

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Area Council Meeting held via Zoom on 21st May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Sam Borman (Acting chair), Tony Corrigan, Stephen Down, Peter Godfrey, John Motley, Joe Neal, Kate Plumb, Marian Thomas, Karen Van Eck

Apologies: Steve Lack, Kathryn Surtees, Tony Tew, Paul Shepherd, Ian Reavil



AC 11/24 Acting Chair's Welcome and Apologies

Temporary acting chair & treasurer SB welcomed members to the on-line meeting; apologies were recorded.

AC 12/24 Remembering Chris Bush

Chris Bush died on 14th April 2024, a tribute written by Tom Halstead assisted by others, was circulated to AC members prior to the meeting. Chris's passion for walking was evident throughout his decades of service with EY & D Area Council and York Ramblers Group committee.

AC 13/24 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the previous Area Council meeting of 27th February 2024 were accepted without amendment. There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere.

AC 14/24 Reports from Area Officers and Groups

A) Treasurer's Report: SB presented the account from Oct 2023 to 06 May 2024, he said there was a healthy balance of over £8,000. The expenses of £671.15 under Newsletters & publicity were connected with Chalklands Way 30th Anniversary celebration. We received a £575 donation from Ultra Trails (marathon organisers who are running the entire Chalkland Way in one day in November this year) because the Pocklington footpath team had checked & repaired the route and signposts.

The account were unanimously approved. Proposer: Stephen Down, Seconder: John Motley.

B) Footpath Officer for East Yorkshire: TC said he had received had a number of footpath consultations from ERYC but the most disputed was at Catwick & Leven where there had been quarrying operations for 15 years and the landowner had applied for an extension of the site which would involve the removal of a bridleway. Local residents were strongly against this and TC has opposed it. The matter was on going and would take some time to resolve.

TC said that at the Area AGM there was no replacement for Roy Hunt who had taken on North Yorkshire footpath consultations. TC said that he knows nothing about North Yorkshire footpaths and when he receives a consultation from the local authority he merely passes it to the group that covers that territory. Secretary MT was asked to write to York, Ryedale & Scarborough Groups to determine if there was a volunteer to act as footpath liaison officer with North Yorkshire Council.

C) Group Reports

Written reports from most groups had been previously circulated;

Beverley Group: JN reported that the group's coach outing to Grassington on 19th May had been successful & enjoyable and they had been able to fill the 50 seater coach.

Howden & Goole Group: MT said that due to a dire lack of walk leaders (currently only one) the group might close at the end of the year, but she would endeavour to keep it going for as long as possible. If the group did fold then its members and group territory would be re-distributed amongst neighbouring groups.

Pocklington Group: KP said the group's annual walking holiday had recently taken place and was very enjoyable with over 60 members and guests participating over 5 days; the leaders had been able to offer a choice of 4 walks per day.

Also the group was participating in a promotional event at Burnby Hall and had printed some new recruitment posters.

AC 15/24 Discussion of New Walk Leaders' Guidance & Risk Management Strategy

Members said they were generally happy with the new walk leaders' guidance & risk management strategy which could now be accessed by all on the Ramblers' main website. The guidance is more flexible and non-prescriptive and groups/areas could adapt according to local practice. The guidelines were suggestions and not compulsory- walks did not have to be pre-booked, it was not a requirement for the walk leader to take a register at the start of a walk or for there to be a strict ratio of 1 to 8 walk leaders per walkers if experienced walkers were present. Nor was it compulsory for walkers to give the walk leader their emergency contact details at the start of a walk, however it was a good idea for group officers to persuade walkers to always carry ICE (In Case of Emergency) details in their rucksack.

There was concern that new walk leaders would be put off by the requirement for compulsory on-line training. JM said that the best way to encourage a new walk leader was a mentoring system and help them with the on-line training. He said that it is important for all groups within our Area to adopt a consistent policy certainly regarding the risk assessment policy. There was no longer a requirement for individual walk leaders to complete a risk assessment, the generic risk assessment can be adapted; MT and KVE agreed to modify the draft generic risk assessment template according to our current practice and circulate it to all groups for comments and amendments.

There was discussion about first aid training, SB said that Central Office will not fund first aid training, it must be self-funded by groups or area. First Aid training by St John Ambulance is expensive especially if leading to a qualification. Last year Pocklington Group had received additional funding (when extra funding was permitted) for two half day first aid training sessions which did not lead to a qualification. SB said that the Walk Leaders' Guidance does not specify that there must be a first aider on the walk.

AC 16/24 EY &D Area Walk Leaders & Walkers Guidance Notes

KVE said that Central Office had recently issued a Walk Leaders Check List and also Information for Walkers joining a led walk. She had modified these by adapting to what we do locally and using the very useful walk leaders and walkers' guidance notes which used to appear at the beginning of 6 monthly walk programme and are still to be found somewhere on our website. Both of these revised guidance notes occupy just one page each. MT to e-mail these documents to groups for comments & amendments/additions.

AC 17/24 General Council 2024 Update

SD had produced notes updating AC members about General Council held on 20th April at Birmingham NEC. He said that the meeting was more positive and less combative than previous GCs; there was a positive feeling amongst delegates. They recognised that the Ramblers needed to reach out beyond our typical membership and become more inclusive and accessible to those of different ethnicity or socio-economic background. SD said he was happy with the outcome of the 5 motions that were debated.

He suggested that "Well Being Walks" (organised by the Ramblers) should go on the website. It was pointed out that ERYC had withdrawn from this programme because of expense and now organised & funded their own "Walking for Health" walks.

AC 18/24 Complaint about Car Parking at Thixendale

A complaint had been received by Pocklington group about car parking at Thixendale village- the main issue was congestion caused by walkers at weekends. The complainant (who was a member of the Ramblers) was

happy with the response received from the Pocklington secretary, who detailed the proactive steps the group are taking to reduce the number of cars parked at villages by car sharing and avoiding starting a walk from the same place regularly.

SD said it would be useful to draw up a list of suitable places for car parking, there was already some information on Area website. PG said he had a list and useful telephone contacts; secretary MT to collect a list of suitable parking places for the start of walks from each group to add to the website list.

AC 19/24 Feedback on Chalkland Way 30th Anniversary Celebration

The 30th Anniversary event on 28th April had been really well organised by Martin Hill with 112 people booking one of the walk stages, including a number of non-members. Unfortunately, on the day the weather was atrocious with heavy rain & strong winds virtually all day and a number of walkers had cancelled; those who did walk concluded that it was a day to remember; Martin Hill has written a full report with photos for the Area News.

The afternoon tea at Bishop Wilton village Hall following the completion of the 4 walks stages was very enjoyable. It is lovely to meet Ray Wallis and his family; he was delighted to receive a certificate of appreciation from the Ramblers with a personalised commendation and also details of the bench that had been recently installed by the Pocklington footpath team on the Chalklands Way with a commemorative plaque acknowledging Ray's contribution to the route. The bench had been paid for by Ultra Trails.

SB thanked all those involved but especially Martin Hill for all his hard work organising this excellent event.

AC 20/24 Any Other Business

A) Notes from Howardian Hills National Landscape (formerly AONB) Joint Advisory Board- Spring meeting 25/03/24- from Phil. Catterall. Notes from the meeting had been previously circulated to AC members; there was no further comment. SB thanked Phil Catterall for his contribution.

B) East Yorkshire Walking Festival 14th to 22nd September. As done in the past couple of years, Martin Hill will be liaising with his contact at ERYC to organise the longer walks for the festival. Contributions of walks in East Yorkshire of varying lengths were needed from groups, the deadline was 7th June. MT to contact groups asking them to send any offers of walks to Martin Hill as soon as possible.

C) Area News- summer edition. MT said she was hoping to produce a summer edition of the Area Newsletter but so far only had two articles for publication. She asked each group to send some news of events with photos – copy deadline 25th June.

D) Area Council Meetings via Zoom. SB asked members if they were happy with all AC meetings being via Zoom rather than having face to face meetings during the summer months. Everyone said that Zoom meetings were more convenient for them as we all saved on travel time to the venue and it was cheaper as there were mileage costs or hall hire costs.

SB also ask if AC members knew of anyone who was prepared to takeover as Area Chair, as he had only taken over the role chair on a temporary basis and was not prepared to do any more than just chairing the meetings.

E) Acknowledgement of Ann Laing's service to Area over several decades: Peter Ayling, who was unable to join the meeting had e-mailed to say that it was important to acknowledge Ann Laing's contribution to Area after her retirement at the last Area AGM. She was Area secretary from 1996-2001 and Membership Secretary with other related roles until recently. MT stated that she had applied for and received a certificate of appreciation from the Ramblers for Ann and arrangements were made for Ann to receive this soon.

AC 21/24 Future meeting dates

Area Council Meetings- on Tuesdays commencing 7.30pm

20th August 2024 via Zoom.

26th November 2024 via Zoom

2pm Saturday 1st February 2025 Area AGM, at Bishop Wilton Village Hall hosted by Pocklington Group. Hall booked from 12pm until 4pm.