

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION - YORK GROUP

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 24th March 2022 at 2:00pm at 8 Fox Garth, Nether Poppleton YO26 6LP

Present: Ian Reavill (Chairman) via FaceTime, Vivienne Taylor (secretary), David Nunns, Steve Hoather, Linda Gall, Avis Strudwick, Judith Tosh, Eric Smith and Mike Norman

1/. Apologies for absence: Anne Parker, Paul Shepherd, Tom Halstead, Simon Lyle and Stephanie Windsor

2/. Committee Members

The committee officially appointed **Stephanie Windsor** as a Committee Member.

Simon Lyle reported to the committee that he may not be able to continue as a committee member because of personal commitments. As Simon is able to collect all the paperwork and liaise with NYCC and their team on all matters at home, Simon has now agreed to remain a valued member of the committee.

3/. Minutes of the last meeting held on 9th December 2021 were adopted.

4/. Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

5/. Treasurers Report:

BANK BALANCE

As at the close of business on Friday 18th March 2022 the balance in our Bank Account stood at £660.49 which comprises £306.68 in the Main Fund plus £353.81 for Self-Funded Activities.

The balance on the Main Fund has been reduced from £508.27 as at 7th December 2021 (see my Report to the Committee Meeting of 9th December 2021). This has been a result of payments for refreshments at the Area AGM (£196.79) and Bank charges for processing cheques (£4.80).

Committee members are asked to note that the balance on our Main Fund has been much higher than it should have been for many years. Payment of the cost of refreshments at the Area AGM was at the request of Sam Borman, Area Treasurer, to reduce the balance on our Main Fund nearer to the amount acceptable to Ramblers Head Office.

The balance for Self-Funded Activities has fallen from £1,245.81 as at 7th December 2021 (see my Report to the Committee Meeting of 9th December 2021). This is due to the payments for the 2021 Christmas Lunch which were partly off-set by some late receipts for the same event.

The Committee discussed whether some of the main fund could be spent on secateurs for those members that didn't have them so that they could be used on walks and recce's. The committee decided that for those members who did not own secateurs then there would be

monies available to purchase them. It was also discussed whether we purchase reflective jackets to ensure that these were used by leaders and back-markers for road walking. SH advised against the difficulties of bulk buying the hi-viz jackets and it was agreed that walk leaders and back markers should be encouraged to wear them and that most walkers do have their own hi-viz equipment.

6/. Membership: Current membership stands at 442 members and 1 affiliate member. This is unchanged since late December as the York Group have gained 10 new members and lost 10 members. A couple of new members have also been walking, so generally an encouraging picture. SH commented that owing to the cost of living going up the expectation was that we could lose members.

7/. Footpath sub-committee report and parish footpath report:

DAVID NUNNS reported that since the last October meeting there had been several public enquiries, including the Fulford 23 Enquiry which Graham Cheyne set up having gone through the Ombudsman and won his case. Other public enquires included: the Knapton No. 4 footpath which has finally gone through from the end of Acomb to the boundary of Rufforth Airfield, although this to be re-advertised due to issues of a possible restrictive byway; the inquiry into the Kexby footpath 19 and 20 which lead from Intake Lane to Hag Wood; work has also started on the closed path across Askham Bryan half way through the menagerie; the Bishopthorpe Level Crossing at Copmanthorpe which Network Rail have applied for a diversion order and an application to put up a footbridge at the end of York Field Lane.

SIMON LYLE recently sent out several emails to all parish walkers asking for an update on the situation at their respective parishes and received very little response. There were 4 replies from Ryedale members and 3 from York. As Simon is unable to get out on walks, owing to personal commitments, he has been unable to chase up members and get the support the job needs to keep it active. Therefore, SL now needs to find an active member of the group to restore the enthusiasm that was there before Covid, where virtually every York parish and about half the Ryedale's parishes were being covered. SH commented that SL was also going to organise a working party to help with path maintenance and that it now needed a 'path's champion' to generate enthusiasm within the group, and that this should be published in the newsletter.

8/. Publicity: IR asked that apart from the newsletter, was there any other publicity we should be thinking of. VT said that owing to the pandemic everything had changed and that it was now down to publicising through the websites and social media. ES mentioned that the Ramblers do send out leaflets but the question was that apart from making a leaflet drop there was very little more that could be done. VT reiterated that 'word of mouth' was the best publicity and for all members to extol the benefits of the Ramblers. IR commented that the website must be doing its job because we were still getting new members.

9/. Walking Groups

Linda Gall – Tuesday Group reported that the group was going well and on average they had up to 22 walkers and that four new people had joined the group, although the group was still struggling for leaders. IR asked whether the Tuesday Group was going to continue with pub lunches. LG commented that owing to the varying number of walkers and pubs closing it was proving too difficult, although LG mentioned that if someone else wished to organise the pub lunches then she would put it on the website.

Judith Tosh – Amblers reported that the Amblers were no longer limiting numbers or having to use a booking system anymore, and that the same leaders were available to lead. The Amblers have had one or two visitors but no new members.

Steve Hoather – Wednesday Ramblers reported that the typical numbers walking were in the region of 20, although one walk had 31. The group no longer requires a booking system mainly because walkers didn't like the inflexibility. There was a full programme of walks up to the end of June, with all the same leaders as before, the only difference being that walk leaders were leading twice as often as before the pandemic. SH also commented that as the number of walkers had fallen there was no intention of going back to two walks a week, and that unless it was really necessary walks would not be split.

Avis Strudwick – Public Transport reported that a booking system remained in place due to travelling by bus and having to limit numbers, although when travelling by train bookings weren't always necessary. Members didn't seem to mind the booking system and with each walk emails were sent out every Sunday for the following Saturday, and it was on a 'first come first served basis', with most people sending their requests back within minutes! AS also commented that quite a lot of their walkers had requested walking further afield, therefore a couple of walks were successfully planned for the Peak District. Up until the easing of the pandemic the numbers were at least 20, whereas now the numbers have dropped to between 10 and 14 because of people going on holiday.

Roger Brooks – Public Transport Trails IR reported that the trail walks were going well.

'GOOD PRACTICE' GUIDE and RISK ASSESSMENTS

'Good Practice' Guide [DRAFT] (see Addendum for full edited guide) IR reported that the draft guide produced is nothing new and is simply a condensed version of what was originally in the Walking Booklet, and that this should be presented to all people that are leading walks and also all members of walking groups that have an equal responsibility. ES, together with several other members of the committee commented on the paragraph relating to road walking; 'small groups walking on the right and large groups walking on the left'. It was agreed by the committee that this should read; 'normally groups should walk on the right'. SH commented that as we were awaiting General Council on the Risk Assessments, were we looking to publish the guide imminently or wait until there was a

decision. IR responded that regardless of what decisions were made with Risk Assessments the 'Good Practice Guide' should be published in the April newsletter and also on the website because it would not change and is what the group have been working with for years. It was agreed by the committee to publish the guide in the newsletter, and on the website. JT suggested that it could be an annual reminder, particularly as there was no longer a Walks Booklet.

Risk Assessments are still 'work in progress' and the committee is awaiting to hear from Central Office the results of further discussions. IR commented that both the Area Committee and the Cluster Meeting had both highlighted the need to reassess the Risk Assessments proposed by Ramblers CO. At next month's General Council Meeting a decision will be made on Risk Assessments, therefore this is something that the committee can discuss again at the next committee meeting. SH reported once again that leaders and volunteers would be put off by not only the paperwork involved but also with each leader having to keep copies for 3 years. JT commented that if Risk Assessments were required then so would the task of registering walkers. ES commented that he found it difficult leading walks when he didn't even know who the names of walkers were, and he thought it important that we stress the need for each walker to carry an ICE card (an identification card produced by the Ramblers) and distributed by Steve Hoather.

REGISTRATION OF LEADERS – ASSEMBLE

All walk leaders that lead for the York Group are required to register on Ramblers Assemble, and if they are walk leaders for other groups they should also register separately under that group. It is up to the Walk Secretaries to register their leaders, and this can be achieved by emailing the list of walk leaders to Eric Smith Membership Secretary eric.ericsmith69@hotmail.co.uk. ES confirmed that once he received the list of walkers he would check their membership number and send the request direct to central office.

10/. Website

Mike Norman reported that there had been no progress on the local group Ramblers CO pages. MN also commented on how good our own website was looking with the new design, to which the committee unanimously agreed.

Tom Halstead reported on the data that he could access from the website, and a printed graph of all the hits the website had received over the last 7 days was passed around the committee.

11/. Area Council: IR reported that Area Council have four meetings a year, two through Zoom and the other two held at Wetwang Village Hall. Area Council commented on all the work that the York Group had put in at the Area AGM in January, and IR thanked all the volunteers that helped. The committee agreed that receiving the Area Minutes was informative, therefore emailed copies will be sent out to all members.

12/. Newsletter: Items required to be advertised in the newsletter were; the Coach Ramble details including the registration form; details of the 'Good Practice Guide', Parish Paths volunteer and also a volunteer to undertake a footpaths working party; St Leonard's Challenge Walk, Walking Group secretary's articles of interest, and Roger Brook's Dales Way. Ian, Viv and Anne to get together to collect all the articles for the newsletter with a deadline of mid-April.

13/- Coach Ramble to Settle

Coach Ramble date is booked for the 22nd of May going to Settle. Roger Brooks has organised the A Walk which is 12 miles, Ian Reavill will be taking the B Walk at 9 miles, and John Cocker is leading the C Walk which is 7 miles. Description of all walks to be sent to MN and upload onto the website with the booking form. A full description of all the walks, including the booking form, will also go in the newsletter. All walks will start from the same start point in Settle. Bus timetable agreed at 8:25am Hospital Field Road Bus Station, 8:35am Memorial Gardens, and 8:50am at the BP Garage in Poppleton. IR reported on the extra costs for the coach and proposed that the cost of the coach ramble would now go up to £15 (previously £12), to which the committee agreed.

14/. Correspondence:

A request was received from the Leibniz-Institute for German Language in Mannheim, Germany asking whether anyone travelling with groups of 3 or more people would be interested in having a small video camera set-up in their cars to record their conversation for research purposes. It was decided by the committee that it wasn't something that members would be interested in.

11/. AOB: Date for the next Coach Ramble – Sunday the 16th of October – location to be agreed. York AGM venue at Welburn Hall to be booked for Wednesday the 23rd of November.

12/. Date and venue of next meeting: Thursday 7th of July at 2:00pm held at 49 Main Street, Escrick YO19 6LQ.

ADDENDUM

Walkers 'Best Practice' GUIDE

Walks that are organised by Rambler Areas and Groups will automatically receive civil liability insurance protection through the Ramblers National Policy.

All walks must be publicised in advance, which at present will be on both the national and group website. All walks must have an authorised nominated leader, and where appropriate, a back-marker, both of whom should preferably have recce'd the walk.

Walkers are all being urged to use 'good practice', which include the following responsibilities:

Walkers

- a) ensure you are fit enough to complete the walk, and inform the leader of any potential problems
- b) ensure you are properly equipped with the right clothing, and also including refreshments and first aid kit
- c) keep behind the leader and in front of the back-marker
- d) follow the leader's instructions, particularly regarding road walking and difficult terrain
- e) carry some form of identification (ask about Ramblers ICE cards)
- f) where dogs are allowed, follow the directive regarding dogs
- g) inform the leader and/or back-marker if you leave the walk or drop behind
- h) be aware of others when using walking poles

Leaders

- a) all walk leaders should be registered on Rambler's Assemble
- b) give an outline description of the walk, its length, and include any tricky sections, particularly road walking
- d) check all walkers are properly equipped for the conditions
- e) ensure the group does not get too spread out, always look behind to check where the back-marker is and adjust the pace if necessary
- f) if you need to inform emergency services and there's a phone signal, use either a grid reference or 'what3words' to inform emergency services of your whereabouts

It is assumed walk leaders will be familiar with the route and any potential hazards such as road walking or difficult terrain. The weather forecast should be checked for any conditions which might necessitate changing the route or cancelling the walk.

Road walking is a particular hazard to walkers, and where possible pavements or grass verges should be used. If this is not possible then normally groups should walk on the right, and where possible both leader and back marker should wear a high visibility jacket.

Emergency 999 Calls can be made on any mobile phone network, not just your own. If you are somewhere where your network does not have reception, but another does, you will get Emergency Calls.