

Area Council

5th June, 2017

Quaker Meeting House, St James Street, Sheffield, S1 2EW

Present

Allen Pestell (Chair), David Gadd (Secretary), Gavin Johns (Treasurer), Les Seaman (Access), Christine Whittaker (Information), Cynthia Ashton (Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers), Christine Hewitt (Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group), Basil Merry (CNED), Terry Howard (MWPF), Philip Ryder (Rotherham Metro), Tom Kistell (Acting Chair, Sheffield 20s), Judy Gathercole (Sheffield), Wayne Grounsel (Sheffield 40s).

Apologies

Nicki Speakman (Barnsley and Penistone), Jez Kenyon (Sheffield 40s), Philip Lee (Dearne Valley), Cath MacKay (MWPF).

Minutes of the meeting of 6th February, 2016

Agreed as being correct.

Matters Arising

None

Constitution of Sheffield 40s Group.

The constitution was agreed.

Group Reports

Christine Hewitt said that she would appreciate any sponsorship from members for the Sheffield Visually Impaired Group's walk of the 14.6 mile Sheffield Round Walk on 17th June. Money raised will be for the Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind and for the walking group. The group's AGM will be in June; CH is likely to be the Chair.

Gavin Johns said that the recent CNED Walks Festival had been very successful, with record numbers participating.

Philip Ryder said that the Dearne Valley and Rotherham Metro Groups are combining to organise a walking festival from 11th - 15th October, 2017. Because of cutbacks RMBC are not running a festival. Funding for publicity was requested and granted.

Judy Gathercole said that the Sheffield Walking Festival will be between 8th - 17th September.

Tom Kistell said that the Sheffield 20s Group's AGM will be in October.

David Gadd said that a member of the Doncaster Group had recently agreed to be its Publicity Officer, a role unfilled for several years.

Officer's Reports

Chair's Report

AP said that the Spirit of Kinder event had gone well, with our new CEO, Vanessa Griffiths, speaking well, as did our new President, Stuart Maconie.

The new book, *Clarion Call*, was presented by Roly Smith, with slides of many of the photos in the book.

We then discussed various requests to spend the Ivy Cowan and Roy Cannon legacies.

i) TH said that the recently published *Clarion Call* was the first book on the subject of the history of the walking movement in our area, and specifically the Ramblers heritage, and it would be a good

idea to build on this success. He said that Sheffield Museum is planning to mount a walking display/exhibition next year. In addition, Sheffield is vying to be known as the Outdoor City.

TH said that the National Trust are expanding Longshaw and that they would have the space for a permanent exhibition on the history of walking in the area and they are totally supportive of such a project. There is already a reasonable collection of material and further material will be obtained. (DG agreed to contact central office to ask if they held any suitable material). Venues other than Longshaw were open for consideration, with a cruck barn in Bradfield and a site at Tapton Lock being available for the storage of material.

Such a display would need to be presented to a very high standard, with display cases possibly costing around £2-3,000. Money would also need to be available to change the display periodically.

It was proposed by TH and seconded by GJ that a maximum amount of £20,000 be earmarked for this Rambler Heritage project. All agreed.

It was also agreed that TH would donate copies of *Clarion Call* to the local history section of local libraries.

ii) GJ proposed and AP seconded that £2,250 be given to the Edale Mountain Rescue Team for a defibrillator. All agreed.

iii) GJ proposed and LS seconded that £900, comprising £480 from the Roy Cannon legacy and £420 from the Ivy Cowan legacy, be given to the Peak and Northern Footpath Society for three PNFS signposts, which would name Ivy Cowan and Roy Cannon, as well as the Ramblers.

iv) BM said that he would like to re-vamp the Mosbrough Country Way, a lovely walking route around Mosbrough which has not been maintained recently. Funding would cover way marking and publicity. £300 maximum was requested. Proposed by BM, seconded by TH. All agreed.

v) The CNED Group had failed to find matched-funding to enable disabled-friendly work to be done at Stavely. It was agreed that the £2500 previously requested be given.

Secretary's Report

	CNED	Don	Sheff	R'ham	B&P	DV	Sh20	Ch20	Sh40	SYNED	National
1/10/13	505	234	661	269	242	99	226	22	179	2399	
1/12/13	542	227	663	272	223	100	223	25	190	2449	
1/06/14	536	232	677	271	202	103	214	23	219	2486	107837
1/06/15	478	232	626	264	187	103	235	37	227	2403	107473
1/01/16	473	230	614	266	180	105	231	33	230	2392	106452
1/08/16	457	227	603	265	172	107	247	26	238	2369	106131
1/11/16	441	225	601	269	173	109	258	26	224	2352	
1/01/17	439	224	590	259	167	114	258	25	233	2334	105234
1/04/17										2295	105428
1/06/17	433	213	581	255	157	114	249	23	238	2293	105136

(Emailed CO to check accuracy of recent national figures i.e. 105234, 105428, but then 105136 i.e. increases then a sharp decrease.)

DG said that he has started sending a welcome email to members new to SYNED who are not in a Group.

The correspondence list was distributed.

Treasurer's Report

GJ distributed the Treasurer's Report.

He pointed out that a separate account had been opened for the *Clarion Call* with £2289 transferred into it. £1353 had been received so far from sales.

A request from Rotherham Metro for £500 for advertising for the walks Festival was agreed.

Groups have until 17th July to submit budget requests for next year, or the basic allocation will be given.

2017 General Council

AP said that GC this year had been much more unified and peaceful than in recent years, with no contentious issues being raised and all discussions concerned with walking issues. (*See GC report below).

Response from Groups to questionnaire

Several Groups responded to the questionnaire sent to our Groups by Area Council on facilitating better communication, particularly the idea of introducing an Area Newsletter as happens with the South East Walker. The Sheffield Group were supportive of the idea; other Groups were not enthusiastic, believing that it might lead to an increased workload, that communication from Area Council was already good, or that newsletter items could be placed in a section of *Walk* magazine. It was suggested that paper newsletters are too labour intensive and costly to mail.

Role of Groups

Responses from Groups to the *Ramblers Local Work* were very positive, supportive of the overview of the things Ramblers aspire to do at a local level. The newer Groups within SYNED, who have mostly younger members, communicate with their members totally electronically. The older-established Groups have and are making efforts to increase the percentage of their members contactable by email, with the Dearne Valley Group reaching 70% of their members and the Sheffield Group 44%. The Doncaster Group has asked its non-email members to give their email addresses, with a marked lack of success; efforts continue.

Lost Ways

We agreed to review the Lost Ways situation at the next ACROW meeting.

Area Support Officer

Diane Simcoe has been appointed into this newly-created role, to cover the north of England. This is defined as the North West, the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside. She has agreed to attend the next Area Council meeting. (*See advertisement for the position below).

AOB

BM drew our attention to the Peak District Boundary Walk.

There has been some discussion, nationally and locally, regarding the use of footpaths by cyclists. It was agreed to ask a representative from a local cycling organisation to talk at the next Area AGM.

2017 ACROW meetings start at 6.30pm and Area Council meetings start at 7.30pm
All meetings are held in the Quaker Meeting House, St James Street, Sheffield S1 2EW.
4th September
20th November

2018 AGM: 2.00pm, Saturday, 27th January
Rotherham Metro to host.

Area website: www.synedramblers.org.uk
National website: www.ramblers.org.uk

Regarding General Council, this report, by Jez Kenyon, has previously been circulated.

'A brief report on the recent Ramblers GC, a much more positive meeting than in recent years. All About 150 folks from Ramblers Areas across the UK gathered in sunny Southampton for the weekend, to discuss walking issues. It was a very cordial event, thoroughly enjoyable, and was a good antidote to the previous two years, as it was all about walking related issues, and was very constructive and positive.

We met our new Chief Executive, Vanessa Griffiths - she impressed us with her down to earth approach and clear desire for us all to work together to achieve our goal of championing walking issues locally and nationally.

There were 7 new Board Members elected, and a wide range of ages and parts of the country were represented, with new trustees coming from Shropshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, London, Buckinghamshire and Birmingham. Following last year's motions re Governance, the Board, along

with our new Chief Executive, are taking a different approach and we are starting to see a much more open and collaborative way of working to achieve our mission - it is up to us to play our part in that - the doors are open for us to influence how Ramblers develops.

SYNED and Derbyshire Areas submitted a joint motion to request action to address the growing problems caused by inappropriate ploughing and planting crops on footpaths. The motion was passed and we look forwards to hearing how the Board will address this ongoing issue. However it is also very much a local issue - so please use Pathwatch, or other methods, to report any problems you find due to ploughed up footpaths or crops blocking your way.

Protecting rights-of-way post Brexit was also debated, and Ramblers will campaign for using "public money for public good", for post-EU subsidies to landowners to be conditional on maintaining rights of way & improving access to the countryside.

The final debate was about the shared use of paths by walkers and cyclists. There was widespread acceptance that sharing wide urban paths with cyclists would make sense, but in other cases it would be extremely difficult. A motion was passed that Ramblers would oppose a blanket permission for cyclists to use any footpath, and another motion was passed that we would work with cycling and other organisations to come up with guidance and standards about this thorny issue.

Finally we had a presentation from Stuart Maconie, our new president. He is a keen walker (he has bagged all 214 Wainwrights), a northerner, and has his own music programme on BBC R6 - we look forwards to his help championing the cause of Ramblers.'

Advertisement on the Ramblers website for the role of Area Support Officer:

'The Ramblers is looking to recruit an energetic self-motivated and confident individual to provide support to volunteers who run area committees within our regional structures in northern England. This is an exciting new role within the chief executive team; you will play a crucial role in supporting and inspiring our area committees, sharing the Ramblers strategic direction and exploring with them the best way to deliver our mission of the national charity locally. This role is home based with extensive travel across our northern areas, as well as working in conjunction with a wider team. We are looking for an individual who is excellent at communicating and building relationships and confident in interacting with people from many different backgrounds. We'd also like you to have experience of managing grass root volunteers through exciting times of change, especially focusing on communicating strategic direction and modernisation of current practice and methods. You'll need to love walking as some of your work will undoubtedly be undertaken on the footpath'.

Diane Simcoe has agreed to attend the next Area Council meeting. We suggested that she is asked to find out whether central office could establish a national system for all Area and Group websites.