



**ramblers**

at the heart of walking

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT KEBLE  
COLLEGE, OXFORD  
16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2011**

**ATTENDANCE LIST**

\*denotes a member of Council (voter)

**Vice-Presidents**

Andrew Bennett\*  
Geoff Eastwood\*  
Richard Lloyd Jones\*  
Cath MacKay\*  
Jerry Pearlman\*  
Paddy Tipping\*  
John Trevelyan\*

**Chairman**

Rodney Whittaker\*

**Treasurer**

Jonathan Kipling\*

**Board of Trustee member**

Naseem Akhtar\*  
Kate Ashbrook\*  
Eleanor Harris\*  
Helen Lloyd Jones\*  
Harry Mycock\*  
Robert Peel\*  
Owen Plunkett\*  
David Thomson\*  
Keith Wadd\*

**Agenda Committee member**

John Esslemont\*  
Elizabeth Lawie\*  
Eileen Linfoot\*  
Brian Reader\*  
Neill Schofield\*

**Avon Area**

Jill Fysh\*  
Ruth Ginever\*

**Bedfordshire Area**

Mike Hyde\*

**Berkshire Area**

Jim Binning\*  
Lee Pattison\*

**Bucks, Milton Keynes & W Middx Area**

John Elfes  
Charles Pickett  
Paul Rhodes\*  
John Wainwright\*

**Cambs & Peterborough Area**

Brian Foster\*

**Carmarthenshire Area**

Geoffrey Williams\*

**Clydesdale to Solway**

Stuart King\*  
Ann Rankin\*

**Cornwall Area**

Margaret Kelly\*  
Sylvia Ronan\*

**Derbyshire Area**

Martin Pape\*  
Sandy Jones\*

**Devon Area**

James Baldwin\*  
Nick Savage\*

**Dorset Area**

William Blight  
Kate Gocher  
Jim Scott\*  
Jan Wardell\*

**E Yorks/Derwent Area**

Len Atkinson\*  
Peter Ayling  
Chris Bush\*

**Essex Area**

Kevin Clark\*  
David Harvey\*  
Mags Hobby\*

**Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside Area**

John Andrews\*  
Ben Douglas\*

**Glamorgan Area**

Gwyn Lewis\*

**Gloucestershire Area**

Jill Byrne \*  
Richard Davis\*

**Grampian Area**

Anne MacDonald\*  
Alison Mitchell\*

**Greater Gwent**

Maggie Thomas\*

**Greater Manchester & High Peak Area**

Salle Dare  
Gloria Gaffney\*  
John Ireland\*  
Mags Metcalf

**Hampshire Area**

Margaret Mathieson\*  
Rob Renshaw\*  
Ben Sillifant\*

**Herefordshire Area**

Arthur Lee\*

**Herts & N Middx Area**

Phil Escritt\*  
Declan Leyden

David Smith\*  
Harold Stokes

**Highland & Islands Area**

Vic Royce\*

**Inner London Area**

Diana Kavanagh\*  
Dominic Pinto\*

**Isle of Wight Area**

Michael Slater\*  
David Howarth\*

**Kent Area**

David Gatward\*  
Neville Machin\*

**Lake District Area**

Hilary Parker\*  
Dennis Pook\*

**Leics & Rutland Area**

John Howells\*  
Michael Parr\*

**Lincolnshire Area**

Stuart Parker\*  
Colin Smith\*

**Lothian & Borders Area**

Jim Harrower\*  
Arthur Homan-Elsy\*

**Merseyside & West Cheshire Area**

Dave Callan\*  
Pat Sullivan\*

**Mid Lancashire Area**

David Kelly\*  
Kevin Matthews\*

**Norfolk Area**

Richard May\*  
Julian White\*

**Northamptonshire Area**

David Craddock\*  
Anita Reynolds\*

**North & Mid Cheshire Area**

Keith Doughty\*  
Andrew Galloway\*

**North East Lancs Area**

Susan Baxendale\*

**North Strathclyde Area**

James Lawson\*  
Barry Pottle\*

**Northumbria Area**

Dave Turnbull\*  
Nuala Wright\*

**North Wales Area**

Max Grant\*  
Denis McAteer\*

**North Yorks/S Durham Area**

George Bateman\*  
Jo Bird  
Simon Gotch\*

**Nottinghamshire Area**

Lara Cronin  
Rod Fillingham\*  
Chris Thompson\*

**Oxfordshire Area**

Mary Gough\*  
Susan Maguire\*  
Peter Stone

**Pembrokeshire Area**

George Allingham\*  
Jeanette Allingham\*

**Powys Area**

Alan Austin\*

**Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute Area**

David Collinson\*  
Hilary Graham\*

**Shropshire Area**

Peter Carr\*  
John Newnham\*

**Somerset Area**

Mary Henry\*

Rod Porter\*

**South & East Cheshire**

Philip Lund\*

**S Yorks/NE Derbys Area**

Lee Farmery\*  
Judith Gathercole\*  
Diane Parkin

**Staffordshire Area**

Marie Bowen  
Graham Evans\*  
Rebecca Head  
Graham Rothery\*

**Suffolk Area**

James Richards\*  
Richard Tyson\*

**Surrey Area**

Graham Butler\*  
Doreen Masters  
Ted Masters\*  
John Nathan\*  
David Ross  
Damian Wheeler

**Sussex Area**

Graham Elvey  
Clive Grumett\*  
Malcolm McDonnell\*  
Malcolm Newman  
Anne Parker

**Warwickshire Area**

Michael Bird\*  
Andy Page\*  
Ian Wilkinson

**West Riding Area**

Michael Church\*  
David Gibson\*

**Wilts & Swindon Area**

Gill Minter\*  
Ron Moore\*

**Worcestershire Area**

Clive Bostle\*  
Peter Wright\*

**Camping & Caravanning Club**

Jim Perry\*

**HF Holidays**

Andrew Deeks

Matthew Humphreys\*

Melanie Josey

**Long Distance Walkers Assoc**

Paul Lawrence

Les Maple\*

**Open Spaces Society**

Jean MacDonald\*

**Ramblers Association Services**

Peter Balchin\*

**Red Rope**

Don Kinnibrugh\*

Barbara Segal

Steve Wright

**Guests**

Roy Batty

Simon Brett

John Geoghegan

Michael Geoghegan

Tim Geoghegan

Ady Hewett

Barry Ingram

Ray Maguire

Ian Martin

Joan Martin

Jacque McKenna

Peter McKenna

Mavis Rear

Andy Rogers

Derek Twine

Fiona Walker

**Visitors**

Hugh Pratt

**Staff**

Simon Barnett

Dominic Bates

Paul Butler

Maria Castellina

Angela Charlton

Richard Colwill

**Staff Cont...**

Amy Cook

Janet Davis

Des de Moor

Tom Franklin

Anastasia French

Jennifer Green

Tony Hall

Lucy Humphrey

Iain Johnston

Harriet Lamb

Richard McKinnon

Adrian Morris

Dave Morris

Thomas Moulton

Hazel Robinson

Tamika Russell

John Sadler

Jo Smith

Paul Strong

Caroline Wheeler

Ed Wilson

**Area Helpers**

Joan Allibone

Lucy Blake

Fraser Broadfoot

Dick Brown

Helen Burlingham

Eileen Burroughs

Dave Cavanagh

Bob Clement

Nuala Clements

Ruth Cornish

Vanessa Corrick

Chris Corit

Shirley Corit

Jane Ferguson

Maria Fulton

Mike Fulton

Doris Gangl

David Godfrey

John Gordon

Karen Graves

Ann Harman

Robin Harrison

Gill Heaven

Claire Herbert

Stuart Hughes

Michelle Kelleher

Hazel Lister

### **Area Helpers Cont...**

Pat Lonergan  
Joanne Maltby  
Don Manley  
Susan Manley  
Alice Marten  
Brian Maunder  
Carolyn Maunder  
Liz McGowan  
Lesley Milne  
Nick Morley  
Pete Norris  
Judy Palmer

Jim Parke  
Mike Peel  
Terry Pollard  
Gavin Powell  
Deb Sanders  
Maria Simpson  
Elaine Steane  
Bob Ward  
Joan West  
Barry Wicks  
Laura Wilkinson  
Charles Woolland

Following the re-organisation of Areas in Scotland, the Chairman asked for, and received, Council's acceptance of an interpretation of the Articles of Association as permitting new Areas to appoint delegates. Stuart King and Ann Rankin (Clydesdale to Solway Area), James Lawson and Barry Pottle (North Strathclyde Area), and David Collinson and Hilary Graham (Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute Area) were, therefore Council Members. Council also noted that Michael Parr had been appointed as a Council Member by Leicestershire & Rutland Area, replacing Stan Warren.

## **1 WELCOME BY PAT LONERGAN, OXFORDSHIRE AREA CHAIRMAN**

- 1.1 Pat welcomed General Council to Oxfordshire and, in particular, to Oxford. He said that Oxfordshire had much to offer ramblers—the beech-covered scarp and dip slopes of the Chiltern Hills, the Cotswold Hills, Oxford Vale, with its many attractive villages and market towns, drained by the River Thames and its tributaries, the North Wessex Downs—rolling countryside with few stiles and lots of horses, two national trails, the Thames Path and the Ridgeway, and numerous other named routes such as the Oxford Green Belt Way.
- 1.2 He explained that Oxfordshire Area of the Ramblers comprised eight geographically-based groups and two Area-wide groups, a 20s & 30s group and a Weekend Walkers group. All contributed to a twice-yearly Area walks programme which contained over 350 walks. The walks were also published on the Area website which provided pages for each of the geographically-based groups.
- 1.3 Virtually all the footpath work in the Area was done by a sub-committee, with the redoubtable David Godfrey as secretary and with Group footpath secretaries as members. Most of the groups ran social events; the Vale group ran an annual walk leadership course. Through the work of Brian Maunder, the Area contributed to **South East Walker**. The Area also ran first aid training courses and regularly attended shows such as the White Horse Show. 75th anniversary celebrations included a picnic at Shirburn and walking the length of the Oxfordshire Way.
- 1.4 Pat wished all delegates a good and constructive conference and looked forward to talking to delegates over the weekend and listening to the debates, especially that on HS2.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 2.1 Apologies for Absence were received from David Grosz, Chris Hall and Alan Mattingly (Vice-Presidents), Susan Carter (Board of Trustees), Allan Richards (North East Lancs Area) and Stan Warren (Leicestershire & Rutland Area).

## **3 APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUNTINEERS**

**Tellers:** Dick Brown, Dave Cavanagh, Nuala Clements, Jane Ferguson, Mike Fulton, Claire Herbert, Stuart Hughes, Hazel Lister, Joanne Maltby, Don Manley, Brian Maunder, Lesley Milne, Judy Palmer, Terry Pollard, Rory Scannell, Barry Wicks, Laura Wilkinson.

**Scrutineers:** John Gordon, Lesley Milne, Terry Pollard, Peter Stone, Bob Ward, Laura Wilkinson.

## **4 MINUTES OF GENERAL COUNCIL 2010**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of General Council 2010 as a correct record.

## **5 AGENDA COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 5.1 Council noted a report from the Agenda Committee which had met to consider the resolution and motions. The committee had, at a second meeting, considered the amendments that had been submitted.
- 5.2 In presenting the report to Council, Brian Reader said that in view of the number of motions remitted in 2010 because debating time ran out, the Committee had considered the idea of revising Standing Orders to slightly reduce the maximum time available to speakers. This was not being proposed formally but he urged speakers to try to make their case in less than maximum time if possible. Brian thanked his fellow-committee members for all of their work.

## **6 REPORT ON ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT MOTIONS PASSED OR REMITTED**

- 6.1 John Esslemont (Agenda Committee), referring to the motion on governance and to the remitted motion on democracy, said that there were no recommendations in the governance inquiry report, but merely comments. He hoped there would be a wide-ranging consultation on all aspects of our democratic processes.
- 6.2 Alison Mitchell (Grampian Area) said no money had as yet been provided for Scottish legal action as set out in the response in respect of the motion on rights of way and access work. The Chairman said that it was intended that money would be available for work in Wales and Scotland.
- 6.3 Elizabeth Lawie (Agenda Committee) said that the response in respect of the remitted motion about holding General Council over two full working days was inadequate. Tom Franklin said that more time was being allowed for debate of motions at the present General Council meeting.

- 6.4 Cath MacKay (Vice-President) said that she was concerned that the idea of 'Area Members', not allocated to a specific Group would mean more work for existing hard-pressed volunteers (response to the motion on membership recruitment). Tom Franklin said that this was still subject to trial evaluation
- 6.5 Cath MacKay also expressed concern about the Walk Leaders' Check List and the delicate balance between training walk leaders and their legal liability. Was a better trained, more professional volunteer more likely to be sued? Tom Franklin said that Ramblers' insurance was comprehensive but that it was necessary to demonstrate to the insurers that risk was being properly managed. The message from the insurers was that Ramblers' strategy was the right one—more training and information lowered the risk of a problem arising.
- 6.6 Sue Baxendale (North East Lancashire) expressed disappointment with the slow progress which had been made with her Area's 2009 motion on definitive map anomalies. Adrian Morris (Head of Walking Environment) said that it had been hoped that the motion would be encompassed by the recommendations of the Natural England Stakeholder Working Group. That had not been the case but it remained a live issue and it was the case that many General Council motions took many years to resolve.

## **7 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

- 7.1 In presenting the accounts, Jonathan Kipling gave an overview of the financial situation. By the end of the financial year the accounts showed an operating surplus of £1.1m. The main factors in this recovery were legacies, recovery of outstanding Gift Aid monies, a smaller fall in membership and recruitment than had been budgeted for, and increased donations. The reserves had been restored and there were now plans to spend money on improving systems. The reserves policy would be reviewed. The surplus had allowed for the creation of a designated fund of £250k to cover the shortfall in the assets of the multi-employer pension scheme against its long term liabilities. A further £250k had been set aside to create a legal fund to finance legal cases and participation in public inquiries throughout Great Britain. The Trustees had also given consideration to the implications of the ending of the Get Walking Keep Walking project. Its replacement might be a series of smaller grants.
- 7.2 Paul Butler, Director of Finance and Administration, said that the half year management accounts for 2010–11 showed a £192K surplus so the year-end figures were likely to balance. However, much remained to be done.
- 7.3 Jonathan Kipling thanked the Central Office Finance Team for their hard work and moved the adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts. This was seconded by Ron Moore (Wiltshire & Swindon Area).

### **Questions and comments on the Annual Report and Accounts**

- 7.4 Council noted a paper setting out a number of written questions and their answers on the Report and Accounts (this appears an an Appendix to these minutes). The following additional points were raised.
- 7.5 John Esslemont (Agenda Committee) observed that p.16 of the report should refer to the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and that the terminology relating to protecting the

countryside in the report was not the same as that used in the Memorandum and Articles.

- 7.6 Mike Savage (Devon Area) said that if Areas are expected to publish their Annual Reports and Accounts then the central organisation should do likewise by publishing summaries in **walk** magazine. Tom Franklin said that the annual report and accounts were published on the website; and the Chairman indicated the Board's support for the Devon motion on this subject.
- 7.7 John Andrews (Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside Area) said that when he was an Area Footpath Secretary in England he had received massive support from Central Office. Since the Ramblers was supposed to be protecting rights of way and access throughout Great Britain it was essential that rights of way and access volunteers were given the equivalent level of support by the Ramblers' Scottish Office. How could improvements to access in Scotland be achieved without an access officer? Tom Franklin said this was again a matter of resources: Ramblers' work across Great Britain was under-funded which is why it was essential that more members were recruited.
- 7.8 Jerry Pearlman (Vice-President) asked how much had been spent on legal cases in the last year and how many new legal cases had been initiated. Adrian Morris, Head of Walking Environment, said that approximately £130k had been spent and about half a dozen new cases had been started. Very few cases were being brought to Central Office for action at present.
- 7.9 Barry Pottle (North Strathclyde Area) stressed the need for access staff in Scotland and regretted the loss of those who had been in post before the 2009 cuts. He said that the present operational surplus suggested that the 2009 cuts had been too great. Tom Franklin said that the cuts had been essential at the time but that it was most unlikely they would have to be repeated.
- 7.10 Council agreed to adopt the Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 30 September 2010.

## **8 ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**President:** Julia Bradbury

Proposed by Harry Mycock, seconded by David Thompson

**Past presidents who automatically continue as vice-presidents:**

Andrew Bennett, Chris Hall, Mike Harding, Peter Melchett, Chris Smith, Janet Street-Porter.

On a point-of-order, John Esslemont (Agenda Committee) asked why Floella Benjamin was not included on the list. The Chairman said that Lady Benjamin had indicated that she did not feel able to continue as a Vice President as she was unable to dedicate sufficient time to the position.

## **Vice Presidents**

John Bunting, Geoff Eastwood, John Foster, David Grosz, Jack Ibbott, Richard Lloyd Jones, Cath Mackay, Alan Mattingly, Jerry Pearlman, Malcolm Petyt, John Riddall, David Sharp, Paddy Tipping, John Trevelyan.

Proposed *en bloc* by Owen Plunkett and seconded by Keith Wadd.

All officers were elected overwhelmingly by Council.

## **9 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

The firm of Crowe Clark Whitehill was proposed by Kate Ashbrook, seconded by Robert Peel and agreed by Council.

On a point of order, Brian Reader asked why the newly appointed auditors had approved the accounts for 2009–10. Jonathan Kipling said that the audit requirements had been re-tendered, the old firm had resigned and the new firm had taken over during the course of the year so they were already operating by the end of the financial year.

## **10 ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

There were five candidates for five ordinary Board member places. Candidates with the three highest votes were to serve for a term of three years, the candidate with the fourth highest vote was to serve for two years and the candidate with the fifth highest vote was to serve for one year.

Naseem Akhtar, Andy Rogers and Max Grant were elected to serve for three years, Owen Plunkett for two years and James Lawson for one year.

## **11 AGENDA COMMITTEE**

Six persons had been nominated for the Agenda Committee; however one withdrew before the election took place so no election was necessary. The following five persons would serve on the Agenda Committee:

John Esslemont, Elizabeth Lawie, Eileen Linfoot, Brian Reader and Neil Schofield.

## **12 RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS**

### **Ordinary Resolutions**

#### **[1] Standing Orders Amendment**

The following resolution was proposed by Dominic Pinto of Inner London Area and seconded by Diana Kavanagh of that Area.

That the Standing Orders of Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows. In Standing Orders A4, delete the first sentence and replace with "The Agenda Committee shall consist of 2 members of the Board of Trustees and 5 members elected by the General Council and from the General Council or the prior year's General Council".

The resolution was carried unanimously.

## **Motions**

### **[2] Rights of Way spending cuts**

The following motion was proposed by Chris Thompson of Nottinghamshire Area and seconded by Rod Fillingham of that Area.

This General Council considers that the large-scale cuts in local authority rights of way funding will lead to an increasing deterioration in the quality of rights of way in England and Wales. It urges the Board of Trustees to bring to the government's attention the wide benefits of a well-maintained rights of way network for healthy recreation and tourism, and the damaging effects of a reduction in funding. It further urges the Board of Trustees to organise a high profile national campaign for the protection of rights of way, including, if thought appropriate, a national rally at a central location.

The following amendment was formally moved by Harry Mycock (Board of Trustees) and accepted by the proposers of the motion and by Council:

Add at the end of the motion:

"It also calls upon all Ramblers' Areas in England and Wales to launch local campaigns to protect rights-of-way funding in highway authorities and if required to seek support from staff where needed."

The amended motion reads:

This General Council considers that the large-scale cuts in local authority rights of way funding will lead to an increasing deterioration in the quality of rights of way in England and Wales. It urges the Board of Trustees to bring to the government's attention the wide benefits of a well-maintained rights of way network for healthy recreation and tourism, and the damaging effects of a reduction in funding. It further urges the Board of Trustees to organise a high profile national campaign for the protection of rights of way, including, if thought appropriate, a national rally at a central location. It also calls upon all Ramblers' Areas in England and Wales to launch local campaigns to protect rights-of-way funding in highway authorities and if required to seek support from staff where needed.

The amended motion was carried unanimously.

### **[3] Rights of Way Network**

The following motion was proposed by Malcolm McDonnell of Sussex Area and seconded by Neville Machin of Kent Area:

This General Council believes that for the Ramblers to fully protect the Rights of Way network, it is imperative that sufficient expert staff are always available to scrutinize Highway Authority Orders and similar documents received by the Ramblers in our role as a body that must be consulted, thereby enabling us to take legally appropriate action promptly when required. Therefore it calls upon the Board to embark on a training

programme for existing staff, or to consider recruitment in order that sufficient expert staff are in place as soon as possible.

The following amendment was proposed by Michael Church of West Riding Area and seconded by Jerry Pearlman (Vice President):

After "it is imperative that sufficient expert staff" in second line, insert "at Central Office".

This amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

The following amendment was moved by Kate Ashbrook (Board of Trustees) and accepted by the proposers of the motion and by Council:

In first sentence enter full stop after "available" and delete rest and replace with:  
"Therefore it calls upon the Board to ensure that the number of expert staff working on rights of way reflects the high priority attached to this work by the organisation, and that resources are made available for ongoing staff recruitment, training and development in this area."

The following amendment was proposed by John Newnham of Shropshire Area and seconded by Peter Carr of that Area:

Add at end "Council further calls for the provision of training for Area Footpath Secretaries."

The amendment was carried.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council believes that for the Ramblers to fully protect the Rights of Way network, it is imperative that sufficient expert staff are always available. Therefore it calls upon the Board to ensure that the number of expert staff working on rights of way reflects the high priority attached to this work by the organisation, and that resources are made available for ongoing staff recruitment, training and development in this area. Council further calls for the provision of training for Area Footpath Secretaries.

The amended motion was carried *nem con*.

#### **[4] HS2 Railway Lines**

The following motion (composited from motions submitted by the proposing Areas) was proposed by Michael Bird of Warwickshire Area and seconded by Paul Rhodes of Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes & West Middlesex Area:

This General Council believes that construction of the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) railway line would scar many attractive areas of England, cause a high degree of damage to rights of way, and adversely affect local communities and facilities for outdoor recreation. Council therefore urges the Board of Trustees to join other like-minded bodies in campaigning against HS2.

The following amendment was proposed by John Esslemont (Agenda Committee) and seconded by Graham Rothery of Staffordshire Area:

After "This General Council" insert ", whilst reiterating Ramblers' traditional support for public transport," and replace "campaigning against HS2" by "announcing support for the Charter for High Speed Rail published on 7 April by the Campaign to Protect Rural England". Add at the end "Council further urges the Board to campaign vigorously to reduce the adverse effects on rights of way on foot, and on the beauty of the countryside, of this or any other transport infrastructure development."

The amendment was carried with four abstentions.

As this amendment was carried, two further amendments which had been submitted were ruled inadmissible.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council, whilst reiterating Ramblers' traditional support for public transport, believes that construction of the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) railway line would scar many attractive areas of England, cause a high degree of damage to rights of way, and adversely affect local communities and facilities for outdoor recreation. Council therefore urges the Board of Trustees to join other like-minded bodies in announcing support for the Charter for High Speed Rail published on 7 April by the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Council further urges the Board to campaign vigorously to reduce the adverse effects on rights of way on foot, and on the beauty of the countryside, of this or any other transport infrastructure development.

The amended motion was carried.

## **[5] Consultation on Initiatives**

The following motion was proposed by Peter Carr of Shropshire Area and seconded by Graham Rothery of Staffordshire Area:

Whilst this General Council applauds the stream of initiatives from the Trustees and Ramblers staff, it asks the Board of Trustees where Areas or Groups are required to take action to implement an initiative, then due consideration is given to:

1. Consulting where practicable with representative Areas or Groups first as to the feasibility of implementation, and
2. The timescales required for Areas or Groups to plan and implement the initiative.

The following composited amendment was proposed by David Gibson of West Riding Area and seconded by Jill Fysh of Avon Area:

At end of motion add:

"3. Initiatives and consultations should be published and clearly flagged up on the Ramblers website, with Area and Group Chairmen and Secretaries being notified by e-mail or letter."

The amendment was carried unanimously.

The following amendment was proposed by Jim Scott of Dorset Area and seconded by Jan Wardell of that Area:

To add point 3 (or if appropriate 4):  
“Initiatives and communications thereof should be concise and comprehensible.”

The amendment was carried unanimously.

The amended motion reads:

Whilst this General Council applauds the stream of initiatives from the Trustees and Ramblers staff, it asks the Board of Trustees where Areas or Groups are required to take action to implement an initiative, then due consideration is given to:

1. Consulting where practicable with representative Areas or Groups first as to the feasibility of implementation, and
2. The timescales required for Areas or Groups to plan and implement the initiative
3. Initiatives and consultations should be published and clearly flagged up on the Ramblers website, with Area and Group Chairmen and Secretaries being notified by e-mail or letter.
4. Initiatives and communications thereof should be concise and comprehensible.

The amended motion was carried unanimously.

#### **[6] Walk Leader’s Check List**

The following motion was proposed by Chris Bush of East Yorkshire & Derwent Area and seconded by Len Atkinson of that Area:

This General Council is concerned that the complexity of the Walk Leader’s Check List may deter current and potential new walk leaders and, therefore calls on the Board of Trustees to substitute a simplified version limited to basic essential recommendations, supplemented, where appropriate, by separate documents giving codes of best practice for particular situations, such as walks in remote or mountainous areas and walks designed for children or vulnerable adults.

The Chairman called for the tellers. The motion was lost. There were 33 votes in favour of the motion and 77 against with 15 abstentions.

#### **[7] Get Walking Keep Walking**

The following motion was proposed by John Ireland of Greater Manchester & High Peak Area and seconded by Gloria Gaffney of that Area:

General Council urges the Board of Trustees to ensure that the success of the Get Walking Keep Walking initiative is embedded in future Ramblers activities and programmes so that:

- We will be able to recruit new members through this activity
- We return to our roots of providing access for those whose lives are such that they are not able to readily access walking and all its pleasures because of economic, social, cultural or other obstacles.

The following amendment was proposed by John Ireland of Greater Manchester & High Peak Area and Brian Reader (Agenda Committee):

Replace “activities” in the first sentence with “activity”. Add a third bullet point: “We maximise opportunities to secure external funds to broaden the network of local Ramblers co-ordinators.”

The amendment was carried *nem con*, with eight abstentions.

The following amendment was proposed by Jill Fysh of Avon Area and seconded by Ruth Ginever of that Area:

Delete all from “ensure” in the first line and replace with: “examine the evaluations of the get Walking Keep Walking initiative, so that its costs and benefits are reflected in future activities. The Ramblers should continue to seek to attract external funding to promote walking among those unable to access its pleasures because of economic, social, cultural or other obstacles.”

This amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

The amended motion reads:

General Council urges the Board of Trustees to ensure that the success of the Get Walking Keep Walking initiative is embedded in future Ramblers activity and programmes so that:

- We will be able to recruit new members through this activity
- We return to our roots of providing access for those whose lives are such that they are not able to readily access walking and all its pleasures because of economic, social, cultural or other obstacles.
- We maximise opportunities to secure external funds to broaden the network of local Ramblers co-ordinators.

The amended motion was carried overwhelmingly.

## **[8] Regional Structures**

The following motion was proposed by Dominic Pinto of Inner London Area and seconded by Graham Butler of Surrey Area.

This General Council, recognising that there is a need for the Rambler’s regional structures to be, wherever possible, coterminous with strategic local authority boundaries and taking cognisance of the possibility that Ramblers’ Central Office will move out of London in the near future, calls upon the Board of Trustees to undertake a re-appraisal of Area structures within the geographical area covered by the Greater London Authority, including consulting with the existing Areas, and to report their findings and subsequent recommendations to the Ramblers 2012 General Council for consideration.

The motion was carried.

## **[9] Abandoned proposal of selling off/leasing Forestry Land**

Council agreed to debate revised wording submitted for their original motion by Hampshire Area (and a consequential revision to an amendment submitted by the Board of Trustees) even though, by an oversight, the revised wording had not been submitted to the Agenda Committee. The following motion was proposed by Owen Plunkett (Board of Trustees) on behalf of Hampshire Area and seconded by Stuart Parker of Lincolnshire Area:

This General Council welcomes the decision of the Government to abandon its proposals for the sell off or leasing of Forestry Land. Keeping this land in public ownership will provide the best protection to both Rights of Way and Access. We urge the Board of Trustees to adopt a strong policy of opposition to any future proposals for the sale or lease of Forestry Land. In the event of our campaign to halt the sale being unsuccessful, we believe that the Ramblers five key tests should be applied, namely:

- Public access and amenities, such as recreational facilities, are maintained and enhanced,
- Public rights of way, access land and other amenities are properly managed,
- No sale or transfer is completed until the purchaser has committed to preserving and maintaining access,
- Where access is currently not secured in law, this is remedied through CROW Act dedication,
- The local community is consulted and given the opportunity to play a full and active part in woodland management, including first-refusal on purchase.

Council urges the Board of Trustees to highlight to Government the additional public benefits that are delivered by the Forestry Commission on its estate in England, and to lobby for sufficient funding for this best practice to continue.

The following amendment was proposed by Harry Mycock on behalf of the Board of Trustees and seconded by Naseem Akhtar of the Board:

In opening paragraph, delete text after “This General Council welcomes the decision of the Government to” and replace with: “halt its consultation on ‘the future of the public forest estate in England’, and notes the Chief Executive has been appointed to the independent panel that will make recommendations on forestry policy for England. Council believes that the Ramblers five key tests for forestry land should be used when considering any future proposals for sale:”

Retain the five tests from substantive motion, and then insert: “If all these tests are not met, the Ramblers should oppose the sale or lease of publicly-owned land.” Retain closing sentence of substantive motion.

The Chairman called for the tellers. The amendment was carried. There were 89 votes in favour of the amendment and 36 against with 3 abstentions.

As this amendment was carried, two further amendments which had been submitted were ruled inadmissible.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council welcomes the decision of the Government to halt its consultation on ‘the future of the public forest estate in England’, and notes the Chief Executive has been appointed to the independent panel that will make recommendations on forestry policy for England. Council believes that the Ramblers five key tests for forestry land should be used when considering any future proposals for sale:

- Public access and amenities, such as recreational facilities, are maintained and enhanced,
- Public rights of way, access land and other amenities are properly managed,
- No sale or transfer is completed until the purchaser has committed to preserving and maintaining access,
- Where access is currently not secured in law, this is remedied through CROW Act dedication,
- The local community is consulted and given the opportunity to play a full and active part in woodland management, including first-refusal on purchase.

If all these tests are not met, the Ramblers should oppose the sale or lease of publicly-owned land. Council urges the Board of Trustees to highlight to Government the additional public benefits that are delivered by the Forestry Commission on its estate in England, and to lobby for sufficient funding for this best practice to continue.

The amended motion was carried overwhelmingly.

#### **[10] Campaign Policy Progress**

The following motion was proposed by David Harvey of Essex Area and seconded (as amended, see below) by John Esslemont (Agenda Committee and Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex Area):

This General Council is concerned at the lack of information on progress with the Campaign Policy adopted by General Council in 2010 regarding gaining access to woodland, river banks and canals subject to exclusions of domestic areas. Given the newly perceived threat to such areas by the possible sale of Forestry Commission assets, this Council urges the Trustees to take positive action forthwith.

The following amendment, submitted by the proposer was accepted by Council:

Replace the start of the second sentence “Given the newly perceived threat to such areas by the possible” by “To benefit from the publicity generated for woodland access by the recently threatened”.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council is concerned at the lack of information on progress with the Campaign Policy adopted by General Council in 2010 regarding gaining access to woodland, river banks and canals subject to exclusions of domestic areas. To benefit from the publicity generated for woodland access by the recently threatened sale of Forestry Commission assets, this Council urges the Trustees to take positive action forthwith.

The amended motion was carried.

**[11] Government Guidelines on path structures**

The following motion was proposed by Phil Escritt of Hertfordshire & North Middlesex Area and seconded by David Smith of that Area.

This General Council welcomes the issuing of government guidelines on the authorisation of path structures by local authorities, with emphasis on the least restrictive option. Recognising that few local authorities yet follow this guidance fully, Council asks the Board of Trustees to ensure that all our members are made aware of its key features and that in particular our footpath secretaries are given specific guidance and encouraged to assist their authorities in implementing it.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

**[12] Direct Debit Incentive**

The following motion was proposed Elizabeth Lawie (Agenda Committee) on behalf of North Strathclyde Area and seconded by James Lawson of that Area.

This General Council notes that there has been introduced an incentive for new members who join at the full rate by direct debit - £10 off individual and joint membership for the first year. However, it deplors the fact that concessionary rates paid by direct debit will not qualify for the discount. It calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that, as soon as practicable, a similar incentive is provided for concessionary rate members. It further calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that any future incentives do not discriminate against concessionary rate members.

The motion was lost.

**[13] Equestrian establishments causing footpath problems**

The following motion was proposed by Max Grant of North Wales Area and seconded by Denis McAteer of that Area.

This General Council urges the Board of Trustees to cause guidance to be developed and issued to volunteers, covering law, strategy and tactics relevant to footpath problems caused by equestrian establishments.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

**[14] Usage Level of Access Land**

The following motion was proposed by David Kelly of Mid Lancashire Area and seconded by Kevin Matthews of that Area:

This General Council is concerned about the continuing low level of usage of access land. The main reason why many walkers are reluctant to use access land is because they do not know where the access points are located; this is both to gain access to access land and within access land. Some local authorities have attempted to provide publicity about access points but this is frequently of poor quality. In many other places the publicity about access points is non-existent. Therefore the publicity on how to use

access land needs to be improved, with ideally the access points being shown on OS 1:25,000 maps. General Council recommends that the Board of Trustees campaigns on this issue.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

### **[15] Rights of Way Network**

The following motion as proposed by Michael Church of West Riding Area and seconded by David Gibson of that Area:

This General Council notes with approval the inclusion of Rights of Way as a key priority in the Business Plan for 2011/12 and calls for Rights of Way to have high priority in the association's future Business Plans until such time as the entire Rights of Way network in England and Wales is legally compliant.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

### **[16] Multi-User Paths**

The following motion was proposed by Maggie Thomas of Greater Gwent Area and seconded (as amended, see below) by Kate Ashbrook (Board of Trustees):

This General Council believes that all multi-user paths on OS maps should be defined differently from cycle paths, including those which form part of a national cycle network route. General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to negotiate with the Ordnance Survey.

The following amendment submitted by Keith Wadd (Board of Trustees) was accepted by the proposers of the motion and by Council:

Amend motion to read:

"This General Council believes that many multi-user/shared use paths which are not bridleways, restricted byways, or byways open to all traffic are currently shown misleadingly on OS maps as 'traffic free routes'. Council believes that these paths, including those which form part of the national cycle network, should be defined more accurately, with an accompanying explanation as to which classes of user are allowed on them. General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to negotiate with the Ordnance Survey."

The amended motion was carried overwhelmingly.

### **[17] Annual Accounts Publicity**

The following motion was proposed by Nick Savage of Devon Area and seconded by James Baldwin of that Area:

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to publish a summary of the Ramblers annual accounts in Walk magazine.

The motion was carried unanimously.

### **13 VENUE FOR GENERAL COUNCIL IN 2012**

13.1 General Council 2012 would take place at Leicester University, Leicester.

### **14 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

- 14.1 In bringing General Council to a close the Chairman congratulated a number of delegates whose long-service had been drawn to his attention: Geoff Eastwood (Vice-President) had been attending Council since 1972, Brian Reader since 1975 and Kate Ashbrook since 1981. If there were others with similar service he would hope to pay tribute to them next year. He also thanked those who had retired or resigned from the Board of Trustees over the past year—Susan Carter, Tom Fisher, Gus Halfhide, Helen Johns, Helen Lloyd Jones and Harry Mycock. All had made a positive contribution to the Board's work.
- 14.2 Thanks were also due to the staff of Keble College, especially those who had assisted with the sound system, to Oxfordshire Area for all of their work as hosts, in particular Peter Stone, Pat Lonergan, members of the 20s-30s Group and the jazz band, and to Ramblers' staff, led as usual by Jo Smith, for their contribution to the smooth running of the event.
- 14.3 The key issue for Council and for the coming year was membership and how to increase it. Derek Twine, Chief Executive of the Scout Association, had given an inspirational talk about his organisation's recovery from a situation of declining membership but their recovery had taken ten years, so Ramblers needed to acknowledge that the process of change and recovery could be a long one. In the mean time, footpath and access work in all three countries would continue. This work was in the Ramblers' DNA and would never be left behind. £250k had been set aside as a legal fund to support this work although going to court was expensive and unpredictable so would never be the first option. However, it would always remain an option for appropriate cases.
- 14.2 Britain was changing and the Scouts had responded to those changes and was seen to do so. Their reward had been an increase in membership. The membership question was a big challenge to all older organisations but the Board was aware of this and was already considering the best way forward. The Get Walking Keep Walking project was part of the response and the election of Naseem Akhtar, who had come to Ramblers from Get Walking Keep Walking, was very heartening.
- 14.3 The Chairman concluded by saying that General Council had been an excellent weekend in pleasant surroundings. He looked forward to meeting friends and colleagues again for General Council 2012 in Leicester.
- 14.4 The Chairman's remarks were greeted with applause. Kate Ashbrook (Board of Trustees) thanked the Chairman for steering Council through its meeting and his leadership throughout the year.

**THIS ENDED THE BUSINESS**