

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
RED ROPE SOCIALIST WALKING AND CLIMBING CLUB
Mose Cottage, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth 29th September 2013

PRESENT: 29 members

John Dickie, Becky Bates Jonathan Bridge, Dave Doody, Colin Knowles, Chris Drinkwater, Sherry Macliver, Dave Symmonds, Barbara Segal, Steve Wright, Olya Bowers, Gill Cox, Adrian Jones, Arthur Bowling, Andy Bateman, Jan Lancaster, Julian Noble, John Marsden, Ann Silber, Humphrey Southall, Janet Saunders, Hugh Wallis, Steve Bonham, Grace Ogiliva, Alistar Latcham, Chris Smart, Linda Goss, Dermot McKibbin, Pauline Appleton.

APOLOGIES: Don Kinnibrugh, Adrian O'Connor, Nigel Green, Paul and Phillipa Webster, Mark Wallis

1. John Dickie chair 1st half, Colin Knowles 2nd half. Colin confirmed that the meeting was not quorate.
2. Adrian Jones – minute taker
3. Running order of the meeting was accepted.
4. Apologies were received and accepted

1 MINUTES OF THE 2012 AGM

Circulated extensively and posted on Web Site. Accepted unanimously.

2 AGM 2012 MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising

3. OFFICERS REPORTS:

a Membership. Steve Wright

Currently 299 members, stable; band distribution roughly unchanged over the year.

Routine tasks have been notification of new joiners to the regional contacts; monthly listing of all existing and lapsed members to regional contact; monthly update to Treasurer for BMC and MCoS returns; update of membership database to IT and MIS.

MIS by email : 20 members are still receiving MIS by post, of whom 6 have an email address. Efforts continue to persuade those outstanding to take MIS by email.

New region - East Anglia, with 11 members. Attempts are also being made to start up a Northampton Regional group.

b. Administration Treasurer. Sherry

Sherry circulated copies of the accounts. These were accepted by the meeting. Steve W proposer, 2nd Pauline Appleton.

Current account balance £13,435.

Total income for the year ended July 2013 was £8876, slightly up on last year. Includes a £350 grant from the BMC). Total expenditure £6537, £300 down on last year; made up of £3684 affiliations, £1808 for publications, £731 for the NC (travel to NC meetings, meeting rooms, postage) and the remainder on the website running costs, a training grant, and other minor items. Significant postage savings by increased delivery of MIS by email.

There is just over £2000 in the Action Fund. Used to fund attendance at the Ramblers AGM; other uses are being considered and under discussion.

A small balance in the hut fund of £312, mainly from ad hoc donations (it is proposed this will be used to pay for something 'Red Rope' in the hut).

AGM accommodation costs this year substantially reduced, to £475 (£700 last year)..

Overall, the RR club finances are good, and there is no need to review membership charges.

The NC thanked Sherry for her work

c. National Trips Secretary. Rebecca Bates

All trips this year have been full with most bookings made early and cancellation rates down on last year. The 'island experience' of Arran in May was particularly popular and although this trip had the most cancellations, all places were taken.

Gear purchased a few years ago with a BMC grant - walking rope, shelter, walkie talkies have been used regularly.

Next year we have two pairs of 'back-to-back' trips for people who want to be away a full fortnight -

³⁵₁₇ CIC, Ben Nevis pre-half-term in February with Alex Mac, Onich following on.

³⁵₁₇ Glen Brittle, Skye pre-half-term in May with Naismith, Elphin following on.

We were grateful to accept early offers from organisers for these trips and will support those new to the role.

Other ideas are

³⁵₁₇ a Scottish Island climbing trip

³⁵₁₇ a camping trip in July or August.

³⁵₁₇

The postponed first aid training weekend will be planned as a National Trip and we are hoping to include a training day on the 2015 winter trip to the Cairngorms .

The Trip Organiser's pack has been reviewed and a draft has been sent to NC and next year's trips organisers for comments, to be finalised at the November NC meeting.

d. National Trips Treasurer. John Dickie

In the year 2012/13, there were 4 national trips which turned in an overall surplus of £368.35 – made up of CIC - £23 loss; Lagangarbh - £183.41 surplus; Arran - £94.29 surplus; Blea Tarn - £113.65 surplus.

The transport rates have been changed slightly recently so it is not expected for trips to post a surplus next year.

The balance of the national trips account is £1956. Last year's was £1858 - the year's increase does not match the overall surplus noted above because the year's accounts include transactions relating to the previous year's and the next year's trips.

e. IT Officer. Dave Doody

Work has continued this year with ongoing routine maintenance of the website, keeping contacts up to date on the website list, and posting NC meeting minutes.

f. Ramblers and Campaigns. Don Kinnibrugh

Ramblers AGM University of Warwick April 13th - 14th

Adrian and Don attended this, the fourth year that Red Rope has recently taken part. As usual, we had a stall providing information about Red Rope (leaflets, past bulletins etc), which attracted a fair amount of interest. The Ramblers currently face a declining membership and a falling membership income, and some motions debated reflected this.

Red Rope's motion passed last year (2012)

(This called on the Ramblers to end their 'commercial partnership' with private health insurance company BUPA.) The good news, announced in the Ramblers Board's report to the conference, was that they had decided to end the contract.

New Link to RR Website

After contacting the Ramblers to point out that there was no mention of Red Rope, a nationally affiliated organisation, on their new updated website, we are now again listed with a link to RR's site (which could be useful in attracting new members).

Campaigns

The job spec for the Ramblers and Campaigns officer includes 'encouraging Red Rope participation in the Ramblers' access campaigns'. The major national campaign issues are currently the all-England coastal footpath (included in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, but on which the government have been backtracking); the management of National Trails (ie the main long-distance paths like the Pennine Way); cuts to local council footpath budgets and getting more woodland opened up to walkers.

Occasional requests are made for Ramblers members to support these by writing to their MPs or signing e-petitions, and these are usually passed on to RR members via the internet. (An offer agreed by the RR NC to ask members to write to MPs to support the Ramblers' line on the National Trails issue was declined, as the Ramblers had just agreed to join a DEFRA working group on the subject.)

The days of mass rallies with the Ramblers (in the Chilterns, on Kinder Scout or the Forest of Bowland, eg), in which Red Rope participated during the Right to Roam campaign, appear to be a thing of the past, and the scope for participating in Ramblers' national access campaigns rather limited.

Despite this, much of the Ramblers' work takes place at local level and by volunteers: monitoring and reporting on the condition of footpaths, as well as practical maintenance tasks like stile- and bridge building and clearing overgrown paths, whether together with local council ROW officers or not. The Ramblers deserve our continued support for this alone.

g. BMC. Chris Drinkwater

Nothing as such to report to the AGM. Dermot and Janet reported on the success of their grant applications to the BMC, and Dermot and Sherry have attended / will be attending BMC convened meetings.

The BMC are running several training courses over the coming year, including First Aid, and Navigation. A list will be circulated. These events are also shown on the BMC website.

h. Training. Dermot

Dermot recently became the RR National Training Officer and reported the following activities;

At the request of the national committee, Dermot organized a weekend training on outdoor first aid. Unfortunately this had to be cancelled as it received very little interest from club members and there was a real risk that the club would lose a substantial amount of money.

Applied for and obtained a training grant of £150 from the BMC Training fund for a day's training on basic navigation by a women instructor (London members had requested a female trainer). Six female members took part in this training at a cost of one third of their banded nightly rate.

In May, Dermot attended a useful BMC seminar on training new members.

Has circulated details of BMC training courses run for affiliated club members. These courses are very good value for money. The 2014 club training programme is shortly to be announced. See www.thebmc.co.uk/club-training-courses-2013 for more details.

Has given a reference recently to a London member to support her application for a grant from the future leaders fund at Plas y Brenin, (PYB) the national mountain sport centre. This fund currently offers grants of up to 75% to pay for future leaders to develop their skills in hill-walking, mountaineering and climbing. For more details see www.pyb.co.uk/awards.php and look at page 68 of the PYB'S current brochure for details of other available awards.

The Austrian Alpine Club currently gives grants of 30% to club members to undertake either training or assessment for most formal mountain qualifications. In return you have to organise a week-end trip. Further grants are also available for Alpine courses. See www.aacuk.org.uk. Dermot will attend the AGM of the Austrian Alpine Club

With regard to the future, the following is planned:

To apply again to the BMC for further funding from their training budget. The club currently has a total training budget of £500.

Would like the regions to assist in applying for BMC funding for regional training events in 2014.

The National Committee have agreed that Dermot can organize a week-end's training course on navigation in 2014, probably in the Peak District. The club will subsidize this course though members will have to pay more than the usual trip rates to make the money go further.

Would like to hear from experienced club members who are able to help organize training courses. Richard Churchill has volunteered to help already.

Encouraging Red Rope nationally and regionally to enter into dialogue with the BMC to encourage further development of the BMC's training programme. I think we may be knocking on an open door after the BMC has appointed their first ever Hill-walking officer.(Carey Davies at carey@thebmc.co.uk)

Would like to hear from club members about how the club should encourage all club members to develop to their full potential when outdoors either on walks in the home counties or on more challenging activities in the mountain areas.

i. MIS. Mark Wallis

MIS continues to be distributed monthly. We have now switched almost entirely to electronic distribution which should reduce our costs by about £400 a year compared with 2011/12.

MIS is important in binding us together as a national club - please would regional reps continue to email details of local events to Mark so that everyone can join in.

A thank you gift from the club to Mark for all his work was proposed. NC to action at next NC meeting.

j. Bulletin. David Symonds

Requested that material continue to be sent through for the Bulletin. A summary of each NC committee meeting minutes will continue to be put into the Bulletin.

k. Publicity Officer - Janet Saunders

Publicity Material

General overhaul of publicity posters and other material – prepared for a CD (sent to the new East Anglia Region). Updated the national leaflet to include new regions.

New Regions

Assistance provided to East Anglia Region in form of a CD of posters and other material. Assistance provided to the new Northampton Region.

Website and Funding

Meeting with Steve Wright, Colin Knowles and members of Bristol RR Web Development team end of 2012 to agree website design plans on behalf of the NC. Both Steve and Janet have been kept involved in any web issues on behalf of NC.

Applied for funding from the BMC – asked for £500 and got awarded **£350** for websites and newsletters – it is up to RR to decide whether we want to spend any of this on another colour bulletin, because that was included in the request. Also sent in our feedback form re. last year's Publicity grant

Note – we must have some results to show this year – otherwise it is difficult to apply again.

Car Stickers

Organised printing of more car stickers for membership secretary to send out

Planned Project

An action is to get a club 'business card' designed and printed – work in progress

Facebook

The club Facebook presence could be used more; it needs more words in the 'About' section at the least.

k. The Hut - an update

Mains water is nearly installed. The first fit of electrical wiring is in place. Some plasterboard has been fitted and, most of the upstairs has been plastered.

Contractors will be completing the mains electricity connection in September. Anticipated all work completion and hut available for use by April 2014.

Take up of the use of Lancashire MC facilities at Blea Tarn is still slow if any. The availability of the Blea Tarn hut was brought again to the meetings attention. Booking forms are on the website. Barbara Segal is the booker for regional/individual visits; Becky for National Trips.

l. Gear Co-ordinator.

Adrian O'Connor. No report, gear was safe.

m Archivist.

Andy Bateman continues to store the archive until a new archivist is found.

o. Web Review Team. Colin Knowles

1. A working party of Bristol/SW members provide design requirements. These were reviewed by two NC members. We should thank Jerzy Wieczorek, Mike Demenis, Anne Silber, Julian Noble, Ruth Naughton-Doe, Mai Wong, Karin Burnett and Chris Smart for their valuable input and sustained hard work.
2. In the Spring a developer was contracted to undertake the work based on a specification provided by Mike Demenis. The developer was based at Yale.
3. Early progress was most satisfactory and in June the development site was visible on his personal server. Feedback was provided to direct the developer toward the completion of the site.
4. In July we contracted GreenNet to provide us with a Drupal site <http://dev.redrope.org.uk/>. At this point difficulties occurred as the developer's version did not transfer cleanly to the long-term site.
5. During the summer holiday period no progress was made.
6. Latterly it seems that the developer may have successfully worked with GreenNet to transfer the site over. However the developer must now withdraw due to a change in country/job.
7. Thus though by the time of this AGM the site should be visible at the URL above, some considerable work is still required to complete the task. Consideration needs to be given to the best way forward and to the proportion of the initial agreed fee that should be paid to the developer.

So to conclude, the existing developer will be paid £250 for work undertaken so far, and a new developer will be found. No technical difficulties are anticipated transferring from one developer to the next and enabling continuation of the work already undertaken.

THE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED THE ABOVE REPORTS AND GAVE THEIR THANKS FOR ALL THE HARD WORK DONE BY ALL OFFICERS.

2 NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COMMITTEE

All standing officers were re-elected by the meeting. The meeting was in full agreement

3. MOTIONS TO THE 2013 AGM

Motion No 1: Cancellation Refunds on Trip Charges

(From London Region)

The London Group AGM notes that:

The absolute no-refund rule on accommodation charges for trip cancellations where less than 28 days notice has been given can cause hardship.

And therefore propose:

This AGM agrees that henceforth anybody cancelling within the last 28 days will have 50% of their accommodation charges refunded.

Voting

For the Motion – 13; Against the Motion 16; Abstain - 1
The Motion was therefore rejected

Motion No 2: Poor Committee Support/Regional Disbandment (from Bristol and SW Region)

Withdrawn by proposer (superseded by a discussion later in the meeting)

Motion No 3 – Trip Transport (From the National Committee)

The National Committee note the following:

Red Rope members are normally expected to travel to trips in shared cars. However, where a member wishes to travel to a trip by public transport, or to travel separately using their own transport, this must be agreed with the trip organiser in advance of the trip. Trip organisers will be flexible, but where this would lead to a shortage of cars on the trip, including for local transport, or to unfilled spaces in cars - the norm is 3 in a car (i.e. a driver plus 2 passengers) - they may refuse.

And therefore propose

Part 1 - Charges for public transport users (revised to emphasise this applies to national trips; regional trips at local discretion)

The member will pay the cost of their ticket. This will then be adjusted by their income band. Below E band some of the cost will be reimbursed and above E band an additional payment into the trip will be charged, as follows:

- A band – reimbursement of 50% of ticket cost
- B band – reimbursement of 40% of ticket cost
- C band – reimbursement of 30% of ticket cost
- D band – reimbursement of 15% of ticket cost
- E band no adjustment
- F band – payment of 15% of ticket cost
- G band - payment of 35% of ticket cost
- H band – payment of 54% of ticket cost

Part 2 - Charges for independent car use

- a) The member will pay into the trip their normal banded transport charge for the number of miles between their home town and the trip location and back.
- b) The member will be reimbursed by the amount that would be paid to a car driver, for one person, if they had travelled in a shared car; that is, the number of miles travelled, at the E band mileage rate for the current petrol cost.
- c) The member will then be responsible for funding their own car travel

Voting

Voting for the original Motion Part 1; In favour – 12, Against – 12
Voting for the revised Motion Part 1 : For – 14 Against – 13

THE REVISED MOTION PART 1 WAS THEREFORE CARRIED.

Voting for the Motion Part 2 (independent car use); In favour – 12, Against – 13; abstain 4
Part 2 was therefore rejected

Discussion Items

Revisions to the Banding Structure

A reduction in the number of bands to say 5, recalibration of the band rates and a top band aimed at high earners was discussed. The meeting was in agreement with this in principle. It was agreed the NC are to work on this to develop details to bring to the AGM 2014

Disbandment of a Region

After recent problems maintaining a regional committee in Bristol, (now resolved) a discussion followed on what would happen if a RR region were unable to fill Regional Committee Posts and under what circumstances they would be forced therefore to disband.

Several regional representatives explained how they go about their regional organisation; planning walks, finances, etc. It emerged that it is often down to just 2 or 3 members to carry out all tasks, but that overall it worked well even then.

It was concluded that it was hoped the situation of no committee would never arise and that this has not so far happened in the club, it seems there is always someone to take tasks on.

Special RR Membership – infirm members

A discussion on a lower membership fee for members still interested in keeping contact with the club but unable to participate fully due to ill health or infirmity. For example, perhaps registered disabled members could pay a lower membership fee.

Steve W advised there are practical problems with a lower fee band within the club as such, but suggested a separate sub organisation "Friends of RR " or similar, with a lower membership fee, and no trips or events. There would be no BMC affiliation fee for them, running costs would be simply communications eg the Bulletin.

It was agreed the NC to consider this further at their next meeting.

The AGM closed at 12.30.pm.