

## Agenda Notes for November 2017 NC Meeting

### Item 3.

#### Gill Cox

Many people are put off by the idea of having to attend a 3-4 hour meeting (and this would probably apply whatever the content). When going away for a weekend most people want a decent walk on both days. A 3day weekend would work for some -but it would be important that people who could only come for 2 days did not have to pay for 3 days.

I think that trying to focus on getting people to be responsible for themselves when out on walks is likely to put people off coming but offering things like navigation training is a good idea. If we are trying to attract people who do not normally come to the AGM some of these are going to be people who enjoy going out on day walks with other people leading usually (at least in the West Midlands) not in areas where there is much danger . Some people do not want to learn to map read etc and any idea that the AGM is going to be encouraging all members to do so is likely to put them off the AGM and possibly the club.

As regards the meeting I thought that the suggestion that all reports, accounts etc should be sent out before the AGM and as many questions as possible answered on line was a good one.

Is there any mileage in separating the meeting into 2 halves-starting at 6pm on Saturday to discuss remaining issues from reports and electing officers (should not last more than say 80 minutes).The meeting on Sunday could then be purely for discussing motions could start at 9.30am and finish by 11am enabling a decent walk on that day (which would be also helped if the event was 3 days and we did not have to get out by 2pm).

Everyone would not need to attend the Saturday meeting. Issues that were to be raised could be mentioned at breakfast on Saturday enabling people to discuss them on walks if they so wished.

I do not know if this format would attract more people but it might be worth trying. I think that the main issue is that people are encouraged to see the AGM as a weekend to go on some good walks and socialise and not mostly as wasted time sitting in boring meetings (I do not personally regard the meeting as a waste of time or boring but I think many people might). I doubt if having the AGM in a city would work -then it would be even more focussed on the meeting. Gill Cox

#### Mike Hargaden

- I recently suggested to Manchester RR that our region offer to take the lead on organising the next AGM as a way of giving something back to the club but the response has been feeble. So far I have only received one (positive) responsebut that is at least 2 of us with a possible third.
- None of us from Manchester RR attended this years meeting despite it being held less than 1.5 hours drive from where most of us live and too few members (from all regions) attended to make it quorate. This is an issue that needs to be addressed
- I'm not sure that local members recognise the AGM nor the activities of the national RR in general as having any relevance to their local activities.
- I suggest that the focus of the next AGM could be to **engage members, and be a celebration of the club and as an way of renewing it and moving it forward.**
- If a decision is taken to hold the AGM in the Peak District it should be able to call on contributors from 3-4 regions located within a couple of hours away, to deliver fun sessions on things like yoga, making the most of your RR walk and perhaps even Salsa for hill walkers (with boots). If no-one else turned up at least these sessions leaders would constitute a quorum :)
- How about a catch phrase such as '**A Red Rope for the many not for the few?**' Mike Hargaden

#### Mike Hargaden (also Item 5)

I am offering to contribute to the organisation of the 2018 AGM.

**Firstly I believe that we need to scope out what issues the club has to address at the AGM.** I suggest that these are: **Engaging members** more in the clubs activities (and by implication attracting new members). 2. Engendering a culture in the club where **developing our skills and knowledge** become a theme that **runs through all of the clubs activities**

and not just hived off to 'training'. The first is about safeguarding our club and the second about safe-guarding our members. (This may be developed as part of item 5. DS)

**Barbara Segal:**

Just to clarify, my intention was that the NC meeting at the AGM should be one of the three, not an additional one, and I agreed with others that it should be short – an hour or two on the second day. This would require the meeting room to be available into the afternoon, but I can't see a three-day AGM working; my guess is that very few members would sign up to that. I would envisage that this meeting would discuss:

- a) How to take forward any decisions taken at the AGM. This might include the appointment of a working group of two or three people on the issue (who need not all be members of the NC, so possibly a way of involving a wider group of members in the running of the club).
- b) A single ongoing NC issue or one from the NC's 'to-do list' which the NC thought would encourage other members to participate in the meeting. A brief description of this, and progress so far (if any), would need to be circulated with the AGM agenda. Barbara

**Humphrey:** reading these posts, there is a basic problem of language: the people who go to "the AGM" are using the term to refer to the weekend, mentioning all sorts of fun things which are outside the formal meeting, but to most members of the club who don't go the term means the meeting, and with the exception of John's very fun motion to change the club's name there hasn't been much on the agenda that sounded exciting since we (largely) disposed of the hut fund.

**Jon Marsden:** Some years back, when I was editing the Bulletin, we tried to "rebrand" the weekend as the "annual gathering". That didn't work, but how we call the weekend is still a problem.

Like me, you have probably been to the AGM of your union branch, or your Teacher/Parent association, or any society you might belong to, and found them boring, uncomfortable and far too long. But the Red Rope AGM is different!! Having been to quite a few, I have met some really lovely people from the different areas and branches, enjoyed a great meal (every time!), quizzes, music, a wide choice of walks, useful training, beers and wines, a treasure hunt, and I've learnt lots about the different huts, trips, and places people have been. Thank you to all the members and organisers!

Regional voting might improve the effectiveness of the decision-making process, although I have reservations about not hearing the full range of views across the whole club before we make a collective decision. A different location might attract more members, as might an invited speaker (serious or funny), some live music, or a wider (earlier?) distribution of the programme of the fun stuff that goes on in addition to the actual meeting. All these things are worth a try in my view! Jon Marsden

**Item 4.**

**Becky Bates:**

Re trips, I think it's important to have a good mix of huts/houses, coast/hills, all season, larger/smaller groups, public transport options.

We are looking for new locations to keep things fresh for our regulars and no longer necessarily book 3 or more weeks in Scotland each year in response to interest in full week bookings for the Lakes and Cornwall. This year and last there have been 3 and 4 trips to Scotland which filled up.

We could try a 'moving on' trip as W Midlands' are so popular but it may be too complex. I am quite keen on complex logistics to ensure variety but know that others find it a strain to move between huts.

There could be more national trips and I think with more retirees this is more likely and members have asked for trips further afield - Hebrides, Lundy, Alps. The main concern is avoiding a financial loss but this will be addressed with the proposed rise to the nightly charge. I have been doing this for a while so know the risks involved when making bookings in terms of not filling spaces. We were pleased with how the costs worked out in Cornwall so this is positive for the future. Becky

**Item 5, Pete Watson:**

a) The ideas of socialism and anti austerity are now once again popular. It is possible for RR to grow. The Labour Party is now the biggest party in Western Europe with something around 600,000 members. There is a growing number of open air rallies and conferences and events discussing left-wing ideas. There are also new ways to contact like-minded people through social media.

b) Red Rope is more likely to grow by making itself known to socialists who like walking and climbing rather than to members of existing groups such as the Ramblers. For discussion at the National committee therefore is how to connect with probably thousands of people who may be interested in a socialist walking and climbing group.

c) Printed material

Should there be a stock of leaflets and cards in each region with somebody responsible to distribute so that major events can be leafleted? What should the leaflet say? (I like the current leaflet- Could be fewer words bigger headline?)

d) Adverts: Should Red Rope advertise in left wing journals as a one off?

e) Social media and meet ups: Should RR invest in improving its profile on Facebook. How does red rope access and contact people who may be looking for socialist walking groups through social media?

f) Can all regions absorb and welcome new members? Pete Watson

### **Item 7, Humphrey Southall:**

Although the AGM agreed that I should take over from Sherry as national admin treasurer, in practical terms that doesn't happen until I become the signatory on the bank account.

I met with Sherry on Saturday, and have started work on the substantial paperwork involved.

Currently, Jonathan Bridge and Pam Case are additional signatories, needed if a cheque for over £250 needs to be signed urgently (cheques for less can be signed just by the treasurer, and so long as there is time the national secretary usually co-signs). We are proposing that they both step down, as neither is much involved with the NC or lives that close to me; both agreed to this when I saw them on Sunday. Sherry and I are proposing that Sherry be one of the additional signatories, and that Dermot McKibbin who lives near me become the other; Dermot has agreed to this. A lot of signatures are required, and we are planning on getting the last of them at the NC meeting.

We need Adrian to confirm he wishes to remain the other "significant person" listed on the account, in addition to myself as the main person they correspond with. We are only allowed to nominate one such person, and if anything happened to the treasurer their role is crucial: the club would lose all access to its funds until they took action — and we have had a situation like that within the last ten years or so.

The paperwork requires us to sign a very formal DECLARATION that a very specific and long MOTION, as supplied by the bank, has been passed by the club, on a particular date. The fact that the AGM agreed in a general way that I should take over from Sherry is neither here nor there, and anyone signing the declaration to say that this motion was passed by the AGM would be liable to criminal charges (and as the AGM minutes don't mention it, not hard to prove). THE LIVERPOOL NC MEETING NEEDS TO PASS THIS MOTION. Sorry, I can't include a copy with this email as I currently have only a paper version, but I will circulate it before the meeting. I don't think the content will pose any particular difficulty.

The background to all of this is that there are now very elaborate rules surrounding bank accounts which don't simply belong to a particular person, supposedly to prevent money-laundering — and the paperwork is correspondingly baroque, Best wishes, Humphrey

I e-mailed you ten days ago to say that the Co-op Bank require us to pass a specific motion in connection with the change of signatories on the bank account. I am attaching just that part of their "change of signatories" pack, and you will see that, as I said, there is a long and specific motion which we have to pass without amendment. Most of it is entirely procedural, but you may notice these requirements:

(A) Limitations on who can be a signatory:

- all signatories to the Account(s) are aged 18 or over
- No Directors/Partners/Signatories/Authorised Users have been subject to bankruptcy in the last six years
- No Directors/Partners/Signatories/Authorised Users have had County Court Judgments registered against them in the last six years.

(B) This one looks worrying:

- the Bank shall be notified in writing of any change of Directors/Partners/Owners/Officials/Members
- However, I have phoned the bank to ask what it means, and they say it means they need to be notified if the people who control the bank account change, meaning the Treasurer and the "key account party", which for now means the National Secretary. In other words, only people we have to tell them about anyway as they are account signatories. It definitely does not mean we need to keep them up to date on individual members joining and leaving! Humphrey

**Item 8.** Carried over from AGM: Redistribution of membership fees to regions, possibly from Jan 2018.

There was a general agreement at the AGM that this was a good idea but a lack of agreement as to how it could be implemented. Please come with suggestions. DS

### **Item 9 (a)**

#### **Linda Goss**

I stopped sending out renewals and reminders after the AGM and have been working on 1) getting web collect set up and 2) moving to the January renewal date

I am still receiving odd renewals from people who are finding the letters in their to do piles and from new members (2 lately have said they have found the club on the internet which is interesting and encouraging)

*Moving to Webcollect* will be a bit of a leap of faith, partly because I am finding a few things with it tricky and partly my lack of time to experiment. But I do think it will do most of what we need and I'm hoping that exporting to excel and word merging will do the rest. I was interested in the Action Fund debate as I haven't yet worked out a way of adding a variable amount to the subscriptions form where people might round up an amount on their cheques.

My thoughts are that once the subcommittee are happy with what I have done I will add the committee to my next test email (shout if you want to be included earlier) so everyone can have a look and test the instructions, as its not totally obvious how to renew the first time.

Someone else needs to follow up on paying online, this is what a lot of people really want to do as they have no cheque book, Sherry and Janet did look at the options and costs but we need to decide what we are implementing and engage with **webcollect** on that.

Also we need a logo to display on the site and emails, if someone could take on getting ours into a suitable format... I'm happy working on setting up the system, but need help on the extras as really have no time for them. Linda

**Steve Wright:** My understanding from NC and AGM discussions is:-

- A) Existing members due to renew between Oct and Dec 2017 get membership until Dec 2018
- B) All others pay for whole of 2018 and get a proportion of their 2017 fee refunded by cheque
- C) New members joining from July to Dec any year pay half annual fee

### **Item 9 (b).**

**Becky:** This is what my bulletin article said on trip charge increase. To address this shortfall NC will raise charges by about 10% for all trips from our AGM . This keeps costs as low as possible for all of our members.

And this from my trips report to AGM: The proposed increase of trip charges should be immediate, from AGM. So why are we now talking of a raise for trips not yet publicised? We cannot afford to go ahead with the 6 national trips at old rates. The June NC meeting accepted that the rise needed to be implemented with immediate effect from AGM.

We can advise trip organisers to let people booked onto trips know about this and make a decision on whether they need to cancel. The club comes first. Becky

**Humphrey:** This was not formally discussed at the AGM, but concern was expressed about raising charges for trips after people have booked onto them.

Personally, I would distinguish between the New Year and February trips, which have been advertised for some time, and the additional five trips which were announced only in the August MIS, which had not even made it onto the web site. Don't know how many people have booked onto them, but probably not many. Damien definitely has booked well ahead, but says he is OK with them being raised.

I am very aware that the trip account got into difficulty and has had to be boosted, but ultimately that is just a "float", and overall the club is quite solvent — and needs to retain members who want to go on trips.

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**Barbara:** I support Humphrey's compromise. Last time we increased trip rates I contacted each of the trip organisers individually to find out how many people had booked onto the trips, and how the organisers felt (both in principle & in terms of hassle) about asking them for more money. This was a bit of a pain for all concerned.

As Humphrey says, the club has a fair bit of money at present. If it looks as if the New Year and February trips are going to make a loss perhaps the organisers could explain the situation and ask for voluntary donations. In my experience members are often happy to waive small amounts owed to them at the end of

trips.

The organisers of the trips from February onwards should provisionally be told about the increases NOW, pending confirmation at November's NC meeting (if the latter is thought necessary). It doesn't seem that the decision will be controversial. Barbara

#### **Item 10 Hut liaison Report** Barbara Segal

##### *Organised trips to the huts*

The newish LMC booking secretary is very flexible and efficient, and making group bookings is now very straightforward.

All three of our allocated weekends for 2017 were used for regional trips, all at Cae Ysgubor:

Leicester in March

Manchester in May (bank holiday)

Scotland East in October

There's been very little response to my requests to regions for bids for 2018. West Midlands have a four-night booking at CY for May 18. The only other request has come from Merseyside. Although they have already had a weekend at CY I am proposing to offer them a weekend in 2018.

##### **Individual bed nights:**

There are now 25 RR members with keys. However, the number of bed nights used has declined this year. Here are the stats to date:

	<b>Bednights used</b>	<b>Fees to RR</b>	<b>Fees owed to LMC</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Blea Tarn, Aug 15 – Oct 16	24	79.00	120.00	Almost all usage by one low-band member
CY, Oct 15 – Oct 16	50	325.00	350.00	
<b>Totals to Oct 16</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>404.00</b>	<b>470.00</b>	Has been paid
Blea Tarn, Nov 16 – Oct 17	1	3.00	5.00	
CY, Nov 16 – Oct 17	39	291.00	273.00	26 of these nights were for one small group
<b>Totals Nov 16 – Oct 17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>294.00</b>	<b>278.00</b>	
<b>Overall totals to date</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>698.00</b>	<b>748.00</b>	

28 different members appear to have used the huts as individuals – though not all key-holders have done so. However, we have no control over our members' use of the hut, so it's possible that a few may have paid LMC directly, by-passing the banding system, or have forgotten to let me know (and pay!) at all. LMC have identified lack of payment as a problem – not necessarily including Red Rope - and I have sent all key-holders instructions about this, so I don't think there's much more we can do.

##### *Installation of a key safe at CY for the use of RR members*

It was agreed at the last joint LMC/RR meeting in October 2016 that we would install a key safe for Red Rope use while we're at the hut. This would avoid the need to rely on the key holder(s) to get in or leave

keys in an insecure place while out for the day. The cost was approved by the NC and Pete Kos from Manchester agreed to install it around a year ago. He has not been able to do this but a group of Bristol climbers who were planning to go to the hut for a few days from Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November agreed to do this and I have bought the key safe at a cost of £39.99. An injury to one member of the group and a poor forecast has led to them postponing the trip but hopefully it will go ahead over the next few months.

##### *Relations with LMC*

These have generally been good and several RR members who have used Cae Ysgubor have remarked at how friendly the LMC members have been. However, when a few of us were there as a group in August it was clear that some LMC members (not those on the Hut Committee) felt that it was unfair that we had contributed almost no physical work to the hut, compared with the massive amount done by LMC members. Although this is not required of us as part of our agreement, and appreciate that it would be

difficult to organise, I think it would help relationships if we could contribute in some small ways. Suggestions on this would be welcome!

#### *Future developments*

The October 2017 Hut Committee meeting was postponed (cancelled?) but the following have arisen by email or via informal conversations at CY.

- 1) The payment of £20 for key fobs has now become a charge rather than a deposit. I provisionally agreed this with LMC and there were no objections when I raised it at the AGM
- 2) LMC are looking into charging for individual use of the huts by direct debit linked to the keys, due to the issue of people forgetting to pay. I think we could sort out a way of this working for Red Rope as well and it would make it easier to keep track of use of the huts by our members.
- 3) Work is beginning on the upgrade of the Blea Tarn hut, to include the installation of a shower. The same key fob will shortly be useable for both huts. LMC would welcome support from Red Rope on the work to be done and possibly in terms of finance. Having a partner organisation involved would make it easier for them to raise external funds, and it may be that a very small amount would suffice. I can investigate this if there's any chance that Red Rope could raise a small donation or offer it from our existing funds.

Barbara Segal, November 2017

**Item 11. Officers' reports** – if not already included above.

Item Treasurer, **Sherry Macliver** has already sent several documents.

#### **David Symonds – Bulletin editor**

The main issue regarding the bulletin is whether it continues to be printed and posted from Sheffield now that Mark Wallis has, or has not, stood down. I say that because I wasn't expecting him to organise any more editions of the MIS – there wasn't one in September (?) and then the October edition did materialise. I'll try to find out if he is continuing until someone volunteers to take over. I heard that some Sheffield members have said they will organise the mailing of the bulletins.

I've tried to get confirmation of this from the Sheffield rep but haven't had an answer. Does anyone know if Sheffield has a rep? An alternative would be for me to find a printer in Liverpool. The next edition should be sent out at the end of February so there is time to sort that out but it would be best done sooner than later. The number of submissions for the last bulletin was healthy enough so I hope that will continue. If you have ideas for articles please turn them into reality! David Symonds

**Dave Doody** replied: I am the acting rep for Sheffield. Jon Marsden has been contemplating whether he could apply for the MIS job and after quite a wait got a reply from Mark outlining what the job entails, but I don't know whether he is still interested. I think Mark will continue to service the MIS if only every other month for a while at least. I am not aware of any offers from Sheffield members re the MIS job.

**Mark Wallis** said: I haven't got a confirmed successor and felt I couldn't just abandon it so am continuing for now. I'm still looking for a volunteer to replace me though and am thinking of dropping out of RR completely. Just doing the November edition. Regards, Mark

**NEWS:** Current National Secretary Adrian Jones is willing to continue with the role as he has been doing, minutes (when he has been to a meeting), meeting venue booking, agendas. He will not be doing any additional more proactive coordinating role so if we want that, this must come from elsewhere. He would be happy to help support that role if it were a job share and we wanted to ask him to help in that way. I think we must discuss this at the meeting because several of us said we would consider doing or sharing that role. Janet Saunders