

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held via Zoom on 23rd January 2021

Present: Stephen Down (Secretary and Acting Chair), Tony Ashbridge, Peter Ayling, Sam Borman, Richard Bramall, Graham Collett, Tony Corrigan, Brian Currey, George Donnor, Pat Donner, Cathryn Ferris, John Harland, Steve Hoather, Steve Lack, Ann Laing, Gary Malcolm, George Malcolm, Malcolm McDonnell, Joe Neal, David Nunns, Enid Nunns, Jane Preston, Kate Plumb, Ian Reavill, Geoff Richardson, Sean Sedman, Vera Silberberg, Eric Smith, Elaine Tague, Marian Thomas, Adam Watkins [31]

In compliance with HM Government's Coronavirus restrictions on face to face meetings, this AGM could not occur physically. Using digital technology it took place online, with procedures in place for managing voting and transaction of business. This action was to demonstrate good governance of Ramblers as a charity and in keeping with HM Government advice.

AGM 1/21 Chair's welcome

As Chair, Stephen Down welcomed members, guests and Ramblers Trustee Malcolm McDonnell to this virtual AGM. After explaining instructions for using Zoom operating tools and voting procedure if required, he stated proceeding were being recorded in audio and video, advising video opt out for those who did not wish to appear on screen.

There were no apologies.

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

AGM 2/21 Minutes of the 2020 AGM

Held at Welburn Village Hall on Saturday 25th January 2020, the minutes were accepted without amendment.

Proposed: Stephen Down

Seconded: Jane Preston

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 3/21 Matters arising

AGM 9/20 – PA reported that Area's motion 'Climate Crisis' to a virtual General Council meeting had received good support.

AGM 6/20 – Area Council Committee vacancies. AL updated members that at the Area Council Meeting of 25th February 2020 she volunteered as Membership Secretary.

NB: At the same meeting a member volunteered and was elected as Webmaster but never commenced the role.

AGM 4/21 Annual report 2019 - 2020

In thanking Groups and Area Officers for their contributions to the Annual report, President Peter Ayling praised SD for his hard work in compiling another excellent publication. Photographs supporting information provided an excellent illustration of our area and where we walk. There were no urgent matters arising from the annual report nor any supplements to it.

Proposed: Geoff Richardson

Seconded: Marian Thomas

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 5/21 Financial statement

Sam Borman, Treasurer, in presenting his statement reported a healthy position. There were no questions relating to the produced account and SB was thanked for his work.

PA referred to page 15 'Bequest from D Wlodarczyk'. He informed members that DW's executor had approved a residue of £96 be apportioned 50% to Ramblers DLYW campaign with the remainder split between Great Givendale and Millington parish churches. This had been ratified at Area Council Meeting on 1st December 2020 and action completed by SB. The churches had thanked Area for the gifts.

The Treasurer's report and financial statement were received.

Proposed: Vera Silberberg

Seconded: Tony Corrigan

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 6/21 Election of officers

i. Prior to dealing with election of officers SD informed members that no nominations had been received for the position of Area President. PA offered to continue for one year and was thanked.

Proposed: Ann Laing

Seconded: Sam Borman

Vote: Carried nem con - Peter Ayling to be Area President

ii. Vacant Posts

No applications or nominations had been received for the following: -

Chair/Vice Chair:

Secretary:

Webmaster:

Publicity Officer:

PA outlined a potentially serious situation developing should roles of Area Chairperson and Secretary not be filled, inviting Sam Borman to provide an overview of his discussions with Ramblers CO.

SB reminded members that three key Area leadership roles must be filled in order for it to function within its constitution: i.e. Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. He had liaised with Diane Simcoe Ramblers Area Support Officer [North] who provided information as follows:-

'If volunteers cannot be recruited to fill the key leadership roles the area will then be placed 'in abeyance', (a shorthand term for pausing area committee activities whilst the area support team helps re-establish a local structure). Ramblers' staff take over the basic functions of area which might include finance and communications, if there are no volunteers willing to continue. Volunteers who are willing to continue without the coordinating Area Council can help with e.g. area finance/area website/representation on bodies etc. Areas in abeyance do not hold an AGM. Members can still volunteer for roles as part of the process of re-establishing an Area Council'.

SB informed members that if unresolved this AGM would need to vote on putting the Area into abeyance, MMCD advising for it to take place at the end of the meeting. Members engaged in informative, useful discussions on how 'abeyance', if entered into would impact upon Area and Group activities.

Marian Thomas volunteered to fill the role of Secretary for up to one year [in addition to her several current roles at group and area level]. Her kind offer was noted and gratefully accepted.

Proposed: Stephen Down

Seconded: Peter Ayling

Vote: Carried nem con – Marian Thomas to be Area Secretary

To prevent the Area Committee being put into 'abeyance', Peter Ayling volunteered to fill the role of Chairman as a short term measure. Acknowledging Peter's existing commitment to various aspects of Ramblers business and demands on his time, members expressed gratitude for his kind offer that was gratefully accepted.

Proposed: Ann Laing

Seconded: Sam Borman

Vote: Carried nem con – Peter Ayling to be Chairman

iii. Other Posts

For the following committee positions no nominations had been received. Current incumbents offered to continue in post. They were therefore elected en bloc.

Treasurer: Sam Borman

Footpaths Secretary [York & North Yorkshire]: David Nunns

Footpaths Secretary [Hull & East Riding]: Matthew Harrison

Environment Officer: Peter Ayling

Walks Programme Coordinator: Geoff Richardson

Area News Editor: Marian Thomas

Membership Secretary: Ann Laing

Communications Officer: Ann Laing

Access Officer: Tom Halstead

Minutes Secretary: Tony Corrigan

Proposed: Ian Reavill

Seconded: Jane Preston

Vote: Carried nem con

iii. Vice Presidents

PA informed members that current vice presidents had been approached and agreed to continue i.e. Jack Bower, Roy Dresser, Ann Holt, John Jefferson, Ann Laing, David Nunns and Ray Wallis.

Proposed: John Harland

Seconded: Ian Reavill

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 7/21 Appointment of Independent examiner

Sam Borman thanked Emily Hunt for her assistance and stated she was happy to continue in the role.

Proposed: Sam Borman

Seconded: David Nunns

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 8/21 2021 General Council at Birmingham 17th April - Delegates

Area can send two voting delegates to Ramblers General Council. Scheduled as a one day event at Birmingham NEC but if current Covid restrictions remain in place this may be a virtual meeting. MMCD outlined current guidelines for an online General Council.

18 January C.O. update: *'The board is continuing to keep these arrangements under review. For the time being we are not opening registration for the meeting, but motions and all nominations may be submitted as usual with a deadline of 6 March'.*

SD proposed selection of delegates be remitted for resolution by Area Council on 23 February 2021, it being noted AL has asked to be considered as a delegate.

Proposed: Stephen Down

Seconded: Vera Silberberg

Vote: Carried nem con

AGM 9/21 Motions for General Council

None

AGM 10/21 Any other business

i. IR outlined to members a communication from York City Council for Ramblers to become involved in a project called 'SlowWays'. Launched by Daniel Raven - Ellison in February 2020, this initiative is aimed at creating a network of walking routes throughout Great Britain that will connect villages, towns and cities.

Because of Covid restrictions development and roll out has been slow, but it is thought to be a project that some members could enjoyably participate in by simply walking and checking out routes.

IR was thanked for the item and asked to report progress to the next AC meeting.

AGM 11/21 Guest Speakers

Malcolm McDonnell - Ramblers Trustee

Opening his presentation with Ramblers 'Don't Lose Your Way' project Malcolm gave an update on progress. Phase one was complete, a map now produced, populated with possible lost rights of way. The next stage is recruiting volunteers and co-ordinators to research the identified paths and identify those suitable for making a claim. Training and materials are being developed by the project team. Information is available on Ramblers DLYW website and for volunteers already researching paths a forum 2026@groups.io is recommended.

Moving on to Ramblers campaign against Network Rail's closure of railway crossings, Malcolm briefed the meeting on some results. After a victory in Cambridgeshire resulting in five level crossings being saved, further success was achieved in Suffolk where a further eleven important level crossing public rights of way were saved from permanent closure. Such campaigns involve a great deal of work by volunteers and not all have successful outcomes.

Malcolm mentioned two pieces of legislation before Parliament that provides a fresh look at how to manage the countryside. In respect of The Agriculture Bill, Ramblers stance is that before landowners receive payments from the public purse they must demonstrate compliance with their existing legal duties relating to maintenance of public rights of way. Additional funding should be available to landowners who provide new paths or make improvements to existing routes.

The Environment Bill requires Government to set legally binding long-term targets and plans for air and water quality, biodiversity and waste. Such provisions will play an important role in reversing environmental decline, protect and improve where we love to walk. But it doesn't compel the Government to do anything to improve people's access to and enjoyment of nature. Ramblers are supporting Bill amendments for targets to increase public access to and enjoyment of the natural environment and also steps to improve enjoyment of nature.

As part of Ramblers campaign Malcolm suggested members may wish to write to their Member of Parliament in respect of these issues

Commenting that the last twelve months have been challenging for Ramblers, reflected in membership numbers taking a hit with a drop from 103,000 to 97,000, Malcolm said there has been an upturn to 99,000. He mentioned there is an ongoing project for updating Ramblers website to make it more relevant and inclusive to members.

In concluding, Malcolm thanked all volunteers for their work; it was greatly appreciated by Trustees and staff. He asked Area and Groups to promote Ramblers at a local level and hoped for more volunteers to come forward.

PA thanked Malcolm for providing a reassuring and helpful voice to the AGM and for an informative and useful presentation.

In closing the AGM, PA thanked all Area Committee Officers and Groups for their resourcefulness and commitment during a difficult year. Endorsed by members, he thanked SD for his hard work as Area Secretary and for chairing Area Council meetings.