

MID LANCASHIRE AREA



ramblers
at the heart of walking

NEWS – Early 2021

****End of Paper Programmes? ** **AGM** **Coastal Access ****

****YOU NEED TO READ THIS****

We are considering not producing any more paper programmes.

We need you to tell us if paper programmes are important to you.
(although not walking yet, this newsletter is best opportunity to ask)

HOW TO TELL US: Let us know enough information to identify you.

Name, Member No. OR part of address, phone no.

By Text: 07740 470728 (voice call possible but may not be able to record details.)

By Voice: Leave voice message on 01942 671311 (it's only an answerphone)

If you have access to our website, you will be able to download walk details.

Ask a friend to tell us via our website or email

By Website: www.lancashire-ramblers.org.uk and follow link on home page.

By email. midlancsareamembers@gmail.com

Why are we doing this?

-It's a year since we produced a paper programme. No one has expressed concern.

-When we are free to walk, groups will return to planning only one month ahead, which is not a realistic timescale for paper programmes.

-It unlikely that we could consider 4 month cycles until at least Autumn

-4 years ago only 30% of our members had ready access to emails and internet.

-Now 778 (68%) of our 1150 members have access to our website and downloads.

-Our leaders have appreciated not having to plan 5-6 months ahead

-Can more viably add walks at shorter notice.

However, we have an obligation to ensure all of our members can access our walks. We are unaware if the remaining 370 members do need a programme, or perhaps don't walk with us now. We will seek to find solutions for those who do not have internet access.

Accessing Walks Electronically

All the groups, other than Chorley, add their walks to the Rambler site. Hence available: -

- Via the Rambler site
- Via our Rambler supported Area & group sites. (or on local group sites)
- Downloadable Printable version on Area site always up to date?
- May be offering a weekly text based summary
- Via the Rambler App which is a particularly convenient means of finding walks.

Chorley walks are only on their own site or by email if you are on their lists, or via a curtesy link on the Area website.

****Walk Leaders****

You may have noticed that when we were permitted to walk, a number of the groups managed to largely re-create their normal walk programmes.

What you may not have noticed is that with many leaders unable to contribute due to their personal situation, those programmes were maintained by a relatively small number of leaders, around 11.

We owe a great vote of thanks to those leaders and hope that when more of us have been vaccinated, more leaders may feel able to start leading again.

****Zoom AGM****

This was the first time we have tried a Zoom AGM. Quite a few members made use of the practice sessions so we anticipated more “armchair attendees” than joined in. Not surprisingly there was the odd hiccup.

Mark Crosby from Headquarters updated us on various campaigns Ramblers are involved with and a bit about the on-going IT and website developments. And Diane Simcoe, our key HQ contact introduced herself.

David Kelly provided an update re the state of footpaths and coastal access. His Annual Review is now on the website under Reports.

Over the last year a number of officers have changed and some were co-opted. The current officers are:

Acting (& Vice) Chair: Eric Crichton	Secretary: David Kelly
Treasurer: Hilary Kane	Membership Sec: Joy Taylor
Finance Support: Paul Coupland	Footpath Sec: Joe Howard
Publicity: Kevin Matthews	Walk Prog: Eric Crichton
Web/IT/GDPR: Eric Crichton	
Area Website: www.lancashire-ramblers.org.uk	
Area Email midlancsareamembers@gmail.com	

We continue to seek a Chairman, Secretary and Footpath support person and will email specific requests and descriptions in due course.

****WebSite****

For the moment the main activity on the website are updates on the impact of Covid on walks and related information. Some more walks descriptions have been added.

****Tony Clarkson****

Sadly Tony passed away on the 10th Jan. As Area Secretary through the 80's into 90's, a period as Area Chairman, newsletter author and walk compiler Tony endlessly worked to provide an interface between HQ and groups and members, especially at times of difficulties in HQ. Meanwhile Tony also ran South Ribble until a few years ago. Tony has made a major contribution over a great many years, a record difficult to beat. Tony had health issues for a while but passed away a little unexpectedly (not covid). A number of members managed to attend his funeral.

Coastal Access Update

I have mentioned in previous newsletters that slow progress is being made with the provision of Coastal Access in England. On the 27th March 2017 Natural England started work on planning the section of the Coastal Way between Cleveys and Liverpool, which is expected to be about 117km. However it is thought that March 17 was a nominal date, with the real date being about Spring 18.

In 2018 it was expected that a set of proposals about the proposed route between Cleveleys and Liverpool Pier Head would be published in early 2019, which then slipped to Nov 19, before slipping further to early 2020, and then to late summer because of Covid-19, and was eventually published on the 7th Oct 2020. My reaction on reading it was one of being underwhelmed, which was a sentiment shared by the Open Spaces Society.

The document consists of six chapters with details as follows -

Chapter 1 - Cleveleys to Freckleton - mostly the access already exists. At the northern end it is planned to use the pavement on the A road rather than the Promenade, because the Promenade is subject to large waves in the event of bad weather. My thoughts are that this is health and safety gone mad. The reply to Natural England stated that the Promenade should be used in good weather and the A road when the weather is poor.

Chapter 2 - Freckleton to Preston - the proposal is to use the grass verge on the dual carriageway from Freckleton to Lea Gate. You can guess this came in for strong criticism, for alternatives should have been listed, with ideally the Coastal Way being on the banks of the River Ribble, but if not then field paths should be created. Discussions took place with Ramblers Central Office staff about this who stated that this seemed excessive, and compared this with proposals for the western side of The Wash which is an important place for bird life, where much better access is being planned.

The feeling is that if the route is not changed then walkers on the Coastal Way may decide to catch the bus between Freckleton and Lea rather than walk on the verge of a main road.

Chapter 3 - Preston to Tarleton - the proposal is to use existing footpaths and access by custom to a place near the last lock at Tarleton. It was commented that access in the vicinity of Hutton Marsh access could be improved by the provision of new footpaths.

The proposal is to build a bridge at Tarleton but presently the funds available do not allow for such a bridge to be built, so whilst not mentioned in the text it is going

to be a case of catch the bus from Much Hoole to Tarleton until such times as funds become available.

Chapter 4 - Tarleton to Southport - no comments, for the proposed route seems alright.

Chapter 5 - Southport to Cabin Hill (Formby) - comments about a couple points of detail, but nothing that should be controversial.

Chapter 6 - Cabin Hill to Liverpool Pier Head - again comments about points of detail, but nothing that should be controversial.

My expectation is that Chapters 1, 4, 5 and 6 will be accepted with hopefully small changes, but that Chapters 2 and 3 will need to be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, which may perhaps result in a public inquiry. Anything that involves the Planning Inspectorate is usually a slow process, so do not expect any improvements to coastal access for a number of years.

During last year (2020) the only section of the Coastal Way to be opened was that around Walney Island which opened in Feb, which is the thirteenth section to be opened. The total number of sections in the Coastal Way for England is 67.

In 2019 only two sections of the Coastal Way were opened, and in 2018 only one section was opened. Going back a few years the Coastal Way was expected to be completed by 2020, but 2023 or maybe 2024 now looks more realistic.

In Sep 2015 the Secretary of State approved the route of the Coastal Path from Whitehaven to Silecroft, which was going to be 55km long, which at the time was expected to open early 2017, with the works that are required being arranged by Cumbria CC. In reality good access already existed on the coast from St Bees to Whitehaven, so works were needed from St Bees to Silecroft. The opening date has kept slipping at intervals of a few months, with the latest date being shown as Early 2021. Assuming no further slippage occurs an expected eighteen month implementation period will have become five and a bit years.

Any articles for the next Area News need to be with David Kelly by the end of Nov.

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