

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 21st JULY 2020

Minutes

This meeting was conducted by email due to the Covid-19 lockdown preventing physical meetings. Papers were sent to all members of Area Council who were invited to respond to the Secretary by Monday, 20th July. The responses were collated and circulated to members on Tuesday, 21st. Members were asked to vote on resolutions by Thursday, 23rd July. This is a record of those responses and the result of the vote.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (21st April 2020)

Approved

Proposed: Alan Wilson

Seconded: Alex Staniforth

Voting: in favour – 8, against - 0, abstain - 0

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

“Dave Johnson, Southwell – Very much appreciate the obvious hard work and dedication of all those that hold posts of responsibility in Nottinghamshire Area. There is nothing really that affects us now other than the uncertainties of walking dealing with Covid-19 restrictions.

Alan Wilson, Rushcliffe – we welcome the co-option of Sue Jones as Countryside Officer. Sue joined us on our very first post-lockdown walk on Friday.

Chris Thompson - Delighted that the Area Countryside Officer post has been filled. Looked forward to working with Sue Jones.

Note from Judith – Sue takes up her post on 1st August and I will send a note to Groups and Area Officers with her contact details.”

3. Area Officers Reports

3.1 **Chair Appendix I**

Comments on report:

“Dave Johnson, Southwell – Comments re walk leaders and the insurance angle with respect to volunteers useful and clarifies our own uncertainties.

Chris Thompson – Fully support the initiative on Covid-19 Secure Guidance for Walkers. Confirm support to re-amend the 12 Hilltops list. This is in hand. Support the 10 best accessible views in Notts.

Judith Anson – I support the ideas in Jim's report. The details of the photographic competition are being worked out. The idea of adding Nottinghamshire walks to Ramblers Routes and walks to the Area website is being followed up. Group participation is welcome.”

3.2 **Secretary Appendix II**

Comments on report:

“David Johnson, Southwell – very useful presentation of the role of volunteers and about Assemble/GDPR/Insurance. Both these presentations [*Chair’s Report being the first*] will assist our future discussions about these matters as the situation is rapidly changing.

Alan Wilson, Rushcliffe – you will see from our Group report that we are dissatisfied with Central Office handling of insurance arrangements, saddling us with central registration of walk leaders and requiring written risk assessments for all walks.

Heather Ingram, One Step Walkers - The recent email from the interim CEO is strange: 'As I am sure you can appreciate the number of questions we are having from volunteers has reached an unprecedented level. We really want to support you in the best way we can on **how** we deliver our activities, but this is being made increasingly difficult by the volume of people contacting us to ask **why** certain decisions are being made. This is making it more difficult for us to move forward quickly.'

It would have been helpful if this had been phrased more sensitively recognising that all the volunteers support the organisation to function and that members are struggling to comprehend and implement actions taken by the organisation which impact significantly on volunteer activity.

Chris Thompson - Confirm acceptance to the report. Thank you for showing clear details of how to obtain clear insurance for leading walks.

Judith Anson – To follow up Heather’s point – had the insurance been introduced in a sensible way, with at least 2 months lead in time and adequate guidance then people would not have been ringing up. Groups were suddenly faced with their walk leaders being uninsured - an unacceptable situation. CO response has been very poor. The debate on RamblersNET continues with contradictory responses from CO being posted. Some CO responses appear to say a written risk assessment will be needed when normal walking resumes post-Covid-19 while other responses are in line with the walk leader checklist that written assessments are not required. I will continue to keep Groups informed if I have any facts.”

3.3 **Treasurer** *Appendix III* Comments on report:

“David Johnson, Southwell – informative.

Alan Wilson, Rushcliffe – we support continued membership at Area level of PNFS and CPRE. We are content with the proposed budget.

Chris Thompson - Confirm acceptance. Thank you for a concise clear report.

Judith Anson – I support continued membership of both the PNFS and CPRE. The change of the timetable for Officer expenses to match the financial year is long overdue. Area has now reduced its reserves to an acceptable level and I support the request for additional funding. It is unfortunate that events have not taken place in 2020 but we need to ensure funding is available for 2020/21. What makes Ramblers different to other walking groups is our work on rights of way and this should be adequately funded. As mentioned in the April papers, there is the opportunity to undertake maintenance work on ROW.

Votes required:

Area Council is asked to approve the payment of £22.50 to the Peak and Northern Footpath Society for membership for the year 2020/21.

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Judith Anson

Voting: in favour – 13, against – 0, abstain – 0

Resolution carried

Area Council is asked to approve the payment of £36 to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England for membership for the year 2020/21

Proposed: Neil Stafford:

Seconded: Judith Anson

Voting: in favour – 13, against – 0, abstain – 0

Resolution carried

Area Council is asked to support the request for funding of £3,900 from CO for the financial year 2020/21

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Judith Anson

Voting: in favour – 13, against – 0, abstain – 0

Resolution carried

3.4 **Rights of Way Secretary** *Appendix IV*

Comments on report:

“Dave Johnson, Southwell – interested in the old railway line survey but of course ours (Farnsfield/Bilthorpe to Rolleston) has been adopted as a popular trail. The recent addition of pedestrian gates at either end of the racecourse access road has further enhanced this facility.

John Young, Vale of Belvoir – a website which might help <http://disused-stations.org.uk>
There are numerous rail preservation groups that will have details and pictures of old railway lines and perhaps making contact with those may help progress the matter from a Ramblers point of view.

Chris Thompson - Welcome a detailed report. I fully support the Lost Ways project, will assist ROW Sec in achieving RoW claims. I am pleased to see the Hallcroft Fishery Retford claim is going ahead again. This was thrown out last time the Ramblers tried to achieve this path claim. Thank you for resolving the Hickling BW12 issue of a 30m gap to the right of way. I fully support this whole report.

Judith Anson – thank-you to Steve for the report.”

3.5 **Countryside Officer** no report

3.6 **Membership Secretary** *Appendix V*

Comments on report:

“David Johnson, Southwell – down 2 to 75 members means we are stable, but we cannot be complacent. Of those 75 approximately 40 are active walkers.

Heather Ingram, One Step Walkers - there is a difference between our statistics and those provided by the Ramblers Insight. Our statistics indicate very little change.

Chris Thompson - Thank you for the report. Very concerned about National membership figures. I hope the local retention membership rate can be improved. However in this difficult period it is to be expected. However we must not forget the national trend for walking. We need to find ways to link into that swing. I am happy with the Chair's report that Notts Area is making initiatives to improve membership.

Judith Anson – Thanks to Rod for his report. The initiatives mentioned in Officer reports and actions of the Groups are intended to stabilise and increase membership."

3.7 **Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer Appendix VI**

Comments on report:

"David Johnson, Southwell – interesting. Hopefully Chris will be successful with the Pilgrim Father long distance path.

Judith Anson – Thanks for Chris for his report. It is important to ensure ROW are open and useable at a time when more people are walking.. The highest Notts 'tops' that can be reached on a ROW will be an interesting piece for the website and I look forward to the article on Silverhill. Short family walks for the website will be helpful as the usual length of a Ramblers walk may be too far for people walking for the first time or with small children/pushchairs."

3.8 **Communications Subcommittee Appendix VII**

Comments on report:

"David Johnson, Southwell – looking forward to the real high points in Nottinghamshire. Must get the camera out for the best views in Nottinghamshire and plan a walk for the Area Walks Day in 2021.

Heather Ingram, One Step Walkers - Facebook – there is some concern about the decision to close the Facebook page. The words on the page are...*will be taken down before the end of July.*" & *"If anyone is interested in setting up and administering a new Facebook page"* are worrying and is giving the message we've given up. Surely the best way forward is to keep the page and change the administrators of it. There are 127 Likes and 137 people follow the page. The page was created in 2016 and has a lot of content already. It would be a shame to see all that go to waste and to start anew.

Mailchimp and GDPR: One Step use Mailchimp effectively without any problems. To clarify using Mailchimp doesn't involve storing membership numbers. Email addresses are necessary to send the newsletter. Consent is covered by agreeing to receive Ramblers emails generally when the box is ticked on the personal profile section - if say yes to all is ticked then this permits the use of the newsletter. Re the proposal for an inhouse Ramblers newsletter – Ramblers already provide a newsletter to volunteers with general information. It may be worth exploring whether this could be adopted and adapted for local newsletter distribution. However there would be concerns about how long this may take to develop, how effective it would be and whether the data stored by Ramblers is accurate.

Response from Judith – Thanks to Heather for her comments. At the time of writing I did not have anyone willing to take over Facebook which was attached to Keith Wallace's personal account and he was closing it down. I am pleased to report that Sue Jones (the new Countryside Officer) has spoken to Keith and will take it over. Since Heather wrote her comments, the Facebook page has been changed. Many thanks to Sue for being

willing to take this on. I would have been sorry to lose the page but we also need to be realistic that we can only take actions where we have volunteers willing to do them. .

Chris Thompson - Confirm acceptance to the report. I welcome the initiatives mentioned in the report. I take this opportunity of thanking Keith Wallace in all his work carried out for Ramblers Notts Area and his time as Ramblers Notts Area Chair.

Response from Judith I confirm that I have thanked Keith for his contribution to the Communications Group, the website and the Facebook page.

Neil Stafford - Whilst I understand Rod Fillingham's concerns about data security when some elements of membership records are held within Mailchimp, the real risk to member's personal data lies elsewhere. Area Secretaries, and Area and Group Membership Secretaries all have legitimate permission to download subsets of the membership database. Whilst I have no reason to question the integrity of any Ramblers volunteer, the presence of membership data on a computer or laptop in a family home provides a real opportunity for a data breach.

Judith Anson – I appreciate Rod's concerns that using Mailchimp or any other distribution company places a small amount of data with a third party. I agree we should contact CO for their advice."

3.9 **Press & Publicity Officer** *Appendix VIII* Comments on report:

"David Johnson, Southwell – Sadly we have not been able to put the pamphlets into Southwell Library when it reopened. Covid-19 restrictions did not allow it but we have them on hand when we get the go ahead.

Chris Thomson - I welcome the initiative by Southwell Group to promote their group. Thank you Alec for your report and the excellent work you are doing."

4. Group Reports *Appendix IX* Comments on report:

"Judith Anson – I would like to say a formal thank-you from Area for all the work being done by Groups. These reports are imaginative, inspirational and demonstrate how much work is being put in by members to keep their members informed, involved and occupied when they cannot meet in person."

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held at 7.30 PM on Tuesday, 20th October 2020. If it was still not possible to hold a physical meeting, the Secretary would contact members.