

## MINUTES OF ECR ZOOM MEETING TUESDAY 5 MAY 2020

Start time 1.30 pm

### ATTENDANCE

Dave Barraclough

Jane Gay

Kathryn Carty

Keith Anderson

Maggie Swindells

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#### 1. APOLOGIES AND ATTENDANCE

The only absent committee member was Colin Finlayson.

#### 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on February 3<sup>rd</sup> were approved.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) Thanks were expressed to Neil Collie for information re donkey bridge at Pott Shrigley. The work is done and there is an article on the website.
- b) Lost Ways – Keith Anderson is interested in doing some work on this and is waiting to hear from Colin Park.
- c) The annual General Council, which Jane and Steve Butterfield were due to attend, was cancelled. No cost was incurred by ECR.

#### 4. WALKING PROGRAMME

Jane has emailed coordinators and suggested that as soon as we receive a recommencement date, they prepare the programme for the first month and then concentrate on the rest of the schedule.

Dave suggested simply bringing forward the unused element of the current programme (Jan to June) and send that out to leaders and simply amend if walk leaders are unable to lead on the revised allocated dates. This was considered to be a good suggestion which would be put to the all coordinators. Jane would email them after Sunday.

#### 5. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

- CHAIR

Jane met Steve Butterfield re Area chair. Diane Simcoe (Northern support officer for the Ramblers). Jane mentioned ASSEMBLE a unified website all officers should be using. She had encountered some difficulties and Dave suggested all committee members try and log on or register and have a look how it works and familiarise themselves with it. He will similarly ask the footpath committee. He will forward the email from Wendy Halley. Any thoughts on Assemble can be emailed to committee members.

- Jane didn't intend emailing ECR members about the present situation or restarting the programme until there was advice from Head Office. It was felt that there was clear advice on the Ramblers website.

- **TREASURER**

Absent. Nothing to report.

Dave referred to an earlier email re relinquishing part of the budget and suggested in future all committee members be consulted. Jane, however, had been consulted and had agreed the course of action. Dave also wondered whether the treasurer could ask Ramblers if it is was their intention to extend the annual membership period to reflect the period of non-walking. This was from the viewpoint of encouraging new members and retaining new members as the group was very aware of the competition from other walking groups and ECR membership not being seen as of comparable value for money. Other members of the committee said they were happy to pay the full subscription to support the Ramblers at this difficult time.

- **FOOTPATHS**

- One recent query related to footpaths being illegally closed.
- The closure problem near Mottram is now resolved.
- Dave has spoken with Nicola Swinnerton who is the new part-time Rights of Way Officer with Cheshire East. The post is shared with Evan Pedley who was persuaded to remain in post, now part-time. Nicola is very enthusiastic. She has access to the Ramblers footpath database and is initiating actions to rectify things and she would like to be able to write onto the database. It needs to be clear to the user that any of her entries are hers, and not those of Ramblers. There needs to be some way to differentiate. Nicola's enthusiasm is very welcome but she seems to think that ECR can be allocated lots of maintenance tasks whilst we really should decide what tasks to undertake.
- The footpath committee meeting has been cancelled though they may have a Zoom meeting at the end of May.
- Some footpath inspections have continued where paths are near the inspectors' homes. Maggie wondered if we could swap areas to coincide with paths close to home. Whilst a good practical idea, Inspectors like to keep to their same patch and this does provide continuity and they can keep abreast of what needed doing and what has been achieved.
- Someone is needed to coordinate the working projects team. Nick Brierley hasn't enough time for coordinating teams to work big projects and general maintenance. A list of jobs can be extracted from a database but it needs prioritising.
- Nicola Swinnerton is keen to involve ECR in helping with non statutory footpath maintenance tasks. ECR is happy to be asked for help but we must make her aware that this must join the queue of the existing tasks generated from the ECR footpath inspections. Also, the maintenance capability is currently undergoing a period of transition in its management, so it cannot be an instantly available resource.
- We need to ask for volunteers. Dave was sure that Brian Richardson had a spreadsheet which included some 15 volunteers. He will draft an email and send it to Brian to see what he thinks about it. Chris Munslow will provide a list of maintenance people he worked with.
- In discussions with Nicola Swinnerton it transpired that Cheshire East Rights of Way has had its budget cut by 20%. Dave thinks he could lobby the appropriate people in Cheshire East. He has contacts with Craig Brown, the deputy leader of the Council. We have been advised to address next year's budget. Dave wondered if the Area

could get together and send a joint letter. Dave will put some input into this and liaise with Jane who will get the other Area groups on board.

- Whilst inspections may not all be done before the AGM, they will have been by the end of the year.

- **SOCIAL AND EVENTS SECRETARY**

Virtually everything has been cancelled.

The Settle coach trip for the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of June is unlikely to go ahead. Maggie will speak to Ann Thompson, the organiser, after Sunday.

The Patterdale weekend has not yet been cancelled. The hotel has been shut during April and May. If we cancel then we will lose deposits, therefore we are waiting for the hotel to cancel.

The footpath inspectors' social gathering is postponed until maybe next year.

The long walkers' weekend in August has not yet been cancelled. This is the organiser's decision subject to Head Office guidance.

Maggie will advise the coach company that the September coach trip is likely to be cancelled.

No decision has been made on Andy's weekend away at the end of September.

Maggie will contact Judith re the Stockport history tour to advise it won't be going ahead.

- **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

There are 546 current members. Two new members had joined just before lockdown. Some members had joined in January and then cancelled their membership in April but there were no further facts at present. A few people haven't renewed their membership. Dashboard, a Ramblers tool, is available to Sue to obtain membership information.

- **PUBLICITY**

Colin Park hasn't been asked for any updates during the lockdown.

**6. AOB**

- Keith had a question about re-routing a path. Apparently you can go on Cheshire East's interactive maps. Maggie thinks this brilliant. She will send the link. There is a link from our website on the footpath tab. If you go on the interactive tab you can use the snipping tool and highlight where you want to walk and print off the map.
- Dave alerted people to information from HO Ramblers on lost ways (called Don't lose the way). He urged the committee to look on the Ramblers site and log on to get and sign up for progress updates.
- Dave said that there was a facility to compare a current OS map with an historic map so that differenced which looked like lost ways could be highlighted. Once a member had accessed a square and highlighted the differenced no-one else could access the same square which was a flaw in the system. We wouldn't want the situation to arise where HO would be pursuing a lost way without consultation with Ramblers group which covers that area.

## **7. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

- a) All committee members to familiarise with HO's Don't Lose the Way and sign up for progress updates.
- b) Jane will ask Colin Park to contact Keith re Lost Ways.
- c) Jane will email walk coordinators after Sunday with proposals re next walk schedule.
- d) All committee members to familiarise themselves with ASSEMBLE by logging on and maybe registering. Convey any thoughts to fellow committee members.
- e) Colin to approach HO re possibly extending membership period.
- f) Maggie to contact Ann Thompson after Sunday to discuss the feasibility of her coach trip. Maggie also to advise coach company that September coach trip likely to be cancelled. Maggie to advise Judith that Stockport history tour won't go ahead.
- g) Footpath maintenance coordinator sought. Sue to get Chris' list of footpath maintenance people. Draft email to be drawn up by Dave and to be sent to Brian Richardson for his comments.
- h) Area letter to be put together by Dave and Jane (Jane to approach other Area groups) to send to Cheshire East re next year's Rights of Way budget following 20% cut this financial year.
- i) Maggie to send link re interactive maps to committee members.

## **1. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 11 August, possibly via Zoom

**The meeting closed at approximately 3.30pm**