

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20TH APRIL 2021

Minutes

This meeting was conducted on Zoom due to the Covid 19 lockdown preventing physical meetings.

Present Jim Norris (Area Chair), Judith Anson (Area Secretary, Membership Secretary), Neil Stafford (Area Treasurer), Steve Parkhouse (Area ROW Secretary), Sue Jones (Area Countryside Officer), Alex Staniforth (Area Press & Publicity Officer), Tony Norcross (Minutes Secretary), Adrian Amer (Area Council Member, Newark Group), David & Barbara Dobson (Nottingham), Alan Wilson (Rushcliffe), Sue Rick (Mansfield & Sherwood), Brian Tuffnell (Mansfield & Sherwood), Dave Johnston (Southwell), Helen Percy (Notts & Derbys) Dave Hufton (Notts & Derbys) John Young (Vale of Belvoir), Heather Ingram (One Step Walkers) Allan Rogers (Robin Hood Way Flexi-Group)

- 1 Apologies Joyce Pedersen (Newark), Keith & Janet Ross (Worksop), Keith Jacobs (Broxtowe) Chris Thompson Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer.

Chris had given his apologies from Hospital and members sent their best wishes. Judith confirmed a bulletin would be sent to Council members when more information was available.

- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 19 January 2021

Approved

Proposed: Allan Rogers

Seconded: Heather Ingram

- 3 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None.

- 4 Area Officers 'Reports

- 4.1 **Chair Appendix I.**

Jim and Judith had attended General Council on 17th April on Zoom. Jim understood a recording would be available on the Ramblers website. Rebecca Dawson had been voted in as Chair of the Board of Trustees (BOT) as Kate Ashbrook had stood down. There had been several important motions. The 3 year Digital Transformation Programme had expired with parts not completed – Salesforce and the new website. The Motion which stated that IT developments which directly assisted Areas and Groups be prioritised had been passed, against the BOT opposition although the decision was not binding. The comments from members present emphasised the Data Transformation Programme had “over promised and under delivered” and Areas and Groups had not been consulted. A second Motion endorsed the creation of Clusters, Communities of Practice and Special Interest Groups. Jim and Judith had already been involved in early meetings of an Area Cluster although the geographic grouping was not suitable. It had been suggested a Cluster could be set up for the younger Groups. In answer to a question from Heather, Judith replied that the Clusters currently active were those on Mayoral elections. A ROW motion had been lost as the vote was tied.

- 4.2 **Secretary Appendix II**

Judith had nothing to add to her report. A volunteer was sought to help organise the photographic competition in 2021.

4.3 Treasurer Appendix III

Neil reported the Area Zoom account was being used for the ROW Committee meetings, the Communications Group in addition to the Executive, the Management Meeting and Area Council. Although the contract did not expire until September, an early decision on renewal was requested to provide reassurance if actual meetings could not be held.

The following motion was voted on:

Area Council is asked to approve the renewal of the Zoom licence in September, based on the current price of £143.88

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Judith Anson

Vote: all were in favour

4.4 Rights of Way Secretary Appendix IV

Steve indicated the amount of ROW work happening and the advantages of monthly ROW meetings on Zoom. Steve added that Assemble allowed those working on Don't Lose Your Way to contact each other.

4.5 Countryside Officer Appendix V

Sue did not add to her report. The criminalisation of trespass had been discussed in the House of Commons but the full implications for ROW users were unclear.

4.6 Membership Secretary Appendix VI

Judith did not add to her report. Steve added the national Ramblers membership had declined by 9% while the Notts membership had increased by 1.2% since 2015. Jim thanked Groups for working hard to maintain and increase their membership. Jim asked for a volunteer to become Area Membership Secretary as Judith was doing two roles.

4.7 Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer Appendix VII

Chris sent his apologies, as he was in hospital for tests, and was unable to add to his report.

4.8 Communications Subcommittee Appendix VIII & VIII.I

Members received a draft of the first self guided walk proposed for the Area website. Alex explained this project was being taken forward through the Communications Group by himself, Chris Thompson and Neil Stafford. A template would be produced for members to produce their own walks. In answer to a question Alex indicated the Ramblers licence for OS could be used as the walks would appear on the Area website. Area Council was supportive of the proposals.

4.9 Press & Publicity Officer Appendix IX

A question was asked about the Brand Refresh proposals and whether finance might be available. Judith said no mention had been made at General Council and summer was the time mentioned for its launch. It was not known whether additional finance would be available to Areas and Groups. Area had funds allocated to produce leaflets and a banner and it was assumed the Joomla system which Area and some Groups used for the website would be updated nationally. The Communications Group was leading on this and Judith suggested a survey of Groups on what items they would need to change. This would be dependent on when the new brand was introduced.

5 Wellbeing Walks/Walking for Health Appendix X & XI

Alan Wilson introduced the paper Introducing Ramblers Wellbeing Walks which set out how the current Ramblers Walking for Health Scheme would be changing. Area Council had already provided financial support for the proposals from Rushcliffe Move & Mingle and the Rushcliffe and Vale of Belvoir Groups but the production of leaflets was delayed by the Ramblers Brand Refresh. Alan suggested that model could be adopted by other Ramblers Groups working closely with the Ramblers Wellbeing Walks. Together these walks provided for a wide range of walking abilities and could increase Ramblers membership. This linked closely with walks organised from GP surgeries and under social prescribing.

Tony commented that he had become aware of Ramblers through leaflets in the GP surgeries. Judith added that, although more information was awaited, it seemed the Wellbeing Walks Schemes would become Affiliated Groups. Allan stated Ravenshead & Hucknall Group was also organising short walks for members and non-members and these specifically catered for those who could not walk far. Heather questioned whether there would be enough people willing to lead very short walks.

Judith proposed that when the Wellbeing Walks were launched by Ramblers there should be a lead Area Officer or a working party to take it forward. Jim suggested the Groups Officer should take this forward. Groups were supportive of the proposals and thanked Alan for bringing this to Council.

6 Group Reports Appendix XI

Group representatives made the following comments:

Nottingham – a Committee meeting of 6 had been held in a garden and a walk programme had been organised but no coach trips could yet be held.

Newark – a wide range of walks was being offered in anticipation of lockdown easing

One Step Walkers – there was a high demand for all walks and the website was being reorganised to make booking easier. Where multiple walks were offered organising enough walk leaders was a concern.

Rushcliffe – Alan added that getting enough walk leaders to come forward was also a problem and some members who had led walks before lockdown had been reluctant to come forward. To manage demand, the same walk was being run several times if possible.

Southwell – walks had been restarted with 6 members only and having sufficient walk leaders was an issue. Several short breaks had been booked for later in the year and 2022.

Notts & Derbys – numbers were limited to 10 per walk and the walks were fully booked.

Issue common to all Groups – Insurance and Assemble the need for all walk leaders to be registered on Assemble was raised by Allan. Several members also raised the point of non-members booking on walks when there were limited places available. The national Ramblers rules were clear and all walks were open to members and non-members as it was a national charity. It was recognised this might mean members of a Group were unable to book a place on a walk. Where walkers were recorded on the app, Central Office contacted non-members and encouraged them to join. Jim added the emphasis was on Ramblers keeping rights of way open and available. Heather understood that Meet Up Groups were claiming that they worked to the same rules as Ramblers and were also organising walks. Jim agreed to follow this up as he understood only Ramblers had met all the Sports Council rules to be registered as an organised sport i.e. with risk assessments, recording information for track and trace.

7 20th July Area Council Meeting

Members discussed whether the July Area Council should be an actual meeting or held on Zoom. In answer to a question from Heather, Judith stated the Area Council meetings would continue to be held at Bilsthorpe Miners Welfare assuming it reopened. As licensed premises, there would be different rules to a village hall and all venues had to meet strict criteria. If members of Area Council wished to change to another location they were invited to propose a venue.

Members were asked to vote on whether the July Area Council should be a physical meeting providing the following criteria were met:

- it must be allowed under that law at that time
- it must be allowed under Ramblers rules
- there should no longer be a requirement to wear or mask or to social distance

Votes had been submitted by Groups not present. The result was:

For a physical meeting – 13, against – 8, abstentions – 1

Judith was asked to organise a meeting. Jim would not be attending and another Chair for that evening would be sought. Adrian asked if it would be possible to also have the meeting on Zoom. Judith did not think this would be possible but would explore the options.

Area Council meetings included a discussion session and it was suggested the Brand Refresh should be the July topic if information was available by then.

Jim thanked everyone for attending and their contribution.