

East Cheshire Ramblers Group Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8th February 2019

1. Present

Jane Gay – Chair

Colin Finlayson – Treasurer

Dave Barraclough - Footpath Committee
Chairman

Sue Munslow – Membership Secretary

Kathryn Carty – Committee Member

Maggie Swindells – Social & Events Secretary

Keith Anderson – Committee Member

Adrian Flinn – Secretary

Apologies: None

2. Matters arising from last meeting held on 12th November 2018

All the outstanding actions were reviewed and closed as follows:

- Footpaths Projects work: no follow up but is

understood that this work will recommence in 2019.

- RA stipend to ECR: on –going and Colin Finlayson will report when a response is forthcoming.
- Training courses for new Walk Leaders: see 4.1 below
- Tailored publicity leaflets were provided to leave in appropriate venues in our area.
- Stroller Walks: 18 walks confirmed for 2019. Probably they will run weekly during July/August. The advice from Central Office as to whether these stroller walks should be open to the general public with or without membership was not very clear. This will be pursued further in due course.
- Membership: Following a complaint Central Office confirmed that the person joining our walks on numerous occasions was not a member of RA.

3. Matters arising from AGM held on 24th November 2018

3.1 Social & Events Secretary vacancy: The Committee were delighted that Maggie

Swindells volunteered to take up this office from immediate effect. The Committee thanked Jane Gay for all the hard and excellent work that she put in over many years in producing a social calendar for our membership to enjoy.

3.2 Date of 2019 AGM: The Committee agreed to hold the next ECR AGM on 23rd November 2019.

The date of the next Area AGM has not been confirmed yet.

4. New Issues

4.1 Walk Leaders training (map & compass): Contact was made with a qualified trainer (Gillian Kay) who can run a one or two day navigation courses for ECR new walk leaders. In addition, the Peak District National Park (PDNP) run this type of training for the public. **Action: Kathryn Carty, Sue Munslow and Jane Gay will meet to discuss further with Gillian Kay. Also, the membership will be notified of the availability of PDNP training courses provided to the public plus booking details, if interested.**

4.2 Rainow FP28 (Harrop Brook bridge): A section of the Gritstone Trail is currently subject to a temporary closure as this bridge (near Bollington) needs restoration. The Committee was asked to agree to provide a contribution towards the repair of this historic packhorse stone bridge together with other organisations that have pledged a donation. The Committee agreed to contribute £500 towards this project (total estimated cost of around £6500) which will be managed and financed by Cheshire East Council (with contributions).

Action: Colin Finlayson will contact Cheshire East Council and will effect this payment on receipt of an invoice.

4.3 Lost Ways: A meeting of Cheshire East Ramblers groups Footpaths Secretaries was organized by Dave Barraclough to meet Jack Cornish (Ramblers Association Project Manager for the “Don’t Lose Your Way” programme run by Central Office) held on 10th January. Also, Diane Simcoe (Northern Area Support Officer for RA) attended the meeting. The outcome of the meeting was shared with the Committee and the messages given are summarized in the

Footpaths report – see 5.5 below. The key point is that the meeting concluded that there is probably no need to organize a further motion to the 2019 General Council on the basis that the views/concerns /principles expressed during the meeting will be taken back to Central Office and will be incorporated into the programme.

The Committee reiterated our commitment for our own Lost Ways project and to provide support and encouragement as the practical help for making applications from the RA Central Office will not be available until later this year. David Barraclough understands that Colin Park has a shortlist of some potential claims that will add benefit to the ECR existing footpath network. He also expressed the view that our main priority of ECR effort should remain on our Walks Programme and attention to existing footpaths. **Action: Colin Finlayson will discuss with Colin Park and review the current situation/progress**

4.4 ECR proposed funding of Footpaths projects in 2019: See 4.2 above. Other project

will be considered as they arise.

4.5 Walk Register App: No time to discuss.

Action: Adrian Flinn to include in the agenda for next meeting.

4.6 Front cover to “6 month “ programme:

No time to discuss. **Action: Adrian Flinn to include in the agenda for next meeting.**

5. Reports from Officers

5.1 Chair

Report in Appendix 1. Noted

5.2 Treasurer

Report in Appendix 2. Noted.

A discussion took place on the cost of the subscription to join RA compared with other competitor walking groups in our Area and the potential impact on our membership (a slight drop noted – see 5.3 below) and nationwide. A draft motion to the General Council 2019 was tabled by Dave Barraclough seeking for a freeze on subscriptions for a few years which was approved by the Committee in principle but needs to be approved by the other 2 groups in

our Cheshire East Area before submission. It was noted that the time left to submit motions is very tight as the General Council meeting is in April 2019. **Action: Dave Barraclough and Colin Finlayson will draft wording for approval by the Committee and other groups in the Area.**

5.3 Membership

Report in Appendix 3. Noted.

5.4 Social & Events

Report in Appendix 4. Noted. Maggie Swindells will take over this position and produce the report for our next meeting. **Action: Jane Gay will inform all organisers of events of this change and copy Maggie so that she can have the email addresses of all organisers.**

5.5 Footpaths

Report in Appendix 5. Noted. See 4.3 above for discussions on Lost Ways and 4.2 for Rainow FP 28.

5.6 Publicity

No report. Continuing to publish walks every week in the Macclesfield Express.

6. Any other Business

6.1 Frequently asked questions for new Walk Leaders: A draft was circulated by Maggie Swindells for the Committee to give feedback. This FAQ's is complimentary to the guidelines issued by RA. **Action: Maggie Swindells will incorporate the feedback and post the guidance in our website.**

6.2 Recurrent item for Agenda: It was agreed to add "Walks Programme" as a regular item in the agenda for future Committee meetings.
Action: Adrian Flinn

Date of next meeting

Thursday 25th April 2019 at 1.30 pm at Chair house

Adrian Flinn – Secretary (17.2.2019)

APPENDIX 1

Chair Report: February 2019

I don't think anything particularly major has happened over the last couple of months.

Adrian Sue and I attended the area AGM and as a result of this several of us feel that it would be nice to work more closely with the other groups in our area. I'm not really sure how to progress this but perhaps we can all give it some thought I have cut and pasted a section from Steve's email to me.

I think this is possibly something for the next meeting when we've all had some time to think about it and maybe discuss with other members of ECR.

Steve's email

"Some of my thoughts about closer working are more to do with sharing training, having a common method of grading walks (maybe we already do) and some generic common practices and publicising the area's walks on our web sites so any member in our area can quickly and easily see what is happening.

Also, I went to the footpaths meeting and am keen that we all work on the spreadsheet of lost ways that DAVE Baraclough circulated and identify this as a priority for all 3 groups.

However, I do like the idea of joint social events and joint meetings.

Let me know what you think.

I've heard comments that the area structure is largely irrelevant for our area. I feel this is a shame and would like to see that perception change"

Dave Barraclough has been very busy holding meetings with other footpath secretaries from the area and also with Jack Cornish. I'm sure he will report back on this but I would just like to record my thanks for all the work he has done all "lost Ways" and how to have a sensible approach to this project

Below is the list of tasks I presented in my January report 2018 I have to say I think we have made good progress on many of these so that's thanks to the hard work of the committee.

Chairs report January 2018

There are several topics from the last few meetings which I think we need to keep in mind so they don't disappear. They are

Notices recognising footpath work NOT SURE THINK WE HAVE BOUGHT THEM

Celebrating and recognising volunteers AT THE LAST AGM, national achievement awards presented, BUT MAY THINK ABOUT A SOCIAL FOR ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS.

Emergency aid or map reading course. PLANNING UNDERWAY

Questionnaire to membership to get an understanding of what they want from the group and what they are prepared to offer. I'll bring to the meeting the results of the last questionnaire. CARRIED OUT AND RESULTS ACTED ON.

Events onto the website DONE

New General and footpath committee members. DONE

APPENDIX 2

Treasurer's Report : January 2019

Self Funded Activities :

Both Xmas Lunches were well attended in December and broke even.

Bank

The balance at 31st January was £6065.85

Charges are now been applied to our account for paying in of members cheques.
Total charges to date are : £2.10 .

Annual Return 2018

We received a query from the RA External Auditors in early January asking ECR to give details and examples of why we had a difference in our spending profile over the past two years?

We gave a full and documented response which was timed to meet their deadline of 14th January.

No further request for any additional information has been received to date.

Funding of Footpath Projects in 2019

Details of the request for funding of the renovation to Rainow FP 28 Harop Brook Bridge have already been circulated with the Agenda.

This meeting needs to decide whether ECR would be willing to contribute to the preferred proposed solution (Stone Bridge)

I will table any updates of other proposed "crowd funding" at the meeting.

Report Ends

APPENDIX 3

Membership report: February 2019

At the 2018 AGM I reported that
“ Over this year membership has remained stable throughout with 593 members showing high retention and a steady supply of new members. The national membership continues to decline at a rate of about 2% each year.”

Since my last report the membership has dropped slightly with fewer new members in recent months. However membership figures do fluctuate from month to month and it is only looking at the total at the end of each year that any real change will be seen.

Nov	582	2 new members
Dec	584	3
Jan	576	2
Feb	577	6

APPENDIX 4

Social secretary: February 2019

Since my last report which was for the AGM we have had three Christmas meals. One was organised by Andy at the Church House and was virtually a sell-out. All who attended seem to enjoy it. Teresa organised the weekend Christmas lunch at the Windmill and about 35 people attended. This was a new venue and was so well received she booked again for next year. Georgie and Peter also organised a walk with a meal for long walkers. It was a bitterly cold day and I think they had to take shelter in a pub and have coffee to warm up, but those who attended enjoyed the event. Thanks to all those organised these meals.

New Years Day was made special once again by Melanie and Lorraine who organised the walk and ensured that there was enough sherry and mince pies to go around at the break. There were 37 on the walk and we made a half page spread in the Macclesfield express so thanks to Melanie and Lorraine and also Barry who seemed to be the one carrying a heavy load!

The quiz night on the 1st of February organised by Peter and Georgie was a great success in spite of the fact we thought it may be snowed off. Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves so thanks to the quiz organisers, Peter and Georgie. Amazingly, 32 people attended so dividing perfectly into teams of four! The event made a profit of £60 which is very pleasing and will act as a cushion for future social events.

Well, the brilliant news is, that Maggie has agreed to take over as social secretary. I have met with her and explained that basically the program is set up 12 months ahead and so this year is organised which gives her some breathing space. I am sure that everybody will give her loads of support and help. I have to say that she is a whizz with spreadsheets and lists of tasks to be carried out so I'm sure that she will bring a different method to the role. And I'll probably be emailing her regularly remembering things that I haven't told her about, hopefully not!

Jane Gay

APPENDIX 5

FOOTPATH COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE MAIN COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEB 8th 2019

There have been two meetings of note since the last ECR Committee Meeting

Lost Ways Meeting – Jan 10th

We organised a meeting of Cheshire Ramblers Groups Footpath Secretaries to meet Jack Cornish the Ramblers Project Manager for the ‘Don’t Lose Your way’ Project. The day was successful and several e mails have been circulated with details of the presentation he gave us and the messages we asked him to take away with him. In summary, we hope he will persuade (or impose) guidelines for other Ramblers Groups to follow sensible levels of claiming new Lost Ways, without excessive claims that could lead to unnecessary costs all round.

We hope he will also approach the Open Spaces Society to limit their Cheshire representative from making too many claims in Cheshire.

Overall, I hope that work on Lost Ways can be kept to a modest level as I regard the main purpose of ECR is to organise an active walking programme for its members and keep administration of footpath matters to a modest level.

We also met Diane Simcoe, the Ramblers Northern Area Support Officer, which was useful.

The meeting also used the opportunity for the FP Secretaries to propose items for discussion at the next PROW Consultative Meeting in April.

Footpath Committee Meeting – Jan 17th

This was the first meeting of 2019 and carried out its normal business of reviewing last year’s key ‘problem paths’ and planning the footpath inspection programme for 2019. All these are going ahead smoothly and we also plan a meeting with Roger Fielding to discuss possible improvements to the Footpath Database. It is good to note that almost all FP Inspectors are now using the database online without many problems.

Routine matters of dealing with footpath problems from the public and Consultations on Diversions etc from PROW were dealt with. There are no special items of note.

One item is being brought to the Main ECR Committee’s attention, namely the closure of Rainow FP28 on the Gritstone Trail at the Harrop Brook Bridge and the subsequent request for a grant of funding from ECR towards its repair. This is already the subject of other documents circulated for the meeting

Dave Barraclough
3rd February 2019