

The Sheffield Rambler



In this issue:

Walks Programme:
2015 Onwards

Parkwood Springs

New walk leaders
needed

Walks Programme – 2015 Onwards

There seem to be ‘consultations’ for a great variety of things now-a-days – so here’s another one:- a consultation on our future walks programmes.

As we said at the AGM, our printed programme is out of date almost before it starts. This year there were about 55 changes to the programme – averaging more than one each week. They varied from small, or major, changes to bus times and/or routes to changes of leaders and new walks added.

As a first step the Rambles Committee has met to discuss some possible options. We are wondering about changing the programme to an annual printed newsletter which could give a flavour of the group – reports on some walks, activities undertaken etc – anything you would like to see, really, but with the main objective of making sure everyone knows how to get hold of up-to-date information about the walks.

The programme itself could then be on-line but with the facility to print off all or parts of the programme as you want – all Tuesday walks for the next 3 months, for example, or the complete programme for next month. Every 3 months we could print a programme for the next 3 and make it available to anyone who needs a printed copy. This means it should always be reasonably up-to-date, although obviously we can’t discount bus changes even on that time-scale. We would always keep the programme filled for at least 3 months ahead.

This would mean that leaders would not have to enter their walks up to 17 months ahead, though they could fill in for the whole year if they wanted to. The whole system would be so much more flexible.

We have already had some feedback and a main concern seems to be that people do like something ‘in hand’ to browse through or carry around with them. Does this need to be a full year’s programme at one time? Could being able to personalize the programme you print off for yourself have any appeal? I’ve also had the suggestion of a calendar with all walks listed on one page along with a photo each month – a briefer version of the current programme, I suppose. This doesn’t, though, address the changes problem.

Please let us have your views and any ideas you may have. We really will take all into account and try to come to the best compromise we can. Obviously we will never be able to give everyone everything they want – unless everyone wants the same – but we’ll try our best. You can email your views to rambles@sheffieldramblers.org or telephone any member of the Rambles Committee as listed on page 28 of the new programme or talk to us about it when out on walks.

Judy Gathercole



Is the glass half-full or half-empty? What's happening about Parkwood Springs?

It's been a busy few weeks finding out what's going to happen about the future of Parkwood Springs, and all the signs are that this will continue in the first few months of 2014. As well as chairing the Friends of Parkwood Springs, I also represent the Ramblers, and I'm trying to make sure that the interests of walkers are fairly reflected in it all.

The broad strategy has been clear for some time. When the Landfill on Parkwood Springs closes, the City Council's plan is that the whole area from Rutland Road to Herries Road – a distance of about 2 miles – should become a 'country park in the city'. It's already possible to walk on a lot of it, and enjoy amazing views over the city and beyond. There's been a steady increase in walkers and other users. But the big step forward will come when the Landfill site that makes up the middle part of it closes.

The Landfill Restoration

At the beginning of December, Viridor, who own the Landfill site, outlined their current plans. The quantity of waste coming to the site has fallen substantially because of increased re-cycling. Nevertheless, Viridor won't be immediately seeking to vary the planning permission to allow them to tip for longer, and so tipping will stop, as planned, at the end of 2018. That's good news. Early in 2014 they will apply for changes to the planning permission to recognise that the final contours will be different – indeed, they won't be tipping on parts of the site at all - and to accept their plans for the restoration of the site, to take place by the end of 2020.

We've only seen outline plans so far, not the detail, but as far as we can see there will be things we can support, but also substantial problems. The good news is that a small area will be opened up in the first five years, and there will be small improvements to a problem path round the perimeter. However, under the Viridor proposals most of the site will be closed to the public for many years – up to 30 years or more.

Their reasoning for this is that they will collect methane gas from the site to generate electricity for that length of time. They want to prevent access by the public to certain areas until gas collection has finished and the underground pipework and other infrastructure has been removed. This could delay access for many, many years. The Friends Group has argued that they need to think much more imaginatively about how they can provide the necessary security and allow reasonable access on a more acceptable timescale.

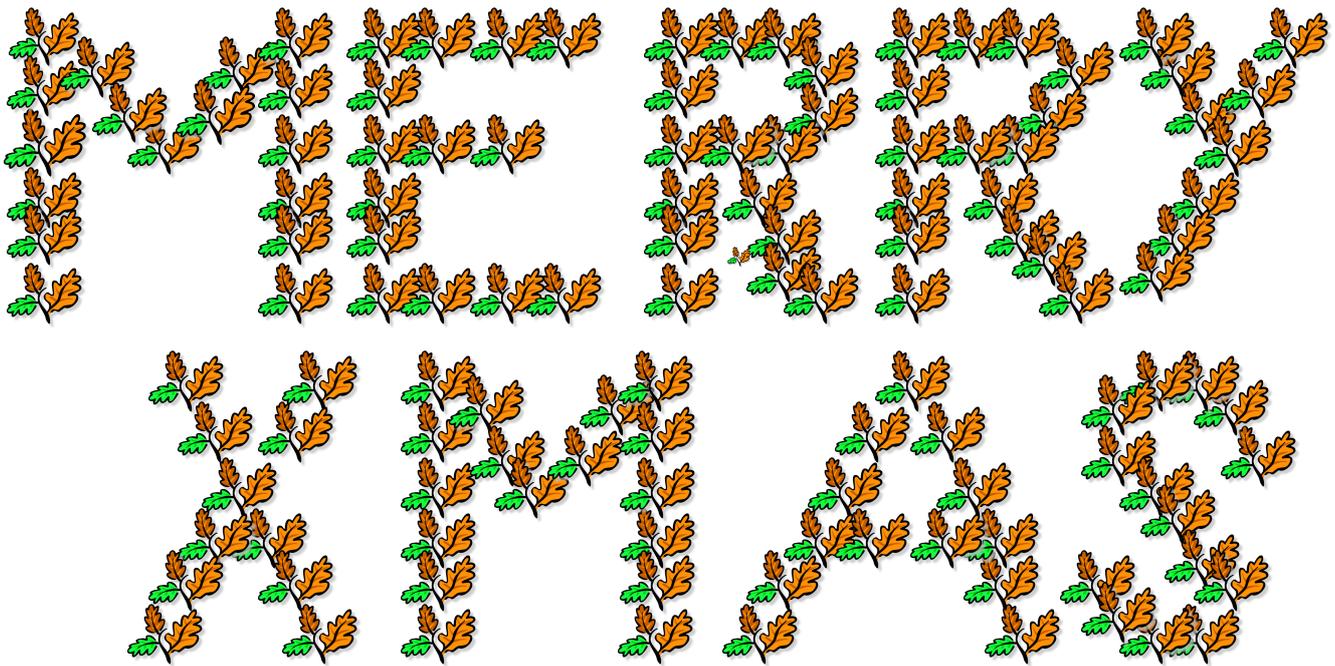
Viridor have promised a full consultation in the New Year, with an open day to scrutinise the plans and ask questions. The Ramblers Committee has agreed that Terry Howard, David Woodhead, Les Seaman and I should consider the proposals then and make a response.

Sheffield Ski Village

On top of all this, the owner of the Sheffield Ski Village has announced that he will ask for planning permission from the City Council to build 70 houses on the site of the Ski Village, which forms a small part of Parkwood Springs. (When the owner first bought the Ski Village people asked whether this was his long-term plan.) As you probably know, after 30 years of trouble-free operation, the Ski Village has been subject to a number of arson attacks recently. The owner has closed it and removed a lot of the equipment. Although the site looks better than it did a few months ago, it is still a blot on the landscape.

The Friends Group has said that we will form a view when we see the detailed plans. In general, we are against any large scale building project on Parkwood Springs because of the opportunity it now presents for a unique country park in the city. Of course we recognise that there will be buildings such as visitor facilities. It is also possible that some houses could help the site, for example by bringing people to it who will keep an eye on things and help to make it feel safe for people. But we want to make sure that any development contributes to the long-term vision of the country park, and does not cut across it.

Interesting times!
Neill Schofield



Best wishes
for
2014
from the Committee

URGENT: New Walk Leaders Needed.

New walk leaders are urgently required to fill gaps in the 2014 Shorter Walks Programme. Routes of between 3 and 6 miles are needed for Thursdays and Saturdays in April, June, August, September and October. Walks can be entered on the website. To register and receive instructions on how to use the web walk entry system email rambles@sheffieldramblers.org or send the details of your walk to the coordinator at roberthaslam0@googlemail.com in the same format as in the walks booklet. Deadline is 1 January, 2014.