

Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting

Dorset Area of the Ramblers' Association

Held on 22nd November 2014 at the Scout Hut Bere Regis

1 Introduction

The meeting was hosted by the Young Walkers Group and was opened by the Area President Laurie Fairhurst. He welcomed the members present and the guest speaker Giles Nicholson, Area Manager – West and North Team and also Steve Davies Area Manager - Eastern Team from Dorset Countryside Services

2 Present

There were 22 persons present.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Graham and Madeleine Hemsley, Kate Gocher, Sue Blake and Alan Harris,

4 Minutes of the 39th AGM

These had been circulated to all present at the start of the meeting. They were accepted as a true record of the meeting with no objections and were duly signed by the Chairman.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Jan Wardell asked about the present membership of Dorset Area – the Secretary advised that there were just over 1550. There were no other matters arising.

6 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

Laurie Fairhurst introduced the 40th Annual Report for the Ramblers Association Dorset Area for 2013/2014.

The Secretary explained the reasoning behind the removal of the position of Area Membership Secretary with the duties being taken over by the Secretary

Income and Expenditure Accounts

Mike thanked the independent examiner Martin Ford-Horne. It should be noted that the format has changed slightly this year to improve the readability.

He asked the members to note the small surplus over the last year of £219.90 (approx. 2.5%) as compared to the previous year where there was a deficit of £407.60 (approximately 4.3%) neither of which could be considered too bad when the budgets are submitted approximately 15 months before the end of the financial year.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Steve Ryder and seconded by Peter Evans. They were approved with no objections.

Area Footpath Secretary Report

Jan Wardell stated that in addition to the written report there has been a statement from Ramblers that as part of the 80 year celebration next year they want the whole of the footpath network in the country to be surveyed by Ramblers Members. Subsequent to the initial announcement no further information has been received.

She also expressed thanks to Jim McDonald for his outstanding work over many years as the Footpath Officer looking after the Purbeck Area

7 Election of Members and Officers

In accordance with the Constitution all posts are open to nomination at the Annual General Meeting and as no valid nominations had been received in advance the following persons were proposed and seconded from the floor.

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Second
Chairman	Keith Seymour	Julia Mathews	Mat Benfield

Secretary	Jim Scott	Peter Evans	Brian Panton
Treasurer	Mike Heckford	Brian Panton	Rosemary Bramah
Area Footpath Secretary	Jan Wardell	Hazel Evans	Steve Ryder
Newsletter Editor	Douglas Pigg	Rosemary Bramah	Keith Seymour
Publicity Officer	Cheryl Whittle	Julia Mathews	Jan Seymour
Coastal Access Officer	Brian Panton	Mike Heckford	Cheryl Whittle
Individual Member	Kate Gocher	Julia Mathews	Margaret Kettlewell

There were no nominations for Countryside Secretary or for the remaining two vacancies for Individual Members

Area Delegate for General Council 2015	Jan Wardell	Rosemary Bramah	Brian Panton
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The secretary explained that the second representative would be nominated by the Group hosting the 2015 Area AGM which is normally in rotation. Next year it would normally be the East Dorset Group but we have asked whether the 4050 Walkers Group would like to host it and await their response.

Representative of the Affiliated Clubs - No nomination received at this time

Rosemary Bramah – wearing her other hat as Secretary of the Casterbridge Ramblers – asked whether there was a formal listing of the duties of the representative.

The secretary advised that there isn't a formal document but gave a brief summary and agreed to prepare such a document and circulate it round the Affiliated Clubs.

8 Appointments

Martin Forde-Horne has agreed to continue as Independent Examiner and as there were no objections or alternative proposals he was appointed after being formerly proposed and seconded by Mike Heckford and Keith Seymour.

Laurie Fairhurst to agreed to continue as President and this was agreed unanimously after being formerly proposed and seconded by Jim Scott and Mike Heckford

9 Questions

Cheryl Whittle made a request for assistance in relation to the Festival of Winter Walks where she needs confirmation from the Groups as to which of their walks in that period would be included – The secretary agreed to contact the Groups to see which of their walks could be included.

Also she advised that the programme of short Area Walks (3 to 5 miles) which was intended as a bridge between the Walking for Health Walks and the usual 5 mile plus walks hasn't been a great success with difficulty of getting leaders and the fact that very few non members turned up for those walks which did take place. If any members have any thoughts on broadening the appeal of the Ramblers in Dorset can they please contact her.

Mat Benfield asked whether the documents could be made available to members prior to the meeting. The secretary advised that this was normally the case for the annual report with members being advised in the brief annual report in Dorset Footnotes that it would be available on the website or by post if a stamped addressed envelope was provided. The draft minutes should also be available on the website. Unfortunately this year that didn't happen. The secretary to ensure that this is done in future with an email copy sent to all persons on the Area Council Minutes circulation.

In the case of the financial report being available in advance would not be practical due to the timing of the end of the financial year and the AGM.

Maureen Panton asked what happens when members of the 4050 Walkers reach 60. Keith Seymour advised that nothing would happen and they could continue as members of that group should they so wish

Keith Seymour asked that any groups putting on Leadership and Navigation Courses where there were spare places advise the other groups who may have members who would like to attend.

Mike Heckford asked members to note that as part of the accounts there is an item Royalties £116. This is a one off receipt and relates to the book by Priscilla Houston – Walking the Wessex Ridgeway in Dorset – where she donated the royalties to Dorset Area. This payment was a final receipt of the royalties due and will be used to create a memorial to Priscilla on the Wessex Ridgeway, probably in the area around Ibberton, which will be a fairly large stone with a suitable inscription. Can any members who have ideas for a suitable location please advise Mike Heckford or Jan Wardell.

10 Talk by Giles Nicholson, Area Manager – Dorset Countryside Services

Giles gave an extremely interesting and enlightening presentation covering the role of Dorset Countryside Services with the effects of the reorganisation and the more effective use of resources and volunteers.

Points which were noted were the change from 2 seat to 4 seat vehicles allowing them to transport more volunteers and apprentices to work sites.

Also the combining of the resources with grass cutting on highways which makes better use of resources over the whole year

In terms of numbers there are about 11 sq. km. of highway verges, 2.5sq. km. of urban verges 30 country sites and 3 country parks

An interesting development is the production of Walkabout Leaflets in conjunction with local councils. The first example of this is Sturminster Newton.

Communication – the Ramblers footpath monitors/secretaries are encouraged to have direct contact with the local rangers to follow up formal problem reports.

11 Comments

Rosemary Bramah. The Jubilee Trail in the Ramblers has previously had a very good relationship with DCC but for the last 6 months there has been no communication. Replacement of stiles with gates just hasn't been happening and we haven't received invoices for the work which has been carried out.

Reply – Will look into this and ensure that invoices are generated

Brian Panton Has been receiving numerous complaints about lack of response to reports

Reply – It is believed that this is now under control but that direct contact with the relevant ranger would help in this although that should be an addition to the normal reporting system not a replacement

Cheryl Whittle Would like to see more communication about the work being done and how we are working together for us to convey to the public

General It was felt that we need to have better communication with Countryside Services to allow the Ramblers path clearing teams to work more effectively with the Rangers.

12 Votes of thanks

Keith Seymour thanked Giles Nicholson, for his interesting talk and his responses to the wide range of question and Steve Davies for his contribution. He also thanked the volunteers from the Young Walkers Group for organising the venue, morning walks and the excellent refreshments.

Signed

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