

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 18TH APRIL 2023**

Minutes

Present Adrian Amer (Vice-Chair), Judith Anson (Area Secretary), Neil Stafford (Area Treasurer), Tony Norcross (Minutes Secretary), Chris Thompson (Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer), Steve Parkhouse (ROW Secretary), Alex Ellis (Groups Officer), Brian Tuffnell (Mansfield & Sherwood), Mike Stock (Rushcliffe), Jim Norris (Gedling), Keith Jacobs (Broxtowe), Keith & Janet Ross (Worksop), Dave Johnson (Southwell), Joyce Pedersen (Newark), Yinka Soetan (One Step Walkers), Dave Hobson (Vale of Belvoir)

1 Apologies Sue Rick (Area Chair and Mansfield & Sherwood), Diana Munro (Membership Secretary and Worksop), Linda Honey (Nottingham), John Young (Vale of Belvoir)

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 17th January 2023

Approved

Proposed: Janet Ross

Seconded: Brian Tuffnell

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None

4 Area Officers Reports

4.1 **Chair** Appendix I.

Members sent best wishes to Sue. The Notts Groups Day was organised for Saturday, 15th July at Holbeck. Janet reported the meeting of the Working Party had gone well with ideas put forward. Information would be sent to all Groups and Council members were asked to inform their members and add it to their walking programme.

Steve Parkhouse made a personal statement and left the meeting. Several members commented that although Steve's comments were unclear, it was obvious he was very concerned and a way forward should be found.

4.2 **Secretary** Appendix II

Ravenshead & Hucknall – Judith confirmed the R&H AGM had been held without Area involvement. The AGM had voted to close the Group rather than merge with Mansfield & Sherwood Ramblers. Area had worked with Central Office to close the Group. All members had been contacted encouraging them to join another Group rather than transfer into the Area only category. Diana Munro will monitor where members move to. The Treasurer's Report included the concerns about how the R&H Committee had spent Ramblers funds at their AGM. The final step was to transfer the R&H Parishes to neighbouring Groups. In answer to a question, Judith confirmed that all Groups had a specific allocation of Parishes or districts which was shown on the Ramblers maps and was used to allocate new members.

Area AGM – Southwell was thanked for the excellent AGM. The 2024 AGM will be organised by Rushcliffe.

Lincolnshire Wolds Festival – Leaflets were circulated for the Lincolnshire Wolds Festival 20th May – 11th June.

4.3 **Treasurer** Appendix III

Notts Guided Walks Programme Neil explained the programme had been printed and as in previous years, Area had paid for an advert to be included in order to meet the production schedule. Chris Thompson circulated copies of the Programme. Area Council was asked to vote on the following motion:

Area Council is asked to endorse the decision to pay £200 for the advert for Notts Area Ramblers in the Notts Guided Walks Programme

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Keith Ross

All in favour – motion agreed

Renewal of Area Zoom Account – Neil asked that the Zoom licence be renewed for a further year from September so it could be included in the budgeting for 2023/24. The Area account was used regularly, particularly by the ROW Team. The cost was currently £119.00, a reduction from £143.88. In answer to a question, Neil confirmed this licence covered Area only and Groups had to purchase their own licence. In answer to another question, the issue of hybrid meetings had been discussed early in the pandemic but the logistics had meant it was not possible. Area Council was asked to vote on the following motion:

Area Council is asked to vote to renew the Area Zoom licence from September 2023 for a further year based on the current price of £119.00.

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Dave Johnson

All in favour with 1 abstention – motion agreed

4.3.1 Best Practice for Claiming Recce expenses

Yinka Soetan, One Step Walkers (OSW) explained her Group currently did not pay expenses for recces and asked other Groups about their policies. OSW had members in, and organised walks across, 3 Counties in addition to holidays. Particularly whether there was a limit on the number of times a member could claim. One OSW member led about 10 walks a month. How were holiday recces managed? Group representatives replied: Worksop – Keith Ross said the Group had only recently started to pay recce expenses and had set firm boundaries. A maximum of 20 miles each way at 45p per mile could be claimed plus £5. Otherwise the Group would be overspent.

Broxtowe – Keith Jacobs said not many walk leaders did claim but the maximum allowed was £25. An issue was Group budget requests and the requirement to not hold excess funds.

Rushcliffe – Mike Stock said only one claim per walk was allowed even if the walk leader did more than one recce. There was Ramblers guidance on claiming for recces.

Rushcliffe had a limit on the total claimed over 6 months. This sum was reviewed every 6 months and the budget request adjusted accordingly. For a holiday, the costs should include payment for the recce. The written policy was circulated to all walk leaders so it was clear.

Vale of Belvoir – Dave Hobson added a recce was necessary to complete a risk assessment.

Newark – Joyce Pedersen said the Group paid 35p per mile but very few walk leaders claimed.

Mansfield & Sherwood – Brian Tuffnell commented the Group had a £20 maximum payment and all walk leaders were encouraged to claim.

Yinka thanked all members for their comments which would assist OSW in developing their own policy on recce payments. Neil Stafford would contact Yinka outside the meeting to provide details of the Ramblers policy and guidance.

- 4.4 **Rights of Way Secretary** Appendix IV.i, IV.ii and IV.iii
 Steve Parkhouse had left the meeting. Judith had circulated the paper on Solar Array and Grid Battery Bank which had been circulated by Steve with the January Notts Walker. The paper had not been seen or discussed by Area Council and its status was unclear. It was not known who had written the paper or where it had been sent. Members felt it should be sent to Central Office to form part of a national Ramblers policy, rather than Nottinghamshire developing its own separate policy. There was concern about a ROW being confined within a narrow tunnel of hedges which hid the solar array but also prevented walkers from seeing any views or the sky. Dave Johnson used the example of the Hockerton and Caunton proposal to which he had responded. It was noted the policy of solar array and grid battery banks across the County should be the remit of the Countryside Officer. This would then be linked with the response to individual planning applications. This was in the same way as applications were made for quarries or major road developments.
- The need to fill the vacant Officer posts was discussed. The last Countryside Officer had been recruited through an advert in the Notts Walker as had the Area Treasurer and the majority of the ROW Team. It was important to target members who were not currently involved with Groups rather than Groups losing Officers to Area. Yinka suggested that Area Council members could approach individuals to ask as people could respond positively to a personal request.
- It was not possible to discuss the 2026 lost ways deadline
- 4.5 **Countryside Officer**
 See comments above about the urgency of appointing a Countryside Officer.
- 4.6 **Membership Secretary** Appendix VI
 Diana had changed the format of the report and would continue to monitor the ex-Ravenshead & Hucknall members.
- 4.7 **Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer** Appendix VII & walk leaflet
 Chris confirmed the launch of the Major Hayman Rooke Mansfield Woodhouse Heritage Trail was being formally launched on 21st April. Discussions on the Ancient Oak Trail were continuing with the RSPB. A leaflet for the first walk on the Trent Vale Trail was circulated. This had been produced with support from the Collingham Group. Chris was thanked for his work on these and on the Notts Guided Walks Programme.
- 4.8 **Communications Subcommittee** Appendix VIII
 Judith explained Mailchimp had introduced charges for distribution lists greater than 500 and this would affect all Areas and larger Group that used the system. This would be an additional expenditure not budgeted for. Advice had been sought from Central Office but there had not been a response to date although the additional funding would be paid by Ramblers. Yinka pointed out that OSW probably exceeded 500 with the additional people who received the newsletter and so could incur costs. There were a number of similar distribution systems which all charged and it was important to choose one which met Area's specifications. Dave Hobson proposed that the Notts Walker be sent out in batches of 500 but Neil responded the practicalities of this were difficult. It was important that research could be done on what members read in each edition as the opening rate did not give any indication of whether we were sending out what members actually

wanted to read. There was also work to be done on the mailing list for the Notts Walker. Steve had identified Mailerlite which, with Council's approval, could be used under a free trial for one edition. If this was satisfactory, it was proposed a year's subscription be taken out. As this expenditure might be incurred before the July Council, members were asked to approve this in advance. Council was asked to vote on the following motion:

Area Council is asked to agree the next edition of the Notts Walker in April is sent out by Mailerlite. If this is found to meet our specifications, a subscription will be taken out for one year. The exact cost will need to be confirmed as the pricing on the website is opaque.

Proposed: Judith Anson

Seconded: Neil Stafford

All in favour – motion agreed

5. Group Reports Appendix IX

Several members and reports mentioned problem filling coaches. Judith confirmed she would circulate all Groups to advertise coach trips. Alex Ellis added that as Groups Officer she encouraged Groups to contact each other to share details of coach trips and holidays.

6. PNFS Area Subscription

Janet Ross presented a paper from the Worksop Group proposing that Groups and individuals should support the PNFS, rather than Area affiliate. This would benefit PNFS more than a single payment from Area. The cost to Area was £22.50 per annum. Janet asked members for their views. Neil stated the PNFS had existed before Ramblers and, unlike Ramblers, contributed money to repair ROW signs and maintain them in perpetuity. Joyce pointed out Groups and individuals could contribute in addition to Area if they wished. Judith added that every Group and individual who walked in the PNFS area benefited from the work of the organisation and it should be supported. Janet commented that members could walk on National Trust (NT) land but did not affiliate to the NT. Neil replied the NT was a landowner and not a voluntary organisation like PNFS. Janet stated her subscription was the Ramblers and not the PNFS so funds should not be used for the PNFS. Jim quoted the Charitable Aims & objectives of the Ramblers which was for the development of ROW and the PNFS subscription did that. Keith Jacobs added the £22.50 was on behalf of 2,291 members and was a small amount.

It was agreed to vote on the following proposal:

Area Council is asked to agree to the renewal of the subscription to the PNFS as an Affiliate for a further year at a cost of £22.50.

Proposed: Neil Stafford

Seconded: Judith Anson

For: 12 Against: 2

Motion carried

7. Discussion Session – How to Enhance the 2024 AGM

This would form the discussion item at the July meeting.

8. Date and Venue of Next Meeting 18th July 2023

The next meeting will be held in person at Bilsthorpe.at 7.30 on Tuesday, 18th July 2023.