

**THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
HERTFORDSHIRE & NORTH MIDDLESEX AREA**

MINUTES OF THE AREA COUNCIL MEETING
20 April 2009

Members Present

David Allard, Phil Escritt, Philip Greswell, Sue Jacobs, Norman Jones, Robin King, Sarah Lea, Ray Peters, Harold Stokes, Edward Walker(acting chairman), Mark Westley, David Whiskin.

Agenda Item

- 1 **Apologies** - Nigel Agar, Chris Beney, Chris Clyne, David Dickson, Bert Richardson.
- 2 **Minutes of Meeting held on 23 February 2009** - Approved
- 3 **Matters Arising**

Item 4 - AGM Matters

Bert Richardson has investigated potential locations for the next AGM and proposes Woolmer Green Village Hall. It is warm, has good parking and is on a good bus route. He has made a provisional reservation for Saturday 9 January 2010. The Council AGREED the proposed location and date.

The leader for the pre AGM walk will be agreed at the next meeting.

Item 10 – Heartwood Forest

Phil Escritt has sent his proposals to the Sandridge Parish Council. The parish clerk has written that the Parish Council supports these proposals and in particular wholeheartedly agrees that the issue of parking needs addressing and that it is desirable to ensure dedicated access as opposed to permissive.

General

Philip Greswell pointed out that a Google search for the name of any Area Council member brings up the Council's minutes. Following discussion it was AGREED to continue to put the minutes on the website.

4 Ramblers Re-Branding

Norman Jones wished to know what stationery would be required. Most Council members said that they used an electronic letter head and did not use pre- printed stationery.

It was AGREED that:

- There should be a consistent style
- It should be defined by Central Office
- It should be available in an electronic form which can be used by people with a wide range of standard hardware and software e.g. Mac or PC, Works or Office.

5 Area Secretary's RA Correspondence

Insurance - Norman Jones drew attention to the notice on the Ramblers website concerning insurance cover for practical work.

It was pointed out that this document also contains proposed criteria for walks to be covered by Ramblers insurance. There was some discussion about the practicality of the proposal that each walk must "Have a nominated leader and ideally a nominated back marker who are both members and who together, or separately have reced the walk"

(Minutes secretary's note: The document makes it clear that these walk proposals are being circulated for consultation).

Welcome Letter - Norman has circulated a draft welcome letter for new members. The Council AGREED the text in principle subject to minor amendments. Any further minor amendments to be sent to Norman ASAP.

6 STILE – Report from sub-committee

Harold Stokes said that last October a date of 1 May had been set as a target for distributing the current edition of Stile. He was happy to say that this timescale has been met. It was now being printed and was only awaiting the labels from HQ. He had an early copy of the final printed version to show the Council.

He thanked everyone who had submitted articles. It was a very full edition and some articles had to be shortened slightly.

The Council AGREED to record its thanks to Justin Lumley for his very hard work in producing the new format with colour.

Harold said that a timetable has been agreed for the autumn edition and the sub-committee will meet in early July to decide on the articles to be commissioned

7 Report of General Council 3-4 April 2009

Norman Jones said that circular 09/12 on the Ramblers website is a fair summary of the meeting including the critical motions. David Allard said that following advice from Mark Westley and Chris Beney he had spoken against two motions. Mark explained why he had given this advice.

The "CRM" system which holds membership records is still a shambles. The slides presented at the General Council are on the member's website. A consultant has been appointed and Chris Clyne is attending a sounding board. Central office is concentrating on sorting out the data before sending reports. Sarah Lea said that there are signs of improvement

There was an inconclusive discussion about the need for any attendance at the Members Day to be held in Sheffield on 5 September as no-one was clear about its purpose or value.

8 Report on Ramblers Greater London Forum

Norman reported that the chairman of the forum had had meetings with officers from central office but he had not heard the outcome.

9 Officers Reports

Secretary

Norman Jones proposed dates for Council and Footpath Committee Meetings in 2010. There was a discussion as to whether the Footpaths Committee should precede or follow the Council meetings. Mark Westley said that it was more likely that there would be things to report from the Council to the Footpaths Committee than vice versa. It was AGREED therefore that the current order should be maintained. The Council AGREED the dates proposed. For convenience the dates of all future meetings are listed on an attachment to these minutes

Treasurer

All groups have received their budgeted amounts. A donation of £500 has been sent to the Woodland Trust following confirmation from Central Office that this is in order. We have bought stamps for the next edition of stile.

We still have to pay for two editions of Stile, the annual report, the 25 year celebrations and any expense claims.

We are due to receive additional money from Central Office on 12 May and 4 August which together with our current balance should be adequate.

Countryside Secretary

Local Development Frameworks (LDF) - Philip Greswell is preparing a proposed standardised template to be submitted to each local authority covering rights of way issues. Mark Westley agreed that a standardised statement in each LDF would be beneficial. Ray Peters drew attention to the clear explanation of the LDF process on the Royal Town Planning Institute website.

Lilley Bottom- Philip was impressed by the number of people attending a walk through the affected area organised by North Herts. He drew attention to a protest walk to be held on 3 May.

Stansted Airport Expansion- Philip was pleased to see the article in Walk Magazine. He noted that BAA had delayed their application for a second runway.

Public Transport – Both Philip and Norman have been invited to an HCC Transport Forum. Philip proposed to raise the problem that there were no longer many direct bus routes from north London to the start of walking areas in Hertfordshire. The Council AGREED that this is a serious issue and encouraged him to attend and express this view.

Footpaths Secretary

Mark Westley said that there are still vacancies for Footpaths secretaries in the east Herts area.

Access Officer

Norman said that at a national level the major preoccupation is coastal access.

Area Silver Jubilee

Robin King expressed his thanks to all those who had helped with the planning and particularly Harold Stokes. Details of all the walks have been included on a leaflet which it is desirable to circulate to all members.

It was AGREED that the most efficient and effective mechanism would be to get the current printer of Stile to print the leaflets and enclose them with Stile.

11 Potential Change of Name of Dacorum Group

The Dacorum Group wishes to change its name to West Herts Group but prior to starting the formal process of changing its constitution it seeks approval from the Area Council.

In discussion it was noted that although Dacorum is a historic Hertfordshire name it is now associated with the area covered by the Dacorum District Council. Members living in St Albans or Welwyn Hatfield may wonder why they are allocated to Dacorum. On the other hand people living in Hatfield east of the A1 may wonder why they are being allocated to a "West Herts" group.

In conclusion the Council overwhelmingly voted to SUPPORT the change and AGREED that West Herts appeared to be the best available title.

12 Reports from Group representative

North London and South Herts- Sue Jacobs reported that even though she is the chairman of this group there is still a problem with the central office record of her membership. She also reported that the Group is planning a publicity event in May with walks in Trent Park.

East Herts- Sarah Lea reported that for many years the Group had been running a volunteer footpaths working party in conjunction with the Countryside Management Service (CMS). The CMS have now withdrawn their support. It was AGREED that Relationship with the CMS is a topic relevant to the entire county. The secretary was requested to include it as an agenda item for the next meeting.

13 AOB

Larry Bell- The Council noted with deep regret the recent death of Larry Ball who was a former president. The secretary has written a letter of sympathy and there is an obituary in the current edition of Stile.

Complimentary Copies of Stile- Philip Greswell raised the possibility of sending complimentary copies to the CPRE. It was AGREED that Stile could become a vehicle for publicity to non members and the Stile sub-committee was requested to give consideration to this possibility.

Organisation of HCC Rights of Way Unit – Philip Greswell has obtained a copy of the latest organisation chart. This is of interest to many council members. With the permission of the RoW unit this chart is attached to these minutes.

The meeting closed at 21.30

Attachment to Minutes of Area Council held on 20 April 2009

Dates of Future Meetings

2009

Monday 7 September – Area Council

Monday 21 September – Area Footpath Committee

Monday 9 November – Area Council

Monday 23 November- Area Footpath Committee

2010

Saturday 9 January – Area AGM

Monday 1st February – Area Council

Monday 15th February –Area Footpath Committee

Monday 19th April – Area Council (National Council w/e 10th April)

Monday 10th May – Area Footpath Committee

Monday 6th September – Area Council

Monday 20th September – Area Footpath Committee

Monday 8th November – Area Council

Monday 22nd November – Area Footpath Committee

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