

MINUTES OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD
ON SUNDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2021 AT 4.30 PM ON ZOOM

The record of attendance shows 38 members were present at the Annual General Meeting, see Appendix 1.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE AREA OFFICERS

Jim welcomed everyone to an unusual AGM with no tea or cake, no social interaction and no walks. Hopefully this would be the first and last AGM on Zoom. Members had all received the protocol for the meeting. Due to the unique circumstances the nomination procedure for Area Officers had been changed for this year only. This meeting would not set any precedents for future AGMs.

The Area President and Officers were introduced to the meeting. Richard May, Member of the Board of Trustees was welcomed and Jim thanked Richard for attending a Nottinghamshire AGM for the second time. Diane Simcoe, Ramblers Area Liaison Officer was introduced. Jim particularly thanked Allan Rogers and Rod Fillingham who had stood down as Officers during the year. James Magill was not standing as an Officer for 2021 and Jim thanked him for his service as Area Chair, Area Vice-Chair, Groups Officer and Council Member. Jenny Fillingham had re-joined the Council in 2020 as a Council Member but was not standing for 2021 and Jim thanked her for the last year.

2. OVERVIEW FROM THE AREA PRESIDENT

Paddy Tipping thanked the team for the arrangements for the AGM and commented that we had all been learning new skills and techniques like Zoom. Paddy said he had walked to the Hemlock Stone in the morning and there were a number of families with small children. Many people had been walking locally in the crisis and Ramblers needed to engage these people. Walking provided a release from the stresses of the situation and a closer link with nature. The reduction in traffic noise meant the birds could be heard which added enjoyment to walks. Paddy said he had been walking on Curbar Edge just before the first lockdown and since then had found excellent local walks. A great solace in this dreadful period had been to put boots on and get out walking whatever the weather. Paddy said he missed the companionship of others and hoped walks would be able to start again in the Spring and Summer when members could walk and talk together.

Paddy confirmed he was willing to stay on as President for another year.

3. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 2nd February 2020 were approved as a true record. .

Proposed: Alex Staniforth

Seconded: Jenny Fillingham

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

There were no matters arising.

6. REPORT ON MOTIONS PASSED AT THE PREVIOUS AGM

There were no motions last year.

7. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS (2019 – 2020)

The Area Officers Annual Reports and Accounts covering the period 1st October 2019 – 30th September 2020 had been published on the Notts Area website.

- 7.1 Chair's Report - Jim reported that recruitment of new Area volunteers had been successful with 8 coming forward to assist with rights of way work and as Area Minutes Secretary. Central Office had kept members up to date with changes due to Covid rules. The designation of Ramblers as a sport had allowed walks to have up to 30 participants and to organise walks when other walking groups could not.
- 7.2 Area Secretary's Report - Judith reported Central Office had been in contact about Group boundaries as shown on Assemble. The details, originally provided in 2018 had been sent again and it was hoped the maps could be corrected to show the correct geographical boundaries for Groups.
- 7.3 Area Rights of Way Secretary – Steve reported that a claim for ROW at Clipstone submitted in 2008 had finally been agreed
- 7.4 Area Countryside Officer – Sue reported the Agriculture Bill had now become an Act. The proposals to criminalise trespass had received over 100,000 comments from the public and a debate in the House of Commons would be required. Steve added this was a matter of great concern for claiming rights of way. The original intention had been to prevent illegal encampments but the scope had been widened. Adrian Amer expressed concern about the proposals which would adversely affect all walkers. Sue added that the Environment Bill had been delayed.
- 7.5 Area Membership Secretary's Report – Judith explained the report had been produced by Rod Fillingham. Judith had taken the role back following Rod's resignation. The number of members in Nottinghamshire had increased to 2276 at 5th February 2021 although the national membership had fallen to 97,275 in January.
- 7.6 Area Tourism & Heritage paths Officer – Chris added it had been a difficult year and much of the planned work could not be carried out due to restrictions. The walk book had been delayed and Chris had been checking paths and dealing with problems.
- 7.7 Area Publicity Officer's Report – Alex added that work was being done to add walks to the Area website (www.nottsarearamblers.org.uk).
- 7.8 Communications Group – Judith reported that since the report had been written, all members without an email address had received a letter inviting them to the AGM

growing membership would contribute. Central Office was also looking for ways to diversify the Ramblers income.

The second objective, Awareness and Engagement, was to increase people's awareness of the essential work of Ramblers in protecting rights of way and the countryside. Norfolk Ramblers had cards printed to hand out to members of other walking groups to encourage them to join Ramblers in recognition of the work Ramblers did to protect ROW. The third objective was for Ramblers to be relevant and inclusive. This applied to Central Office, Areas, Groups and the wider walking community.

Don't Lose Your Way was an essential project with the 2026 deadline getting closer. The on line project had been set up during lockdown and the map on the Ramblers website showed the scale of the task. Ramblers would prefer the 2026 deadline to be scrapped or at least, extended and was lobbying for that. Ramblers was also concerned about the proposal to move trespass from a civil to a criminal offence. As more people were walking Ramblers was receiving more 'complaints' about ROWs being blocked, etc which were being referred to the Councils involved. Comments on HS2 were available on the Ramblers website but there was concern that it was continuing given the impact on the countryside and the environment.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Central Office and staff Richard thanked Nottinghamshire Area, Groups and volunteers for keeping their members involved in what had been a very difficult year. Particularly walk leaders and those who kept the communications going to try and replace the social activities.

Jim thanked Richard for his presentation and asked for questions:

Alex Staniforth explained Nottinghamshire Area had produced leaflets to encourage people to join Ramblers and asked about the Norfolk cards. Richard explained these were for non-Ramblers members they met on a walk to explain what Ramblers did and to encourage them to join. Members of other walking groups were encouraged to join Ramblers to support the charitable aims and protect rights of way.

Steve Parkhouse said that 70% of members did not walk with a Group. In Notts, the Notts Walker newsletter emphasised the ROW work and the local membership had been holding steady with a recent increase. The newsletter focused on rights of way as the unique selling point of Ramblers and the spread of good practice. A recent advert for volunteers to assist with ROW work had resulted in 8 new people coming forward, none of whom was currently active in a Group. Ramblers should push the ROW angle. Richard agreed that ROW creation and protection was the unique selling point of Ramblers. Some members joined for the walking and then moved into ROW work. Ramblers had a wide range of issues that interested potential members.

Jeremy Pratt felt Ramblers Central Office did not emphasise the ROW protection enough to potential and existing members. People new to walking during the lockdown would not be aware of Ramblers and the essential rights of way work. It was vital to encourage younger people to join and Jeremy suggested local advertising would improve recruitment and this needed Central Office support. Richard responded that this could be linked with the restart of walking after lockdown and the opportunity to capture new walkers was essential. Diane Simcoe added that Central Office could help with specific media issues.

Chris Thompson commented about the excellent work being conducted at Central Office but it was essential to reach out to other partners who used rights of way to

combat the pressure from some landowners. Chris expressed concern about the General Council not being held in 2020 and 2021 as members views could not be expressed. Richard agreed it was particularly important to work with the British Horse Society which had established a system similar to Don't Lose Your Way. Although the 2021 General Council was to be on Zoom, it would be fully participative with elections.

Jenny Fillingham reminded the AGM that Nottinghamshire Area was the first to establish a younger Group set up by Kevin Matthews. Jeremy Pratt agreed but as the younger groups members grew older, new Groups needed to be established. Richard agreed that special interest Groups were as important as geographic Groups e.g. walking with pushchairs, photographic interest, long walks (20 miles+) historical interest and that these Groups could bring in more members.

Peter Revill asked about the future of Walking for Health (WfH). Richard explained that WfH was now fully integrated into Ramblers and hopefully the WfH schemes would grow. The new branding would specifically include WfH and they were important for the fitter members to move up to Ramblers and for Ramblers to 'move down' to WFH if necessary. More information would be published shortly.

Jim thanked Richard for his stimulating talk and to members for their questions.

12. DIANE SIMCOE, AREA LIAISON OFFICER

Diane thanked all members and volunteers for their support and continued work in a very difficult year. There were changes at Central Office with a new address and additional support to Areas. Cluster meetings were being organised between Areas so volunteers could share their experiences and good practice. Walk leader training was being introduced for new leaders and to encourage potential leaders to come forward. A short video was available on the website.

Diane encouraged members to stand as a Trustee at General Council by contacting herself or Judith.

Sue Jones asked for more information about Clusters. Diane explained these were only just starting and the main focus had been special interest groups with the first being on the Mayoral elections in London and Birmingham. A group was planned for membership. Jim and Judith had attended meetings to represent Nottinghamshire.

Sue added that she managed the Notts Facebook page. More people liked the content when people were shown on a group walk but pages on the Ramblers site were often as families or as individuals, rather than of walking groups. Diane suggested this was because currently people could not walk in a group due to restrictions but thanked Sue for her comments which Diane would feedback.

Jim thanked Diane for her contribution.

13. PRESENTATION OF WINNING PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE BEST VIEW IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COMPETITION

Paddy Tipping introduced the winning photographs from the photographic competition and thanked members for taking part. The photographs were shared in reverse order:

Highly Commended – Silk Road taken by Adrian Amer, Newark Group

5th Place – Lockdown taken by Neil Stafford, Rushcliffe Group
4th Place – Family Outing taken by Sue Rick, Mansfield & Sherwood Group
3rd Place – Clumber Church taken by Rod Fillingham, Area member
2nd Place – Out of the Shade taken by Charlotte Cunningham, Nottingham Group
1st Place – Autumn Leaves taken by Roger Mellor, Newark Group

Paddy commented that the winning photo could be seen as a path out of lockdown and into the future. Roger Mellor thanked the judges for awarding him first place. The Newark Group has a photo diary of all their walks on the website (www.newarkramblers.org.uk). Paddy hoped the competition could be run again in 2021.

14. CLOSING REMARKS FROM AREA CHAIR

Jim said it was 25 years since he first walked with the Gedling Group. At that time Jim had very little understanding of Area. All Groups were to be congratulated for managing so well during the pandemic and continuing to thrive. Jim had met individuals during his walks over the last year and had been able to explain the rights of way work done by Ramblers in Nottinghamshire. There had also been the opportunity to explore local paths. All members would be looking forward to being able to walk together as soon as possible and Jim hoped to meet people again.

Jim informed those present that the AGM had been managed by a team who had worked hard to ensure the meeting had gone smoothly. For 2022, the arrangements should return to usual with the walks.

15. DATE OF NEXT AREA AGM SUNDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 2022

The next Area Annual General Meeting would be held on Sunday, 6th February 2022 organised by the Nottingham Group. Jim thanked David Dobson of the Nottingham Group.

APPENDIX I

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUNDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2021

ATTENDANCE LIST

Anson	Judith	Area Secretary & Area Membership Secretary
Amer	Adrian	Newark
Coxon	Keith	Rushcliffe
Coxon	Clare	Rushcliffe
Dobson	Barbara	Nottingham
Dobson	David	Nottingham
Duesbury	Pam	Rushcliffe
Ellison	John	Rushcliffe
Ellison	Yvonne	Rushcliffe
Fairhurst	Elizabeth	Gedling
Fallon	Adriana	Rushcliffe
Fallon	John	Rushcliffe
Fillingham	Jenny	Council Member
Hobson	Dave	Vale of Belvoir
Ingram	Bob	One Step Walkers
Ingram	Heather	One Step Walkers
Johnson	David	Southwell
Jones	Sue	Area Countryside Officer
May	Richard	Ramblers Board of Trustee Member
McGill	James	Council Member
Mellor	Roger	Newark
Mitchell	Brenda	Vale of Belvoir
Munro	Diana	Worksop
Norcross	Tony	Area Minutes Secretary
Norris	Jim	Area Chair
Parkhouse	Steve	Area RoW Secretary
Pedersen	Joyce	Newark
Pratt	Jeremy	Rushcliffe
Revill	Peter	Broxtowe
Rick	Susan	Mansfield & Sherwood
Rogers	Allan	Robin Hood Way
Simcoe	Diane	Ramblers Area Support Officer
Somerville	Peter	Southwell
Stafford	Neil	Area Treasurer
Staniforth	Alex	Area Press & Publicity Officer
Thompson	Chris	Area Tourism & Heritage Officer
Tipping	Paddy	Area President
Tuffnell	Brian	Mansfield & Sherwood
Wilkinson	Carol	Newark
Young	Kim	Vale of Belvoir

APPENDIX II

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUNDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2021

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

PRESIDENT**Paddy Tipping**

The following Area Officers were elected:

AREA CHAIR

Nominator: Sue Rick

Jim Norris

Seconded: Sue Jones

AREA VICE CHAIR**Vacant****SECRETARY**

Nominator: Jeremy Pratt

Judith Anson

Seconded: Sue Rick

TREASURER

Nominator: Moragg Hunter

Neil Stafford

Seconded: Karen Lewis

RIGHTS OF WAY SECRETARY

Nominator: Alan Wilson

Steve Parkhouse

Seconded: Diana Munro

TOURISM & HERITAGE PATHS OFFICER

Nominator: Sue Jones

Chris Thompson

Seconded: Jenny Fillingham

COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

Nominator: Alan Wilson

Sue Jones

Seconded: Joyce Pedersen

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Nominator: Jeremy Pratt

Judith Anson

Seconded: Sue Rick

PRESS & PUBLICITY OFFICER

Nominator: Jenny Fillingham

Alex Staniforth

Seconded: Rod Fillingham

GROUPS OFFICER**Vacant****AREA WEBMASTER**

Nominator: Judith Anson

Chris Taylor

Seconded: Alex Staniforth

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Nominator: Alan Wilson

Steve Parkhouse

Seconded: Diana Munro

MINUTES SECRETARY

Nominator: Judith Anson

Tony Norcross

Seconded: Steve Parkhouse

COUNCIL MEMBERS**Vacant**