

South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire

Area Council Meeting

7.30, Monday, 13 June 2011

Scout HQ, Trippet Lane, Sheffield

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Officers Present: Lee Farmery (Chair), David Gadd (Sec), Neill Schofield (Area Newsletter), Terry Howard (MWPF), Cath MacKay (MWPF), Chris Whittaker (IT), Carol Wilkie (Publicity), Les Seaman (Access), Allen Pestell (Countryside)

Group Reps Present: Cynthia Ashton (Sheffield Co-op), Marion Thompson, Wendy Atkinson (Doncaster), Philip Ryder (Rotherham Metro), Diane Parkin (Dearne Valley), Julie Evison, Ruth Thomas (Sheffield 20s-30s), Paul Cairns, Russell Matthews (Chesterfield Young Ramblers).

Guest: Helen Judge (Get Walking Keep Walking).

Apologies: Gavin Johns (Treasurer), Eric Andrews (Sheffield VI).

- 1 Minutes of the meeting of 7 February 2011
Proposed Lee Farmery, seconded Terry Howard. Agreed as correct.
- 2 Matters Arising
Re item 4, Area Council vacancies, it was agreed that Allen Pestell would be Countryside Officer.
Re the lack of a Footpath Officer, it was agreed that the Access, Countryside and Rights of Way (ACROW) committee would be re-established when needed.
Re item 10, General Council, Diane Parkin had been unable to go but a substitute had been found.
- 3 Helen Judge, from the Get Walking Keep Walking project, explained the background and future.
She said that the project was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, from 2008 to the end of 2011. The project was being carried out in Birmingham, Manchester, East London, South London and Sheffield. Its aim is to increase regular independent walking amongst previously inactive and insufficiently active people.
The basic principle of GWKW is that people can gradually increase their level of walking using the structured plans provided by the GWKW programme, whether through Get Walking Packs, the 12-week programmes, taster events, schools programme, or My Get Walking – a paper and online personalised walk diary.
The Sheffield project is progressing well towards its targets, with six months of the project remaining. A full independent evaluation is available online by contacting helen.judge@ramblers.org.uk.
Attention is being paid to the legacy of GWKW. A bid has been made for funding for South Yorkshire, but this, if successful, will not come into being until June 2012. Other funding possibilities are being investigated.
In addition to normal assessments of the project in-depth studies are being carried out with 10 people. It is hoped to establish the cost-effectiveness of the project i.e. that the efforts will improve people's health and, in addition to improving the quality of their lives, savings will be made to the NHS.
- 4 Group Reports
Barnsley and Penistone.
LF said that there is no change to the situation re the bridge of the River Dearne. The Group are preparing a series of walk leaflets. A new country park has been opened. The 20s-30s Group took part in a dragon boat race (16/16!) and raised £1000 for Weston Park. The Group assisted with marshalling at a charity walk last weekend. They continue to have socials and have re-introduced successful evening walks.

Bolsover
No report

Chesterfield
No report

Chesterfield 20s-30s
Russell Matthews said that at the Group's AGM in April he had been elected Chair and Paul Cairns Treasurer. There appeared to be no strong feelings within the Group to change Area. Evening walks were going well and were proving to be a good recruitment tool. They have introduced Saturday walks in addition to their Sunday walks.

Co-operative Ramblers
Cynthia Ashton said that membership was now 56; being a small Group they had little money to advertise to recruit new members. They had a successful quiz night in April and have a coach trip to Stratford arranged for

26 June (a few seats still available). As an Affiliated Group they had an insurance quote of £185 from Perkins Slade but they had obtained a quote of £138 from another company.

Dearne Valley

Diane Parkin said the Group had a major push on membership and had gained 27 members since January. They frequently had press releases in the local press. They had a successful coach trip to Filey. Wednesday evening walks attracted about 10 people.

Cath MacKay added that press releases are an ideal way of getting publicity. All Groups have events that can be presented to the press, which of course costs nothing.

Doncaster

Marion Thompson said that the bridge over the Torne (the supports of which were stolen in December 2009) had finally been replaced. The Group started a walk from the bridge, just after completion, in May.

Wendy Atkinson said that the committee is carrying out a cost-cutting exercise. As usual the Group participated in DMBC's Festival of Walks. DMBC is holding a meeting soon to consider ways of taking walking forward in the borough. WA and DG will participate in the meeting. The Group has continued to assist DMBC's Rights of Way Dept with maintenance and intends to formally assist in monitoring footpaths in the near future. The Group had a successful weekend in Hawes, a coach trip to Ingleton with three walks and a fish and chip supper in Skipton afterwards. Evening walks have re-started in addition to the normal Saturday and Tuesday walks.

Rotherham

Philip Ryder said that walk attendance continues to be good although the average has reduced over the past two months. Get Walking Day was well supported, although only one new member resulted. The Group had a weekend away to Helmsley earlier in June, with 40 members attending. Six walks, varying between 6 and 14 miles, were arranged. There is coach trip to Gargrave on 16 July, with 40 members taking part. Numerous footpath issues are being actioned by the footpath committee. There was a successful outcome following an Enquiry into a disputed footpath. This means the Group can now up-date the Rotherham Ring Route publicity. A plaque has been placed on a new stile to commemorate Harry Rodgers and an official dedication of the walk took place on 20 April. A 2-week display in Rotherham Tourist Information Centre attracted some interest in the Group. A member recently had an accident on Kinder and needed the air ambulance. After hospitalisation he was allowed home and is now walking again.

Sheffield

Terry Howard said that the 60th anniversary of the Peak District National Park was celebrated with a joint walk with the CPRE. A rally in Winnats Pass was held jointly with Park Rangers. The Group held a 'thank you' event for walk leaders, when leadership and child protection issues were discussed. Three public coach ramblers were being organised, one held so far, successfully, with the others to follow. Three walks are offered on each trip. These are being funded by money earned by doing some map-work. The Group didn't take part in the March membership scheme because it was in the process of circulating every surgery in Sheffield. A trial of four car walks has just been completed (The Group have only used public transport for the past 70+ years but a deterioration in the bus service has caused a re-think to the policy). The Walking Out project continues to grow rapidly, with Thursday walks attracting 30-50+ people and Tuesday walks 25+ people. The problem of how to get them to join Ramblers remains unsolved! John Bunting, a Vice President in his 90's, attended Sheffield's last committee meeting. He expressed his surprise and delight at what was going on in the Group compared with what had been going on in his day. TH said that he would have been astounded at what was going on within all the Groups in SYNED.

Sheffield 20s-30s

Julie Evison said the Group had weekends in Malham at Easter and recently to the Lake District, with 34 members attending. A joint walk with the Notts and Derbyshire 20s-30s Group is being held soon. A summer ball has been organised. The Group run new-comers evenings. Membership is stable at about 225, although the 20s-30s age limit is not strictly adhered to.

Sheffield 40s

Carol Wilkie said the Group is buzzing, with plenty of banter among members. Recruitment is mainly through the website and through word-of-mouth. They have two walks on Sundays, attracting 40-50 people. Fewer attend the Saturday walks. Evening walks with a pub-stop at the end are popular. Links have been established with the Hants 40s Group. The Northern College was suggested as a good source for navigation courses. A joint walk with the Wildlife Trust is being organised.

Sheffield Visually Impaired Walking Group

The Group is always interested in people willing to guide for their members. Members were reminded

of the Chatsworth walking day being organised to raise funds for the Sheffield Society for the Blind on 3 July.

5 Area Officer's Reports

Chair

Lee said that anyone who would like to join himself, DG and TH to respond to the Peak District National Park draft Management Plan was welcome.

Secretary

David Gadd said that the correspondence list had been circulated. Apologies were offered that information from the Ramblers website had been omitted. It will be added.

Please note the following items in particular:

16 March: Basil Merry has agreed to let Area Council know of anything at Derbyshire Rights of Way meetings that we should be aware of, bearing in mind that such meetings are the responsibility of Groups, rather than Area.

7 April: the resignation from Area Council of Rhona Gibbons, from the Chesterfield Group, because of the ongoing dispute re whether the Group should move Area.

19 May: a date for the Stanage Edge rally has now been set. It will be on 9 July. Time/start location tbc.

7 June: 500 copies of the Peak District Green Lane Alliance leaflet about damage caused by off-roading in the National Park were delivered just prior to the meeting. They were distributed to Groups present.

Central Office is responding to requests for earlier notice of events:

3-10 October – Walk in the Woods Week. Ramblers has suggested this to keep attention on the forestry situation. It was suggested that the Wharnccliffe Woods need highlighting and might make a good Area walk.

24 Dec – 2 January – Festival of Winter Walks.

5 May – A Coastal Walk, to highlight the ongoing attempts to establish a national coastal footpath.

22-28 May – Get Walking for the Games.

The Secretary will be absent from the next meeting. He is happy to write the minutes if someone will take notes.

Treasurer

Sheffield Group requested funding of £1000 to replace and up-date the 10 linear Sheffield Country Walks with 10 circular walks. Terry Howard proposed and Cath MacKay seconded. All agreed, subject to the Treasurer's agreement.

It was clarified that Groups can make donations from their funds to like-minded organisations i.e. if they are advancing the charitable objectives of the Ramblers. Individual members can of course raise funds for other organisations.

Access

Les Seaman said that negotiations were ongoing for changes to the management of the moors to the west of Sheffield. Ramblers will seek representation on all steering groups.

Countryside

Allen Pestell is closely monitoring the methodology being used on windfarms re climate change. There is a suggestion that songbirds are on the increase, possibly because the increase in large raptors is keeping the smaller raptors away.

It was proposed by Lee Farmery and seconded by Wendy Atkinson that we accept the Ramblers draft response to the High Speed 2 consultation. Agreed.

It was noted that Tom Franklin is on the forestry consultation committee, which is generally considered to have a bias towards landowners. Neill Schofield noted that a motion at General Council set Ramblers requirements at access, not ownership, of forests. This is consistent with the situation in the national parks.

It was noted that an 18 month Traffic Regulation Order had been applied to the Chapel Gate track, with a temporary closure to walkers for repair work.

Newsletter

Neill Schofield said that the deadline for the formal next Area Newsletter, which has reports from each Group and constitutes notice for the AGM on 28 January, is 17 October. Reports preferably received via email (neill.schofield@googlemail.com) but acceptable by postal mail (175 Shirecliffe Road, Sheffield S5 8XA).

Publicity

An informal Area Newsletter had been distributed recently containing much information. Members were happy to receive it. Carol Wilkie reported that publicity had been gained at two fetes recently, with one more fete to attend this year, as well as a leaflet distribution outside a Tesco store if they agree. 'Join Us' leaflets containing details of all Groups in Area were on order with central office ('Join US' leaflets are printed free to Groups). A series of monthly Family Walks of 5 miles had been started. The issue of a discount evening at a walking store was discussed and generally agreed to be a good idea.

Central Office says that membership of Area is 2591, a small decrease of 114 since December. They say that Group memberships are: Sheffield 747, Chesterfield 548, Doncaster 294, Rotherham 286, Barnsley 225, Sheffield 20s-30s 180, Sheffield 40s 149, Dearne Valley 85, Bolsover 40, Chesterfield Young Ramblers 37. The general query re child membership was raised. It was pointed out that children are free, but what is the age limit?

The Area website has been re-designed, with a new colour scheme, new features, etc. Any further ideas are welcome, plus news items, photos, etc.

6 2012 Kinder Anniversary.

Terry Howard said that the celebration was likely to be in April and would concentrate on the benefits of Kinder, with a possible title of 'Kinder: Trespass to Treasure.' The celebration would last for a week and consist of walks, art activities, a ceilidh, etc.

7 General Council.

Information is on the Ramblers website, with draft minutes of GC to be distributed imminently.

8 AOB

2012 AGM. Lee Farmery would approach Bolsover to establish whether they would be happy to host the event.

Area Council meetings: 12 September 2011
28 November 2011

AGM: 28 January 2012

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