

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 27th January 2024 at the Quaker Meeting House, Scarborough

Present: Sam Borman (Acting Chair), Peter Ayling, Belinda Barclay, Norman Barclay, Josephine Bell, Wendy Borman, Ian Buxton, Rachel Carlin, Tony Corrigan, Rebecca Dawson, Evert Ditzel, Donna Dosdale, Wayne Dosdale, Stephen Down, Cathryn Ferris, Ann Harper, Martin Hill, Fay Humphries, Janet Johnson, Ray Johnson, Steve Lack, Gary Malcolm, Denise Morgans, John Motley, David Munslow, Joe Neal, Sheena O'Connell, Chris Prince, Elaine Prince, Ian Reavill, Mark Roberts, Angela Simpson, Vera Silberberg, Wendy Smith, Elaine Tague, Marian Thomas (Secretary), Anne Thornton, Phil Trafford, Colin Van Eck, Karen Van Eck, Glen Walker, Michael Woodhouse (35).

Apologies: Ann Laing, Paul Shepherd, Kate Plumb, George Malcolm, Les Atkinson, David Nunns

Prior to the AGM, guest speaker Bernie McLinden (retired North York Moors National Park Ranger) gave a talk outlining the formation of National Parks in United Kingdom on the 75th Anniversary of the National Parks Access to Countryside Act which enabled their formation; eventually leading to the establishment of 15 National parks in the UK. Mr McLinden went on the talk about the Coast to Coast trail from St Bees Head to Robin Hood Bay, on which he is currently working. This now has funding from Natural England to upgrade the route to National Trail standard, due to be completed in October 2025.

AGM 1/24 Acting Chair's welcome

Treasurer Sam Borman welcomed members and the guest speakers Rebecca Dawson (Chair of Board of Trustees) and Glen Walker (Director of People, Ramblers staff) to the meeting. SB said that Chair Roy Hunt had resigned in the last couple of weeks and SB had agreed to act as Area chair on a temporary basis. SB thanked Roy Hunt for his hard work over the years. He also thanked the Scarborough Group for organising the AGM venue, the refreshments and leading the morning walk.

AGM 2/24 Minutes of the 2023 AGM

The minutes were accepted without amendment. **Proposed:** Peter Ayling, **Seconded:** Ian Reavill

AGM 3/24 Matters arising

The question was asked whether walk leaders were currently required to complete the risk assessment form for each walk, and if they did not complete one would walk leaders still be covered by Ramblers Insurance if an incident occurred. Rebecca Dawson said that new walk leaders guidance was being issued shortly, the guidance would be available as a 6 to 8 page handbook and Areas/Groups could choose to use a generic risk assessment.

AGM 4/24 Annual report 2022 - 2023

SB thanked Groups and Area Officers for their contributions to the Annual report. 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.

Stephen Down (webmaster) said that on the Area website some of the contacts were out of date and asked groups to keep him up-to-date with any changes and reminded groups that they must also update Central Office.

AGM 5/24 Financial statement

Treasurer Sam Borman, in presenting his financial statement reported that the finances of our Area were in a healthy position, with an end of financial year reserve of £7,869.80, which was an increase of £1,456.98 from the start of the year.

There was a mix up over the funding navigation courses (a small cost); Central Office initially refused to fund these but then admitted they had made a mistake and agreed the funding.

No questions were asked and the Treasurer's report and financial statement were accepted.

Proposed: Tony Corrigan, **Seconded:** Vera Silberberg, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

AGM 6/24 Election of officers

i. Area President: SB said that the main role of the President was to chair the AGM- the position was currently vacant and there had been no nominations.

ii. Vice Presidents

The current vice presidents are Roy Dresser, Ann Holt, John Jefferson, Ann Laing, David Nunns, Ray Wallis, Peter Ayling. Vice President is a permanent honorary role.

iii. Area Chair: Roy Hunt had resigned as Chair in early January, SB said that it is a mandatory requirement for an area to have a chair, secretary and treasurer. He agreed to serve as an acting chair on a temporary basis in order to keep the area functioning, but would limit his activity to chairing meetings.

Proposed: Peter Ayling **Seconded:** Gary Malcolm, **Vote:** unanimously accepted.

iv. Election of Area Council Officers

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

Area News Editor: Marian Thomas

Webmaster: Stephen Down

Proposed: Joe Neal, **Seconded:** Vera Silberberg, **Vote:** Carried unanimously

v. Vacant Posts -

A) Both Rights of Way Officer Posts in the north and south of the Area remind unfilled

Glen Walker said that Jack Cornish Head of Paths at Ramblers CO was happy to help in the short term, but this was an interim solution. It was important to have a local contact whom local authorities could contact on Rights of Way issues, and who would then pass the enquiry onto the relevant group to deal with. Tony Corrigan agreed to act as the contact for East Riding Council on ROW issues for one year only.

Vera Silberberg said that Steve Hoather co-ordinated the work of surveying the footpaths of the York parishes, but he was not prepared to do more than this. Ian Reavill to discuss with Steve Hoather if he would act as contact with York City Council on ROW issues.

B) Area Environment Officer – post vacant after the retirement of Peter Ayling. No nominations had been received so this important post remained vacant

C) Membership Secretary: Ann Laing had now resigned from this post and SB thanked her for many years of service. This was essential role, Karen Van Eck volunteered to take over this role.

Proposed: Sam Borman, **Seconded:** Angela Simpson.

AGM 7/24 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:** Evert Ditzel; Vote: Carried unanimously

AGM 8/24 Appointment of 2 Delegates to General Council at Birmingham NEC, 20th April

SB stated that our Area can send two voting delegates to Ramblers General Council (no observer this year), scheduled as a one-day event at Birmingham NEC on 20th April. Rebecca Dawson said it would be a chance to meet Rambler contacts from all over the country, vote for Trustees, hear the motions and debates, expenses paid. Stephen Down expressed an interest in attending, there was no other volunteer; it was proposed that the selection of the 2nd delegate be decided at the next Area Council meeting on 27th February

Proposed: Peter Ayling, seconded : Martin Hill

AGM 9/24 Motions for General Council

None

AGM 10/24 Any other business

i. Chalkland Way 30th Anniversary Celebration Sunday 28th April. Martin Hill said that Hull & Holderness Group member Ray Wallis had devised this lovely 40 mile trail in 1994, Area Council proposed that we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the trail by walking the entire route in 4 separate linear sections in one day. Walk leaders from four different groups had volunteered to lead the walks, Area had agreed to fund the cost of the coach and hire of the village hall at Bishop Walton after the walks had been completed and ERYC had promised to fund the tea & cakes. This information will soon be on the Area website and members can book a place by e-mailing Martin Hill (40 places per walk); after 17th February ERYC will take over the bookings and the walks will be open to the public. Route founder Ray Wallis and his family will be at the tea & cakes event afterwards.

ii. Problem with Use of Copy right image on Scarborough Group's website- Les Atkinson.

Gary Malcolm paraphrased Les Atkinson's e-mail: nine years ago the Scarborough group had a coach trip to Shropshire and downloaded an image from the internet to publicise this trip on their group website. Recently Scarborough Group received a claim from Alamy (a stock photography agency) for £450 in lost copyright fees, the image was removed immediately & Central Office dealt with the matter and eventually paid Alamy £50. Members are warned to use only free downloads on their websites as photo agencies now have sophisticated software which enables them to track through websites in search of their copyright images.

GM said that Les Atkinson was standing down as Scarborough footpath officer after many years and the group had bought him a tankard but unfortunately he had recently had a heart attack and was unable to attend the AGM.

iii. Area Camp: Donna & Wayne Dosdale have organised Area camp for the last six years, but now wish for someone else to take it over and are happy to give advice.

TC thanked Area committee members for their hard work and all those who volunteer with the Ramblers. SB also thanked all volunteers and Scarborough Group for hosting the AGM.

AGM 11/24 Guest Speakers

Rebecca Dawson- Chair of the Board of Trustees and Glen Walker- Director of People & Design (Ramblers staff)

RD said the Ramblers had achieved a lot over the past year- with over 44,000 led group walks and 52,000 well being walks. There were 15,500 new members- the membership total is now around 102,000. She said that volunteers are the backbone of the organisation and there are now 4,500 footpath volunteers.

Last year saw the launch of the new website and the new Walks Manager. Assemble (the volunteers website) was going to be reviewed in the next few months to find the best way of supporting volunteers. GW said that the document hub was going to be moved to the main website, so that it was accessible to all.

New walk leaders guidance- GW said that as the main walking charity, it was important for the Ramblers to manage risk and safety on walks in an appropriate way. There would be a pocket size version of the handbook produced and a resource pack template for the generic risk assessments, depending on the type of walk- weather conditions, terrain etc.. New walk leaders need more support and additional information to become good walk leaders.

Central Office had listened to the concerns of the members and modified the guidance making it less prescriptive and taking a more general approach. It was for local groups to decide how to apply the guidance, walk leaders needed to be dynamic on the day, there was less onerous responsibility placed on the walk leader.

Ramblers Ten Year Strategic Plan: to focus on people who face the most barriers to walking, they need to have information about walks close to their home, access to green spaces and knowledge and confidence about where to walk.

Questions and Discussion

There were questions on the new Walk Leader Guidance; a question was asked about the ratio of 8 to 1 walkers to walk leaders for moderate which was unworkable as many walks had more than 20 walkers; GW said that walk leaders included the back marker and other experienced walkers; this ratio was a suggestion, he said it was important to use common sense.

There was further discussion about the need for walk leaders to complete a risk assessment with every walk until the new guidance was launched, if they failed to do this they would not be covered in the event of an insurance claim. RD said the new guidance would be launched in March but in the meantime walk leaders should continue with the current procedures. It would then be sufficient for walk leaders to read the generic risk assessment template only, they would not need to complete a risk assessment. There would also be a walk leaders check list and walkers themselves also had responsibilities when on a walk. This information would be on the general website and assessable to all.

RD said there were 32,000 blocked paths in the UK and said that members could put pressure on their local authorities by writing to their MPs about this issue.

Finally SB thanked the speakers for their presentation and useful contributions and their willingness to answer all the questions.