

# THE BOOT

## The Bristol Ramblers' Newsletter

No 56 October 2010



### Annual General Meeting

The Group's Annual General Meeting will take place at 7.30 on 7<sup>th</sup> December at the United Reformed Church, Redland Park, Bristol.

The draft agenda is on the Group's website. If there is anything else that you would like to place on the agenda, please let Carew Reynell know.

The meeting will elect officers and committee members for 2010/11. There are currently no nominees for the following positions:

**Vice Chair:** a good opportunity to learn the ropes by supporting the Chair;

**Footpaths Officer:** the Bristol Group has not really been doing its fair share of practical work to maintain and improve footpaths in the areas in which we walk, and there is a need for someone to coordinate and target work of this nature.



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**Communications Officer:** the current committee believes that there should be more communication with members. A proposal for a more frequent electronic newsletter is outlined below, but this would require someone to collate and edit content.

**Sunday walks coordinator:** we would like to include half-day Sunday country walks in the programme, on an experimental basis.

Each of these positions offers the opportunity to make a very substantial contribution to the Group and to walking in Bristol. If you would be interested in these, or any other, positions, please contact any member of the committee.

**The committee is also keen to receive members' views** on two proposals to increase the use of electronic communication, to improve communication and to improve the efficiency with which we use our scarce resources. More details, and the financial context, are set out on the website, but in essence the proposals are:

**That new members** should be steered more strongly towards electronic circulation of the programme/Area News, by making electronic circulation the 'default' arrangement unless the member specifically 'opts in' to paper distribution. Email addresses are now collected as a matter of course when new members join, so this should be relatively easy to administer. Doubling the number of members using electronic distribution would save approximately £150 pa.

**That we replace the Boot** with an electronic newsletter which would be emailed to all members opting for electronic distribution and would be available on the website (and

signposted in the programme) for others. The electronic newsletter should be produced more frequently. The Committee believes that there should be more, rather than less, communication, including planning and environment and footpath issues. The electronic format would facilitate this, especially for matters requiring rapid action such as some planning issues and information about retailer events. Provided that Taunton Leisure is willing to transfer its sponsorship to the programme (or the electronic newsletter), there would be a saving of about £200 pa on printing costs.

**Please let us have your views** by the middle of November, so that the committee can decide what recommendation to put to the AGM.

### **Local issues**

All public bodies are under great financial pressure. In Bristol, as elsewhere, there is a risk of reductions in budgets for protecting and maintaining footpaths and for developing facilities for walkers. The Committee has made representations to the Council: the document is on the Group's website. We would urge other members who have concerns to send their views to Gary Hopkins ([gary.hopkins@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:gary.hopkins@bristol.gov.uk)), the Executive Member responsible for these matters, or Neil Harrison ([neil.harrison@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:neil.harrison@bristol.gov.uk)), Assistant Cabinet Member for Sustainability.

The campaigns section of the Ramblers' national website contains details of the national Dead End campaign, and how you might help.

More generally, the Council has established Neighbourhood Forums covering the entire city, to feed views in to Neighbourhood Partnerships. These bodies are open to anyone,

and have the potential to influence local decisions about the walking environment. This will not be everyone's cup of tea, but you should at least be aware of this opportunity to ask about what is going on and to make your voice heard. Details, including times and locations for forum meetings, are on the Council's website.

### **Retail Discounts**

You may have noticed that Cotswold Outdoor, the Ramblers national sponsors, has opened a store on Union Street. They, like most of the city's leisure retailers, offer discounts to Ramblers members. Remember to ask, and to have your membership card with you.

### **Silva Compass**

A lady has contacted me to say she has a Silva Compass she no longer uses and she would be pleased to give to a member of Bristol Ramblers. If you are interested please contact Tony Parsons 01275 394188

**Contributions to the BOOT please to Julie Westgarth**

[juliewestgarth@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:juliewestgarth@hotmail.co.uk)

***Deadline 06 January 2011***

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