**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15TH APRIL 2025**

## Minutes

**Present** Alex Ellis (Area Chair), Adrian Amer (Area Vice-Chair), Judith Anson (Area Secretary), Neil Stafford (Area Treasurer), James Mcgill (Newark), Alan Burrell (Newark), Keith Jacobs (Broxtowe), Dave Johnson (Robin Hood Way Flexi Group), Jim Sinclair (Southwell), Andrew Cowell (Notts & Derbys Walking Group), Mike Stock (Rushcliffe) and Thelma Ward (Worksop)

1. Apologies: Chris Thompson (Area Tourism & Heritage Paths Officer), Diana Munro (Area Membership Secretary and Worksop), Brian Tuffnell (Area Webmaster and Mansfield & Sherwood), Elaine Hobson (Vale of Belvoir), Dave Hobson (Vale of Belvoir), Linda Honey (Nottingham) and Yinka Soetan (One Step Walkers)

2. Statement by Chair

Alex Ellis asked that all members treat each other with respect, raise their hand if they wished to speak and not raise their voices. Any one not complying would be asked to leave.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2025 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:
Minute 5.1, last line, add "—Executive. Area Council expressed concern at this comment."
Proposed: Thelma Ward Seconded: Keith Jacobs

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None.

5 Area Officers Reports

5.1 **Area Chair's Report** Appendix I

There were no questions

5.2 **Area Secretary** Appendix II and IIa

General Council 5th April The report was received. The Council had felt rather flat, particularly when the Motion stating the Board should take account of the decisions of GC was lost. If the Board cannot be held to account by GC then why have the GC? There had been no attempt by the Board to explain why the return to the 2 day GC had been rejected so there was a lack of transparency in the Board's dealings. In answer to a question, it was explained that only part of the Board was elected with the others appointed. There were questions on the balance sheet and Neil explained the annual income was variable as large legacies were sometimes received which made forecasting difficult. The expenditure could be predicted. Questions had been asked and answered on the cost of the insurance policies for the first time. A session had been held on the revised governance proposals and it was likely another Extraordinary General Council would be held towards the end of the year. If possible, a Special Area Council would be organised to provide guidance to the delegates on how to vote. A question was asked about Motion 9 on information for walk leaders. Neil replied the wording had been unclear and appeared to be asking for the information already available on the website which is why it was lost.

County Show 10th May – Alex stated a rota was being drawn up so there would not be too many people at the stand. Alex wanted those attending to engage with the public and promote what Ramblers does on rights of way rather than just focussing on organising walks. Alex asked people to contact her if they could attend.

Groups/Parishes/Councils – James had looked for the document on the Area website without success. Neil replied that it was there and would be moved to a more prominent position when the changes to the ROW section on the website were made. Judith agreed to send James another copy.

Facebook Brian Tuffnell had restarted the Area Facebook account using a different name. It could be accessed from the Area Website by the symbol on the menu. Members were encouraged to look at the Facebook page and to link their Group accounts.

5.3 **Area Treasurer** Appendix III

Neil presented his report. Although the Zoom licence did not expire until September, it was necessary to approve renewal so it could be included in the budgeting process. Thelma commented that Teams was free for 60 minutes as was a personal Zoom for 40 minutes. Neil responded that with large numbers attending meetings, having to resend the invitation when the meetings exceeded the time limit was not practical.

Area Council was asked to vote on the following motion:

**Area Council is asked to approve the renewal of the Area Zoom licence in September, based on the current price of £155.88.**

Proposed: Neil Stafford Seconded: Jim Sinclair

Vote: All in favour, no abstentions

5.4 **Rights of Way Sub-Committee** Appendix IV

James Magill referred to the minutes of the January meeting and the new posts of Area Rights of Way Protection Officer and Area Rights of Way Maintenance & Improvement Officer. James felt that the person working on the national Don’t Lose Your Way (DLYW) project was being excluded from the Rights of Way Sub-Committee and proposed presenting a paper to a future Council meeting asking for that to be changed. Neil responded that the structure of the Rights of Way Sub-Committee had been agreed in January and was now policy. The work on historic DLYW claims had been largely completed in Nottinghamshire and members could consult the Ramblers DLYW map for information. James felt the person had special expertise which was essential to the work of the ROW Sub-Committee, including how to claim rights of way. Neil explained that the Nottinghamshire County Council website showed all the Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) submitted for the County. Judith reminded members that DMMOs could be submitted by anyone, not just Ramblers. All these claims were important to walkers in Nottinghamshire and it was unclear why certain claims would be identified as more important than others because they had been submitted by the named person. James agreed that he would not raise the issue at future meetings.

5.5 **Area Membership Secretary** Appendix V

There were no questions.

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

Chris Thompson explained that Walk Notts (walknotts.org.uk) had not published the walking brochure as intended. This should have been in the same format as the Notts Guided Walks Programme and Groups had submitted walks to be included. There were some walks on the Walk Notts website but it was difficult to follow. The £200 agreed at the last meeting was for a full-page advert in a brochure and if that was not published, the funds would be withdrawn. Chris confirmed that he was continuing to push for the brochure.

Chris circulated details of the 40th Anniversary of the Robin Hood Way. A self-guided walk leaflet had been produced with a special event planned for 29th May. Members were encouraged to attend and share the information with their Groups.

6. Group Reports Appendix VI

**Robin Hood Way Flexi- Group** Dave Johnson commented that he had submitted a formal motion as part of his Group report but Judith had not included it. Judith confirmed she had informed Dave that motions to Area Council should be in a separate paper, setting out clearly what the issue was and providing information on what members were expected to discuss. The 'motion'' was only several lines and as members represented their Groups, they needed details in advance as they might want to seek views. Dave disagreed and said it was up to Area Council to decide whether to accept the motion. In his view Group reports should be sent to Council unchanged. Members discussed this with several members agreeing the reports should be unchanged while others felt it was not appropriate to discuss a formal motion as part of the reports. One member commented that a motion should be scheduled on the agenda to allow members to prepare for it while another argued that each Group should be able to submit their own information and the Area Secretary should not change what they had written.
Dave made a formal proposal to Council:
**In future, all Group reports submitted to the Area Secretary should not be amended**
Seconded by Keith Jacobs
Vote: For 4, against 6, abstentions 2
the proposal was lost

**Southwell** Jim Sinclair suggested that each Group report should start with the same information e.g. number of walks held, number of people on each walk, any new members on the walks, etc. This would allow a comparison between Groups. Members discussed this and there were differing views. One member felt the key part of the report should be about rights of way work while others thought it was an interesting suggestion. It was agreed that Jim would send a form of words to Judith and Groups would be asked to incorporate this in their July reports. If it was agreed to be valuable then it could be included in future reports.

7. Future Discussion Topics

Groups had been asked to submit suggestions for future discussion topics and the following items were raised:
Nottingham Group – safety on walks and first aid (raised following an incident on a recent walk)
Broxtowe – recruitment of walk leaders; first aid training; rights of way maintenance
Vale of Belvoir – walk leader recruitment
Chair – the impact of climate change on group walks e.g. cancellation due to flooding or adverse weather conditions
suggestions in the meeting – invite Neil Lewis of Nottinghamshire County Council to speak to Council; impact of solar farms on the walking environment

It was agreed the discussion topic for the July meeting would be walk leader recruitment. Thelma Ward, Worksop Group agreed to lead this session. Groups would be invited to send appropriate members of their Group to attend Council to contribute to the discussion. To ensure there was adequate time, the first section of the meeting would be strictly limited to 45 minutes. Officers would not speak to their reports except to add an urgent item or to answer questions. Judith would liaise with Thelma about preparation for the session.

8. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 15th July 2025, 6.30PM at Bilsthorpe.