



Nottinghamshire Area Ramblers
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**MINUTES OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT EPPERSTONE VILLAGE HALL
ON SUNDAY 5th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 2.00 PM**

The record of attendance shows 70 members were present at the Annual General Meeting, see Appendix 1.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE AREA OFFICERS

Sue Rick, Area Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM at Epperstone Village Hall. Sue thanked the Southwell Group, which was hosting today's event, those who led the walks earlier that day, and members who provided the hot drinks and baked the cakes.

Paddy Tipping, the Area President and Area Officers were introduced to the meeting. Sue welcomed Rebecca Dawson, Chair of the Board of Trustees as the speaker.

2. OVERVIEW FROM THE AREA PRESIDENT

Paddy Tipping thanked Rebecca as Chair of the Trustees and Ross Maloney, new Ramblers CEO for working to ensure the future of Ramblers. Locally, members were keeping Ramblers functioning and Paddy thanked them for attending the AGM but particularly for organising walks in their Groups.

Walking is fun and access to rights of way essential. There were opportunities and challenges ahead as landowners and farmers saw new opportunities to raise funds. There were no funds for ensuring access to the countryside for walkers. The government proposal for environment improvement programmes to offer everyone 15 minutes walk to a green space was a long way from the countryside. Ramblers was supporting the campaign for access to wild camping on Dartmoor and should continue to press for a new CROW Act.

Members should enjoy their walks but not forget the campaigning side of Ramblers. The countryside should continue to be accessible to our children and grandchildren.

Sue thanked Paddy who confirmed he was willing to continue as President for a further year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from: Joyce Pedersen, Malcolm Wolfson, Yinka Soetan, Claire Coxon, Helen Bates, Carol Wilkinson and Reg Jowett.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 6th February 2022 were approved as a true record.

Proposed: Brian Tuffnell

Seconded: Steve Parkhouse

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 (2021 – 2022)

The Area Officers Annual Report and Accounts covering the period 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022 had been published on the Nottinghamshire Area website. Several Officers added to their written reports:

7.1 Area Rights of Way Secretary – Steve Parkhouse added the Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) was dealing with about two applications per year. Taking cases to the Ombudsman resulted in the NCC being required to take action. Steve had been assisting Lincolnshire and had made 200 applications for ROW there in the last year. Steve was thanked for his work on rights of way in Nottinghamshire.

7.2 Area Countryside Officer – Sue Jones was standing down as Countryside Officer and Sue Rick thanked Sue for her service.

7.3 Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer. Chris confirmed there would be a press release about the Major Hayman Rooke Trail.

7.4 The Report and Accounts were accepted as a true record.
Proposed: Janet Ross Seconded: Sue Jones

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Officers were elected as set out in Appendix II with the proposer and seconder. Sue Rick encouraged members to come forward for the vacant posts. Sue added that accepting the role of Area Officer without Portfolio was an excellent introduction to Ramblers. Chris Thompson asked members to come forward as Countryside Officer as this was a critical role for Area.

9. RAMBLERS' GENERAL COUNCIL 1st APRIL 2023

General Council (GC) was to take place at the NEC, Birmingham. Regrettably only two voting delegates appointed by the AGM would be allowed to attend; no visitors. Under standing orders one of these would automatically be the Area Secretary, Judith Anson. It was agreed the second representative would

be Sue Rick, Area Chair. The AGM was reminded the nominated delegates remained in place for a year.

In answer to a question about why visitors were no longer allowed to attend GC, Rebecca Dawson replied that those attending GC were 0.15% of the membership. GC was very expensive and the Board did not consider the costs were justified for others to attend. GC in 2023 would discuss how a larger number of members could be involved. In response to a further comment that Nottinghamshire had elected visitors at the AGM, Rebecca stated this was unusual with most Areas choosing the same people to attend GC every year.

10. MOTIONS

10.1 Motions relating to Nottinghamshire Area – none received.

10.2 Motions to go to General Council 2023 – none received.

11. SPEAKER – REBECCA DAWSON, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rebecca thanked members for the warm welcome and hoped everyone had enjoyed the walks. Rebecca had been a member for 9 years, starting in a 20s/30s Group and then moved to running a Group and to Herts & North Middlesex Area. She had served 6 years as a Trustee and had been Board Chair for two.

There were achievements and successes to celebrate in Ramblers and the future focus was to 'open the way'. In 2023 there would be action on expanding access, the freedom to roam and breaking down barriers to walking. Support would be provided to path maintenance teams including Don't Lose Your Way and taking legal action where necessary. It was important for everyone to be able to access an open green space in 15 minutes walk from their house and this would be difficult for many people. Ramblers could contribute to sustainability by sharing transport or using public transport to the start of walks.

Ramblers needed to increase its membership and Rebecca thanked Groups for encouraging and welcoming new members. The membership figures for Nottinghamshire were encouraging. Ramblers was looking at how it presented itself and how to involve people not familiar with regular walking such as refugees. The Notts Area Annual Report illustrated the wide variety of walks organised by Groups. Nationally there were 40,000 organised Group walks and 30,000 wellbeing walks.

Rebecca understood risk assessments were a matter of concern to walk leaders and GC would consider two motions on the subject. Ramblers offered walks to the public and to comply with insurance requirements, required a higher standard of care than when walking with friends. Ramblers was a market leader in walking and, following a survey of walk leaders, a working

group had been set up. This would assess how other organisations dealt with risk management. Ramblers had to demonstrate good practice and following GC there would be open sessions with Areas and Groups. All walk leaders were asked to continue the current system of risk assessment forms until new arrangements were in place.

Although the new Ramblers website should have been operational by January 2022, there had been delays and it should be working in 2023. The delayed walks manager pilot had been helpful and changes were now being made. Groups were asked to continue to use GWEM until walks manager was operational.

The years of Covid had been difficult and the cost of living crisis was affecting many walkers. Rebecca thanked all Ramblers in Nottinghamshire for their activities which made a difference to people's lives and provided access to the countryside. While 2023 would be challenging, Ramblers was a wonderful community. Rebecca asked for questions.

Sue Rick thanked Rebecca and invited questions and comments:

Q – what has happened to Pathwatch?

A – the Pathwatch app had ended and had not delivered as expected. Some of the work was now with the Paths Team.

Q – stiles were a risk and there had been a recent discussion at Area Council. Notts County Council were trying to replace stiles with gates but what action was Ramblers centrally doing about this?

A – this was certainly an issue being taken on board by the Paths Team.

Q – what was the greatest challenge faced by Ramblers now?

A – as a charity, it was how Ramblers is relevant. What does the public understand Ramblers is here for? How the outside world sees Ramblers is not how it sees itself and Ramblers needs to look outwards, not just inwards. How is Ramblers relevant to people who want to walk and access green spaces. Can we inspire people to use the whole path network and not just the 'hot spots'. The prohibition of wild camping on Dartmoor had made people angry and how could Ramblers harness that and show the public that we can protect their spaces.

Q – what is the Ramblers policy on the environment and climate change?

A – these were being worked on.

Q – what was Ramblers view on path maintenance?

A – Rebecca's local County Council had a volunteer team. Other Areas were doing a wide range of work e.g. steps, way marking but not all Authorities would allow Ramblers to be involved.

Q – Notts CC had a way marking initiative but volunteers needed to show they could put way markers in the correct place before NCC would allow it. There were also issues about Ramblers being involved with landowners and politicians not always being supportive.

A – Rebecca encouraged Ramblers to be involved in path maintenance as much as possible and negotiate with the County Council.

Q – the Ramblers image was essential in moving forward but the local wellbeing walks had shown reluctance to involve Ramblers due to a negative view.

A – Rebecca was aware of the image problem which was the responsibility of all of us to challenge and all members must put forward a positive image. New walkers should have a positive experience. Walkers needed to see people like themselves represented on walks and younger walkers and walkers from different backgrounds were needed.

Q – Notts Area wanted to increase involvement of younger people on walks but there had been no support from Central Office. Nottinghamshire had been the first Area to set up a 20s/30s Group.

A – Rebecca replied that younger people were keen to be involved in path maintenance and that would be a way of encouraging them.

Q – schools could be encouraged through the Duke of Edinburgh schemes.

A – other Areas were doing this but the scheme was struggling to find funding.

Q – the majority of members do not walk with a Group and it is a challenge to involve them. The Notts Walker was sent out wider than just Ramblers members to advertise what Ramblers achieved.

12. PRESENTATION OF PRIZES FOR AREA PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Neil Stafford, Chair of the Judges explained this was the second year of the competition which had been introduced during the Covid crisis. The theme was Bright and Beautiful Nottinghamshire and there had been very different interpretations. Neil thanked everyone who had participated and invited Rebecca to present the prizes.

Highly Commended:

Sunset at Carlton-in-Lindrick by Michael King, Worksop Group

6 Spot Burnet Moth by Thelma Ward, Worksop Group

Prize was a print of their photograph donated by Neil Stafford.

3rd place: Wildflower Heaven by Jacqueline Anderson, Newark Group

prize was a jigsaw and a print of the photograph donated by Neil:

2nd place: Shireoaks Pond in Spring by Annick Bootman, Worksop Group

prize was a Ramblers tote bag donated by Area and a jigsaw and print of photograph donated by Neil

1st place: Canal Walk by Bob Ward, Worksop Group

prize was a set of trekking poles donated by Area and a jigsaw and large print of the photograph donated by Neil.

13. CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE AREA CHAIR

Sue Rick thanked Southwell for leading the walks and everyone had enjoyed the magnificent views. A key outcome of the day was to meet other Ramblers to talk and share ideas. Sue was planning a summer Groups day with a walk, fuddle and to chat with members from different Groups. Sue encouraged members to walk with other Groups to meet different people and pick up tips. New people attending walks were a captive audience and it was important to tell them of the benefits of being a Ramblers member and of the essential work on rights of way. Sue thanked Rebecca for attending and giving the key note address.

14. DATE OF NEXT AREA AGM SUNDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2024

The next AGM will be held on Sunday, 4th February 2024 hosted by Rushcliffe Group at Keyworth Village Hall. Mansfield & Sherwood Ramblers would consider hosting the 2025 AGM.

15. THE NEXT AREA COUNCIL MEETING

The next Area Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 18th April 2023 at Bilsthorpe.

APPENDIX I

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUNDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2023

ATTENDANCE LIST

Alberry	Angie	Vale of Belvoir
Amer	Adrian	Area Vice-Chair
Anderson	Jacqui	Newark
Anson	Judith	Area Secretary
Barnfather	Janet	Mansfield & Sherwood
Bird	Rab	Vale of Belvoir
Brimer	Anne	Newark
Brown	Diane	Newark
Carne	Sue	Newark
Casey	Julie	Mansfield & Sherwood
Coxon	Keith	Rushcliffe
Dawson	Rebecca	Chair of Board of Trustees
Dobbs	Stephen	Gedling
Duesbury	Pam	Rushcliffe
Ellis	Alex	Area Groups Officer
Evans	Jackie	Mansfield & Sherwood
Evans	Steve	Mansfield & Sherwood
Fenton	Paul	Vale of Belvoir
Foster	Mags	Mansfield & Sherwood
Garley	Denise	Mansfield & Sherwood
Hobson	Dave	Vale of Belvoir
Hobson	Elaine	Vale of Belvoir
Johnson	Dave	Southwell
Johnson	Dave	Newark
Johnson	Polly	Gedling
Jones	Barbara	Vale of Belvoir
Jones	Sue	Area Countryside Officer
Kehoe	Jane	Mansfield & Sherwood
Lawson	Julie	Mansfield & Sherwood
Lee	Caroline	Newark
Lera	Louisa	Nottingham
Matthews	Eileen	Mansfield & Sherwood
Matthews	Robert	Mansfield & Sherwood
McEvoy	Maureen	Mansfield & Sherwood
Mcgill	James	Newark
Milligan	Pauline	One Step Walkers
Mitchell	Brenda	Vale of Belvoir
Mullen	Sue	Mansfield & Sherwood
Munro	Diana	Area Membership Secretary
Murphy	Bridgid	Newark
Norcross	Tony	Area Minutes Secretary
Norris	Jim	Gedling
Osborne	Julie	Newark

Parkhouse	Steve	Area ROW Officer & Newsletter Editor
Parkinson	Gail	Vale of Belvoir
Pilgrim	Colleen	Gedling
Pratt	Jeremy	Rushcliffe
Reeves	Hilary	Mansfield & Sherwood
Rick	Sue	Area Chair
Ridge	Sheila	Mansfield & Sherwood
Ross	Janet	Worksop
Ross	Keith	Worksop
Small	Chris	Newark
Somerville	Peter	Southwell
Stafford	Neil	Area Treasurer
Stock	Mike	Rushcliffe
Suchak	Sushma	Mansfield & Sherwood
Thompson	Chris	Area Tourism & Heritage Officer
Tilsley	Jan	Vale of Belvoir
Tipping	Paddy	Area President
Tombs	Lee	Gedling
Tuffnell	Brian	Mansfield & Sherwood
Turner	Dave	Newark
Turner	Izzie	Newark
Ward	Bob	Worksop
Ward	Thelma	Worksop
Wilson	Alan	Rushcliffe
Woollard	Jamie	Gedling
Woollard	Sally	Gedling
Woolley	Val	Mansfield & Sherwood

APPENDIX II

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SUNDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2023

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

PRESIDENT**Paddy Tipping**

The following Area Officers were elected:

AREA CHAIR

Nominated: Brian Tuffnell

Sue Rick

Seconded: Helen Ward

AREA VICE CHAIR

Nominated: Joyce Pedersen

Adrian Amer

Seconded: Carol Wilkinson

SECRETARY

Nominated: Jeremy Pratt

Judith Anson

Seconded: Pam Duesbury

TREASURER

Nominated: Karen Lewis

Neil Stafford

Seconded: Lorraine Donovan

RIGHTS OF WAY SECRETARY

Nominated: Pauline Parkhouse

Steve Parkhouse

Seconded: Sue Jones

**TOURISM & HERITAGE PATHS
OFFICER**

Nominated: Colleen Pilgrim

Chris Thompson

Seconded: Sally Woollard

COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER**Vacant****MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Nominated: Thelma Ward

Diane Munro

Seconded: Julie Duncan

AREA NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Nominated: Paddy Tipping

Steve Parkhouse

Seconded: Sue Jones

PRESS & PUBLICITY OFFICER**Vacant****GROUPS OFFICER**

Nominated: Helen Ward

Alexandra Ellis

Seconded: Sue Rick

AREA WEBMASTER

Nominated: Judith Anson

Chris Taylor

Seconded: Neil Stafford

MINUTES SECRETARY

Nominated: G V Evans

Tony Norcross

Seconded: Keith Coxon