

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2024**

Minutes

Present Alex Ellis (Groups Officer) in the Chair, Judith Anson (Area Secretary), Neil Stafford (Area Treasurer), Chris Thompson (Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer), Brian Tuffnell (Area Webmaster and Mansfield & Sherwood), James McGill (Newark), Keith Jacobs (Broxtowe), Yinka Soetan (One Step Walkers), Dave Johnson (Robin Hood Way Flexi Group), Elaine Hobson (Vale of Belvoir), Dave Hobson (Vale of Belvoir), Jim Sinclair (Southwell), Mary Whetstone (Mansfield & Sherwood), Denise Garley (Mansfield & Sherwood) and Heather Jowett (Mansfield & Sherwood)

1. Apologies: Adrian Amer (Area Vice-Chair), Diana Munro (Area Membership Secretary and Worksop), Mike Stock (Rushcliffe), Joyce Pedersen (Newark), John Young (Vale of Belvoir), Linda Honey (Nottingham) and Dave Johnson (Southwell)

2. Chris Thompson and Joyce Pedersen

Joyce Pedersen was standing down as Chair of Newark Group and had served on Area Council for many years. James Magill was asked to pass on the thanks of Area Council members for Joyce's service and valuable contributions.

There was a presentation to Chris Thompson who was 80 on 14th October.

- 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Brian Tuffnell

Seconded: Chris Thompson

- 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Safeguarding Officers – the planned training for Diana Munro and Alex Ellis had been cancelled by Central Office. It would be rearranged.

- 5 Area Officers Reports

- 5.1 **Area Secretary** Appendix I

Area Officer vacancies A Notts Walker would be sent out in November reminding members about the AGM and asking people to come forward for the vacancies. The ROW structure was being considered and members would be asked to give an expression of interest rather than be nominated for a specific post at the AGM.

Area AGM being organised by Newark and Collingham Groups on Sunday, 2nd February 2025 at Collingham Memorial Hall.

- 5.2 **Area Treasurer** Appendix II

Neil confirmed Area and Group budgets had been accepted. The Group funding for Quarter 1 would be sent out this week.

- 5.3 **Rights of Way Committee** Appendix III

Judith presented the report of action over the last quarter. The solar applications were taking up Officer time and the Knapthorpe and South Muskham schemes were going to appeal on 5th November. Advice had been sought from Central Office about the legal

position on ROW affected by the Great North Road Solar Scheme. An induction event for Group Footpath Officers was being arranged in November. The River Trent foot/cycle bridge had received planning approval and confirmation of funding was anticipated.

5.4 **Area Countryside Officer**

This post was vacant and Judith would be covering the work.

5.5 **Area Membership Secretary** Appendix IV

Jim said the Southwell Group was finding it difficult to access the Central Office membership system. Judith asked the Group to contact Diana direct as she would be able to help membership@nottsarearamblers.org.uk

5.6 **Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer** Appendix V

Chris Thompson asked Groups to provide walks for the Walk Notts 2025 brochure. This would replace the previous Notts Guided Walks brochure as the Partnership had linked with Active Travel Notts. Walks should be sent to Chris at tourismheritage@nottsarearamblers.org.uk Members were disappointed the Major Hayman Rooke Trail was not being extended. Self-guided walks were available on the Area website and Chris encouraged members to add new ones. Unfortunately, the excellent library of walks (Ramblers Routes) created by Ramblers volunteers on the national website has, sadly, had some of its functionality removed when it was migrated to the new website it. Several Groups had their own library of walks on their websites.

6. Group Reports Appendix VI

Mansfield & Sherwood Brian invited members to the Group's Christmas Party on 20th December. Contact secretary@mansfieldramblers.org.uk

Newark The Committee had considered holding some meetings on Zoom and James asked about using the Area account. Neil replied that logistically this was not possible but Groups could include a Zoom account in their budget request. The cost would be balanced by a reduction in room hire costs. Members discussed other options such as Microsoft Teams which was free. There were GDPR issues about recording and about seeing other participant's email address or 'phone number.

One Step Walkers Yinka asked what funding was available for publicity as the Group was considering how to attract new members. One option was using Meet Up and involving two other Groups to share the cost. Another was to produce publicity material. Neil replied that funds were available at Area for publicity and the Group could make a proposal to Area Council for funds.

Vale of Belvoir Dave Hobson asked if anyone knew when the Bennerley viaduct would be open at the east end as the Group had a walk planned. Members were aware of the delay caused by adverse weather but not when it would be opened to allow a circular route.

Post meeting Note – current status of Bennerley Viaduct access can be found at <https://www.bennerleyviaduct.org.uk/>

7. Rights of Way Team Structure – Working Party Review

Members of the Rights of Way Committee had been invited to attend for this item. Neil spoke to Appendix VII which included the comments made at the July meeting. A number of the problems identified in 2013 prior to the previous restructuring still remained. There had been considerable change since 2013 with almost all information now distributed

electronically, and with most DMMO applications made, this was no longer a priority. There had also been a move since 2013 to focus ROW work at Area level to the detriment of Group Footpath Officers who were the experts on their own patch. The role of the DC had been to coordinate work across the District Councils which contained several Groups, rather than subsume the work of the Groups. That had not happened in practice leaving Group Footpath Secretaries unclear of their role or involvement with the ROW Committee. In addition, the loss of most of the ROW records and correspondence as volunteers left had highlighted the need to retain information centrally, rather than on personal computers.

Neil proposed the creation of a working party to produce proposals for January Area Council and asked members to volunteer. Jim asked what the process was intending to achieve. Neil replied the outcome would be a new ROW structure in place to protect ROW and manage planning applications. A recruitment process would then seek to fill the new roles. In answer to a question from Dave Hobson, Neil replied that action should be taken by Groups wherever possible although Area would always provide advice. Heather asked about utilising models from other Areas. Neil explained that all Areas operated different models based on the type of Local Government structure they worked with, or due to historical development, or topography. An example was Path Orders which were usually issued by the Highways Authority but could be issued by a District Council if connected to a planning application.

Neil asked for volunteers to come forward for a working party. Judith explained that if no one volunteered the proposals would be put forward by the Officers but it was important the new arrangements were owned by the Groups. Keith agreed the Group Footpath Secretaries needed a clear understanding of their role.

Groups were asked to let Judith know by 25th October if they wished to volunteer.

8. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 21st January 2025, 6.30PM at Bilsthorpe.