

# **Red Rope Annual General Meeting**

## **27<sup>th</sup> September 2015:**

### **Minutes [part 1]**

#### **(1) Election of Chair(s)**

Steve Wright was elected to chair the first half, and John Dickie for the second.

#### **(2) Appoint minute taker(s)**

Humphrey Southall was appointed for the first half and Janet Saunders for the second half.

#### **(3) Present:**

Andy Bateman	Ian Carey	Titch Kavanagh	Terry O'Brien
Rebekah Bates	Pete Clark	Don Kinnibrugh	Naomi Paul
Sarah Bates	Gill Cox	Peter Kos	Janet Saunders
<i>Angela Benham (non-member)</i>	John Dickie	David Levine	Barbara Segal
Olya Bowers	Malcolm Donne	Alice Lyons	Philip Smith
Arthur Bowling	David Doody	Dermot McKibbin	Humphrey Southall
Jonathan Bridge	Chris Drinkwater	Sherry Macliver	David Symonds
Marie Campbell	Nigel Green	Jon Marsden	Hugh Wallis
	Jake Jackson	Heather Morris	Steve Wright

#### **(4) Apologies for absence**

Damien Connor, Adrian Jones

#### **(5) Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the 2014 AGM 2014 were formally approved, having previously been circulated on the website. It was noted that motion 1 of section 3 was moved by some members of South West Region, rather than being a motion proposed by the region.

#### **(6) Matters Arising from 2014 minutes**

None.

#### **(7) Officers' Reports:**

##### **National Secretary**

The national secretary was not at the meeting and no report had been received.

##### **Membership Secretary**

Steve Wright noted that membership had been stabilized, and there was a small increase. Merseyside is the fastest growing, one factor being the creation of a new internet mailing list restricted to members. London remains the largest. South West is second largest but is declining.

##### **Admin Treasurer**

Sherry noted £330 in grants from the BMC. It was noted that the expenditure listed on the web site was on an earlier unsuccessful project, the new web site which has now been launched having cost nothing. Last year's AGM had made a surplus.

##### **The accounts for 2014-15 were formally accepted.**

##### **National Trips Secretary**

There had been a successful programme, apart from the finances (see below), and a full programme had been organized for next year.

## **National Trips Treasurer**

There had been a loss on the overall programme of about £550, mainly due to the Arran trip; some additional financial details had been circulated to the National Committee. The NC are proposing a substantial increase in overnight charges. There was an extended discussion of trip finances.

## **IT officer**

Dave Doody gave a short report. There are some handover issues with the transition to the new web site, and Janet and Dave will sort this out.

## **Ramblers/Campaigns**

Don Kinnibrugh announced his resignation. He reported that Ramblers are in transition, with reduced emphasis on campaigning. Noted RA Pathwatch project, which Don had been assisting with.

## **BMC representative**

Chris Drinkwater said there was little to report: he had been receiving material from BMC and passing it on to relevant people in club. Sherry Macliver is now on the BMC clubs committee, but has not yet been able to attend a meeting.

## **Training Officer**

Dermot had circulated a written report. He noted that only one member had taken up our offer to pay for them going on a BMC training course, then pass skills on to rest of club. He appealed for more people to contribute to the training programme, especially acting as organizer for training events (which does not require you to be the trainer). There was discussion of how to get more people involved, and whether everyone knew about the above offer.

## **MIS editor**

Mark had not sent a report, but issues have been coming out reliably and promptly.

## **Bulletin editor**

David felt it was running fairly smoothly. There was discussion of whether we should go back to having more than two issues per year, the additional issues maybe being only online. It was suggested that producing additional PDF-only issues that other than not being printed out matched the existing ones would be silly, while blogs etc might be easier.

## **Publicity**

Janet had prepared cards and helped regions in various ways, but the main focus over the year has been the new web site. Earlier attempts proved abortive, and the new site is the result of work by Bronwen Reid and Janet in Coventry; no cost. Is based on a new hosting site, Ecohosting, who are slightly cheaper than Greennet. All content from old site has been updated and moved to the new site. It is based on Wordpress and it should be possible to give many more people the ability to edit particular areas, including e.g. trip reports.

It was also suggested that the climbers' page be expanded to enable an online blog or forum in some way, as not all climbers use the Bristol discussion list.

## **Report back from the Hut Liaison Team**

Barbara reported that a system is now in place for individual RR members to have keys to the new hut, but the team needs reports back on how this is working. There has been a good meeting with LMC to resolve various issues. It is possible to check on the LMC web site which weekends have already been booked. Twelve beds currently available, but 19 or 20 once all work is completed.

## **Vote of thanks**

The meeting formally thanked all the officers for their work over the last year.

## **(8) Election of Officers for the year 2015-2016**

The following are willing to continue:

- National Secretary: Adrian Jones
- Admin Treasurer: Sherry Macliver
- National Trips Secretary: Becky Bates
- National Trips Treasurer: John Dickie
- IT officer: Dave Doody

- Training Officer                      Dermot McKibbin
- MIS editor                                Mark Wallis
- Bulletin editor                         David Symonds
- Publicity                                 Janet Saunders

Posts vacant:

- Membership Secretary      Linda Goss might be interested
- Ramblers/Campaigns        Olive is interested
- BMC representative            Andy Bateman

Motions (see sheets attached, and were circulated within the August 2015 Bulletin)

Discussion Items

Any other Business

## Part 2

### **Motion x**

John Dickie's proposed motion re. Changing the Red Rope tagline had not been formally circulated as a motion. It had however been extensively discussed by some club members over email and the discussion summarised in the Bulletin. In the light of the Motion not having been formally set out and circulated, John withdrew the motion and suggested people continue the discussion between themselves, if interested.

### **Motion 3**

West Midlands motion put in 2014 to an inquorate meeting suggesting changes to the policy regarding refunds in the event of members cancelling a trip booking. The current situation is full refund if cancel up to 4 weeks before a trip, no refund if cancel within 4 weeks of a trip.

The motion proposes:

Refund will be 100% if cancellation is at 12 weeks or more before the start of a trip; 50% if less than 12 weeks but 4 weeks or more before the start of the trip; zero if the cancellation is less than 4 weeks before the start of the trip.

There could be, in exceptional circumstances, a discretionary element to the no refund within 4 weeks of a trip rule, but this should be, in the case of a region's trip, by application to that region's officers, or, in the case of a National trip, to the National Committee, and in no case part of the trip organiser's responsibility.

Motion carried, 22 For.

### **Motion 2**

This motion was brought by the NC following a rationalisation of the Constitution.

It had three features:

- Separation of the Constitution into 2 parts: Constitution and Policy
- Accept the Constitution as it has now been rewritten
- Accept the Draft Policies document

With agreement of the meeting, all three parts were taken together and carried Unanimously, with 2 abstentions

### **Motion 1**

Banding Structure reduction to 5 bands, featuring a 'super-band' for very high earners

The discussion contained numerous points of clarification to the meeting. A point was made and affirmed that this did not constitute any intention to link the RR bands indefinitely to the tax structure for any future changes.

Motion carried 30 For; 1 Against ; 1 Abstention

To be implemented 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. Trip charges will also rise from that date to finance trip costs.

## **2016 AGM**

Meeting discussed continued use of last weekend in September. There was some interest expressed in terms of reviewing:

- Accessibility
- Level of the accommodation
- Possibility of carrying out a survey of members to understand preferences

**Meeting closed circa 12.30 pm**

### **Attachments**

**Motions 1, 2 ad 3**

**Motion No 1: Revision of the Membership Banding Structure and Membership Fees**

Proposed by the National Committee

**Background**

There are at present eight bands A to H use for setting membership fees and trip charges. This is difficult for prospective members to understand and to calculate their correct band. The lowest five bands cover a rather narrow band of weekly or monthly incomes. Furthermore the highest band equates to an annual income of only about £36,000 which is not a great deal above average UK incomes.

Therefore we would like to reduce the number of existing bands and add an additional one for higher earners. In doing so we must ensure that overall income to the club is not diminished.

In 2014 the BMC increased their affiliation fee by £1.50 per person. Last year we absorbed this by drawing on reserves. However we cannot afford to continue to do so. Therefore our target income with the proposed fees banding structure is the present income plus the BMC increase. This equates to £7665 per annum.

**Proposals**

- 1) Reduce the number of existing bands from eight to four and add a new upper band for higher earners. To avoid confusion the new bands will be designated 1 to 5.
- 2) Set the fees for these new bands as:-

<b>Band</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Annual fee	£12	£18	£27	£40	£48
ratio to band 3 fee	44%	67%	100%	148%	178%

Note that the fees for bands 1 to 4 are the same as those for the present bands B, D, F, H. The proposed fee for band 5 has been kept below £50 as this is regarded as a psychological disincentive.

- 3) As far as possible, base the income thresholds between bands on national income and tax parameters. In particular:-
  - a. the threshold between band 4 and band 5 should be derived from the higher rate (40%) income tax level – in 2015, £42,385.
  - b. the threshold between band 3 and band 4 should be derived from the median UK standard personal allowance for income tax – in 2015, £26,884.
  - c. the threshold between band 1 and band 2 should be derived from the standard personal allowance for income tax – in 2015, £10,600.
  - d. The threshold between band 2 and band 3 should be set to be somewhat lower than the midpoint between the upper income levels of bands 1 and 3.

Taking account of income tax and national insurance deductions and converting to weekly and monthly figures, these equate to:-

<b>Income\Band</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
per week	£0 – 204	£205 – 275	£276 – 411	£412 – 614	£615 +
per month	£0 – 884	£885 – 1192	£1193 – 1781	£1782 – 2659	£2660 and over

However estimating the annual club income for existing members with these bands and fees shows a deficit of nearly £200 on the target income as described in the Background above.

**We are, therefore, proposing the following band and fee matrix:-**

<b>Band</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Income per week	£0 – 180	£181 – 275	£276 – 400	£401 – 615	£616 +
Income per month	£0 – 780	£781 – 1192	£1193 – 1733	£1734 – 2665	£2666 +
upper limit ratio to band 3	45%	69%	100%	154%	n/a
Annual fee	£12	£18	£27	£40	£48
ratio to band 3 fee	44%	67%	100%	148%	178%

- 4) No changes are proposed to the method used by members or prospective members to calculate their relevant income.
- 5) Trip fees are to be calculated on the same 5 bands as proposed above.
- 6) If accepted, this proposal will be implemented for new or re-joining members and for renewals received after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015, irrespective of the actual renewal due date. The impact of the new bands and fees will be kept under review by the National Committee and the results reported to the 2016 AGM.

### **Alternative Motion to Motion No 1 : Increase Membership Fees for 2016**

Proposed by the National Committee

#### **Background**

In 2014 the British Mountaineering Council increased their affiliation fee by £1.50 per person. Last year we absorbed this by drawing on reserves. However we cannot afford to continue to do so.

With the current fees membership raises about £7440. 280 of our members are based in England and are liable for the increased BMC fee. To accommodate this, with the same membership, we would need to raise an additional £420 – to give a new total income required of £7860.

#### **Proposal**

Increase membership fees as follows:-

<b>Band</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Annual Fee</b>							
Present fee	£10	£12	£15	£18	£22	£27	£33
Proposed fee	£10	£12	£16	£19	£23	£29	£35

Note that we have kept the lowest two bands at the present fee, increased bands C and D by only £1 whilst all higher bands increase by £2. We have preferred to have fees in whole pounds.

Based on the present membership this would raise £7864.

If accepted this proposal will be implemented for new or re-joining members and for renewals received after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015, irrespective of the actual renewal due date.

### **Motion No 2 : Reform Constitution**

Proposed by the National Committee

## **Background**

The National Committee has been concerned for some time that changes to the existing Constitution can be overly difficult as any change, however minor, requires a two-thirds majority of those present at a General Meeting.

On detailed examination it became clear that the present Constitution was in fact made up of true constitutional items - relating to the principles of the club, its composition and organisation, and to conduct of meetings – and of policies, for instance, specifying national committee posts, or relating to trip financing.

## **Proposal**

It is proposed therefore that

- 1) The present Constitution be reformed into two separate components:-
  - a. A new constitution Rope Constitution (2015), consisting only of elements concerned with the club principles, its composition and organisation, membership eligibility, financial management, conduct of meetings and such like. Changes to any clauses of this document would continue to require a two-thirds majority of those present at a General Meeting.
  - b. A Policy/Standing Orders document comprising those topics from the current Constitution not included in the Constitution 2015. Opportunity has been taken to update these from decisions agreed by previous AGMs and to revise wording in various sections to clarify meanings. Changes to any clauses of this document would require only a simple majority of those present at a General Meeting. Changes could be effected between General Meetings by the National Committee with simple ratification at a subsequent GM.
- 2) The Red Rope Constitution (2015) should be adopted as attached – see Appendix 1(on RR website)
- 3) A draft Red Rope Policies document should be adopted as attached – see Appendix 2 (on RR website). Note that for a number of issues further detailed decision is required. This will be undertaken at the next meeting of the National Committee.

(For voting purposes, the Chairman of the AGM may decide whether to offer this as one motion with three clauses, or as three separate motions. In the latter case if Proposal 1 falls, or the meeting is inquorate, then Proposal 2 and 3 need not be put to the meeting)

## **Motion No 3 Refund of trip charges to members who cancel their bookings.**

Proposed by West Midlands Region

Change the existing policy to the following:-

Refund will be 100% if a cancellation is at 12 weeks or more before the start of the trip, 50% if less than 12 weeks but 4 weeks or more before the start of the trip. No refund will be given if the cancellation is less than 4 weeks before the start of the trip.

However in special circumstances refunds larger than this may be given at the discretion of local club officers.

Reasons for the motion are as follows:-

When a region organises a trip they have to commit funds for accommodation which are often not refundable. Cancellations can therefore lead to serious financial consequences for the region as it may be difficult to find a replacement and this becomes more difficult with shorter notice.

The current system encourages people to book early in order to qualify for the 10% early booking discount. It seems unreasonable that nothing is then forfeited if a person drops out more than 4 weeks before the start of the trip.

There may be circumstances such as ill health or losing a job where it would be reasonable to offer a more generous refund but this can be at the discretion of local club officers in consultation with the trip organiser.