

East Yorkshire and Derwent Area Ramblers Association

Minutes of Area Council Meeting held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on 29th July 2025

Present: Sam Borman SB (acting chair), Tony Corrigan (TC), Stephen Down (SD), Cathryn Ferris (CF), Peter Godfrey (PG), Tom Halstead (TH), Gary Malcolm (GM), John Motley (JM), Joe Neal (JN), Kate Plumb (KP), Ian Reavill (IR), Michelle Smith (MS), Marian Thomas (MT), Karen Van Eck (KEV), Colin Van Eck (joined for AC22/25 only)

Apologies: Steve Lack, Tony Tew, Peter Ayling



AC 16/25 Acting Chair's Welcome and Apologies

Temporary Acting Chair & Treasurer SB welcomed members to the on-line meeting; apologies were recorded.

AC 17/25 Remembering Vera Silberberg & Ann Holt

The lives of Vera Silberberg & Ann Holt were remembered, they had both died in the last couple of weeks. Tragically Vera died after a car accident, her funeral is on 4th September. She had many roles in the York Group over a number of years, she was the York group secretary for 20 years, a North Yorks Moors National Park volunteer ranger and a great character.

Ann Holt was the wife of David Rubinstein, (he was the driving force behind the foundation of the Wolds Way). Comments from Peter Ayling – “Ann was a writer and first-class researcher, producing many influential reports for the Ramblers, such as the one on the threatened National Forests. She also edited the book “Forbidden Land” about the very early days of the Ramblers Association”; in 2024 she published a book on walking “The History of Recreational Walking in Britain”.

AC 18/25 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the previous Area Council meeting of 6th May 2025 were unanimously accepted without amendment. Proposed: Ian Reavil, seconded: Karen Van Eck

A) Matters arising not dealt with elsewhere:

AC10/25B Access Report- TH said he had received no further news about the possible designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Renewing Permissive Access to Fairy & Whay Dales: TH reported that although he had received a positive response from the Birdsall Estates for this to be renewed, the matter had not been progressed by North Yorkshire Countryside Access Service, in spite of repeated reminders to Andrew Hunter, the officer concerned. TH asked TC if he would consider taking up this matter with NYCC.

AC13/25: SD said that the East Yorkshire Walking Festival Programme was now available on-line. He asked Group leaders to promote it to their members but to remind members that non-Ramblers walks needed to be booked.

AC 19/25 Budget Bid for 2025/26

The Area/Groups budget bid for Oct. 2025 - Sept.2026 had previously been e-mailed to AC members. SB talked through the assumptions he had made on Area expenditure based on previous costs, this was likely to be around £2,380.

Group expenditure: SB said of the 8 groups, 4 were taking their basic allocation, but 4 groups- Beverley, Ryedale, Scarborough & Pocklington had submitted a request for additional funding, giving a total estimated

group expenditure of £7,800. SB stated that we currently have a surplus of over £7,000 and that if we request £6,000 for 2025/26 that should still leave us with £5000 at the end of the financial year which is an excessive reserve.

After discussion, it was agreed that we should request £5,000 for 2025/26, which should leave with a reserve of £4,000 at the end of the financial year, this would be more than enough to cover any unanticipated expenses.

Proposed: Sam Borman, Seconder: Stephen Down.

AC 20/25 Governance Review Consultation

A paper on the Governance Review had been previously circulated, this is an important review representing current thinking of the Board of Trustees based on consultation with a number of focus groups. The pre-consultation review involves a number of major changes and is still on-going. Area Chairs, secretaries and General Council members (SB, MT, TH) have had the chance to discuss with others via on-line discussion sessions. SD has also been involved contributing to Focus Group sessions.

Key Proposed Changes: Groups become the primary formal organising units with simplified and bureaucracy requirements and officer roles, receiving funding directly from the Ramblers central funds. Over time areas will morph into networks with no formal governance role, but will enable groups to work together for footpath work, shared group activities and discussions of tricky issues. Area websites can be retained, and other activities that we share with all groups such as the Zoom licence, Area Camp etc.; it is up to groups to work out how they want the networking to function.

SD said it is sensible for groups to be the main organising unit rather than areas, because this is where all the activity is. It was felt that the formality of the group and area structure and the bureaucracy has acted as a barrier preventing members from getting involved. Groups will require three roles- activity co-ordinator (secretary and chair combined), fund organiser, & footpath work. MT said it at the discussion session she attended importance of group territory being aligned to local authority boundaries was emphasised, this is for working with local authorities on with rights of way maintenance work.

GM asked about area AGMs as these are important get-together opportunities for groups; SB said area AGMs would no longer be required but there could still be area network gatherings, activities and discussions.

One person, one vote is proposed that instead of voting for General Council representatives at AGMs, elections for trustees would be held on line, all members would be able to vote. SD said this was an issue on which the working party had the most reservations, with concern that the majority of members will not take an interest and bother to vote.

Each area is being asked to feedback their response to this consultation paper- the on-line form is available from 6th to 17th August (SB will be away). MT said she was co-ordinate the response with Area Council members, passing the details to the representatives of all groups for their comment.

AC 21/25 Derwent Bank Hotel (HF) Holiday Deposit Required

Background: for the past 25 years Ann Laing has organised a walking holiday with York and Ryedale groups at the Derwent Bank Hotel (HF), Keswick. Ann has managed this through her personal bank account, but has now decided she no longer wishes to organise this holiday.

Kathryn Surtees has agreed to take on the financial management of the holiday for next year, HF require a deposit of £500 in advance to book the hotel for the dates they want to reserve in 2026. A temporary loan of £500 from Area is needed; there will be no difficulty in paying this back, since the holiday is always oversubscribed.

Proposed: Sam Borman, Seconder: John Motley.

AC 22/25 Tighter Training Requirements for Experienced Walk Leaders

On 9th July, Central Office e-mailed all walk leaders who had not completed the two on-line walk leaders training modules, informing them of an updated approach to walk leaders training. From 31st December all walk leaders would be required either to complete the on-line training modules, or have led 12 walks in the last 3 years or hold a recognised walk leaders' qualification. The self-certification form relies on honesty, CO are not checking up.

IR said this was problematic for the York group; the group had 5 different walk sections, each with a significant number of walk leaders. Most will not have led 12 walks in 3 years, so it will be a big task for the walk co-ordinators to persuade all these walk leaders to do the on-line training, especially as this depends on people having access to the internet.

PG stated this was also going to be difficult for the Monday Afternoon Area Group to manage, as the groups' walk leaders were from a mixture of groups. SD reiterated that this was going to be hard work for walk secretaries; he thought the requirement to have led 12 walks in 3 years was over-the-top and was concerned that some very experienced walk leaders may refuse to do the on-line training on a matter of principle.

KP said that where walk leaders were not computer literate, it would be helpful to do walkers training as a group event, and make it more fun as a joint activity. *After the meeting SD mentioned that CO will send out paper copies of the reading material for people who aren't able to access them on line.*

GM said he had written to the B of T asking them why they had decided to bring in this change to the walk leaders training requirements; he will share the response when he receives it. Colin Van Eck (walk co-ordinator for Beverley Group) said he thought the reason was one of Health & Safety; the Ramblers had a duty of care towards their members; CEO Ross Malony (formerly worked for the Scouts) had been criticised in a report into the death of a scout in Snowdonia. There was also a requirement for Health & Safety training for footpath maintenance teams.

AC 23/25 Reports from Area Officers and Groups

Treasurers report: SB had circulated the accounts from Oct 2024 to 17th July 2025; they showed a healthy current balance of £6,840.93

Proposed: Tony Corrigan, Seconder: Karen Van Eck.

Group Reports: most groups had previously circulated a report, group leaders had no further comments.

AC 24/25 Any Other Business

A) Opening of Coast Path from Easington to Filey Brigg

TH reported that the last section of the Yorkshire/Humber coast path from Easington to Filey Brigg would be officially opened on 18th August; it was great news that this finally been complete; TC and other footpath volunteers who had been clearing footpaths on some of the route, had been invited to attend to opening ceremony.

B) Great British Beach Clean-up:

Secretary MT said she had received an e-mail from Natasha of the Marine Conservation Society, asking if any Ramblers groups would be interested in taking part in the annual Great British Beach Clean Up, which will be taking place from Friday 19th to Sunday 28th September. This involved a litter clean up and survey of the types of litter found, it was a worthwhile and rewarding volunteer activity. SB asked MT to pass this information onto groups.

C) Autumn Edition of Area News:

GM said he was planning to produce an autumn edition of the Area Newsletter in September /October and asked groups to send him their news items.

D) Mileage Expenses claimed by Walk Leaders for Recceing Walks

MS asked about mileage claims for recces by walk leaders- who pays for them? SB replied that they come out of group funds, he encourages walk leaders to claim- the rate is 45p per mile up to a maximum of a 50 mile round trip (£22.50 maximum claim). Other group leaders said only a few walk leaders actually claim, even though their claim is anonymous.

MS said that as a flexi-group the Midlife Hikers only receive a grant of £150 per year, so 7 mileage claims would completely wipe out their funds. SB said he would ask central office finance if anything could be done to increase the groups' funding allocation.

E) **Date of Area AGM:** SB asked secretary MT if she had any further information about the Area AGM; MT said she was still waiting to hear from JN, secretary of Beverley Group.

Immediately after the meeting had closed, JN e-mailed MT to say Beverley Group had agreed to host the Area AGM, it would be on 24th January.

AC 25/25 Future meeting dates

Area Council Meeting -Tuesday 25th November 2025 at 7.30pm via Zoom

Area AGM -Saturday 24th January 2026 hosted by Beverley Group