exhaustive, work that John Andrews has done spanning five decades to bring about the recording on the Definitive Map of paths on the basis of historical evidence that he has researched. There is still some work to be done though and John is willing to help us. It is proposed that a team of volunteers be formed and I shall be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to contribute, in however small a way, to this project.

**Sizewell C** – EDF made an additional Stage 4 consultation. This was supplemental to the Stage 3 consultation. Threats to close several foot crossings on the East Suffolk Line may now be averted if the newly proposed "integrated transport option" is chosen.

**Sunnica Energy Farm** (Freckenham, Worlington, Chippenham and Snailwell)- a joint venture between Tribus Energy and PS Renewables. Those of you in the west of the county will be aware of this proposal which, we are told, would be the biggest Solar Farm in the UK. This is still in the non-statutory consultation stage and volunteers in our Newmarket Group will initiate our responses.

### **4.3 Coastal Access Officer**

Nigel advised: When I was first appointed as Suffolk Area Coastal Access Officer, I was told by Natural England that they hoped to open the first 2 sections of the 5 in Suffolk, by the end of 2017.

However, the whole process is now about 3 years behind schedule. We, as Ramblers, produced detailed reports and recommendations for all five Suffolk sections in 2016 and early 2017, as well as consulting with SCC Rights of Way team. I have since kept in regular contact with the Natural England Officers responsible for each section, and things speeded up at the end of 2019. If it had not been for the general election, 3 sections would have been published at the end of last year. The whole process for Natural England is in 5 stages. Stage 1, preparation and stage 2, development, are now pretty well completed for all 5 sections. Stage 3 is where they finalise proposals, with maps, and publish a report to the Secretary of State. Once the sections are published, we will have further opportunities to comment over a period of what used to be 6 months, but is now down to 8 weeks. Then, stage 4 is next, when the finalised proposals, together with any amendments, representations and objections will then be sent to the Secretary of State for adjudication, a process that currently takes about 6 months, but is speeding up. Finally, once approved, stage 5 the work on the ground, can take place and the order is confirmed, a process which can still take up to a year, but Natural England are still confident that all of the Suffolk Coastal path will be open on the ground, if not this year, before the end of 2021. To this end, I am very pleased to be able to tell you that the section from Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry was published on 15th January. The section from Harwich to Shotley Gate was published on 22nd January, and the section from Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea was published on 29th January. The 2 remaining sections should be published within the next 2 months, so we should have all 5 sections in Suffolk up to stage 5 before the end of this year. Maps of the published sections are available to view on line, or with me today.

### **4.4 Area Footpath Maintenance Team**

Nigel Meadows was asked to undertake the role of Area Coordinator in the Autumn as he has been part of the Alde Valley Working Party Group (which has been in existence for some 20 years). Nigel made contact with Groups and initially received contact from 16 volunteers. Currently 3-4 sessions have been arranged around the county between February and end of March to clear paths using hand tools. Volunteers have been asked to bring their own tools, but Alde Valley are able to supplement these. Further clearance work will be considered such as way marking, netting bridges and boardwalks, etc. outside of the bird nesting season. Anyone else interested in volunteering should contact Nigel by email [onnigelmeadows@sky.com](mailto:onnigelmeadows@sky.com).

Ron West asked if there was an age limit to volunteer but Nigel confirmed there was only an age limit when using power tools. At this time it is not planned to use such tools, as individuals would have to have undergone training.

### **4.5 Membership Secretary Report**

Jan advised that both in Area and Nationally membership numbers continue to fall. Newmarket Group were contacted to share their best practice. They welcome prospective members and the Membership Secretary ensures they have a copy of their current programme. When notified of a new member they send a welcome letter, programme and latest Newsletter. They also offer a varied programme.

Membership Secretaries can now access membership Data on the Insight Hub and Gavin Monk, Technology Officer will cover this in more detail.

#### **4.6 Area Campaigns and Publicity**

Mary undertook this role in August and has contacted all Groups to introduce herself. Mary has been in touch with Central Office who coordinated the Festival of Winter Walks and she brought along the Eastern Daily Press and also National Press Papers which had very positive articles. Jenny Tyson advised that Graham Howard spoke on Sarah Lilley's BBC Radio Suffolk show on behalf of the Ramblers and gave a very positive interview. Some Groups have also put up posters promoting walks. Mary has also been in touch with Central Office to promote Sudbury's 50 year celebration and advised they are keen to publish such events.

#### **4.7 Technology Officer's Report**

Gavin encouraged all groups to promote use of the Ramblers App by their members. He asked a number of questions to establish how much was known as to the number of walks offered in Suffolk and how many people attended. This established that whilst walks are recorded, the information on people attending is not. He asked Groups to start to record this information for every walk, something which Bury St Edmunds Group have been doing for some time. This information will let us know the number of people who have walked with us throughout the year, if they are a member of the Group, a visitor from another Group, or a new Walker. It also allows us to know which walks appeal to non-members and which don't so that we can offer more of these in the future. This information can easily be recorded using the Ramblers App and it doesn't have to be the Walk Leader, anyone can input this at any point on or throughout the walk.

Gavin also advised the Ramblers App allows you search for a walk and will give driving directions to the start of the walk and, for Ramblers Routes, follow the route of the walk.

Peter Hunt asked if the Group Programme published on the web automatically transfer to the App and Gavin confirmed it does.

**Adoption of Reports was proposed by Ralph Brighton, seconded Jenny Brabin. All agreed.**

#### **5. Presentation and acceptance of Accounts for previous year and Appointment of Independent Examiner.**

David Holmes ran through the Accounts for year ending September 2019, which have been independently examined. David advised the Area had received £4700 from Central Office of which £1535 has been allocated to Groups. These monies are not automatically allocated so David asked Groups to confirm the amount required. Other expenditure consisted of £672 for the Newsletter publication, £350 for meetings, £96 for Campaigns, Practical Work (Alde Valley Flexi Group) £95, but David advised if other Group work parties need funding they should look to the Group Treasurer. £45 was a donation to Open Spaces. Surplus this year is £1904 compared to £321 last year. We also still hold £176 for Jeff Pratt's memorial plus £124 Area contribution, total £300. This year David requested £2500 from Central Office which has been granted.

David advised in the past Groups/Area have only been able to spend Ramblers funds on charitable aims. However, now any monies from Ramblers Holidays can be spent on social events. Acceptance of Accounts was proposed by David Harmer, seconded Peter Hunt. All approved.

## **6. Election of Officers**

There were no elections received from Affiliated Societies and Individual Members.

Area Council Officers:

Chair. Roley said he was prepared to stand again if no one else came forward. There were no other proposals. He was proposed by Dave Hodgkinson, Seconded Jenny Brabin.

Remaining posts were proposed on block by Rosie Perham, Seconded Roger Moore. All agreed

|                                                           |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Area Footpath Secretary                                   | Jim Richards    |
| Area Secretary/Area Membership Secretary                  | Jan Palmer      |
| Treasurer                                                 | David Holmes    |
| Coastal Access Officer/Area Footpath Maintenance Officer. | Nigel Meadows   |
| Area Access Officer                                       | Jenny Tyson     |
| News Letter Editor                                        | David Harmer    |
| Area Website Manager                                      | Dave Hodgkinson |
| Area Campaigns and Publicity Officer                      | Mary Moore      |
| Technology Officer                                        | Gavin Monk      |
| Vice Chair                                                | Vacant          |
| Volunteer Training and Recruitment Officer                | Vacant          |

## **7. Delegates of General Council**

Roley Wilson and Dave Hodgkinson, Bury St Edmunds are prepared to attend General Council in Bristol. No other names were put forward. All agreed.

## **8. Motions for General Council**

No motions were received prior to the meeting.

## **9. AOB.**

Linda reminded Roley to look for someone to accompany a Walk Leader on a Festival of Winter Walk on Friday 15 May, in Long Melford as they didn't hold a First Aid Certificate which is a requirement of SCC.

## **10. Closure of formal business was at 12.12 when the floor was handed over to our Guest Speaker, Aynsley Jardin, Trustee.**

Aynsley advised that Central Office were One Team working together for the benefit of the Ramblers and ran through the achievements for 2018/19 which included Don't Lose your Way, Helping Everyone find their Feet, Grow Members, Supporters and Income to become a great Charity. Aynsley also ran through the business plan goals for 2019/20 : Deliver membership growth through acquisition, retention and offer development. Deliver individual, major donor, community and legacy fundraising to diversify and grow income. Produce an implement people, organisational design and location strategy. Embed new digital transformation tools with staff and volunteers. Strengthen volunteering foundations and develop volunteering strategy.

Aynsley also showed the Suffolk pages on the Insight Hub and talked about the benefits that can be gained by having this information.

Aynsley asked for any questions and David Harmer asked if there was an age limit for the role of Trustee and Aynsley confirmed there isn't.

Rosie Perham closed the meeting by thanking Aynsley for her enthusiasm and commitment and referred back to her first slide "One Team" - Team standing for: Together Everyone Achieves More. Rosie also reiterated the importance of the welcome at the start of a walk and welcomed everyone at the meeting to join Ron West for a 5 mile walk, where Gavin would be taking the walk register.

# Suffolk Coastal Access - situation as of Summer 2020

All NE (Natural England) offices were closed until further notice during the pandemic crisis, and all staff are now working from home to the extent that they are able and personal circumstances allow. I am informed that all field work is still suspended, as of 9th July.

Publication of proposal reports had been suspended, but has re-commenced this month and so the Felixstowe to Bawdsey, and Bawdsey to Aldeburgh sections which are currently still 'in development' could be published in the next couple of months.

The consultation periods for the three stretches that were still in the eight-week period for objections and representations have been extended and remain open, with no current closing date for ending these consultation periods. That is the Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry, the Harwich to Shotley Gate, and the Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea sections, all still published but not yet approved.

To view all relevant documents on any sections of the Suffolk Coast path, go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coastal-path> then shotley-gate-to-felixstowe-ferry or aldeburgh-to-hopton-on-sea or harwich-to-shotley-gate.

All our formal comments have been submitted, mostly supportive, but with a few minor alternative suggestions. If any individuals still wish to make submissions, I would appreciate being sent a copy.

I am informed that NE's coast path teams are focusing on finalising unpublished proposals and the accompanying habitat assessments, as far as they can, and addressing the comments received for those stretches where the consultation period has been completed.

Subject to staff availability, I understand that Defra are continuing their work to approve uncontested report lengths (those with no objections).

All Planning Inspectorate site visits, hearings and inquiries are suspended, but I am told that they hope to continue undertaking admissibility decisions for objections received on the recently published proposals.

Despite the delays, we continue to remain optimistic regarding the opening of the coastal path.

**Nigel Meadows**

*Suffolk Area Ramblers Coastal Access Officer*



The Editor's Swan Song

By hook or by crook I'll be last in this book *[well Newsletter]*

Usually, it is the female of the species that has the last word *[only joking ladies]*

After eight years I am bowing out.

I would like to give thanks to Printing for Pleasure for assistance over this period, and trust that all members of The Ramblers in the Suffolk groups have enjoyed my efforts.

So dear readers, all that I can say is "parting is such sweet sorrow"  
and enjoy your walking.

*David Harmer*

*Thank you to all who have contributed, without these contributions  
there would be no Area Newsletter and Reports [Editor]*