

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 19TH APRIL 2022

Minutes

Present Sue Rick (Area Chair and Mansfield & Sherwood), Adrian Amer (Vice-Chair and Newark), Judith Anson (Area Secretary), Neil Stafford (Area Treasurer), Tony Norcross (Minutes Secretary), Chris Thompson (Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer), Sue Jones (Countryside Officer), Steve Parkhouse (ROW Secretary), Alex Ellis (Groups Officer), Brian Tuffnell and Judy Lawson (Mansfield & Sherwood), Jim Norris (Gedling), Mike Stock (Rushcliffe), David & Barbara Dobson (Nottingham), Keith Jacobs (Broxtowe), Keith & Janet Ross (Worksop), Dave & Elaine Dobson (Vale of Belvoir) and Allan Rogers (Robin Hood Way Flexi-Group)

- 1 Apologies Heather Ingram (One Step Walkers), Dave Johnson (Southwell), Dave Hufton
 (Notts & Derbys Walkers), John Young (Vale of Belvoir), Diana Munro (Membership
 Secretary and Worksop)
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 18th January 2022
 Approved
 Proposed: Janet Ross Seconded: Brian Tuffnell
- 3 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- 3.1 Stiles – this was discussed at Item 4.4
- 4 Area Officers Reports
- 4.1 **Chair Appendix I.**
 Sue introduced herself as new Area Chair and set out her ideas for the future.
- 4.2 **Secretary Appendix II**
 Judith asked Area Council to approve the idea of **rights of way maintenance** in principle
 to enable discussions with Notts County Council. This resulted in a lively debate. Steve
 commented that currently all ROW maintenance had to be supervised by a NCC senior
 officer which was a waste of their time. It was possible NCC would agree to Ramblers
 putting up waymarkers. Allan and Sue Rick spoke about Spadework which had been
 stopped. The Robin Hood Way markers had been approved by NCC as the RHW was
 sponsored by NCC. Steve added that County Council across the country had stopped
 volunteers working on ROW because of supervision which cost more than using
 contractors. Mansfield & Sherwood and Worksop Groups did litter picking already which
 was covered by Ramblers insurance. It was suggested that way markers could be used
 as publicity for Ramblers as with SUSTRANS. It was agreed that Steve would continue to
 pursue the idea of ROW maintenance with NCC. At the AGM, Nottingham Group had
 demonstrated an **Emergency Information Keyring** the Group had purchased and
 examples were circulated. These would supplement an ICE card and could be bought in
 bulk cheaply from Micro Ltd, 01993 773350, www.microltd.co.uk
- 4.3 **Treasurer Appendix III**
 Neil informed Groups the quarterly payment had just been received and would be paid to
 Groups on 21st April. The British Horse Society grant secured by Steve for Don't Lose

Your Way was noted. The canopy and tablecloth for the eventing tent had been purchased with the new brand and the cost taken from the Communications Group budget – there being no Ramblers central funding for the re-brand. Marion Staniforth had made a donation of £17 to Area following the sale of Alex's items at the AGM. The Area Zoom account was due for renewal in September and Council considered the following proposal:

Proposal: Council is asked to approve the renewal of the Area Zoom licence in September 2022 at a current price of £143.88

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Adrian Amer

Vote: All in favour

4.4 **Rights of Way Secretary** *Appendix IV*

In addition to the reports, Steve reported NCC had carried out enforcement on stiles – 5 had been followed up informally and 5 had been served a notice. Only 1 had required full enforcement as the landowners had repaired/replaced the others. Dave Hobson added the Ramblers Pathwatch app had been withdrawn although Dave had sent in maps showing ROW problems. Steve confirmed the Ramblers Special Interest Group (SIG) had discussed Pathwatch which had been withdrawn because it was not compatible with new systems. In answer to a question from Chris about Bleasby (Goverton) ROW, Steve confirmed the original application made in 2010 had been incorrect. Allan questioned the Babbington Bridleway but the residents wanted to claim a bridleway, rather than a footpath, and Ramblers was supporting the residents.

4.5 **Countryside Officer** *Appendix V*

Members discussed the A52 crossing provision. It was noted that applications for solar arrays and wind turbines were increasing across Nottinghamshire with an adverse effect on the countryside. Steve added that Central Office did not have a policy and the ROW Team had sent proposals to them.

4.6 **Membership Secretary** *Appendix VI*

There were no questions on Diana's report.

4.7 **Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer**

Chris would produce a report in July.

4.8 **Communications Subcommittee** *Appendix VIII*

There were no questions on the main report. Neil Stafford spoke to the paper proposing Groups put walks on for Nottinghamshire Day on 25th August. District Councils were already involved and any walks would be added to the County Council website, providing publicity for the Group. Adrian reported he had recently visited the Tourist Agency and the Castle in Nottingham where there was very little information about Sherwood Forest which was the major tourist attraction in the County. There were no details of walks available in the County or any postcards of Sherwood Forest. Chris Thompson agreed that information for tourists was poor. Several Groups commented they had already created their walks programme for the year and felt it was not appropriate to add additional walks on 25th August.

5 Group Reports *Appendix IX*

Group representatives made the following comments in addition to their written reports:

Mansfield & Sherwood – a coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum had been organised on 24th April.

Worksop – a coach trip with the Mansfield & Sherwood Group had been organised to Brimham Rocks and Fountains Abbey on 12th May.

Robin Hood Way – the guide books were being reprinted as more were being bought.

Vale of Belvoir – Jan Tilsley was working with the Rushcliffe Group on the rebranding of the Wellbeing Walks.

6. Date and Venue of Next Meeting 19th July 2022

The next meeting will be held in person at Bilsthorpe.at 7.30 on Tuesday, 19th July 2022.

7. Discussion Session – To Book or Not to Book, led by Janet Ross

Members were divided into groups and were each given four questions to discuss. A summary of the feedback is below:

Should booking be required?

Positives reasons for booking:

- knowing the number of walkers turning up
- viability of running the coach trip
- certainty of numbers and who to wait for
- if the walk was cancelled everyone could be contacted without the walk leader having to go to the start

Negative reasons for booking:

- it may be put people off
- problems for those without the necessary tech
- it removes the spontaneity of deciding on the day e.g. according to weather

Do groups/leaders prior to the walk need to know who is attending? If yes state the reason why.

- if certain members are attending their limitations (e.g. speed, distance) are known in advance
- parking restrictions
- removes stress on public transport and if the numbers are high, people can catch different buses
- allows a register to be prepared in advance and completed on the day – some Groups do not do a register and only note names informally
- if the walk is linear, enough cars need to be available to take people
- CO want to know how many people are attending Ramblers walks across the country so want the numbers to be recorded centrally to lobby for walkers
- some Groups thought that was unnecessary bureaucracy and a burden on walk leaders
- other Groups found recording the stats on the app useful for planning future walks and for reporting to the AGM

If booking walks, what communication system do groups/leaders use to acknowledge recipients/ members request?

Groups who ask for booking use a variety of systems:

- Eventbrite
- RSVP

- email
- 'phone number given
- Meet Up

Other Groups do not require any booking and members/non-members turn up

Should Ramblers provide a system for booking?

There were mixed views on this:

- Ramblers centrally should not require Groups to only have booked walks and the information should not be held centrally
- it added unnecessary bureaucracy to going for a walk
- potential walk leaders would be deterred by the need to do tasks other than lead a walk
- there should be no central control over local walks
- any central system would have to be an 'one size fits all' which might not suit local requirements
- not everyone would be able to do the technology which would also deter walk leaders
- the new Walks Manager might have a simple system when it went live

Conclusion

The subject seemed to raise a lot of discussion within groups and also on the night. The feedback concluded, 'why change what isn't broken'. Walk leaders provide a variety of walking opportunities across and beyond Nottinghamshire for all of us to enjoy. The least we can all do is use what means of communication and follow instructions that they have specified. There is a need to look to the future and what the next generation of walkers want. It is essential to modernise for the future as if new walkers do not join there will no longer be a Ramblers organisation.

Janet thanked everyone for participating and reminded members if they would like to share good practice, discuss any issue or improve the way Area Council supports Groups in Nottinghamshire the Council was always glad to hear from you.

Sue Rick thanked Janet Ross for running the session and members for participating enthusiastically.