

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 21st January 2023 at Victoria Dock Village Hall, Hull

Present: Roy Hunt (Chair), Sarah Anderson, Les Atkinson, Maggie Atkinson, Peter Ayling, Belinda Barclay, Sam Borman, Tony Corrigan, Keith Dalby, Alan Dalton, Jenny Devonshire, Cathryn Ferris, Margaret Forrest, Maggie Graham, Karen Hood, Brian Ingram, Sheila Ingram, Steve Lack, Ann Laing, Gary Malcolm, George Malcolm, David Nunns, Enid Nunns, Ginny Oates, Chris Prince, Elaine Prince, Ian Reavill, Jeff Reynolds, Karen Reynolds, Paul Shepherd, Vera Silberberg, Jackie Small, Lorraine Styles, Elaine Tague, Marian Thomas (Secretary), Jim Tulloch, Michael Waudby, Michael Woodhouse, Keith Woodley (38).

Apologies: Penny Hudson, Tony Malt, Kate Plumb

Prior to the AGM, 2 guest speakers from ERYC Countryside Access gave a talk on the England Coastal Path from a national and local perspective. Patrick Wharam (manager) explained some of the background to the Marine & Coastal Act 2009 and the problems they were facing implementing the coastal path, focusing on the stretches in our region from Filey Brigg to Easington, and from Easington to Humber Bridge. Edith Denton, the ERYC Coastal path access officer, discussed some of the physical difficulties they face to create the path, especially due to the coastal erosion along the East Yorkshire Coast.

AGM 1/23 Chair's welcome

Chair Roy Hunt welcomed members, guests speakers and Ramblers Trustee Lucy Robinson to the meeting. He thanked Hull & Holderness Group, in particular Steve Lack, for organising the venue, refreshments and leading the morning walk.

RH thanked all volunteers for their efforts but in particular he wanted to thank the retiring Area Footpath Officer for York & North Yorkshire, David Nunns who had given many years of service as a ROW officer; also Peter Ayling who had served the Area in many different roles over decades and Ann Laing a long time Area volunteer in various Area officer positions.

RH said that volunteer expenses had been discussed at Area Council due to the high cost of fuel, and walk leaders were being encouraged to claim mileage expenses. As members might be reluctant to claim mileage expenses, Roy stated that he was going to start making mileages claims himself and encouraged walk leaders to claim. This year additional Area funds had been budgeted to allow for mileage claims.

AGM 2/23 Minutes of the 2022 AGM

The minutes were accepted without amendment. **Proposed:** David Nunns, **Seconded:** Peter Ayling

AGM 3/23 Matters arising

Tony Corrigan asked about the Area's position concerning recommending groups not to complete the Ramblers risk assessment template. Roy said that the Area had not recommended this and anyway the Area had no authority over groups, except in matters of finance; the Area could only make a suggestion, the decision on whether or not complete the Ramblers risk assessment template must be made on a group by group basis. RH said it was the mitigation of risk that was important- this was not being addressed by the Ramblers template. He stated that it was important for walk leaders to note when particular care was needed on a walk, such as a steep slope and to warn walkers in the walk description, also to then warn walkers about safety issues at the beginning of the walk and then again when they were approaching the problem areas.

TC said groups needed to know whether they were still required to complete the Ramblers risk assessment template, leaving the issue without clear guidance from Area was causing confusion.

AGM 4/23 Annual report 2021 - 2022

RH thanked Groups and Area Officers for their contributions to the Annual report. He said the photographs and supporting the information provided an excellent illustration of our Area and where we walk. He then went through the Annual Report page by page, asking Area Officers and Group secretaries if they wished to give any updates to their reports and if members had any questions.

RH said that Tom Halstead (Area Access Officer) had submitted an excellent response to the decision making committee in favour of the Yorkshire Wolds being designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Marian Thomas commented that the Howden & Goole Group now had only 3 walk leaders and would welcome assistance from walk leaders from other groups.

Les Atkinson (Footpath Officer Scarborough Group) updated the meeting on the local government boundary changes; from the end of March the North Yorkshire County Council and seven district & borough councils would merge to become one large council- North Yorkshire Council, based in Northallerton. Changes were also being made to the management of the Rights of Way in the North York Moors National Park. He said that members should be aware that change is coming.

The question was asked why the Monday Area Group (an Area group not connected to a particular territory) had not been asked to contribute to the Annual Report. The enquirer said that the Group leaders had organised weekly walks throughout the year and the groups' success should be recognised. RH replied that the Monday Area group was not recognised as a proper group because it did not have a constitution or a formally organised committee with a chair, secretary and treasurer. However RH said the question of how the Monday Group could get more recognition from Area would be discussed at the next Area Council at the end of February.

Acceptance of the Annual Report: **Proposed:** Jackie Small, **Seconded:** Stephen Down

AGM 5/23 Financial statement

Treasurer Sam Borman, in presenting his financial statement reported that the finances of our Area were in a healthy position; the independent examiner had noticed only a minor error in the 2021/22 accounts, SB had listed the payment of £196.70 as "Groups Other", whereas this was payment to the York Group for expenses incurred by the 2022 AGM. This minor discrepancy had been corrected. 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: Marian Thomas, **Seconded:** Steve Lack, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

AGM 6/23 Election of officers

i. Vacant Posts -

A) Vacancies for Rights of Way Officers both in the north and south of the Area

David Nunns was standing down as Area footpath/Rights of Way Officer for York and North Yorkshire after many years in this role. The post covering Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire was also vacant, sadly no nominations had been received for either post. RH said that defending Rights of Way and helping to expand them was very important, it is one of the main charitable aims of the Ramblers; our footpath work is the difference between the Ramblers and other walking groups. RH said that Central Office were advertising both vacancies on various websites- the roles would be open to Ramblers members and non-members, but there had been no response so far.

RH explained that at a minimum these roles would involve acting as the interface between the local authorities and the local Ramblers Groups; local authorities are legally bound to send the Ramblers and other organisations (the statutory consultees) information concerning for ROW issues, however the local authorities were not prepared to deal with individual Ramblers groups within the Area, they wanted ROW communication to be fronted by one person, who could then pass the ROW issue on to the relevant group, who would then investigate it.

Draft- to be ratified

B) Area Environment Officer – post vacant after the resignation of Peter Ayling last year. The Ramblers are not statutory consultees for environmental planning issues, therefore there are fewer communications with local authorities and environmental issues could be sent directly to the local groups concerned, so that it is not so essential to have an Area Environmental Officer.

C) Walks Programme Co-ordinator- post vacant. Area Council have agreed to discuss the possible restoration of the 6 monthly Area Walks booklet; Hull & Holderness Group are particularly in favour of this. However most groups are unable to plan enough walks in advance to cover a six monthly programme, some groups are so short of walk leaders they can only plan a couple of months ahead. Also Pocklington Group which does have a six monthly walks programme prepared is not in favour of restoring the 6 monthly walks programme as a hard copy booklet, their walk leaders prefer the flexible on-line rolling programme of walks. RH said it seems unlikely that the post of Walk Programme Co-ordinator will need to be filled.

ii. Election of Officers

Area Chair: Roy Hunt nominated, no further nominations received. At this point in the proceedings Trustee Lucy Robinson briefly took over to officiate at the election of Roy Hunt as Area Chair.

Proposed: Sam Borman, **Seconded:** George Malcolm

For the following committee positions the current incumbents were prepared to continue in post, no further nominations had been received. . They were therefore elected en bloc.

Secretary: Marian Thomas

Treasurer: Sam Borman

Access Officer: Tom Halstead

Minutes Secretary: Marian Thomas

Membership Secretary: Ann Laing

Communications Officer: Ann Laing

Area News Editor: Marian Thomas

Webmaster: Stephen Down

Proposed: Jackie Small, **Seconded:** Vera Silberberg, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

ii. Vice Presidents

The current vice presidents are Roy Dresser, Ann Holt, John Jefferson, Ann Laing, David Nunns and Ray Wallis. Our Constitution & Standing Orders state that a President is normally appointed as Vice President upon completion of a period in office. Since Peter Ayling retired as Area President in 2022, he was now eligible to be nominated as a new vice President. Vice Presidents are eligible to attend Area Council.

Proposed: Stephen Down, **Seconded:** Marian Thomas

AGM 7/23 Appointment of Independent Examiner

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

Proposed: Sam Borman **Seconded:** Peter Ayling; **Vote:** Carried unanimously

AGM 8/3 2023 Appointment of 2 Delegates to General Council at Birmingham NEC, 1st April

RH reported that Area can send two voting delegates to Ramblers General Council (no observer this year), scheduled as a one-day event at Birmingham NEC on 1st April. 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. Tom Halstead had expressed an interest in attending; it was proposed that the Tom Halstead should be selected for the 1st place and selection of the 2nd delegate be decided at the next Area Council meeting on 28nd February

Proposed: Peter Ayling, **seconded :** Vera Silberberg

AGM 9/23 Motions for General Council

None

AGM 10/23 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 and he questioned the usefulness of the tick list form introduced by Central Office. A motion passed at General Council last year asked B of T to reconsider the current risk assessment template.

RH also asked about the development of IT systems, the new Events Manager was long over due, also the completion of the new website had been delayed .

AGM 11/23 Guest Speaker

Lucy Robinson - a fairly new member of the Ramblers Board of Trustees.

LR said that Ramblers now have a new CEO- Ross Maloney, previously from a senior position in the Scouts, which like the Ramblers was a grass roots organisation, where volunteers did all the work at local level. Ross Maloney was keen to set out and prioritise Ramblers key objectives. In terms of campaigning the extension of “freedom to roam” and national footpath strategy, also equal access to the countryside for everyone, including ethnic groups, the less well off and disabled.

LR acknowledged that there had been a number of difficulties with developing IT systems especially the Walks Manager and the new website.

LR discussed risk assessments and said there had been lots of complaints from volunteers about the Ramblers template; a task force had been set up to develop a better system, one that was more flexible, less prescriptive, they had been talking to a number of Ramblers Groups.

Questions and Discussion

RH asked about Assemble (the volunteers website); he said hardly any members used it, the messaging system did not work, the data base of volunteers was incorrect and out of date and the officer role profiles give Area and Group officers managerial roles and responsibilities.

RH said that risk assessment is about identifying the risk, it's possible consequences and how the risk can be mitigated. A question was asked about legal liability in the case of incidents on led walks and LR stated that the Ramblers Association were legally responsible. Chris Prince pointed out that for risk assessments to be legally valid in terms of accountability, they needed to be a permanent written/typed record, they could not just be word of mouth.

Finally RH thanked Trustee Lucy Robinson for coming to our AGM and for her presentation, useful contribution to the meeting and her willingness to answer questions.