

**Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM)**  
**Leicestershire & Rutland Area of the Ramblers Association**  
**Saturday 28 January 2023 @ 10.30am**

**Present:** Katherine Hardwick - Secretary (Rutland), Martin James (Melton), Suzanne Elliott (Melton), John Divine (Lutterworth & Harborough District), Dianne Thorp (Lutterworth & Harborough District), Brian Thorp (Lutterworth & Harborough District), Valda Holmes (Coalville), Andy Holmes (Coalville), Mark Hewitt (LRWG), Ronnie Forbes (Trustee), Wendy Martin (Hinckley), Rosalie Beeby (Hinckley), John Samson (Loughborough), Richard Jack (Loughborough), Anthony Mothersole (Lutterworth & Harborough District), Anita Mothersole (Lutterworth & Harborough District), Yvonne Lake (LRWG), Mark Woodall (Leicester), Rachel Hooke (Leicester), Mike l'Anson (Hinckley), Trevor Martin (Hinckley), Mike Goodrich (Leicester), Sue Bicknell, Tony Smith (Hinckley), Angela Preece (Hinckley), Hazel Dalziel (Hinckley), Peter Williams - President, Georgina Sear (Leicester) Rob Jones – Chair (LRWG), Stephen Peck (Leicester), Roy Denney (Leicester)

**Apologies:** Ray Phipps, Chris Alger, Milton & Anne Scott, Ashok Jethwa, Michael Gillon, Terry & Anne Bates, Gill Spatcher

### **Agenda items**

#### **1. Chair's opening remarks and welcome**

Rob welcomed everyone to the meeting. Advised that papers were circulated in the Write of Way newsletter in December via email. They can also be accessed via the website (<https://leicsra.org.uk/>). Rob ran through housekeeping rules.

Rob expressed his thanks to Terry Bates who has stepped down as chair of Leicester Ramblers after considerable service. He also expressed his congratulations to John Williams from Morcott who has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) 'for services to conservation and to the community in Rutland'.

Thanks to everyone on the area exec committee for all the work they do and to everyone who leads walks and continue to support events like this.

#### **2. Previous AGM minutes from meeting on 29 January 2022**

Approved

#### **3. Matters Arising from the minutes**

- a. None

#### **4. Officers Reports – as published in the Write of Way (WOW) magazine**

- a. **Chairman** – Nothing further to add & no matters arising
- b. **Treasurer** - Nothing further to add & no matters arising
- c. **Secretary** – Nothing further to add & no matters arising
- d. **Footpath Secretary** – Nothing further to add & no matters arising
- e. **Walking Environment Officer** – Charnwood forest have £6m to spend. They are resurfacing path at Bradgate to tea rooms for people who are less mobile, creating off road path between out woods & bottom car park, footpath in the verge to make it safer. A short video was played on Charnwood Forest Landscape Forest

Scheme. Charnwood has been accepted by UNESCO as potential GeoPark which would bring people from all over the world to the area to the benefit of the local economy

- f. **Membership Secretary** – very little change in membership since last report
- g. **Communication Officer** – Nothing further to add & no matters arising
- h. **Group Reports** – Sue expressed appreciation to Coalville for walks in association with YHA which generated additional membership
- i. **Anita added that** Lutterworth is now Lutterworth & Harborough District & expressed thanks to various people who helped achieve this
- j. Dianne mentioned that Lutterworth have doubled their membership. Activities such as the coffee morning in town hall where they served coffee & cake & passed leaflets out, encouraged people in along with Friday walks & agenda items. The 121 approach has really worked.
- k. Anita issued a plea to Area Group to promote area events really hard with the Area Reps. Georgina asked for information in advance to help us better achieve this.
- l. There was also a plea to Groups not to put walks on the day of the Area Walk so we can get people together instead. Walks could all start or finish at same time, with longer & shorter walks to suit everyone.
- m. Dianne expressed thanks to Anita for brilliant map reading & navigation & first aid courses.

## 5. Adoption of the accounts as published in WOW

Accounts circulated via Write of Way.

Approved

Sue Bicknell seconded the adoption of the accounts

## 6. Guest Speaker – Roy Denney

Roy gave a fascinating account of his time climbing Everest in 1997 which included flying into the area on an abandoned Russian helicopter, basic toilet facilities, beautiful images of glaciers and mountain-scapes, cairns in memorial to dead sherpas, how to survive an approach by a yak on a narrow path, photos of rickety bridges you must use to cross ravines, tea with yak butter, apple pancakes, cooking fuelled by yak dung, yak burgers cooked on yak dung, a terrifying descent in a snow storm and altitude sickness that felt like walking into a glass wall.

Rob thanked Roy for sharing his experience.

## 7. President's Address

Peter thanked Roy for the fascinating talk and Hinckley Group for the hospitality.

He also expressed his thanks to everyone who fulfils a role with the Ramblers.

He thanked everyone for their wider support for Ramblers, explaining that we are a campaigning organisation & we are interested in protecting the rights of way. He highlighted the recent case of Dartmoor, where, at whim of one landowner, ramblers have found their historic rights taken away from them. It's important to have an organisation like The Ramblers to protect our Rights of Way & fund people to do this job for us. Thank you for supporting the Ramblers and long may it continue. He encouraged everyone to enjoy our walking, to make sure we use our Rights of Way & protect them and wished everyone a great year's walking.

## 8. Election of Officers

### Chair

Peter proposes Rob as Area Chair

Seconded by Roy Denney

**Approved**

## 9. Election of other officers

### Treasurer

Mark Hewitt to stand to Area Treasurer role - [sec@lrwg.org.uk](mailto:sec@lrwg.org.uk)

Seconded by Yvonne Lake

**Approved**

Auto re-election of officers to AEC

## 10. Election of up to two members of affiliated organisations to the AEC

Trevor Martin & Sue Bicknell – reelected as Members without Portfolio

There were no affiliated organisations present and hence no proposed members.

**Approved**

## 11. Confirmation of President & Vice Presidents

Peter Williams confirmed as President

Current Vice-Presidents - Mike Statham and John Williams

Rob to approach Terry Bates & Chris Tipper to see if they would like to be a Vice Presidents due to all the work they have contributed

These are Honorary titles and do not confer any additional responsibilities

**Approved**

## 12. Confirmation of appointment of an Auditor/Independent Financial Examiner as Chris Tipper

Chris is happy to be reappointed as auditor

**Approved**

### 13. Any proposed changes to the constitution

No proposed changes to constitution

### 14. Any proposed motions for General Council

None have been notified

### 15. Nomination of two representatives to General Council

1<sup>st</sup> April @ NEC in Birmingham 10.30-5pm

Mark Hewitt to consider attending

### 16. Report of any Central Office Representative

Ronnie Forbes, Ramblers Trustee gave a short presentation & took questions from the floor.

His presentation covered:

- Campaigning for an expansion of the freedom to roam: We'll be starting the next phase of our freedom to roam campaign, which aims to expand open access to woodlands, watersides and more grassland, closer to where people live. We'll be talking more about this very soon.
- Creating a new paths strategy: The Paths Team is currently producing a long-term strategy for the path network. This strategy is underpinned by research from the New Economics Foundation and input from Ramblers volunteers. Next year, we'll be finalising the strategy and working with the public, groups, and areas to make sure the path network can be enjoyed by all.
- Continuing to break down barriers to walking: We have worked hard in 2022 to make sure the Ramblers is open for everyone - this will continue to be a key focus for the Ramblers.
- Offering varied group walks: Thank you for organising group walks all year round. These give members the chance to find the right walk for them. Between areas and groups, and our Ramblers Wellbeing Walks partners, more than 95,000 walks were organised and promoted on the Ramblers website in the past year. We will continue to support walk leaders with e-learning opportunities and events like our Walk Leader Conversations in the new year.
- The new Ramblers CEO, Ross Maloney, joined us in July. Along with Trustees, Ross is leading a strategy review.
- We set up new team specifically focused on paths The new team focuses on protecting, expanding and improving the path network. Vision for the path network: An important piece of work being led by the Paths Team is producing a long-term vision for the path network.
- In February 2022, the UK government announced their intention to repeal the 2026 deadline for recording historic rights of way in England. We continue to work with government and officials to ensure these announcements are followed through in legislation. Our Don't Lose Your Way project is now focusing on recruiting thousands more volunteers to research and make applications for lost rights of way in England and Wales.
- We are closely following the government's decisions around the future of Environmental Land Management. We have been campaigning to make sure they do not roll back on the opportunity to improve access to the countryside and connect more people to nature.
- We are going to ramp up our efforts to expand freedom to roam in England through expansion of the CRoW Act. It's the biggest and most impactful action that can be taken to make access to the outdoors and green space more equal.
- Our membership has grown for the second year. Thanks to everyone in areas and groups who reach out to new people and encourage them to join the Ramblers. At the end September 2022, we had 102,356 members, the most since 2019

Other points raised that Ronnie has noted & shared with appropriate staff at Head Office included:

- 1. Governance: still a strong feeling for one member one vote. Trustee election process needs to improve. GC should be two days not one.
- 2. Assemble: general criticism plus the distinction it makes between members and volunteers is not helpful.
- 3. A recent RA survey did not include “well-being or health” as a reason for rambling. (Apparently it was tick boxes so no opportunity to add comments).
- 4. The membership renewal letter was not well received. Its tone could have been more sensitive in the context of cost-of-living concerns with more focus on walking for mental wellbeing in tough times.

17. Area Events

- a. Area walk – Saturday, late summer - MELTON Group
- b. Area Quiz – Friday night Oct / Nov - LRWG Group
- c. Next AGM - MELTON group 27/01/2024 - Gaddesby Village Hall, 9:30 start. Walk after

i. Rota of events

| YEAR | AGM (Jan)   | Quiz (Oct/Nov) | Area Walk (late summer) |
|------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 2023 | Hinckley    | LRWG           | Melton                  |
| 2024 | Melton      | Leicester      | Rutland                 |
| 2025 | Rutland     | Coalville      | Lutterworth             |
| 2026 | Lutterworth | Loughborough   | LRWG                    |
| 2027 | LRWG        | Hinckley       | Leicester               |
| 2028 | Leicester   | Melton         | Coalville               |

## 6. Dates of next meetings

|                   |                      |                   |               |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>2023</b>       |                      |                   |               |
| <b>Type</b>       | <b>Date</b>          | <b>Start time</b> | <b>Method</b> |
| AEC               | Thursday 19 Jan 2023 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
| AGM               | Saturday 28 Jan 2023 | 9.30am-12.30pm    | In person     |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 16 Feb 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officer's Meeting | Thursday 16 Mar 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 20 Apr 2023 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 18 May 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officer's Meeting | Thursday 15 Jun 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 20 Jul 2023 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | In person     |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 17 Aug 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officer's Meeting | Thursday 21 Sep 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 19 Oct 2023 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
| Officer's meeting | Thursday 16 Nov 2023 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| <b>2024</b>       |                      |                   |               |
| <b>Type</b>       | <b>Date</b>          | <b>Start time</b> | <b>Method</b> |
| AEC               | Thursday 18 Jan 2024 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
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| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 15 Feb 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 21 Mar 2024 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 18 Apr 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 16 May 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 20 Jun 2024 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | In person     |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 18 Jul 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 15 Aug 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| AEC               | Thursday 19 Sep 2024 | <b>7.30pm</b>     | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 17 Oct 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |
| Officers' Meeting | Thursday 14 Nov 2024 | 7.00pm            | Zoom          |