

2006 RED ROPE AGM MINUTES - 30.9.06 - EDALE

Chairs: Colin Knowles (1st half), Jenny Patient (2nd half)
Apologies: Dave Jefferies, Jan Lancaster, Uta Praekelt, Mark Wallis,
37 members present. (Quorate)
Minutes by Pat Durrant & Janet Saunders

Minutes of 2005 AGM accepted nem con.

Meeting commenced: 3:30 pm.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

National Secretaries: (Janet Saunders, Pat Durrant) (attached)

Janet S fed back to the meeting that the Bristol motion had been reviewed over the past year by the NC, (resulting in an increase of charges finally published) – there was some dispute over whether last year's motion committed the NC to definitely change overnight charges or only review them: it was agreed that a 'review' had been required.

Publicity officer's (Jan Lancaster) Report was also read out (attached)

Frank Mackay asked whether trades unions had been approached for publicity this year. He was referred to the publicity officer's report, which detailed how this had been done. The chair asked for a show of hands re. the question posed in the publicity report - whether the people present at the meeting would themselves use car stickers advertising Red Rope – 2/3 meeting voted yes.

Treasurer's Report (Jenny Patient): (attached)

Charlie Fisher asked if MIS and Bulletin were stabilised at 7 and 2 per annum and if this saved money. Treasurer replied that the electronic MIS would and is saving money. Nikki Finch said that she is getting both and JP informed her that this was an interim problem. (while the process was being ironed out).
Question re. Should we spend some of the action fund? Colin Knowles made the point that any requests should be made formally through the NC or via a motion at an AGM.
JP encouraged new membership recruitment to improve club finances.

Trip Treasurer (Humphrey Southall), (National Trips Report by Arthur Howarth: (attached)

Charlie Fisher queried the petrol reimbursement. Some discussion and questions took place that were replied to by Arthur and Humphrey (satisfying the questioners).

Contact & Information Secretary (Uta Praekelt apologies for absence):

Janet Saunders reported that Uta said she received only one or two enquiries a month. However JS said it is still important to have a central contact point for national enquiries.

Membership Secretary (Gill Platt): (attached)

Gill reported that friends and family are the biggest source of membership – so perhaps it was not worth the £150 spent on press and trade union publications advertising. The membership subs price rise last November had had no effect on membership numbers- in fact more H bands paying the highest fee had joined this year)

Archivist (Andy Bateman): the archive stock is still growing.

Bulletin Editor (Anna Buehring): (absent)

There was a unanimous Vote of Thanks to Anna for her excellent work in producing three Bulletins this year.

MIS Editor (apologies for absence).

In his absence, Mark sent a plea for more people to come forward to take the MIS electronically. Show of hands was in favour of NC encouraging this more 'aggressively'. (Reassurances were given that the Bulletin remains posted and the MIS will still be posted to anyone who does not opt into the electronic one.) Mark Wallis was congratulated from the Chair for his steady and reliable production of the MIS.

IT Report (Dave Jefferies absent): attached

No questions.

BMC Rep and Training Officer (Nikki Finch):

Nikki reported that she had coordinated no training activities. She also reported a BMC request for more subscriptions (and some activity in the BMC to freeze subscriptions for smaller clubs). Nikki - *Under the BMC section it states that I mentioned the BMC wanted more subscriptions, however all I said was that the BMC were looking into the possibility of reducing the subscription per member for smaller clubs.*

Chair suggested the NC review the post of training officer in the light of whether it was still needed.

Alpine Activities Coordinator (Andrew Wordsley):

Andrew reported that an informal trip had taken place successfully this summer and another may be informally organized.

Access & Conservation (Charlie Fisher):

Charlie said he had missed a deadline for one access activity re. Scottish turbines and had not done any other activities for Access. He also drew the club's attention to Nick Kemp and Mark (?)'s recently published book in defence of Scottish wilderness places, urging us to buy it.

Gear Coordinator & Hut Officer (Ian Muir absent):

It was suggested the NC review the need for both of these posts

NATIONAL COMMITTEE Elections:

National Secretaries	Janet Saunders/Pat Durrant
National Treasurer	Jenny Patient
National Trips Treasurer	Humphrey Southall
National Trips Secretary	Arthur Howarth
Contact & Info. Sec.	Uta Praekelt
Membership Sec.	Gill Platt
Bulletin Editor	Anna Buehring
MIS Editor	Mark Wallis
IT Officer	Dave Jeffries
BMC Rep	Nikki Finch
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	Vacant
Training Coordinator	Vacant – to review the post
Ramblers' Rep	Vacant
Publicity Officer	Vacant
Access & Conservation	Vacant
Archivist	Andy Bateman
Gear Coordinator	Ian Muir? – to review the post
Hut Officer	Ian Muir? – to review the post
Alpine Activities Coordinator	Andrew Wordsley

RESOLUTIONS

9 resolutions were tabled. The resolutions, debates and outcome are reported in the order that they were discussed at the meeting.

Motion 9. NC: Child Protection

This AGM adopts the child protection policy.

Discussion

This was introduced by Gill Cox. The motion had been circulated prior to the meeting via the Bulletin. Pauline Ansty queried the age of 'children' within the policy. This was confirmed as under 18. It was pointed out there would need to be changes to this effect on the booking form. After considerable discussion, re. whether the policy would serve the purpose of protecting children, it was pointed out by several people that it nevertheless provided guidelines for trip organisers and members in general and also an emergency NSPCC number.

The motion went to a vote and was carried, 1 against.

Motion 1. NC: Regional support (constitutional amendment)

i) This AGM notes that:

- a) The current regional support mechanism as set out in paragraph H(8) of the constitution is unclear.
- b) The current mechanism includes support proportional to the number of Band A and B members in the region, which does not accurately reflect the main way that Regions are likely to lose money through running low-banded trips.

ii) This AGM believes that:

- a) Red Rope's aims include ensuring that the club runs as many walking and climbing trips and activities as possible, that these are organised within the club rules, and that they maximise participation and enjoyment by all members.
- b) The club's financial mechanisms should be geared to meeting the aims listed in (ii)(a), whilst ensuring the overall financial health of the club and encouraging careful financial management of trips and activities.
- c) The regional support mechanism should recompense Regions where their trip banding was lower than average.
- d) The regional support mechanism should also offer support with administrative costs to regions that request this, in cases where trip banding is at or below average.
- e) The National Committee may at its discretion make further payments or loans to Regions, outside of the regional support mechanism, where there are agreed to be exceptional circumstances.

iii) This AGM resolves that Paragraph H(8) is deleted from the constitution and replaced by the following new paragraph H(8):

"I) Up to 10% of membership fees (the 'National Pool') may be distributed annually as Regional Support. Any Region requesting support from National funds shall notify the National Treasurer by the end of the club's financial year, and provide details as requested of the Region's bank account, income and expenditure.

II) A Region is eligible for Regional Support payments if their trip income for the year does not exceed the amount it would have reached at Band E rates. Regional Support payments shall be made one month after the end of the club's financial year and shall be in the form of:

- a) A payment per member to assist with regional administration costs (at a rate to be determined by the National Committee).
- b) A reimbursement of the amount by which the Region's actual trip income fell short of the amount it would have reached at Band E rates.

III) To obtain these payments, the Region must supply the National Treasurer with a completed trip treasurer form for each trip run by the Region during the financial year, including the following information:

- The income from overnight charges
- The income from transport charges
- The total number of person-nights covered by the overnight charge income
- The total number of person-miles covered by the transport charge income

IV) In the event that the National Pool is insufficient to pay that year's claims for Regional Support, payment will be made to Regions pro-rata to their entitlement.

V) Unused National Pool funds may be carried over to the next year's National Pool, or absorbed into general funds at the discretion of the National Committee.

VI) The National Committee may, at its discretion, make further payments or loans to Regions, outside of the regional support mechanism, where there are agreed to be exceptional circumstances necessitating this."

Discussion

Jenny Patient introduced the motion. Adrian O'Connor queried the difference between regional financial years and National financial years. The National Treasurer answered that it was the National finance year that was referred to in the motion as "the club's financial year"

The motion suggested a replacement for paragraph H(8). An amendment was proposed to retain the following sentence from paragraph H(8) in the constitution:

"However, regions in surplus may decline their share and contribute additionally"

Amendment - carried nem con

Amended motion - carried nem con

Motion 2. London : Subscription rates

'This AGM agrees to freeze Red Rope subscription rates at current levels at least until AGM 2007.'

Discussion

This was clarified as relating to freezing the rates at the level as set in November 2005. Colin Knowles moved the motion be not put, seconded Andy Bateman, referring to the absence of any London members who could speak to the motion, and the unlikelihood that the subs would be raised in the coming year.

The meeting then voted on the proposal that this motion be not put.

Not put: Carried nem con

Motion 3. London: BMC affiliation reappraisal

'This AGM notes the recent increases in the cost of affiliation to the British Mountaineering Council and is concerned at the implications for Red Rope membership rates. The National Committee is instructed to review the pros and cons of affiliation to the BMC and report to members by AGM 2007.'

Discussion

No-one from London spoke for the motion. Humphrey Southall explained that several years ago an assessment had been done of what it would cost the club to get the same benefits currently gained through BMC affiliation, by other routes. This was a substantial piece of work, which relied upon there being someone willing to undertake it as a specific piece of work. Charlie strongly supported this point and suggested that the motion should not stand. Andrew Worsley said that hut-booking would become near impossible if the club disaffiliated and therefore he felt that the investigation would be a waste of time. Nicky Finch said that as BMC Rep she felt it was foolish to even consider getting insurance from another source in Britain.

The motion was put to a vote

Motion Rejected.

Motion 4. NC: Early booking discount of 10% for National trips

This AGM notes that:

National trips are generally arranged in advance, often a year or more. However people frequently book late and the trip organiser has to consider cancelling the booking, or taking a huge risk with Red Rope funds. Three months is the normal deadline for refunds to the hut-booker if the hut has to be cancelled.

In the case of regional trips, it is likely that regions have a better idea of whether they can fill a hut from regional members and greater flexibility may be needed.

This AGM resolves that:

- a) National trips will offer an early booking discount of 10% on bookings made 3 months in advance – so long as the trip is advertised in time for this to occur.
- b) Regional trips may *choose* whether to offer the 10% discount, and if so, to declare their own deadline when the trip is advertised.

Discussion

The motion was introduced by Humphrey Southall, who emphasised the advantages of getting national trips booked early. There were no speakers against the motion.

Carried nem con

Motion 5. NC: Red Rope Membership (Additional clause to be added to the constitution)

This AGM notes that: Although Red Rope encourages the involvement of families on walks and trips, paid-up membership of Red Rope is normally for persons of adult age –i.e. we do not have a 'junior membership' category (unlike some other clubs).

The NC proposes that a clause be added to the constitution to clarify this.

“Red Rope is a club open to persons aged 18 and over. “

Discussion

A debate took place over this motion. Andy Bateman made the point that this seemed disrespectful to people under 18, and that we should not discourage people under 18 from joining. Points were also made about our BMC insurance position that if we have 'junior' members we have to accept the BMC child protection policy. There was some confusion raised concerning the age of legal responsibility and responsibility in the hills. Barbara Segal

proposed that the motion be thrown back to NC to discuss the ramifications more fully. The NC noted the problem this posed for the CP Policy and the need to review the implications.

Proposal to throw this back to NC for discussion – voted on and carried

Motion 6. Bristol & South West: Trip Finance

This AGM welcomes the rise in overnight trip charges but believes that even higher rates are required to sustain the club on a sound footing over the next three years.

Discussion

Colin Knowles spoke in support of the motion. He mentioned the increasing charges at huts to finance increased comfort and insurance, and pointed out that even campsites were now charging £7 per night in some places.

Humphrey Southall spoke against the motion, pointing out the effects of increased rates on the costs of National Trips. Several persons spoke in favour of the motion, re. the increasing expectations of comfort, and food tastes and requirements for a club with an older age-group than latterly. Andy Bateman suggested having different sets of rates per types of trip.

The motion was put to a vote.

Carried 13 in favour, 8 against.

Motion 7: Finance Motion.

Submitted by Charlie Fisher (North East Region) Seconder: Humphrey Southall

This AGM notes that over a number of years, the ratio of charges applied between top and bottom bands has varied considerably.

a) This ratio should be fixed so as to provide the NC with broad guidance when in future recalculating charges, taking into account the effects of rounding.

b) This ratio shall be set at the current level, namely a ratio of 4:1.'

Constitution/policy: Policy H1, General principles, would need to change.

Discussion

Charlie Fisher spoke in support of the motion. The motion was taken in two parts:

Part a – the ratio should be fixed - carried

Humphrey Southall suggested that if there was to be a principle we should state what it is in the constitution. Colin Knowles and Barbara Segal both pointed out that incomes had changed considerably over recent years and that 'banding' needed looking at. It was proposed that the level of the ratio be referred back to the NC to consider.

Part b – Proposal that the level of the ratio be referred to NC to sort out – carried.

Motion 8: Finance Motion

Submitted by Charlie Fisher (North East Region) Seconder: Humphrey Southall

This AGM notes that :

The distinction between formal RR trips and informal trips has recently become blurred. We need to be more explicit about mechanisms regarding overnight and transport charges.

a) In accordance with the principles of the club in applying charges consistently across all trips, this AGM supports the principle that all Red Rope trips will maintain the same spread of charges for all participants. Regions, and indeed national trips, are free to vary either transport or overnight charges as needs dictate, provided that the revised charges are in proportion to the standard charges.

Constitution/policy: Policy H6 b and c will need to change.

***Note:** this in no way prevents members acting privately to do their own thing at home or abroad, but in conjunction with existing policy, means that trips that do not adhere to the proportionality cannot be advertised in club publications.*

Discussion

Charlie Fisher spoke in support of the motion. Debate took place regarding the legitimacy of Regions being able to vary rates while keeping to the proportions. This was regarded by some as opening the doors to a situation where no-one would be able to know what a trip was going to cost in advance. Andrew Worsley spoke in relation to the Alps trip the previous year, which had caused great disapproval because it attempted to do something similar. Barbara Segal suggested the word 'increase' replace the word 'vary' in paragraph (a). At this point it became clear that the Motion meant different things to different people, and could be unworkable.

The chair suggested the motion be withdrawn if the proposer was willing, and the issue remitted back to NC. This was agreed.

AOB

Nicky Finch mentioned the forthcoming and current protests at Faslane, which she urged people to get involved with or give support to.

*****Meeting closed 7.15 pm.*****