

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
RED ROPE SOCIALIST WALKING AND CLIMBING CLUB
HELD AT THE LOCKERBROOK CENTRE, DERBYSHIRE September 26 2009.

PRESENT: 43 members

Rebekah Bates, Pat Durrant, Adrian O'Connor, Gill Platt, Jeremy Abraham, Jan Lancaster, Dermot Mckibbin, Don Kinnibrough, Richard Chessum, Sherry MacLiver, John Rogers, Dave Jefferies, Pam Case, Gill Cox, Steve Wright, Nathan Bridge, Arthur Howarth, Janet Saunders, Malcolm Donne, Barbara Segal, Linda Goss, David Doody, Sunil Nandi, Olya Bowers, Mike Hargaden, Colin Knowles, Richard Gore, John Dickie, Adrian Jones, Val Gorbould, Chris Drinkwater, Hugh Wallis, Pauline Appleton, Anne Silber, Julian Noble, Humphrey Southall, Chris Smart, Jean Luce, Arthur Bowling, Dave Symonds, Andy Bateman, Geoff Birch, Jake Jackson.

APOLOGIES: Angela Beham , Gerry Matthews

1. Janet Saunders was nominated as Chair by Jan Lancaster seconded Colin Knowles. Colin confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
2. Gill Platt – minute taker
3. Running order of the meeting was accepted.
4. Apologies were received and accepted
5. Minutes of the 2008 AGM (circulated extensively and posted on Web site) Accepted unanimously.

6. OFFICERS REPORTS:

a. National Secretaries.

Jan Lancaster and Andy Bateman shared this position but both intend to retire after this AGM. September 2009. Many thanks to both Jan and Andy for their work over the past two years. (see attached report).

b. Membership.

Pat Durrant reported that membership had fallen very slightly. Colin Knowles felt overall it was relatively static. and as such was a good basis for continuing the club. New Members were more difficult to recruit than renewing lapsed members. Current membership at 319 (see attached). Pat is happy to continue as membership secretary for a further year.

c. Administration Treasurer. (see attached report)

Pam Case circulated a detailed report and answered questions as to the financial health of Red Rope. She thanked Sherry MacLver and Arthur Howarth for their help in compiling the report for the AGM. The cost of BMC affiliations has increased and account for over 50% of our admin expenditure. NC meetings were found to be expensive this year due to the very high costs in London for hiring a room for the meeting. It was agreed that NC meetings as a whole had been better attended, but Becky Bates pointed out that we are not very good at sharing transport to these

meetings. Dave Symonds suggested a reduction from 3 meetings to 2, but others felt that the regular NC meetings were a good forum to discuss issues.

The accounts were received and adopted - nominated by Janet Saunders and Seconded by John Dickie. (Pam Case standing down)

c. National Trips Organiser. (see attached report)

Becky presented short report. 6 Trips had taken place with 70 people attending. The Easter trip to Glen Affric and the May trip to Skye were very popular. Public transport to some huts was limited due to their locations. Colin Knowles reported that the annual Alpine Trip has been discontinued.

d. National Trips Treasurer. (see attached report)

John Dickie presented a written account . There was currently £2,606 in the account - making a surplus of £722 this year.

Dermot McKibben asked if there could be a list of FAQs on the web site on working out costs and it was agreed that this would be looked at. Don Kinnibrugh pointed out that the expenses form did not look at the costs for public transport when that was the major transportation costs. Janet Saunders thanked both Becky and John for all their work during the past year. Action: John Dickie and Dave Doody.

e. IT Officer. (see attached report)

Dave Doody has been maintaining the web site and is open to suggestions as to what to put on it for next year. Jake Jackson asked if there were any costs under the national accounts for maintaining the website. Dave Doody replied there was not. Olive asked if there was any way of recording the number of hits to the site - this was going to be looked into.

Dave Jeffries had changed the Website ISP and the emailing forward system. Spam filter is now better. Dave Jefferies will continue to provide support for Dave D.

f. Ramblers and Campaigns.

David Barnes is currently in post and happy to continue. Over the previous year he along with the NC put together a combined role specification for agreement by the next AGM. Geoff Birch offered to help out if needed and NC took action away to contact Dave Barnes.

g. BMC.

Nothing to report. Pravin has obtained £300 from BMC for Red Rope for publicity which has been used to purchase the car stickers. Thank you Pravin and the BMC. The BMC had written to local clubs asking for a representative who could attend meeting to better facilitate communication. Dave Symonds did get in touch with them and was told that a committee was being put together. Jan asked if we did not receive the Summit could our cost be reduced. Dave Jeffries confirmed that there was a facility on the membership renewal to decline receiving the Summit; however the bulk of the cost for the BMC went on public liability insurance which was the cheapest we could get. The committee had looked at cheaper alternatives but to date nothing has been as good as that which the BMC had offered. If anyone else could find a cheaper alternative, it was up to them to provide evidence. (Pravin standing down)

h. Training. (see attached report)

Steve has been trying to contact more training groups

i. MIS.

No report received from Mark Wallis. But MIS editions came out regularly over the year by email and hard copy and on time.

j. Bulletin.

David Symonds presented a short written and verbal report. Two editions produced over the year.

k. Hut Officer.

Colin Knowles presented his thoughts on “the way forward”, reporting on the talks with Lancashire Mountaineering Club.

m. Gear Co-ordinator.

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

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

All standing officers were re-elected.

Adrian Jones from West Midlands was elected as National Secretary, with several people offering ad hoc assistance when needed.

Sherry McIver was elected as National Admin Treasurer

Chris Drinkwater was elected as BMC contact person

Thank you to all.

Short break.

Richard Gore was unanimously elected to chair the next session. Minutes were taken by Adrian Jones

7. Motions to the meeting

Notes

1. The letters preceding each motion are as published in the Bulletin and do not refer to the order in which the motions were taken at the meeting.
2. The order of motions is generally that those proposed by the NC are taken first then those proposed by regions and finally those proposed by individual members. The following exceptions were made: Motion C, Dissolution of Hut Fund, would be taken after Motion A. The meeting agreed that Motion E from the Bulletin, Regional Voting on Major Issues, would be taken as an amendment to Motion B, Postal Voting.
3. Amendments for each motion were taken in the order given below.

A: Hut Development

1. The National Committee took the view that the outcome of the national survey showed that there was sufficient support for investing in sharing a hut with another club(s).

Be it resolved that:

This AGM endorses the National Committee's view and instructs the National Committee to vigorously pursue courses of action consistent with that support.

2. The National Committee took the view that the outcome of the national survey showed that there was sufficient support for investing in sharing a hut with another club(s).

Be it resolved that:

This AGM believes that if the National Committee negotiated an arrangement with another club(s) which they were confident was beneficial, fair and sustainable, then it would not be necessary to call a Special General Meeting to endorse those proposals.

3. The Lancashire Mountaineering Club have made some proposals for our participation in the development of the new club hut near Beddgelert. Those proposals are only the start of a process of detailed negotiation.

Be it resolved that:

Negotiations over matters of detail with any other club over developing a shared hut will be undertaken by a sub-committee consisting of the National Secretary, the National Admin Treasurer and the Hut Officer. This sub-committee may co-opt, in an advisory capacity, other club members with specialist skills (i.e. legal, financial, architect etc.) as required. This sub-committee are responsible for submitting detailed proposals and plans to the full National Committee for their consideration.

Proposed by Colin Knowles Hut Officer on behalf of the NC

Amendments to Motion A

1. AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN BY THE PROPOSER

Note: The sections of the motion need to be discussed and voted on in a logical order so that we first discuss the main proposition (section 3) before considering whether we need an SGM (section 2) and finally decide whether the matter should be 'vigorously pursued' (section 1).

Amendment to motion:

The three sections should be re-ordered so that the proposed section 3, (Negotiations over matter of detail ...) precedes the proposed section 2 (This AGM believes that ...) and the proposed section 1 (This AGM endorses ...) becomes the final section.

2. Note: The current proposal does not give any lead about the financial commitment the club will make for any proposed use of the hut fund. If this is not defined we will need to wait for a further AGM, hold an SGM or ballot members, if the relevant motion is passed at this AGM.

Amendment to motion:

Append to the section of the resolution starting with "Negotiations over matter of detail ...":

The financial liabilities for the club will be restricted to the value of the hut fund and no other financial commitments will be made.

THIS AMENDMENT, SUBJECT TO A MINOR CHANGE, WAS ACCEPTED

3. Note: For the last 5 years the majority of contributions to the hut fund (24 out of 39 donations since 1/07/04) have been made by new members who will have been unaware of its moribund state.

Amendment to motion:

Add a new section to the motion.

This AGM resolves that:

The option to donate to the hut fund will be removed from the membership application form.

Proposed by Dave Jefferies. Seconded by Barbara Segal

AMENDMENT ACCEPTED

THE MOTION, AS AMENDED, WAS CARRIED: 33 votes in favour, 6 against, 2 abstentions

Note: Following this decision, Negotiations will begin to buy timeshare (A number of bed nights) with (LMC) in return for using our hut fund for their project at Beddgelert. There is also likely to be some fundraising to try to increase the value of the fund.

C. Dissolution of Hut Fund

MOTION WITHDRAWN AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF MOTION A

(66.6% majority required, as involves constitutional change)

This AGM notes that clause k) on page 6 of the club constitution reads as follows:

The Club Hut

- 1) In 1989 a fund was established for the purposes of obtaining a hut. The Hut Officer is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the hut policy.

This AGM further notes the following:

- The large expenditure of the hut fund from over £10,000 to approximately £5,000.
- The lack of progress in agreeing the acquisition of a hut.
- The different views within the club on this proposal.
- The need to address the long term development of the club.

This AGM therefore resolves to do the following:

- To remove clause k) on page 6 of the club constitution.
- And that the remaining funds in the hut fund should be divided equally between the Mountain Bothies Association and the John Muir Trust.

Proposed by: Dermot McKibbin. Seconded by: Pam Case, Val Gorbould and Don Kinniburgh

Amendments to Motion C

Delete "divided equally between the Mountain Bothies Association and the John Muir Trust," and substitute "donated to Lancashire Mountaineering Club, to be used by them solely for the development of their Beddgelert Hut"

Proposed Andy Bateman

At this point Chairing the meeting passed to Colin Knowles

F. New Rates, Easier Sums

This meeting notes that since Red Rope was formed, housing costs have increased greatly.

The meeting also notes that the method of calculating disposable income requires simplification to encourage people to work out their band.

The present amount that a member can deduct from their disposable income to cover housing and council tax costs is set at a limit of £50 a week.

This meeting believes that in many cases this amount is too small to make any significant difference to the calculation of disposable income – such that almost everyone currently deducts the £50 as a matter of course.

The proposers of this motion suggest that the housing element is removed from the calculation entirely, with an assumption that individuals already manage their outgoings on housing according to their income, and that it has become meaningless to include this in the Red Rope calculation.

This meeting resolves that the housing element is removed from the calculation of disposable income entirely. To facilitate this change to the method, the proposal is to incorporate the amount of £50 into all the new banding thresholds.

Policy Section H (2) “Club Finance – determining Income band “ should be amended by removing the references to housing costs, as follows:

Current wording

Members are charged on their disposable income. This is defined as total income less tax and National Insurance, also deducting housing costs within an agreed limit. The Income Band and limit are as set from time to time by the AGM and published to the membership at least twice a year in club publications. Housing costs are mortgage/rent and council tax.

Proposed wording

Members are charged on their disposable income. This is defined as total income less tax and National Insurance. The Income Band and limit are as set from time to time by the AGM and published to the membership at least twice a year in club publications.

Note: The allowances for carers are not affected by this motion, and remain as is.

Proposed by Janet Saunders on behalf of the NC

Amendments to Motion F

Replace paragraph 3 above “**This meeting resolves** that housing element is removed ...” with

“**This meeting resolves** that the housing element is removed from the calculation of disposable income, *and adopts the set of new bands and new membership charges as recommended by the NC.*”

Proposed by Janet Saunders. Seconded Dave Jefferies

THE AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED

THE AMENDED MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

G. Trip Deposits

Whereas Red Rope believes that a requirement to pay the full nightly charge with a booking would:

- a. Have only a small negative impact on early bookings, as most trips are advertised well in advance
- b. Reduce the financial impact of cancellations on trips, where often huts have been paid for, food bought, and transport arrangements made.
- c. Discourage cancellations so that trip finances are improved and transport not disrupted.
- d. Make administration easier for trip organiser

Be it resolved that: for all local and national trips starting on or after 1st March 2010

- a. The full nightly charge must be paid when booking onto a trip (e.g. for a 2 night trip, 2 nights must be paid at the appropriate band; for a 3 night trip, 3 nights must be paid etc.)
- b. Those cancelling their place 1 month or more before the start of a trip are entitled to a full refund of any monies paid. Subsequently, no monies are refundable.
- c. Bookings are not transferable i.e. you cannot transfer your deposit to another person.

Proposed by John Dickie on behalf of the NC

MOTION CARRIED: 21 votes in favour, 19 against

I. Members' Website

Be it resolved that: the AGM requests that

The IT officer establishes a members only element to the Red Rope website. This would feature the MIS and bulletin.

Proposed by the National Committee

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Motions B & E on Postal voting and Regional voting

B. Postal voting

Note: As published in the Bulletin section 3. of the resolution ('Append the following item to the Constitution:') was incorrectly laid out as if it were a part of the wording of the constitution to be changed. The layout has been corrected below.

Currently decisions, other than on day to day management, can only be made at General Meetings of the club. This process can be slow, very expensive, both for the club and individual members, and carries the risk of inquorate meetings unable to take decisions on matters of critical importance. We therefore propose the addition of postal voting as a method of making decisions on the governance of the club. We recognise that this method should only be used in special circumstances so limit the use of postal votes to the circumstances defined in the proposed 4d) below.

This AGM resolves

1. To delete section 3) of the Constitution and replace it with the following:
 - 3) The Club shall be governed by General Meetings or by postal vote on specific issues as described in section 4d below, and managed by a National Committee consisting of elected members. See sections 4 and 5 below.

2. To add the following sections to the constitution:

- 4d) 1. A postal vote on a specified motion will be conducted if requested by
 - i) A simple majority of a General Meeting
or
 - ii) 50 members or 10% of the membership whichever is less
or
 - iii) The National Committee
2. The postal ballot will be conducted as defined in 'Guidelines for conducting a postal ballot' which is appended to the Constitution.

3. To append the following item to the Constitution:

Guidelines for conducting a postal ballot

The ballot will be of all members who are paid up on the defined date. Voters will be required to mark the envelope containing their vote with their membership number; this will be checked against an anonymous list of the membership numbers of valid voters by the scrutineers.

1. On receipt of a valid request for a postal vote, which must include the wording of the motion to be voted on, the National Committee will
 - a) Appoint 2 tellers.
 - b) Set a closing date for the return of ballot papers.
 - c) Set a date to define paid up members for the ballot which will be 28 days before the closing date of the ballot. The membership secretary will provide a list of the membership numbers of paid up members for that date.
 - d) Designate an address for the return of ballot papers.
2. Ballot paper will be sent by post or email to all members who were paid up on the defined date so that they should arrive at least 15 days before the designated closing date.
3. Instructions will also be supplied telling voters to:
 - a) Fill in the voting paper
 - b) Return it in an envelope addressed to the designated address
 - c) To include on the outside of the envelope the words "Ballot paper" and their membership number. Votes will only be valid if this information is supplied and if they arrive by the designated closing date.
4. On receipt the envelopes will be stored unopened until the count of the ballot. Any votes arriving after the close of ballot should be marked with the receipt date and stored separately.
5. Within 7 days of the close of ballot the tellers will check all returns against the list of valid members and retain, unopened, any invalid and late returns.
6. The ballot papers from valid votes will be counted by the tellers.
7. The vote will be decided using a simple majority of the valid votes except for amendments to the constitution which will need a minimum of two thirds of the valid votes.
8. The result of the vote will be posted on the web site and included in the next available MIS.
9. Any complaints or objections to the conduct of the ballot should be sent to the Secretary and will be adjudicated by the NC.

Proposed by Sheffield region

Amendments to Motion B

1. In section 2. of the resolution delete 4d) 1. ii) "50 members or 10% of the membership whichever is less"

AMENDMENT CARRIEDThis is my recollection. Can Dave or Adrian confirm - BS

I can't remember what happened to this! Was it withdrawn in view of the amendments to the hut motion? If not, it's likely that it was deferred until after the amendment on regional voting. Dave, do you remember? If it was passed, then the reference to a postal ballot should probably be replaced by regional voting, but I can't remember that happening. – BS)

2. This is my recollection. Can Dave or Adrian confirm - BS

I can't remember what happened to this! Was it withdrawn in view of the amendments to the hut motion? If not, it's likely that it was deferred until after the amendment on regional voting. Dave, do you remember? If it was passed, then the reference to a postal ballot should probably be replaced by regional voting, but I can't remember that happening. – BS)

Append the following section to the resolution

4. Change Appendix section 14 of the Constitution 'Job Description of the Hut Officer' as follows:

Delete items d) and e) then add

d) In the event of a possible club hut being located or the proposal of an alternative use of the hut fund to request the NC:

- i) To send to all members the proposed operational and policy guidelines for the purchase and running of the building or the details of the proposals for an alternative use of the hut fund
- ii) To organise a postal ballot of members on the proposition.

Proposed by Liz Pickles. Seconded Dave Jefferies

3. In section 2. of the resolution delete 4d) 1. ii) "50 members or 10% of the membership whichever is less"

Then add 4d) 1. ii) "50 members or 10% of the membership, whichever is less, those members coming from at least two regions."

AMENDMENT CARRIED: 25 votes in favour, 6 against.

4. (a) In Section 1: replace the proposed new wording of the constitution by the alternative wording given in Section 1 of the published Motion E (See below)

(b) In Section 2, replace references to 'postal voting' in new constitution clause 4d) 2. by the references to 'regional voting' as in the wording of the equivalent clause in Motion E (See below)

(c) In Section 2, replace new constitution clause 4d) 3. by the equivalent clause in Motion E (See below)

Proposed by Barbara Segal. Seconded by Andrew Worsley

AMENDMENT CARRIED: 16 votes in favour, 9 against.

THE MOTION, AS AMENDED, WAS CARRIED: 24 votes in favour, 8 against.

The meeting agreed that Barbara & Dave should check through the details of the amended motion, to ensure that it was clear before incorporating the new policy into the constitution

E. Regional Voting on Major Issues – original motion

According to the current Red Rope constitution, "The Club shall be governed by General Meetings", with day to day management delegated to the National Committee.

However, this AGM acknowledges that:

- i) the number of members attending the AGM is unlikely to significantly exceed the required quorum of 10% of the membership
- ii) that controversial decisions taken by such a small proportion of club members could lead to serious dissatisfaction and risk the possibility of resignations from the club.

The AGM also wishes to encourage members to participate in discussions about important club matters.

This AGM therefore resolves to make provision for greater involvement in important decisions as follows:

1. To delete section 3) of the Constitution and replace it with the following:
 - 3) The Club shall be governed by General Meetings or, on specific issues, by votes cast at regional meetings of members convened for the purpose of discussing and voting on those issues. The club shall be managed by a National Committee consisting of elected members. See sections 4 and 5 below.
2. To add the following sections to the constitution:
 - 4d) 1. Regional voting on a specified motion will be conducted if requested by
 - i) A simple majority of a General Meeting
or
 - ii) 50 members or 10% of the membership whichever is less, those members coming from at least two regions
or
 - iii) The National Committee
2. The regional voting procedure will be conducted as defined in 'Guidelines for conducting a regionally based vote', which is appended to the Constitution.
3. To append the following item to the Constitution:

Guidelines for conducting a regionally based vote

1. On receipt of a valid request for a vote based on regional meetings, which must include the wording of the motion to be voted on, the National Committee will
 - a) Set a date by which votes must be received from its constituent regional groups and appoint two of its members to take responsibility for receiving the results of the regional votes.
 - b) Write to all members (by post or email as appropriate) informing them that a valid request for a motion to be decided by regional meetings has been received and including the motion.
 - c) Inform regional secretaries of the need to organise a meeting to discuss, and vote on, the motion. The notice to regional secretaries shall include
 - the motion

- the closing date for the return of votes (which must be at least 28 days after the receipt of the notice)
 - the person and address (postal or electronic) to which completed votes must be sent.
 - A list of paid-up regional members at the time the notice is issued.
2. On receipt of a request to convene a regional meeting for the purpose of discussing and voting on a motion, a regional secretary shall:
 - a) Issue a notice to regional members, which shall contain:
 - the motion
 - the date of the meeting, which must be at least 14 days from the date of the notice
 3. All paid up members who attend their regional meeting may vote on the motion. A record should be made of the votes – for and against the motion and any abstentions. The regional secretary shall take responsibility for ensuring that all those voting are paid up members of the club, and are from the region.
 4. Following the meeting, and in time to meet the deadline for receipt of votes, the regional secretary shall forward the results of the vote to the person designated to receive these on behalf of the National Committee.
 5. The overall result of the vote will be decided using a simple majority of the total votes cast, except for amendments to the constitution which will require a minimum of two thirds of the valid votes.
 6. Within 7 days of the closure date for receipt of votes, the NC members with responsibility for the conduct of the vote will arrange for the result of the vote to be posted on the web site. The results will also be included in the next available MIS.
 7. Any complaints or objections to the conduct of the regional meetings or other aspects of the vote should be sent to the Secretary and will be adjudicated by the NC.

Proposed by Barbara Segal, Seconded by Andrew Worsley.

Due to lack of time, the chair decided to close the meeting before the three motions below were discussed. These were referred to the National Committee for consideration.

J. Free 3 Month Membership Deal

Bristol/SW Red Rope is concerned that the stagnant membership numbers are preventing the full development of our activities at a time when many would be willing to join. This is more urgent because of the club's ageing demography and the need to infuse the club with new blood.

We therefore propose that we make both a national and a local approach to organisations such as the Woodcraft Folk and the local government trade unions i.e. NUT, UNISON with a 3 month free offer as an incentive to join.

Proposed by Bristol/SW Region

D. Club Development Plan

This AGM notes the following:

- That membership of the club is declining.
- That a significant number of members in the club are aged over 50
- That the club does not have branches in many large cities, and no branch in Wales.
- And that there are very few members in the club aged under 30.

This AGM therefore instructs the national committee in consultation with the wider membership to prepare a development plan to ensure the continued survival of the club and to come back to 2010 with the results.

This plan should look in detail, for instance at ways in which membership could be increased, what types of members we should be looking to attract, the lack of young members, the need to promote branches throughout the country and whether we should review the club constitution to reflect the growing interest in Green politics.

Proposed by Dermot McKibbin, Seconded by Sherry McIver

H. Recruitment

Whereas Red Rope believes:

- that the best way for Red Rope to recruit is through family and friends of members,
- that further incentives to members will improve such recruitment,

Be it resolved that

for all trips starting on or after 1 January 2010, where a member brings with them on a trip one or more non-members who have never been on a Red Rope trip before, the member shall be entitled to a 50% discount on the overnight charge otherwise payable by the member. The non-member(s) will pay according to the normal rules applicable to non-members.

Proposed by John Dickie, Seconded Becky Bates

The meeting closed at 7.00.pm.