

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 22nd January 2022 at The Tithe Barn, Nether Poppleton, York

Present: Roy Hunt (Chair), Peter Ayling, Sam Borman, Sue Brewerton, John Cocker, Tony Corrigan, Nigel Emery, Lai Chan, Ronnie Forbes, Ken Gill, Maggie Graham, Malcolm Hodgson, Penny Hudson, Steve Lack, Ann Laing, Gary Malcolm, Alan Mitchell, Joe Neal, Diane Norman, Mike Norman, David Nunns, Enid Nunns, Anne Parker, Trevor Parker, Chris Prince, Elaine Prince, Ian Reavill, Geoff Richardson, Vera Silberberg, Gina Simpson, Susan Sugden, Jill Swift, Elaine Tague, Vivienne Taylor, Marian Thomas (Secretary), Judith Tosh, Sally White, John Wood (38)

AGM 1/22 Chair's welcome

Acting Chair Roy Hunt welcomed members, guests and speakers- Ramblers Trustee Ronnie Forbes and Malcolm Hodgson National Trails officer to the meeting. He thanked York Group, in particular Ian Reavill, for organising the venue, refreshments and leading the morning walk.

Roy apologised for his sudden resignation as Area chair in 2018 for personal reasons but he was now glad to be back. He thanked everyone for supporting & walking with the Ramblers and said there were 5 people who he would like to thank for the excellent work they had done for the Area over many years: Area President Peter Ayling, Tony Corrigan who had developed our excellent Area website, David Nunns -York & North Yorkshire footpath officer for more than fifty years, Tom Halstead Access Officer who was continuing with his role even though he had moved away from our region and Geoff Richardson Area walks programme co-ordinator.

Apologies were received from Stephen Down, Doreen Felton, Anne Holt, James McCarthy, Brian Taylor.

Those present were asked to remember those who had passed over the previous year including: - Terry Strickland formerly secretary of Ryedale and various other posts, and Shirley Dalby formerly secretary of Beverley Group and footpath officer.

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

AGM 2/22 Minutes of the 2021 AGM

Due to the UK Government's Coronavirus restrictions the 2021 AGM was a virtual meeting held on Zoom on Saturday 23rd January 2021. The minutes were accepted without amendment.

Proposed: Vera Silberberg, **Seconded:** Steve Lack

AGM 3/22 Matters arising

PA reported that Area's motion on 'Climate Crisis' received support by the Motion Review Board, they suggested that a working party may be set up to monitor the Ramblers commitment, but recommended that the motion be closed. PA said there had been no news on the working party.

AGM 4/22 Annual report 2020 - 2021

In thanking Groups and Area Officers for their contributions to the Annual report, President Peter Ayling praised Area officers and group leaders in compiling another excellent publication. Photographs supporting the information provided an excellent illustration of our Area and where we walk.

PA asked whether any Officers wished to provide any updates to their report and if there were any questions. Roy Hunt was asked to elaborate on his comments about Assemble in his Chair's report. He explained that the Ramblers were in his view an upside down charity (unlike most other charities) because it is the volunteers not

the staff who do the main work of the Association- lead walks, carry out the Rights of Way and footpath work and much else. In 2014 the CEO, Board of Trustees & Central Office wanted to change the constitution so that Area Chairs managed their groups and reported to the Chief Executive. However at the 2016 General Council this proposal only had the support of 20% of members and was abandoned. Roy said that this idea was again being introduced via Assemble, as the job description of the Area Chair was implementing a management structure, where he reported to a paid support officer and was expected to manage and ensure that Group Chairs carried out CO instructions; Roy said that this contravenes our Area constitution.

AGM 5/22 Financial statement

Treasurer Sam Borman, in presenting his statement reported the finance of our Area was in a healthy position, except that we have too much money, due to the effects of pandemic. There were no questions asked about the accounts and SB was thanked for his work. The Treasurer's report and financial statement were accepted.

Proposed: Tony Corrigan, **Seconded:** Roy Hunt, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

AGM 6/22 Election of officers

i. President PA informed members that he was resigning as Area President and although a number of people had been approached to become the new President none had accepted thus far. He said that the Area could function without a President.

ii. Vice Presidents

PA told members that the current vice presidents had been approached and agreed to continue i.e. Roy Dresser, Ann Holt, John Jefferson, Ann Laing, David Nunns and Ray Wallis. However it had not been possible to contact Jack Bower, he had moved from his listed address and his current whereabouts were unknown. It was decided to keep his name on the list of vice presidents for another year.

Proposed: Sam Borman, **Seconded:** Penny Hudson, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

ii. Officers

Standing Down

Minutes Secretary: Tony Corrigan (held post since 2017)

Webmaster: Tony Corrigan (held post since 2011)

Walks Programme Co-ordinator: Geoff Richardson (held post since 2014)

Marian Thomas agreed to take on the role of minutes secretary as part of her Area Secretary role. Roy Hunt was currently acting Area chair, having taken over from Peter Ayling in July 2021.

David Nunns said that he had been Footpath Officer for York and North Yorkshire for nearly 60 years and was about to reach his 80th birthday; he suggested that a replacement footpath Officer be found and he offered to spend the next year mentoring & teaching them. RH said he would send a letter to all NY and York members, seeking an understudy for David.

PA said that as Environment Officer he would continue for the next year as he wanted to see through the Hornsea Four Wind Farm project, but would like to stand down next year.

iii. Other Posts

No additional nominations had been received for the following committee positions and the current officer holders were prepared to continue in post. They were therefore elected en bloc.

Chair: Roy Hunt

Secretary: Marian Thomas

Treasurer: Sam Borman
Footpaths Secretary [York & North Yorkshire]: David Nunns
Footpaths Secretary [Hull & East Riding]: Matthew Harrison
Environment Officer: Peter Ayling
Access Officer: Tom Halstead
Minutes Secretary: Marian Thomas
Membership Secretary: Ann Laing
Communications Officer: Ann Laing
Area News Editor: Marian Thomas

Proposed: Ian Reavill, **Seconded:** Joe Neal, Vote: Carried unanimously

Webmaster: Stephen Down had indicated at the last Area Council meeting and confirmed by e-mail, that he would act as Webmaster for one year until a replacement could be found.

Proposed: Ann Laing, **Seconded:** Geoff Richardson

No nominations had been received for the post of Walks Programme Co-ordinator; also there had been no nominations for the posts of Vice-Chair and Publicity Officer. PA said there had been no nominations for the latter two these posts for several years and maybe AC should think about doing publicity another way.

AGM 7/22 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Sam Borman thanked Emily Hunt for her assistance and stated that she was happy to continue in the role. SB proposed a vote of thanks and suggested that she might be presented with a gift, to be discussed at Area Council.

Proposed: Sam Borman **Seconded:** Marian Thomas Vote: Carried unanimously

AGM 8/2 2022 General Council at Birmingham NEC, 9th April - Delegates

RH reported that Area could send two voting delegates to Ramblers General Council (no observer this year), scheduled as a one-day event at Birmingham NEC. He said it would be a chance to make Ramblers contacts from all over the country, vote for Trustees, hear the motions and debates, all expenses paid. It was proposed that the final selection of delegates be decided at the next Area Council meeting on 22nd February 2022.

AGM 9/22 Motions for General Council

None

AGM 10/22 Any other business

Chair Roy Hunt raised the issue of risk assessments on led walks; he said that a risk assessment is about identifying the risk, its possible consequences and how the risk can be mitigated. He questioned the usefulness of the risk assessment form introduced by Central Office, because the walk leader keeps it at home and no one else is required to see it; also it has no provenance, in that it could be completed after an incident had occurred. He suggested that a risk statement could be included with the walk description i.e. steep slope – recommend walking poles.

Penny Hudson (Ryedale Group) pointed out that although walk leaders have a duty of care to their walkers, they could not be expected to take all the responsibility; group safety was a shared responsibility.

Chris Prince (Beverley Group) said that we live in a world of blame, a compensation culture with numerous no win/no fee solicitors. We have to take notice of the terms of the Ramblers insurance cover or protection for walk leaders against any claim could be null and void. On 21st October Tanya Curry (interim CEO) and Rebecca Dawson (Chair of Board of Trustees) stated that all walker leaders must complete the risk assessment form before leading

a walk and that it must be stored for 3 years. CP said that until this statement is rescinded by Central Office, we must ensure that walk leaders comply with it.

As time was running short Tony Corrigan suggested that this hot topic of discussion should be continued at Area Council.

AGM 11/22 Guest Speaker

Malcolm Hodgson – National Trails Officer for Yorkshire Wolds Way & Cleveland Way

MH described the history of the Yorkshire Wolds Way, which celebrates its 40th Anniversary in 2022; the idea of a continuous footpath through the Wolds was promoted by EYDA Area who appreciated the uniqueness & beauty of the Wolds, the campaign was led by David Rubinstein, who developed the idea and presented it to the National Parks Commission in 1968. Although the idea was quickly approved it was not until October 1982 that the official route was finally opened, due to objections from a major landowner Lord Middleton.

MH said that the 79-mile route from Hessle to Filey Brigg has more than 80,000 visitors per year, however there are issues with funding (75% from central government & 25% local authorities); this has not increased since 2013, which with inflation means a significant decrease. To overcome this shortfall of funds, National Trails have adopted some sponsorship e.g. Wold Top Brewery, also holding special events open to the public such as walking festivals and Hardmoors running events. National trails are in partnership with Natural England and local authorities who publish tourist accommodation and information guides. In addition National Trails work with Ramblers volunteers maintaining the footpaths and replacing stiles with gates.

MH said that the planned event with the Ramblers to celebrate the 40th Anniversary, would take place on 2nd October (date of the opening ceremony in 1982); the intention was for the entire route to be walked on the day. The YWW would be divided into 6 or 7 sections, each section would be led by a different Ramblers walk leader; it was also the plan to get the public involved.

AGM 12/22 Guest Speaker

Ronnie Forbes- Vice chair of the Board of Trustees

RF described his experience as a walker, walk leader, Area and Group Chair, Trustee (currently on his second 3 year stint), he had also served as Ramblers Scotland Convenor and was currently Vice Chair of the Board. He thanked volunteers for undertaking their various roles in what had been a difficult year. RF listed the many recent achievements of the Ramblers- 25,000 led walks since 2020, the Don't Lost Your Way project, Area Cluster Groups, Special Interest Groups – investigating how to improve volunteer and membership recruitment, and also more young peoples involvement. In 2021 membership had increased to 101,000 members, this also meant more income.

RF discussed key developments in 2022- a brand refresh with Ramblers values updated, which will raise the public's awareness of the Ramblers; there will be a new more vibrant website and also the Well Being Walks schemes are being introduced. GWEM (Group Walks & Events Manager) is being replaced by a new Walks Manager. Tony Corrigan asked what would happen when the Peoples Post Code Lottery funding comes to an end as it currently provides one-third of Ramblers income. RF said the Trustees and CO have had plenty of time to consider this shortfall in funding and tried to use PPC lottery funds for one off projects, mostly for updating computer systems.

Regarding Assemble, RF stated that it was not a bespoke system designed specifically for the Ramblers but was used by many charities such as the National Trust; Ramblers were just utilising a system that already existed but he agreed that the job title "manager" does not work for Ramblers. The Ramblers choose to use Assemble because they have a duty of care towards their volunteers and members; for instance should an accident occur during footpath maintenance work –Ramblers need to know who was there and Assemble is where you go to get that information- it is part of the digital transformation.

Risk assessments: RF stated that the need for all walk leaders to complete a risk assessment form before each walk they lead, is a red line and the matter is not up for discussion; risk assessments are a requirement of the Ramblers insurance policy. He pointed out that we live in a compensation culture, and the completed risk assessment forms must be retained securely for 3 years. For his group, the walk leaders send all their completed forms to the group walks coordinator, however Penny Hudson stated that if Ryedale Group were to introduce this practice, it would put an unacceptable demand on their walks coordinator, who would resign.

Chair RH responded by stating that this is a misinterpretation of the insurance policy and that at a NE Cluster Group meeting on Zoom, Sam Borman asked the question whether or not he would be covered by the Ramblers insurance if he led a walk but had not completed the risk assessment form. The staff member presiding over the meeting failed to answer this question.

RF said that the assessment of risk on a walk is important and risk identification does not end with the completion of the risk assessment form, it continues during the walk itself and is not limited to the risk issues raised in the form.

Discussion could have continued but unfortunately the meeting ran out of time and chair RH thanked both speakers for their useful and interesting contributions.