

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 25th January 2020 at Welburn Village Hall

Present: Stephen Down (Secretary and Acting Chair), Peter Ayling, Sharon Benton, Peter Bettany, Sam Borman, Wendy Borman, Thelma Brown, Tony Corrigan, Bob Dealey, Cathryn Ferris, Maggie Graham, Martin Hill, Penny Hudson, Ann Laing, Simon Lyle, Gary Malcolm, George Malcolm, Richard May, Joe Neal, David Nunns, Enid Nunns, Moira Penrose, Jane Preston, Christopher Prince, Elaine Prince, Ian Reavill, Vera Silberberg, Angela Simpson, Marilyn Skelton, Sheila Smith, Terry Strickland, Anne Thornton, Phil Trafford, Ken Usher. [34]

AGM 1/20 Chair's welcome

As Chair, Stephen Down welcomed members and guests to the meeting and thanked Ryedale Group for organising the venue, refreshments and leading the morning walk, attended by 19 members.

Apologies were received from Richard Bramall, Matthew Harrison, Steve Lack, Sean Sedman, Elaine Tague and Marian Thomas

Stephen also introduced guest speakers Thelma Brown and Richard May, both Ramblers Trustees.

Those present were asked to remember deceased members : - Richard Armstrong, Mr F. J. Ashcroft, Mrs J. Garner, Vivien Irish, Philip Knight, Mr C.W. Isaacs, Bob Marsham, Miss A. Morton, Mr Park, David Rubinstein, Mrs L. F. Scott, Mr C. Thompson, Mr C. R. Turgoose and John Williams

Area President Peter Ayling then took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

AGM 2/20 Minutes of the 2019 AGM

Held at Beverley Minster Parish Hall on Saturday 26th January 2019, the minutes were accepted with one amendment i.e. Minute AGM 7/19 showed a vacancy for Access Officer which was inaccurate as the position continued to be filled by Tom Halstead. Reference to vacancy deleted.

Proposed: David Nunns

Seconded: Marilyn Skelton

AGM 3/20 Matters arising

No matters were raised from the minutes.

AGM 4/20 Annual report 2018 - 2019

President Peter Ayling thanked all Area and Group Committee members for their contributions to the Annual Report. Stephen Down was complimented for his hard work in producing an attractive and informative publication.

David Nunns adding to his submission, commented that resolution of footpath issues by North Yorkshire County Council had improved, including more involvement by land owners. He informed the meeting that processing of Definitive Map Modification applications also appeared to be speeding up, citing the making of an order resulting from a 2026 Don't Lose Your Way application by Marilyn Skelton.

Adding to David's comment, Marilyn stated North Yorkshire's Definitive Map Team had been helpful in processing her application in a relatively short period. Following a methodology suggested in the book 'Rights of Way – Restoring the Record' by Bucks and Wadey, enabled the best available evidence being used.

Proposed: Terry Strickland

Seconded: Phil Trafford

Acceptance of The Annual Report was voted on and carried – Nem.Con.

AGM 5/20 Financial statement

Sam Borman, Treasurer provided an overview of Area's finances that continue to be in a healthy position. A question and answer session followed. David Nunns asked for clarification of an item 'Meetings [including AGM]' that showed an increase from £427 to £1016. As working papers were not immediately to hand the treasurer advised the answer would be available for incorporating into the minutes later in the day.

Proposed: Ann Laing

Seconded: Stephen Down

Acceptance of The Financial Statement was voted on and carried unanimously

NB: Answer received after close of meeting to DN's query: - "Meetings Other" cost ... additional to the cost of last year's [2019] AGM, a nominal £500 was included to cover this year's [2020] AGM, as a safeguard in case the post of Treasurer, then vacant, was unable to be filled during the year"

AGM 6/20 Election of officers

President: Peter Ayling –

Proposed: Tony Corrigan

Seconded: Chris Prince

For the following committee positions the only nomination received was from the current incumbent. They were therefore elected en bloc.

Secretary: Stephen Down

Treasurer: Sam Borman

Footpaths Secretary [York & North Yorkshire]: David Nunns

Footpaths Secretary [Hull & East Riding]: Matthew Harrison

Countryside Officer: Peter Ayling

Walks Programme Coordinator: Geoff Richardson

Area News Editor: Marian Thomas

Communications Officer: Ann Laing

Access Officer: Tom Halstead

Minutes Secretary: Tony Corrigan

Proposed: Martin Hill

Seconded: George Malcolm

Chair: Vice Chair: Membership Secretary: Publicity Officer: Webmaster - no nominations received.

Stephen Down asked members who go on group walks to raise with colleagues the need to fill these vacancies.

Vice Presidents: Jack Bower, Roy Dresser, Ann Holt, John Jefferson, Ann Laing, David Nunns, Ray Wallis

Proposed: Ian Reavill

Seconded: Gary Malcolm

AGM 7/20 Appointment of Independent examiner

Emily Hunt had stated she was happy to continue in the role. Peter Ayling asked that thanks be communicated to Emily for her assistance.

Proposed: Sam Borman

Seconded: George Malcolm

AGM 8/20 2020 General Council at Bristol - Delegates

Three members, i.e. President Peter Ayling, Secretary Stephen Down and Access Officer Tom Halstead put themselves forward to represent the Area as Delegates at Ramblers 2020 General Council in Bristol on 4/5th April.

As Area's quota for voting delegates is set at two, an election of candidates followed, presided over by Tony Corrigan, Minutes Secretary. The voting procedure was explained to the meeting with those eligible to vote being given a ballot paper. Before voting commenced, candidates PA and SD gave a brief oral statement for their candidature.

Ballot Result: -

Tom Halstead: - 25 votes

Stephen Down: - 18 votes

Peter Ayling: -16 votes

Tom and Stephen were duly elected to represent EYDA Ramblers at General Council 2020 – Bristol

Eligible voters: - 31

Ballot papers returned: - 30 [one member opted not to vote]

The meeting had also been informed that two additional members can attend General Council as a visitor i.e. without voting rights. This provides a useful insight, especially to those considering being a future delegate.

Joe Neal and Peter Ayling being the only members indicating a wish to attend were selected

AGM 9/20 Motion for General Council - Climate Crisis

This matter had been discussed at Area Council's December meeting, where it was acknowledged 'climate crisis' is recognised at national and international levels as of serious concern. The issue links directly into Ramblers objective of countryside protection. Area Council agreed a higher focus by Ramblers to the issues would demonstrate and reinforce our commitment to a core objective. It was further agreed it should be subject of a motion to Ramblers General Council with AGM members being asked to support the proposal.

PA had been requested by Area Council to draft the motion for the AGM after consultation with Central Office staff. TH made significant contributions to the draft and PA added he believed TH should propose this motion at GC. PA outlined the background to the motion and following a healthy discussion by members, the meeting was asked to vote on submitting the motion to Ramblers General Council 2020. There were no editing suggestions.

Proposed: Peter Ayling

Seconded: Tony Corrigan

Submission of the motion to GC was voted on and carried - Nem.Con.

Copy of the motion attached to these minutes.

AGM 10/20 Any other business

i. Following on from the agreed motion, members discussed whether the titles 'Countryside Officer' and 'Countryside Committee' were possibly narrow in focus. As Ramblers are concerned with all issues that may adversely impact upon our environment, whether in the countryside or elsewhere, it was thought a change of title to Environmental Officer/Committee would be more appropriate.

Proposed: Stephen Down

Seconded: Vera Silberberg

Agreed by the meeting - Nem.Con.

ii. Marilyn Skelton, stepping down as Area Membership Secretary was thanked by Stephen Down on behalf of the meeting, for her hard work and assistance over many years in dealing with membership matters.

AGM 11/20 Guest Speakers

Thelma Brown - Ramblers Trustee

Opening her presentation on Membership and Fundraising, Thelma gave a brief update on the functioning of Ramblers Central Office following the resignation of CEO Van Griffiths. Sarah Marfleet is acting Chief Executive until appointment of a new CEO. Otherwise the Leadership Team is operating as normal, being very busy and arranging General Council.

Explaining membership retention is subject of many variables and demographic changes, Thelma commented that increasing the retirement age may cause a potential loss. Recent months has seen an increase in overall membership and it was hoped we were approaching the point when new membership would fully compensate for the number of existing members being lost often because of death or incapacity. Central Office are aware and grateful for the commitment from Areas

In respect of funding, Thelma outlined the helpful financial support received from The People's Post Code Lottery, Sport England and Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust that enabled sponsorship of Ramblers campaigns and promotions such as Walking for Health and Don't Lose Your Way, with a caveat that such funding is not forever.

In concluding Thelma mentioned Central Office staff were busy dealing with walking issues that may be affected by impending legislation e.g. Agriculture Bill and Intentional Trespass.

Richard May - Ramblers Trustee

In his enthusiastic style Richard updated members on progress of Ramblers campaign 'Don't Lose Your Way' as the 2026 cut off point gets closer. He stated February 2020 will see the introduction of a web-based tool that will enable researchers to compare 1 km squares on current and historical maps to identify possible lost rights of way. This will coincide with a significant media launch where the public will be encouraged to participate in the project, with an aim of receiving ten thousand public enquiries. Ramblers in liaison with other like-minded organisations have submitted a statement to government arguing for deferment of the 2026 cut-off date.

Richard then updated the meeting on further developments of Ramblers 'Insight Hub' explaining it was currently used by membership secretaries and the next stage was a platform called 'Assemble' that would enable communication between volunteers. He encouraged members with smart phones to download the Ramblers app and demonstrated the functionality of it.

A question and answer session followed mainly concerning I.T. issues and 2026 at the conclusion of which Peter Ayling thanked both speakers, adding that progress of 2026 investigations was most important.

In closing the meeting Stephen Down announced York Group would be hosting the 2021 AGM. He also thanked Welburn Village Hall Ladies for providing refreshments.

Motion

This General Council recognises the urgency of the situation presented by climate change, in particular its possible effects on the British countryside and wildlife. It supports the general position put forward in the Ramblers December 2019 Election Manifesto that we are facing a climate emergency, and now urges the Board of Trustees to work to identify likely changes in the countryside in the short and longer term, and, where practicable, to develop strategies to mitigate these changes, thereby meeting Ramblers objectives of the protection and enhancement of the beauty of the countryside.

General Council asks the Trustees to meet this challenge by considering the following:

- 1) Continuing to be vocal in the climate change debate and work with bodies such as the Wildlife and Countryside Link coalition and like-minded charities, and where appropriate with governmental agencies, to develop a strategy reflecting Ramblers approach to climate change issues.
- 2) Creating a tool kit of guidance and suggestions as a bolt-on to Area and Group local initiatives.
- 3) Setting up a small working party drawn from trustees, staff, and outside experts or volunteers from our membership with relevant expertise.
- 4) Updating General Council on Ramblers contributions to mitigating climate change problems.

Background

It is widely accepted that the increase in so-called greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide resulting from our use of fossil fuels is the main cause of the observed rise in global temperature, with devastating side-effects such as a higher frequency of extreme weather and a rising sea level. Most countries at the 2019 Madrid UN Climate Change conference (at which there were few definite outcomes, with supporters of fossil fuels avoiding the meeting) and many others have proposed that renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and others must replace fossil fuels by 2040–50 in order to restrict temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. Some progress has been made to achieve these targets, for example over a third of our energy needs in Dec 2019 came from renewable sources, showing just what is possible.

These recent changes in energy use to reduce the rate of atmospheric warming mainly come from changes in government energy policy, but other agencies such as charities and large corporations may also need to change their policies. The public, especially its younger members, increasingly support strong policies and positive activism. Ramblers were a founder-member of Wildlife and Countryside Link (now with 54 member organisations), and continue to be active in this coalition of like-minded charities in monitoring and combating the effects of climate change. Finally, with countryside protection being a core objective of the Ramblers, it is incumbent upon the organisation to demonstrate by way of policy, strategy and initiatives, a commitment to reducing environmental harm.

END