

2007 RED ROPE AGM MINUTES **– 6 October 2007 – GRADBACH**

Present: 43 Members in all (as per list)
(Quorate)

Apologies: Angela Benham, Arthur
Howarth

Minutes taken by Jan Lancaster, typed up
by Janet Saunders

Meeting commenced 3:00 pm

Pat Durrant introduced the meeting – tea
break at 5 pm, due to end at 7 pm

Meeting elected unanimously Pat Durrant
(1st half) and Colin Knowles (2nd half) as
Chairpersons of the meeting.

Minutes of 2006 AGM 30/9/07 accepted
unanimously.

Officer Reports:

National Secretaries: Janet Saunders
spoke to this (Report attached) – no
questions were raised.

Membership Secretary: Pat Durrant
(Report attached) Pat commented that
numbers are dropping although this is
similar to many other walking/climbing
groups. – no questions were raised.

Admin Treasurer: Jenny Patient (Report
attached) Jenny explained she had been
treasurer for 3 years and this year there
was a small profit, she was now standing
down.

Question from Hugh Wallis (London) as to
who we were affiliated to: Answer: BMC /
MC of S / Ramblers Association / Open
Spaces Society

National Trips Sec /Treasurer (Report
Attached) Humphrey Southall spoke to
both, as Arthur had sent apologies. Club
has broken even this year. There is less
variation of spending on food. Two
account tables in the Report, the National
Trips Bank Account, and a summary of the
National Trips treasurer forms. Only 3 trips
are coming up this year, and Arthur wishes
to step down. Humphrey will stay on for
one year.

Question: Jules (Bristol) Why two
treasurers? Answer: Club needs an
analysis of National Trips spending
account. There is a logical split to make
two smaller jobs rather than one large one.

IT Officer: Dave Jefferies (verbal report)
Dave reported his main job consisted of
looking after the website and email lists.
This year club has further progressed
sending out MIS by email and this is much
cheaper. There is a big problem of spam,
mainly to the NC and National Sec. All
addresses are “encoded” to make it
difficult. Apart from that is not much more
we can do. Membership list is on an
Access Database. Dave made the point
that many jobs do need web access and
some IT skills. It was not just the IT Officer
who needed this. He also said that some
of the job descriptions will need to be
updated to reflect this.

*Action: add IT basic ability and reasonable
internet access into job descriptions.*

Question: Dermot (London) Do you need
to be a Red Rope member to be on one of
the mailing lists? Answer: The email
discussion lists are run by the regions.
They may need to make them ‘closed’
lists. (*Added by minute-typer: i.e. London
is a closed list*)

Ramblers Rep: Dave Barnes’ Report
attached, not present. (*see also later
Access discussion*)

Training: Steve Wright (Report attached)
Steve said he has been looking at
possibility of ‘external’ training on a
National trip (not yet booked). Skill sharing
is good but haphazard, so he is looking
into how to make it more organised.

Question: Colin Knowles (Bristol) Am
concerned about skill levels. The cost of
training is expensive and I am supportive
of the idea of internal training.

Question: Gerry Matthews (London) Has
attended a Jonathan Conville winter skills
course and urged others to take up this
option – the Jonathan Conville trust paid,
and G had to find her travel costs only.

Archivist: Andy Bateman – there is more
than there was.

MIS Editor: Mark Wallis - business as usual.

Comment: Colin Knowles (Bristol)
Thanked Mark. The club would fail without the MIS. Supported the electronic communication.

Bulletin: No Editor at present – Janet Saunders put the last Bulletin together. The MIS is sent out once a month, on even months by post and on every month electronically.
Dave confirmed that the Bulletin is also put on the web when possible. (*Note. MIS is not*)

Question: Dot (London) no bookings should be taken before it is in the MIS.
Bob Steele (London) There is an issue re. when to accept bookings.
Pauline (London) a trip could be fully booked before the paper MIS arrives
Dave confirmed that bookings should only be accepted after the paper version is received.
Julian (Bristol) said people were not aware of the email facility.
Janet (National Sec) At least one article had appeared in Bulletin about it. (NB. And others in the paper MIS itself, every month.)
Jenny (Treasurer) said the email list should be re-validated against membership list – Dave said he had recently done that.

BMC: Nikki Finch not present.

MC of S: Helen Todd not present – in fact no Scottish members present.

Alpine Rep: Andrew Worsley not present.

Colin Knowles: Called for Thanks to all the NC for their hard work over the past years.

Re-election of officers.

All those standing again were elected:
Plus the following:

Gear & Equipment – already at Adrian O'Connor's

Hut Officer - Debate about hut officer necessity – Chris nominated Colin Knowles

National Secretary: Really helps to have a job-share – can delegate. Janet explained the position in detail.- no-one elected (see later)

Admin Treasurer – no-one elected (see later)

National Trips Sec: Becky Bates seconded by Jan Lancaster

National Trips Treasurer: John Dickie, seconded by Jan Lancaster, Colin K proposed job share of Treasurer post with Humphrey.

Publicity: Jan Lancaster and Dave J spoke to the idea of web-based publicity. No officer elected.

Bulletin: Dave Symonds elected.

BMC: Colin Knowles suggested that Steve Marriott (Bristol) be approached, who was already active in BMC.

Note: Later on, Pravin Patel volunteered for this post. Colin has been made aware of this.

Access & conservation – Debate as to whether this should be merged with Ramblers, as suggested in Ramblers Rep report.

Malcolm Donne suggested a National RedRope Conservation weekend.
Don (London) asked if we sent any reps to Ramblers National Council – Answer – No, it has been too expensive. Suggested we can and should send someone.
Gill Cox said West Midlands does a conservation weekend. Dave J said regions could do this if they wanted.

Summing up elections:

Dave J spoke passionately about posts of Nat Sec and Treasurer. Andy Bateman said club had been here before and resolved the problem. Dot asked what would happen. Humphrey said the two positions were vital and should be covered.

Jenny P said she could cover Treasurer as a transitional post.

Barbara Segal – next meeting of NC is in Bristol and she will co-ordinate that.

Dave J – suggested we look at this again later in the meeting.

Motions

Motion 1 Hut fund

Proposed by Sheffield Region AGM

Given that there is no realistic prospect of buying our own hut, we ask that:

a) The NC looks at suitable alternative uses for the hut fund which should be in the spirit of the contributions made to the fund.

b) The hut fund should be closed for new contributions.

Submitted by Dave Jefferies on behalf of Sheffield Region

Debate

Dave J addressed the motion. There is £5200 in the hut fund. Donations to the hut fund are still continuing. Don (London) seconded Dave's speech.

Adrian O'Connor: would like to be able to use it more imaginatively. If we close the fund, we might be closing the door on ourselves. Discussion ensued.

Dave J summed up: Happy for the second part to be amended – example of an idea was to share with another club. Suggested Hut fund not to be closed but to be closed to new contributions. NC to look at alternatives.

NB. Addition by Janet S (typing) – Andy Bullivant spoke about the history of the fund, having been given donations from wills, and likelihood that other members' wills may contain future donations to the fund – it would therefore be wrong to close it.

Vote on Part A – all in favour – carried
Vote on Part B: Failed – the hut fund is not closed.

Motion 2 – Trip Charges and applying a 'multiplier'. (Policy amendment)

Proposed by National Committee

(i) This AGM notes that:

(a) The NC reports good feedback from the experimental trips where a multiplier was applied to nightly rates.

(b) The NC proposes that the practise is formalised, via the insertion of two new paragraphs in the Constitution.

(ii) This AGM resolves that

Three new paragraphs be inserted in Section H (6) Club finance / Trip charges above existing paragraph (a), these new paragraphs to read as follows:

(a) The nightly charge is set by the NC and is known as the 'standard' nightly charge.

(b) In cases where accommodation is beyond the reach of the standard nightly rates, and there is no cheaper option suitable, regions may apply a multiplier to the 'standard' nightly rate of any variable from 1 to 2 times. The cost must be advertised in the MIS, i.e. when the trip is advertised.

(c) All such regional trips should be approved by National Trips Secretary.

Existing paragraph (a) then becomes numbered as paragraph (d) and following paragraphs are renumbered accordingly.

NB. Trip booking form/treasurer's form may need to be updated to accommodate this.

Debate

Janet Saunders explained the meaning behind the motion. Discussion ensued. Policy amendment suggested Deletion of the words: "and there is no cheaper option available." Carried. (6 against)

Vote on Full motion with amendment:
Carried

Motion 3 – Application of 20% non-member trip surcharge

Proposed by Leicester Region AGM

Where a non-member is on their first Red Rope trip, the 20% surcharge should not be imposed, whether or not they go on to join.

Submitted by Rebecca Linton on behalf of Leicester Region

Debate

Debate ensued. This moved quickly to a vote. Voted against. Failed.

Motion 4 – the ‘ratio’ for membership rates may differ from the ‘ratio’ for nightly rate and transport charge (Constitutional amendment)

Proposed by Janet Saunders (Seconded by Dave Jefferies)

This AGM notes that:

- (i) The present General Principles H (1) Club Finance, contain a clause which dictates that the proportion of increase in charge from one band to the next should be the same for membership, nightly and transport charges.
- (ii) The principle that membership fees (as well as nightly rates and transport charges) will be graded according to bands, is one we wish to maintain.
- (iii) However, in respect to membership fees, it may become necessary to maintain or set them at a level that members find acceptable, and that compares well with fees of other clubs, and which meets club income demands.
- (iv) This desire is likely to be incompatible with the needs of trip charging proportions, and any review of charges is hindered by a need to keep them the same.

This AGM resolves that

- (a) Paragraph H(1) General principles should be altered by deleting the sentence:

“The proportion of increase in charge from one band to the next should be the same for membership, nightly and transport charges”,

This should be replaced with the sentence:

“The proportion of increase in charge from one band to the next may be a *different* proportion in regard to membership fees, to that of nightly and transport charges. “

Debate

Janet S. spoke to the motion. Discussion ensued.

Vote. Carried (5 against, 2 abstentions)

Motion 5 – Make-up of National Committee and election of officers

Proposed by Pat Durrant and Steve Wright

In order to give power to the regions and streamline the NC, we move to change the Constitution as follows:

Item 5 currently reads “The committee will be made up of regional delegates elected by regional meetings, the National Secretary, Treasurer and other officers who shall be elected annually by the AGM.”

We move to change this to –

“The committee will consist of regional delegates elected by regional meetings. This group will elect the National Secretary from its ranks. All other posts will be shared out to the rest or co-opted out if necessary or desirable.”

Debate

Pat & Steve spoke. This would be a constitutional amendment. There appeared to be lack of motivation from the regions. The change would apply to the next AGM. Discussion ensued.

Vote: Motion failed.

Motion 7 - Transport charges for members on out-of-region trips (Bristol)

This AGM notes

- (a) that according to the current rules, members on trips organised by a region other than their own do not pay banded transport rates, even if they share transport with other member(s);
- (b) that the club wishes to encourage and facilitate participation in out-of-region trips, particularly where trips may otherwise be undersubscribed;
- (c) that having to pay actual transport costs might deter low-banded members from joining out-of-region trips but encourage high-banded members to do so, and that this is not in the spirit of the club;

(d) that the new policy of recompensing regions for losses made on trips with below average banding should ensure that regions would not be disadvantaged by implementing banded transport costs for out-of-region members on their trips;

NB. Following pages contain Officer Reports

This AGM therefore asks the NC

(a) to look into the implications of extending banded trip transport rates to all members travelling to a trip in a shared car, regardless of whether those members are members of the region organising the trip

(b) if this appears workable, to bring proposals for such a policy to next year's AGM.

Debate

Barbara Segal spoke to the motion.
Discussion ensued.

The motion was referred to NC to look into.

Motion 6 - Trip purchasing policy
(Bristol)

"When travelling to outlying areas of the UK for our walking and climbing such as mountains, sea-cliffs and similar; we are mindful of the possibility of buying our supplies locally in that area, where practical, rather than taking much of it with us from city centre shops and supermarkets. In this way we would improve the economy and inhabitability of these outlying regions, and also as a secondary benefit possibly reduce tensions between visitors/tourists and local inhabitants.

To this end it is also suggested that hut bookers enquire whether there are local shops, and impart such information to trip food co-ordinators".

Debate

Julian Noble addressed the policy.
Discussion ensued.

Motion carried.

Meeting Closed 7.00 pm

Appendix: Reports attached

Secretary's Report Red Rope AGM Gradbach Oct 2007 (Janet Saunders)

Overview

Meetings quite well-attended as follows:

November NC - 6 NC (+1 extra Sheffield)
 March NC – 10 NC (+3 extra Merseyside)
 July NC - 7 NC (+1 extra London)

NC Posts

Fewer officers this year available with spare time to do any NC work.

During the year:

Dave Barnes volunteered as Ramblers Rep
 Steve Wright volunteered as Training officer
 Helen Todd volunteered as MC of S
 Pat Durrant took on Membership Sec role in summer – it was a lot to learn but is now working well.

There are many Vacancies to fill this year.

Publicity:

- No publicity officer this year – Some research was done round all regions as to needs – in response Janet has done some work sending out posters to Regions and putting them on shared area for easy access by Regional officers.
- Clearly we are not managing to replace natural turnover of members.
- More badges bought – but no orders placed from Regions, despite publicity sent out
- Stickers – was looked into following last AGM. Some pricings exist, but without a publicity officer to drive it there was no action taken.

Updates arising from AGM 2006 (part of this has appeared in Bulletin March 2007)

Child Protection Policy

The CP policy is now available from the website.

Extra statement placed on the trip booking form for parents to sign
In Loco Parentis form available also from website

NC to review issue of 'under-18' membership of Red Rope

As it stands we could have a member that was under 18.

Update - we have had some clarification notes from the BMC.

We are not covered by BMC third-party liability insurance in the case of child protection, because we could not adopt their CP policy. This is the case whether we have under-18 members or not.

Our CP policy will apply to any under-18, *whether a member or not*. i.e they must have an *in loco parentis* form if coming on any trip/meet without parents.

London's motion 2006 asking for a review of the pros and cons of affiliation to the BMC was rejected

Speakers pointed out that it would be difficult to get the same benefits or civil liability insurance for the club by another route, and that booking club huts relied on club affiliation to the BMC. The motion was rejected.

Update – since this debate the NC have reviewed exactly what the BMC civil liability insurance covers. This was circulated with minutes from March 2007 meeting –.

- 1) This is not a personal accident insurance – you need to upgrade to individual member to get that
- 2) The 'club', its officers and members are covered against civil liability for accidents sustained by them and caused by the club or caused by its members to third parties
- 3) Non-members are not covered when taking part in RR activities
- 4) The club is covered for accidents to under-18s, but not for incidents involving child abuse.

Regional support motion carried

The amended motion was carried – so now the rules for claiming a regional support payment relate to the amount by which the region's actual trip income fell short of the amount it would have reached had all participants been on Band E rates.

Comment – System in operation

Trip charges – mixed results

The 2006 AGM meeting agreed with Bristol that even higher trip rates are required to sustain the club on a sound footing over the next three years

*Comment – The NC are monitoring the effect of the new charges and also are proposing a continuation of the practise of being able to charge between 1.5 to 2 times the cost **if the price of accommodation requires it and maintaining current proportions between bands.***

Update – NC motion re. this issue is for debate this year.

Early booking discount of 10% for National trips – resolution carried

Update – the new trip charges, booking form, and treasurer's forms are on the website

Finance motions – a fixed ratio, but NC to determine the level it should be fixed at

The 2006 meeting voted that the ratio should be 'fixed' in the constitution, but then also voted that the NC should determine the exact proportion to be applied.

Update:

The result of all this is that Trip Charges – particularly the 'ratio' - and banding are under review. A sub-committee of the NC was set up to review banding levels and 'the ratio' itself in relation to banding.

National Secretaries had NO feedback on this despite appeals in the Bulletin (March) and by email. Even the sub-committee was not very enthusiastic in discussing it. See Janet's Bulletin article.

Other

Three 'disputes' and complaints handled by National Secretaries – quite time-consuming for them and regions concerned. One raised the issue of behaviour on trips when sharing huts, two involved issues about winter skills awareness. Individual issues were dealt with satisfactorily to acceptance of all parties.

Club issues remain re.

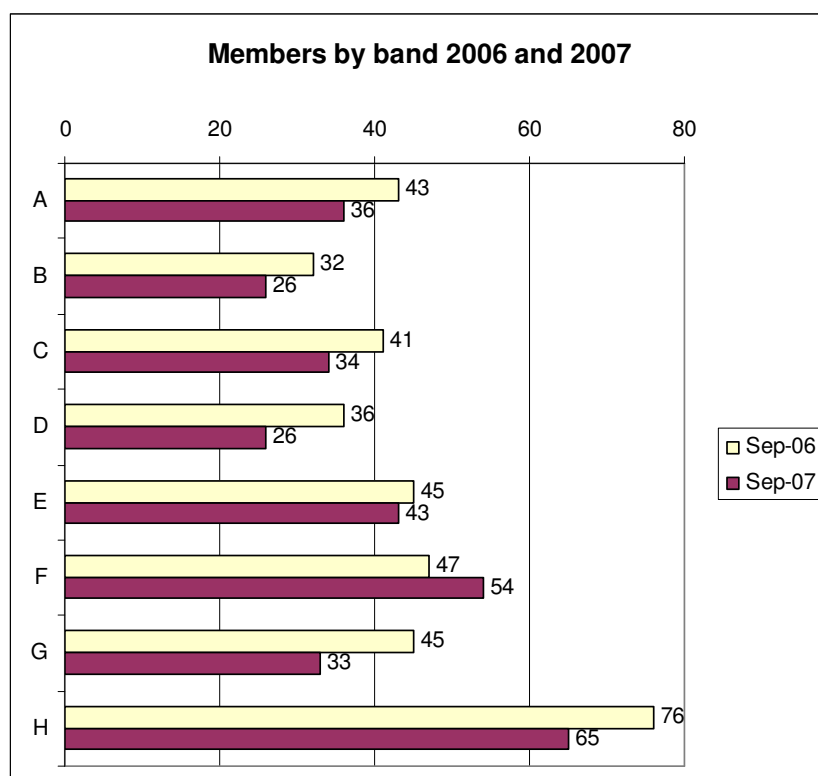
Is there sufficient attention to training/awareness of winter skills, especially for beginners?
Club members' general behaviour when sharing huts with others.

Membership Report - Information supplied by Pat, extra analysis by Janet.

Red Rope membership has dropped this year! (Again) Overall by around 13%. There is obviously always turnover, as people naturally leave and new people join, but it is worrying to see overall numbers drop like this. The picture regionally is not uniform, some regions having little change and others dropping quite a bit. The drop is across all the bands, except F which increased by 15%.

We do not know why any of this has happened. Perhaps we are just lazy about getting new people to sign up?

Region	Sep-06	Sep-07	Drop
Coventry	9	6	3
East Scotland	19	19	0
Leicester	34	30	4
London	81	71	10
Manchester	35	33	2
Merseyside	18	19	Plus 1
North East	4	1	3
North West	3	4	Plus 1
Sheffield	62	50	12
South West	48	42	6
West Midlands	20	15	5
West Scotland	11	10	1
West Yorkshire	21	17	4
Total	365	317	48



Report of Red Rope Ramblers' Association Representative for 2006/07

Job description:

- a) To liaise between the national officers of the RA, particularly the countryside officer and the press officer
- b) To disseminate information to the members via the Bulletin and Monthly Information Sheets
- c) To ensure the club maintains an active involvement with the RA policies and sends delegates to the National Council and to JOCORAMA, to raise the club's profile and to develop motions for the National Council
- d) To participate in the Access and Conservation Committee and to liaise with the BMC rep and the national secretary
- e) To promote the club's participation in Forbidden Britain Day
- f) To coordinate the club's local contact with the RA

Having become RA rep last autumn it has taken a while to find any background to this post. There were no files, few contacts and little information which was available from previous reps. In fact, it was hard finding out whom previous reps were to consult on this. It has also been a challenge sorting out the mailing changes with the RA and these have not been satisfactorily sorted to this date.

I am aware of only two previous RA reps: Becky Bates – who did the post for one year – and Barrie Dobson – who did the job for roughly five years. Barrie who is an ex-member of Red Rope and has retired from walking due to illness was a keen rep who had the capacity to attend RA conferences, give Red Rope a higher profile and report back. He was a keen advocate of Red Rope having a place in RA's campaigns and goals.

I have also been in touch with Andy Bateman, Red Rope archivist to enquire if there are any background files to this post.

My capacity to follow Barrie's enthusiastic lead is limited. However if you wish me to carry on and vote me in again my aims over the next year would be to:

Sort out the mailing changes required

Obtain and establish links with the appropriate officers at RA
Set up a file for the RA Red Rope rep to be handed over each time there is a change in personnel
Address some of the job description which has been outlined above for the RA rep

*David Barnes
Ramblers' Association Rep, September 2007*

Suggestions made by email:
Can I make some suggestions that Red Rope reaffiliates to the Ramblers and that also if you cannot get anyone to be the access and conservation rep you perhaps combine the roles. That does not mean that I would be able to do double the work but the Ramblers rep and access and conservation do in some ways go together.

For any other reports contact National Secretaries