

South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire

Area Council Meeting

Monday, 28th November, 2011

Scout HQ, Trippet Lane, Sheffield.

Officers Present: Lee Farmery (Chair), David Gadd (Secretary), Gavin Johns (Treasurer), Cath McKay (MWPF), Chris Whittaker (IT), Allen Pestell (Countryside), Les Seaman (Access), Neill Schofield (Area Newsletter), Terry Howard (MWPF).

Group Reps Present: Peter Clayton (Sheffield 20-30s), Cynthia Ashton (Co-op Ramblers), Ruth Thomas (Sheffield 20-30s), Basil Merry (Chesterfield and NE D'shire), Eric Andrews (Sheffield VI Walking Group), Laura Proctor (Chesterfield 20-30s), Nikki Farmery (Barnsley and Penistone 20-30s), Philip Ryder (Rotherham Metro).

Apologies: Marion Thomson (Doncaster).

The Bolsover Group do not have a representative.

John Bunting sent his best wishes to Area Council.

- 1 Minutes of the meeting of 12 September 2011.

Terry Howard proposed and Cath McKay seconded that the minutes be approved.

- 2 Matters Arising.

None.

- 3 Group Reports.

Barnsley and Penistone

Nikki Farmery said that the Group were introducing some shorter walks. She had been in contact with central office re meeting the deadline for contacting new members.

Bolsover

No report.

Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire

Basil Merry said that 83 people had attended their recent AGM where the motion to change Area had not gained the necessary two-thirds majority. The Group has weekly rights of way working parties (see major article in current *walk* magazine) and they are a major supplier of local walks to the local walking festival. BM queried the value of Areas within the Ramblers structure, saying that with present-day communication options and the ever-present lack of volunteers to sit on committees, perhaps Areas were unnecessary. Cath McKay said that the purpose of Areas had been discussed previously and she proposed, and Allen Pestell seconded, that the subject be discussed next year.

Chesterfield 20-30s

Laura Proctor said that the Group's AGM was soon. Also that the Group were offering lots of walks and were contributing to the local walking festival.

Co-operative Ramblers

Cynthia Ashton said that membership was 56 and they regularly had 12-18 walkers on Sundays. They had 33 people at their AGM recently. They had a successful coach ramble in June to Stratford-on-Avon and a trip to Liverpool in July. In August 15 of their members had done the Morecambe Bay guided walk. They were planning a Kinder celebration walk.

Dearne Valley

Diane Parkin said that membership had apparently dropped by about 20 people recently, but that this was probably due to administrative errors from central office. The Group usually had 23-26 members and 6 dogs on walks. Their walks are published in the Dearne Valley Weekender. They had a coach trip to York, with two walks, and were having a weekend away to Malham in December to walk and visit a Dickensian Fayre.

Doncaster

David Gadd said that the Group's RoW committee had recently been re-established and was progressing well. This committee responds as appropriate to RoW closures/diversions, etc., supports DMBC's RoW Dept with monthly working parties, and supports the Dept with RoW monitoring. The Group is in the process of producing a series of 9 short circular walks from the staging points of the Heron Way 30 mile linear walk

developed a few years ago. The AGM was held last month; two committee members did not seek re-election and one new member was elected, giving a committee of 14 people. The AGM was immediately followed by a buffet and then a magician performed. We continue to attract large numbers to our walks, especially on the Tuesday walks. Our Winter Walks Programme has just started. DMBC have changed the format of their Walks Festival to a 12 month event, which the Group is supporting. The Group has two walks in the Festival of Winter walks.

Rotherham Metro

Philip Ryder said that the Group's walk attendance continues to remain high and that their 2012 Walks Programme is due to be circulated. The Group are trying to increase car-sharing. Membership has dropped slightly in the last quarter but, interestingly, he said that all new members were walkers, in comparison with about two-thirds of existing membership being non-walkers with the Group. The death of Fred Beaumont, the Group's Membership Secretary, had recently occurred. The position had been filled at the AGM. The Group's 25th anniversary was held with a lunch on 9th November, with 87 members attending and David Hey as guest speaker. The venue for meetings had been changed to the Green Dragon, Kimberworth. The Group had some 'Join Us' leaflets printed, free from central office. Contact had been made with the SY Ambulance Service re the use of GR to locate incidents; their response had been forwarded to central office.

Sheffield

Terry Howard said that the Group's AGM had been held; they still need a treasurer. The normal walks programme was taking place, along with the Walking Out project. The Walking Out leaflet and the Group's Walks Programme were being distributed to members, thus providing a programme of walks ranging from 2 to 15 miles. Some new members had joined Ramblers from the Walking Out project. The Get Walking Keep Walking project was finishing in December but it is hoped to maintain contact with the volunteers; efforts continue to be made to find funding to continue the project in some way. The Group has had 4 car walks this year (for the first time ever) to compensate for reduced bus services.

Sheffield 20-30s

Peter Clayton/Ruth Thomas said that the Group had 2-3 walks per week and regular socials and weekends away. They had just voted against having a printed programme. Their website had recently been up-dated. Potential new members were invited to meetings in the hour preceding the Group's monthly meetings; 8 new members had joined in October. The Group will be celebrating its 10th anniversary on 7th July 2012.

Sheffield 40s

No report

Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group

Eric Andrews said that the Group had had a hectic year. Membership consisted of about 40 visually impaired members and 80 sighted guides. Several members had climbed Snowdon this year. They had 3 walks per week, with 30-40 members walking on the second Wednesday in the month. They had a joint event with Chesterfield VI walkers at Chatsworth. Their 2012 Walks Programme was being prepared. In response to a question EA said that training for guides was sometimes offered.

4 Area Officer's Reports Chair

Lee Farmery referred to his annual report in the Area Newsletter and specifically to the fact that, after three years as Chair, he was resigning. He felt that the role would benefit from new blood.

Secretary

The correspondence list had previously been circulated. After a discussion it was agreed that the Secretary would continue to forward correspondence from the Concerned Ramblers.

Area Council minutes are now being sent to Sheffield Archives.

The Secretary pointed out that groups, as well as individuals, are welcome to join the Peak District Green Lanes Alliance.

Treasurer

Gavin Johns presented the financial report, dated 28th November 2011.

GJ said the issue of the donation previously offered to the Five Weirs Trust to replace information boards was ongoing. All Group and Area budgets had been sent to central office on time. Only the Chesterfield, Sheffield, Rotherham and Dearne Valley Groups would receive money. Other Groups, which had plenty in reserve would not receive an allocation unless they made a request. On the same basis, Area would

refuse the fourth quarter money if it was not needed. All agreed with the proposal, made by Cath McKay and seconded by Neill Schofield, that that these matters be approved.

Andrew Milne, who audits the Chesterfield Group accounts, has agreed to audit the Area accounts.

Access

Les Seaman said that the draft five year management plan from the Eastern Moors Partnership was open for consultation. Among other things they propose introducing concessionary bridleways on the Big Moor area, which includes Curbar and Froggatt Edges. If implemented the question of whether walkers, horse-riders and cyclists can co-exist will be monitored and withdrawn if appropriate. Also, the Planning Inspectorate has looked at the issue of the fencing of common land at High Riggs Road, near Sheffield, and declared that the fencing is illegal.

Countryside

Allen Pestell referred to the possible northern route to the east of the HS2 rail line. One possibility was that it would be routed through one of the old Woodhead tunnels. If this happens then that part of the Trans Pennine Trail which was previously a rail line might be returned to its original use, making a massive problem for the replacement of the TPT route. Another major issue could be the contracting-out of Rights of Way

Departments. If this happens then Ramblers Groups which do maintenance work might be in a position to bid. AP said that what the Chesterfield Group were doing, highlighted in *walk*, was perfect.

Newsletter

Neill Schofield thanked all who had sent items for the annual Newsletter, which should be taken by Groups after the meeting. Any Groups wanting the Newsletter in pdf form should request it.

Publicity

No report

IT

Chris Whittaker pointed out that some links on the website don't work, but that she is trying to solve the problem. Also, that there are no walks submitted to the Ramblers website from any of the Sheffield Groups.

Membership

No report

5 Area AGM

The venue is the Assembly Rooms, Hilltop, Bolsover. GR SK473475. LF will contact the speakers. All existing officers present, except LF, indicated that they would stand again. Nominations can be sent to the Secretary. The AGM will be preceded by a 5-6 mile walk starting at 10.30 from the Assembly Rooms.

6 General Council

General Council is the major decision-making body of the Ramblers. SYNED is entitled to send two voting delegates and Cath McKay and Neill Schofield proposed/seconded that, as usual, Area sends a third, non-voting, member. Several people indicated their willingness to attend the 2012 GC, in Leicester over the weekend 21-22nd April.

7 Kinder Anniversary

Terry Howard said that much work had gone into the planning but that he could confirm that the celebration would be launched on Tuesday, 24th April at Edale. Fiona Reynolds from the National Trust, and Kate Ashbrook from the Open Spaces Society, would speak. The ceremony would be followed by a walk. Further walks would take place throughout the week. On Wednesday celebration walks would start from Hayfield, in the west, and Edale, in the east, meeting on Kinder. David Hey will give a presentation on the events of the original trespass and Benny Rothman's book will be up-dated and published. There will be a ceilidh at the Broomhall Centre. A full programme of the events will be published. The over-arching theme of the events is to look forward, not backwards.

8 Membership Drive

TH had attended a central office organised day on membership issues in Manchester recently. He distributed a handout and asked that Group's discuss the matter. Ramblers had researched why members left. Despite the fact that they had left most of these people were positive about Ramblers, including its campaigning. Some reasons given were inappropriate walks, cliques, cost, age and type of people, lack of time. 66% of the people who had not renewed were unaware of the reminder that had been sent. Not one person gave errors in

membership processing as a reason for not renewing. This research was independent of Ramblers. The most successful way of increasing membership is to open more Groups, although these Groups must be sustainable. When membership processing problems do occur central office would like details so that they can attempt to correct the problem.

9 AOB
None.

Forthcoming dates:	Annual General Meeting	28 th January, 2012
	Area Council meetings	6 th February, 2012
		11 th June, 2012
		10 th September, 2012
		26 th November, 2012
	Annual General Meeting	26 th January, 2013

Area website: www.synedramblers.org.uk

Ramblers website: www.ramblers.org.uk