

GENERAL COUNCIL 2011
RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS AS CARRIED (FOR COMPLETENESS, THE MOTIONS WHICH WERE LOST ARE ALSO SHOWN HERE)

Ordinary Resolutions

[1] Standing Orders Amendment

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".

Motions

[2] Rights of Way spending cuts

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.

[3] Rights of Way Network

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.

[4] HS2 Railway Lines

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.

[5] Consultation on Initiatives

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.

[6] Walk Leader's Check List

[THIS MOTION WAS LOST]

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.

[7] Get Walking Keep Walking

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.

[8] Regional Structures

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.

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

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.

[10] Campaign Policy Progress

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.

[11] Government Guidelines on path structures

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.

**[12] Direct Debit Incentive
[THIS MOTION WAS LOST]**

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 deplores 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.

[13] Equestrian establishments causing footpath problems

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.

[14] Usage Level of Access Land

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.

[15] Rights of Way Network

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.

[16] Multi-User Paths

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.

[17] Annual Accounts Publicity

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