RAMBLERS’ ASSOCIATION (COMPANY NUMBER 4458492)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DRAFT minutes (approved by the Chairman) of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Ramblers, held on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th July 2013 at central office.

ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

B/291/13 Trustees: Jonathan Kipling (Chairman), Robert Peel (Honorary Treasurer), Naseem Akhtar (Vice-Chair), Mike Church, Des Garrahan, Max Grant, James Lawson, Gwyn Lewis, Alex Mannings, Andy Rogers, Richard Truem.

B/292/13 President: Kate Ashbrook.

B/293/13 Staff: Benedict Southworth (Chief Executive), Simon Barnett (Director of Walking Programmes & Promotions), Caroline Wheeler (Governance Officer).

B/294/13 Apologies were received from Richard May, David Thomson, Gary Davis (Interim Director of Finance & Operations), Nicky Philpott (Director of Policy & Campaigns).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELATING TO THE AGENDA

B/295/13 Kate Ashbrook, as President, declared an interest as General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society and as a trustee of the Campaign for National Parks.

B/296/13 Des Garrahan, as a trustee, declared an interest as a member of staff at the RSPB, and as an ex-member of staff of the Ramblers who has a deferred pension arising from the Ramblers’ participation in the Ramblers pension scheme.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

B/297/13 The Trustees noted with sadness the recent deaths of:

- Des Whicher, a former trustee and holder of various posts in Nottinghamshire Area
- John Bunting, Vice-President
- Esme, daughter of Dave Morris, Director of Ramblers Scotland

B/298/13 The Trustees were pleased to hear of the birth of a daughter, Meredith, to Rhiannon Wadeson, Senior Campaigns Officer; also to hear news of the wedding of Emma Bovill, née Pearson, Web Editor.

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11th MAY 2013

B/299/13 A correction was made to the minutes of a typographical error in the figure quoted at minute 234/13. The Welsh Government has committed £1.15m per year to support the coastal path for two years, not the £1.5m cited in the minutes. 

Action: Governance Officer
B/300/13 The Board approved the draft minutes of the meeting held on 11\textsuperscript{th} May 2013 at the Maldron Hotel, Cardiff.

**MATTERS ARISING MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11\textsuperscript{th} MAY 2013**

B/301/13 Minute B/164/13 Pages of the minutes are now numbered to ease reference by Trustees.

B/302/13 B/194/13 There is an ongoing attempt by the Board to attend post campaign success walks.

B/303/13 B/232/13 As requested, Trustees have provided feedback relating to the refocusing of Walking for Health.

B/304/13 B/248/13 The Constituent Parts Committee meeting was held, face-to-face as agreed.

B/305/13 B/278/13 Headhunting for potential co-optees to the Board is underway. The Chairman has a list of names and is undertaking further investigations.

B/306/13 B/286/13 A single, combined PDF of all papers is being made available for all committee meetings to facilitate Trustees who work electronically.

**MISSION REPORTS**

The Board received a mission update from the Chief Executive and the Director of Walking Programmes and Promotions\(^1\)

**Mission Update**

B/307/13 The Board noted the written report provided by the Director of Campaigns and Policy. Highlights of the report included:

B/308/13 Since the May meeting there had been a number of Government announcements, consultations and legislation that directly impact walking and the walker.

B/309/13 Our concerns on the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill were debated by the Home Office Select Committee, and we have since received some helpful assurances on them\(^2\).

B/310/13 It has finally been confirmed that changes to rights of way legislation proposed by the Stakeholder Group have been included in the publication of the draft Deregulation Bill.

B/311/13 Despite progress on some stretches, recent cuts to the Defra budget have

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\(^1\) These reports are normally based on detailed reports which relate achievements/actions/progress to the objectives of the approved Plan 2012/14 and are provided to the Mission sub-committee and updated as necessary. There was no mission sub-committee in July so the reports came directly to the Board.

thrown future funding for the England Coast Path into doubt. Trustees noted that a letter of partial reassurance had been received from Richard Benyon, the Minister for the Environment. Trustees noted that the Isle of Wight will not be included, and there is no confirmation of any stages beyond those already in existence. Trustees approved continued work to stress the economic benefits as a relatively cheap infrastructure project to cement coastal communities.


B/313/13 The development of a new ‘Mystery Walker’ project continues, and a funding proposal is taking shape, with the aim of it being a flagship campaign with significant support from funders.

B/314/13 Another Freedom of Information request will be made to all councils in England to find out the extent of the latest cuts to rights of way budgets. Trustees highlighted the need for rigorous analysis of the results before conclusions are drawn.

B/315/13 The new access and rights of way strategy continues to be developed. Trustees noted the legislative developments in Wales and the need for all Ramblers entities to provide support in making the most of the opportunities.

B/316/13 The Campaigns and Policy conference in Edale was a success, with very positive feedback received. It is evident that there is some extraordinarily good work going on. Trustees noted the need for more volunteer support, to ensure that we are able to influence decision making in all areas.

B/317/13 Work to revise protocols for engaging in legal action is ongoing.

B/318/13 A mailing has been sent to Areas and Groups in England, encouraging them to invite local MPs on walks in advance of the 2015 General Election; the response so far has been limited and firmer encouragement will be given.

B/319/13 We supported a second Britain on Foot parliamentary reception, attended by 22 MPs and Peers. This presented an excellent opportunity to air our concerns on the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill.

B/320/13 The pilot cross-organisational Regional Training Event in the South East, including the first Area Chairs’ Special Forum, was well attended and received, and another event is being prepared for September in Wrexham.

B/321/13 A request has been made from North Yorkshire and South Durham Area for a trustee’s assistance with a local campaign. Michael Church volunteered.

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4 Information about the conference can be found in the volunteers section of the website: http://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-do/news/2013/july/a-successful-campaigns-and-policy-conference.aspx
B/322/13 The Trustees noted the extra staff capacity provided for countryside work and lobbying.

B/323/13 Work to deliver more information to members and walkers in a geographical format continues. The ‘location based services' project will link the Groups Finder, Walks Finder and Ramblers Routes. An advisory group of volunteers has met to help inform this work and a survey has been completed with 400 responses. The technical specification is under development. Trustees noted that the ambition of the project has been subject to financial restraints.

B/324/13 Ramblers Routes workshops continue. The May feature in the Guardian brought in 400 new members; Ramblers Routes was also recently featured in the Independent. The project in collaboration with the YHA has been launched, and routes are being developed. Trustees noted that initial discussions have taken place with Macmillan Cancer Support around the introduction of Ramblers Routes into Walking for Health. Ramblers Routes would be licensed to Walking for Health for the life of Ramblers involvement with the project.

B/325/13 A further meeting of the Volunteer Sounding Board has taken place. The Sounding Board helped define different stages of the volunteer journey and further consideration is being given to the activities that are required to support each stage. The Mission sub-committee will receive an update in September.

B/326/13 Walking for Health delivery continues. The scheme needed more work than was initially anticipated to provide the level of support Ramblers and Macmillan wanted to provide to schemes. Training materials have been reproduced and 200 cascade trainers have been recruited and are being trained. An independent evaluator has been appointed. The registration process for new schemes has been reintroduced and four new schemes have been established.

B/327/13 The new branding for Walking for Health continues to be taken up by schemes. The branding has a joint Ramblers/Macmillan logo and text.

B/328/13 As the support for schemes stabilises, the emphasis will increase on finding the optimum relationship between Ramblers and Walking for Health locally; for example how to structure delivery, promotion and interaction.

B/329/13 The Board congratulated everyone working on Walking for Health for their work.

B/330/13 The evaluation of Get Walking Week showed it to be a success with Walking for Health schemes and Ramblers Groups delivering over 800 walks. The Public Health Minister, Anna Soubry, attended the launch in her constituency. and £300k of advertising equivalent value had been generated. The date has been set for Get Walking Week 2014 and a sponsor is being sought.

B/331/13 A planning process was underway to identify opportunities for Ramblers to work on the connection between walking and health.
ALLOCATION TO GROUPS/YOUNG WALKERS

B/332/13  The Trustees held an informal discussion on the Friday evening, looking at the needs of young walker groups and the related question of how members are allocated to groups. Highlights of that discussion were:

B/333/13  Ramblers has had success before, notably with the Hike 20s 30s Groups, but the formal/informal network which we and, importantly, volunteers, had worked hard to build up, was curtailed by the 2008 cutbacks. There are still opportunities to expand this work by being proactive about setting up different types of young walkers groups.

B/334/13  Volunteers within young walkers groups have requested additional support to enable them to coordinate with volunteers in similar groups.

B/335/13  External advisers have suggested that Ramblers could do more to develop a clearer brand identity for the different types of young walkers groups. The different brands will help attract members to the most appropriate group without ‘rules’ about ages.

B/336/13  We may need to accept that once walkers come together as a social grouping it is easier, as that group gets older, to set up a new group for younger walkers than try and migrate the existing members to a new group.

B/337/13  Enabling people to go walking, in itself, is part of our mission, and therefore we should be providing the suitable infrastructure for this to happen in a social context. That means enabling everyone, so we should be reaching out to young walkers as well. Ideally young walkers can, like other members, be encouraged to support other equally vital parts of our work.

B/338/13  The Group remains an important way of organising within Ramblers. In theory we have full geographical coverage but not full coverage of the different types of social group.

B/339/13  The external competition would, anecdotally, currently be represented by informal groupings of friends/colleagues, and other formal or informal social networks, notably Meetup groups, which are often run with an entrepreneurial spirit.

B/340/13  We currently allocate members to Groups based on what is available in their area; we do not proactively try to find out what members want and create it. This means too many members are allocated to groups that do not suit them.

B/341/13  We need to ensure that flexibility in organising social walks is matched by a consistency in other parts of our mission, for example to ensure we are protecting paths everywhere.
A flexible approach to groups might mean groups that last only a few years. Perhaps a group with a lifespan of just a few years would be right for that group of people at that time, and its longevity as a group less important than the individuals continuing to be engaged with our mission.

We have been asked by a university group for a level of interaction that is closer than affiliate and this raised the possibility of attracting students to the organisation, possibly with initial offers/incentives that would lead to engagement with our mission once they left education.

There is a potential cost to promoting students and more young walkers groups. This may be in direct costs or income foregone, but this could be considered an investment to grow membership and income, and to recruit the volunteers of the future.

It may increase retention to build a grouping of members around interested people with a shared interest, e.g. stately homes, cider pubs, path maintenance, challenge walks (a market we have yet to tap). Interestingly, one of our Areas, Nottinghamshire, is currently surveying its members to see what it is they are really interested in. These could operate as sub groups within established groups.

On the Saturday, in the formal session, the Trustees agreed in principle the following:

To the development of more defined sub brands for young walkers groups and that the ambition of the organisation should be to have these groups available as widely as possible.

That an infrastructure should be put in place to help volunteers within these groups obtain peer support.

To a more flexible approach to allocating members to groups, flexigroups and groupings.

Trustees further agreed:

The process for setting up groups should be reviewed to make it easier for groups to get going and to create flexible opportunities to dispel perceptions of structure and bureaucracy.

To request that as part of the review Areas will be asked to review their arrangements for approving groups, with a view to making decisions quickly, and to encourage groups to be accommodating of both new groups and possible groupings of members within their group.

The Trustees recognized that discussions in Scotland and Wales might lead to a different way of delivering the same outcome from that in England.
and that Areas should not be able to decline the establishment of groups unreasonably.

B/351/13 That whatever flexibility is developed it should not inhibit the ability or right of any member to be involved with the democracy of the organisation; they should be able to participate in Area and therefore General Council, however they engage with Ramblers.

WALKING FOR HEALTH MIGRATION

B/352/13 The Trustees held an informal discussion on the Friday evening looking at the needs of the participants in Walking for Health who might be affected by the reaccreditation.

Highlights of the discussion were:

B/353/13 The scheme audit conducted in 2012 identified that a significant proportion of Walking for Health walks are longer than is desired for an introductory walking programme. It is likely therefore that some walks will become out of scope.

B/354/13 The priority should be to ensure that people continue to be able to walk.

B/355/13 Ramblers should be able to offer itself as one of the viable alternatives to choose from for the future of such walking, and present the alternatives objectively to Walking for Health schemes.

B/356/13 The barriers to continue walking include expense – moving from a free service, gaining insurance, volunteer support and a feeling of being welcome by a new host.

B/357/13 Most walks will be groups of friends who want to keep walking together. The flexible approach discussed earlier would provide an opportunity for ex Walking for Health walks to become part of the Ramblers family.

B/358/13 Ramblers can provide insurance and volunteer support, and the financial barrier to participation needs to be minimised.

B/359/13 The model needs to be applicable across the whole of England with the potential to roll it out in the future in other nations.

B/360/13 Participants should be taken on a journey to be made more aware about the rest of our mission delivery to promote further support and volunteering.

On the Saturday, in the formal session, the Board agreed that:

6 See also the minutes of the May Board meeting.
Ramblers should approach schemes and offer an attractive home within the Ramblers.

Staff should hold further discussions on how this might be achieved, with a first report to the September Mission sub-committee.

REPORTS FROM AREA CHAIRS FORUM AND EDALE FOOTPATH CONFERENCE

The Chief Executive reported that it had been widely agreed that the Edale conference was long overdue; partly because we do not show enough gratitude to our volunteers, and partly because it is essential that we come together to re-energise ourselves, share good practice and learn different ways of doing things. It is also vital that we put rights of way and access matters on a strategic footing and determine a clear sense of direction to progress the mission.

The conference underlined just how committed our volunteers are; we have the benefit of many years’ worth of wisdom, vast technical knowledge and experience. The last few years have been difficult; people had felt isolated, and we were forced by austerity to change direction. However, the feeling at the weekend was that we are back on track and moving forwards on the mission.

However, the weekend also highlighted risks:

- We need to caution about an implicit belief that rights of way as a statutory responsibility of local authorities is an immutable state of affairs.
- We need to train up a new generation of volunteers; we need all Groups to be involved in providing a positive environment with a broad sense of Ramblers activity in the local area, and to seek out and influence the powerful and interested.

The first Area Chairs Special Forum had attracted an impressive 25% of their total number in attendance, with many more keen to come to future forums.

The main findings/outcomes were:

- They had never had the opportunity to talk to their peers and found this chance most useful as they felt a lack of connection (both with each other and with the centre).
- There was a distinct lack of clarity in the organisation as to whether Areas still had relevance and a role today.
- They wanted to be empowered to run their Areas as they felt they had no current validated remit of this nature.
- To this end, a mandate has been drafted; this will be explored with the next group.
- They agreed we should encourage “aspirations”, which the Areas will endeavour to deliver, and ways of assessing that delivery.
- They wanted a plain English version of the mission and constitution.
- The group was keen to start a regional contact network.
- They expressed concern over the large percentage of “invisible” members who ‘don’t walk/volunteer with us’, who it was felt don’t hear sufficiently about the whole range of the mission which they have joined to support.
Invitations are being sent out to the next Forum, which takes place at the training day for volunteers in Wrexham, North Wales, on 15th September.

FINANCE AND PROGRESS AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN

CEO Headline Report

The Chief Executive reported a marked swing in the internal feel of the organisation. There has been positive feedback from volunteers, reinforced by the optimism generated by the string of successful events engaging with volunteers in various locations recently, and a succession of high-profile campaigning activities.

The recent highlights have been:

- Ramblers Scotland secured £25K funding from Paths for All.
- Ramblers Cymru launched their family packs using the new Scramblers Logo.
- Susan Blake received the British Empire Medal for services to rambling and the community of Dorchester.
- Over 400 people joined as a result of the membership offer in the Guardian.
- We were successful in getting the Labour team working on the Anti-social Behaviour Bill to table our amendments at the committee stage, where we had 13 mentions.
- Walking for Health celebrated its first anniversary with Ramblers as the national centre.
- A pilot regional volunteer training day was held in the South East of England.
- Ramblers Routes was given new functionality.
- A new social media toolkit was produced.
- Volunteers were trained to help with the Vision process.

Recruitment is under way for a replacement for the Interim Director of Finance and Operations. The Chief Executive has confirmed the new senior management structure for the staff body, and is now considering what is required in terms of skills and resources in the middle management layer in order to deliver the mission effectively.

[Post Meeting note: Christine Grant has been appointed and will join us on 27th August. She is a member of the Finchley & Hornsey Group and also an experienced manager in both finance and operational matters. Her most recent experience was with the PCS Union.]

Pro bono advice has been received from Forster Communications about a stronger communications framework around what we do. This is being discussed alongside the outcomes from the audit of our communications.

The British Mountaineering Council will be increasing their profile on hillwalking, supported by Sport England. This initiative could provide opportunities for collaboration.

The proposed key aspirations and main indicators for Areas are:
• **Deliver the mission**  
  Co-ordinated and supported groups, volunteers and members, delivering the mission.

• **Work together**  
  The Area’s activities are effectively managed

• **Engage locally**  
  The role that Ramblers play locally, with communities, organisations and local government, is recognized and positive.

• **Welcome everyone**  
  Activities are inclusive and encourage more people to engage.

These aspirations will be discussed at future Area Chairs’ Forums.

**Management Accounts**

**B/374/13** The Trustees received the management accounts for the eight months to 31st May 2013, including the Operating Statement and Balance Sheet at that date. The main features were:

- Core income is £186k behind budget.
- Core expenditure is £100k below budget.
- Project contribution towards overheads is down by £64k.
- Expenditure on investment projects is £49k below budget.
- We have received notification of £405k legacy income, an increase of £140k on the previous month. (An additional £50k had been notified since this report.)
- The full year forecast shows a Core Deficit[7] of £370k, or £194k worse than budget.
- The full year forecast (excluding legacies) shows a net deficit (after investment projects) of £623k, or £128k worse than budget. This is a decline of £38k since the forecast was last updated.
- The full year forecast (including legacies) shows a net deficit of £218k or £277k better than budget.
- General Reserves (Unrestricted Funds) are currently forecast to end the year at £2,100k compared with a reserves target of £1,945k.

**B/375/13** The current full year forecast is showing a worsening overall negative variance (excluding legacies), down £38k. A detailed forecast has not been performed since April. However, some adjustments have been made, largely related to known income variances; expenditure will be reviewed next month as part of the 2013-14 budget process. The current forecast expenditure is considered to be higher than the expected actual, taking into account potential underspends within individual budgets, including subscriptions and semi-optional items. A fully updated forecast will be prepared in July, also taking into account further investments in fundraising activities.

**B/376/13** The accounts to June end have since been produced and broadly reflect

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[7] Core income less Core Expenditure plus Contributions from Projects. Core income and expenditure excludes legacy income and investment expenditure.
expectations. The only budget line of particular concern is that of a higher than expected legal spend. We will need to be circumspect about spending on new cases.

B/377/13 The draft income strategy has been received, and the Finance and Operations Sub-Committee has approved the proposed investment in fundraising initiatives.

B/378/13 The Trustees noted the possibility of taking more calculated and well-justified risks on investment projects in order to avoid a decline in activities that would inevitably curtail the organisation’s ability to thrive.

KPI Dashboard

B/379/13 Following a surge of interest when the new website was launched, the numbers of visitors and pages visited have now dropped a little. We have sought advice on how best to address this and how to reinvigorate the website; for example, search engine optimisation and using social media to feed people to the content. The walk website is also being incorporated, which should drive traffic.

B/380/13 It was noted that it is still difficult to locate documents through the search function. Possible remedial action was being investigated. Action: DoF&O

B/381/13 There was a suggestion from the Trustees that, in light of various staffing considerations, there might be an indicator for staff-related risks. It was agreed this subject would best be covered in the CEO’s headline report. Action: Chief Executive

B/382/13 Still flagged as red – high risk – are membership income and retention rates. However, membership recruitment, following a poor start to the year, has recently been in line with targets.

Fundraising Update

B/383/13 The Fundraising Review has been received and discussed by FOSC.

Membership Update

B/384/13 Although we should end the year with the expected number of members, we will remain behind on income due to not recovering from the higher than expected attrition rate earlier in the year. A recommendation of the fundraising review is that of the analysis of more detailed information that is available for attrition rates year by year. In the past we have not made optimal use of available statistics. In future, it is imperative to assess more thoroughly the returns on our membership initiatives. Action: DoF&O

B/385/13 The telemarketing program has started this week, and in the first week had a

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8 The dashboard is a spreadsheet containing key indicators of the performance of the organisation. It is colour coded Red – High Risk, Amber – Medium Risk, Green – Low Risk
10.5% renewal rate, the vast majority of those on direct debit. Only three complaints had been received.

B/386/13 A new welcome letter is ready, as is a new retention cycle, ready to roll out in September. The first-year member journey is being mapped to identify where we might make improvements to communications.

B/387/13 The Trustees discussed the financial benefits that could be forthcoming from offering members the option to pay over and above the standard subscription rate on a monthly direct debit. This would be examined further by FOSC.

Action: DoF&O

B/388/13 The insurance offer to affiliated clubs is currently being reviewed.

Budget 2013/14 Update

B/389/13 The Interim Director of Finance and Operations is working to produce a balanced budget, and a draft is due at the end of August. Operational and staff budgets have been submitted and meetings with budget holders to challenge budgetary assumptions are on track. The budget will be reviewed at FOSC and will go before the Trustees at the September Board meeting.

Action: DoF&O

ANNUAL REPORT ON LED WALKS

B/390/13 An annual report on the risk management of led walks is submitted to the Trustees, in recognition of the potential significant organisational impact should there be a major incident on a walk, since that which was narrowly averted in the Lake District incident of 2008. However, walking is an inherently safe activity, and the priority areas in relation to risk – training and communicating with leaders – essentially help deliver the mission effectively.

B/391/13 There have been no material changes to our operating procedures since the last report, and our insurers remain satisfied with the measures we are taking to mitigate risks. A programme of centrally-facilitated walk leader training events has taken place in the last year, and more are planned.

B/392/13 It is recognised that there is a mismatch between operational procedures and the support and training offered to volunteers, and there are plans to address this, including the transfer of learning from Walking for Health.

Action: DoWP&P

GENERAL COUNCIL MOTIONS

Governance Review: Process

B/393/13 This year’s General Council passed a motion asking for a review of our Governance. At the May Board meeting the Trustees requested further information in terms of proposals and resource implications.

B/394/13 The Chief Executive outlined how the review will aim to establish if our current Governance structure effectively balances the need for democratic decision
making and the delivery of activities towards our mission. The Trustees noted that the starting point of the review should not be to rewrite the organisation’s Memorandum & Articles, but to focus upon effective democracy in action, including the selection of future trustees, the practices of the Board of Trustees, and the structure and role of General Council.

B/395/13 The Trustees noted that the motion seems driven by the notion that General Council is not a truly democratic body, not least in that very few delegates are actually elected representatives.

B/396/13 The Chief Executive presented the Trustees with a project plan including costs (approx. £6.4k excluding staff time).

B/397/13 Operating within the current legal and charitable framework, the review will recommend and detail any changes proposed to documents and practice, to bring Ramblers governance into line with best practice, and as far as possible future proof against societal changes. The review needs to cover Great Britain.

B/398/13 The review will be conducted by a working group comprised of the Chairman of the Board, another trustee (Richard Trueman volunteered), a member of the Agenda Committee, an affiliate, a person from each of England, Scotland and Wales, and an external person to undertake research to ensure confidence in the findings. The Chief Executive will also attend. The working group will report to the Board of Trustees.

B/399/13 The review will take the following stages:

1. Desktop survey of previous reviews; analysis of external best practice guidelines; analysis of governance practices in other organisations.

2. These findings examined by externally facilitated discussion with key stakeholders; Areas and Groups surveyed to test the outcomes of this discussion; survey analysed; recommendations formulated.

3. The Review document to be put to the Board. To include methodology, recommendations and detailing of changes recommended to governance related practice, including supporting analysis and appendices of key documents.

4. Proposals for changes drafted.

5. Areas asked to comment on proposals in advance of circulation to General Council.

B/400/13 The Board approved the objectives of the review and authorised the process as outlined in the paper presented by the Chief Executive, and made proposals as to the composition of the working group. Further members would be sought, at the Chairman’s discretion, if the individuals proposed declined.

Action: Chief Executive

AGM PROCESS

B/401/13 The Chief Executive detailed how the recent approach to staff/trustee...
attendance at AGMs has been examined. The conclusion was that it makes sense to invest considerable resources into attending AGMs only if we do it for clear reasons that contribute to the mission, and if we are comprehensive in our approach.

B/402/13 At a time when the organisation is developing a new vision and there are positive operational changes occurring, we believe that it is worth committing resources to the next round of AGMs, albeit on a different basis to the ad hoc, reactive approach of latter years.

B/403/13 For the 2013-14 season, all Area AGMs should be attended by a trustee or a senior member of staff, with the aim of communicating to attendees just how Areas contribute to the mission, the GB-wide picture and, of course, our thanks. We will attend even if an external speaker has been arranged, so that we can convey our appreciation and gratitude to volunteers, and answer any questions that arise. The Trustees noted that a similar practice operated some years ago, and that it was deemed to have been most worthwhile and useful.

B/404/13 We will also be in communication with Areas in an attempt to assist them to streamline and enliven their AGMs. Action: Governance Officer

B/405/13 The Board concurred with the proposed plan.

WIND: RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF BECOMING LEAD

B/406/13 This item has been postponed, with the prior agreement of the Chairman, to the September meeting, pending further preparatory work by the Chief Executive.

SUB-COMMITTEES

B/407/13 The Chairman noted that a summary report of sub-committee meetings now goes to the subsequent Board meeting; the full minutes to the subsequent relevant sub-committee meeting; all are posted on the trustee wiki for information. Trustees should familiarise themselves with both the report and the full minutes before the meeting.

Finance & Operations Sub-Committee (FOSC)

B/408/13 Trustees noted the summary report of the FOSC meeting held on 4th July 2013, at central office and by teleconference.

B/409/13 The fundraising review has been completed. It makes recommendations of further analysis of existing information and identifies activities which could reap substantial financial benefits for the organisation. Proposals for a long-term strategy will follow.

B/410/13 The committee received an update on the pension scheme; the situation is not improving.

B/411/13 It was decided to maintain the volunteer vehicle mileage expense rate at the
The flexigroup model has been reviewed, and the conclusion is that the groups are not flexible enough to be sufficiently successful in achieving their aim, i.e. making it easier for a diversity of people to come together and deliver the mission. They will stay as an option but will not be prioritised.

**Constituent Parts Committee (CPC)**

The Trustees received a summary report from the meeting of the Constituent Parts Committee held on 10th July 2013 at central office.

The meeting had assessed the operational impact of devolution to date.

Devolved matters regarding Wales are largely working well, although there is still scope for improvement.

There has been a full analysis of the activities and services in respect of Wales. The committee has agreed the document should be guidance on procedure for all staff and that a similar exercise will be applied to Scotland.

The committee had noted concerns over differing interpretations of the devolution agreement and this is being discussed with the Scottish Executive Committee.

The Chairman reminded the Trustees that they have responsibility for the oversight of the whole of Ramblers GB, and that they have appointed the Chief Executive to run the organisation on their behalf.

The committee voted to change its name, and will henceforth be known as the Devolution Committee.

**Co-options**

The Chairman and Vice-Chair are continuing to consider possible candidates for co-option to the Board.

**Appointee to National Trust Council**

The Trustees heard that Annette Cotter had completed her ten-year term as the Ramblers’ appointee on the Council and was consequently stepping down. The Board asked the Chairman to write to Annette and thank her for her contribution. The Chief Executive will identify suitable candidates for the Board to consider.

**Action: Chairman; Chief Executive**

**OTHER ITEMS**

**Vision Workshop** (Additional Item - time permitting)
There was insufficient time for a substantial workshop to consider the Vision Discussion Kit so the discussion was deferred.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**B/423/13** Des Garrahan observed that the migration of the walk website is behind schedule and asked whether actions are getting pushed back in the timeline. The Chief Executive reported that this project is behind target on delivery due to prioritising other development work on the website. It was agreed that such projects should be monitored via the Chief Executive’s reports through exception reporting.

**B/424/13** Gwyn Lewis mentioned anecdotal evidence of members receiving Area welcomes before their membership cards. The Chief Executive agreed to look into it.

*Action: Chief Executive*

**B/425/13** James Lawson reported news from the Ramblers' Scotland office:

- Training opportunities had been arranged to enhance members’ enjoyment on walks, in partnership with:
  - Plantlife – ‘Wildflowers Count with Ramblers Scotland’
  - Butterfly Conservation ‘The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey, a One Day Workshop’

Both events had been well received and attended.

- There are now more than 20 Medal Route Hubs with many more being developed.

- Responding to consultations on new Scottish Government legislation with regard to hill tracks, wild land, wind farms, etc.

- Dave Morris has been listed as one of the ‘Top 100 – Most Influential Movers and Shakers of 2013 in Scotland’s Countryside Scottish Field magazine (August 2013 Issue)

**B/426/13** The Chief Executive reported that Mr John Esslemont had asked him to point out to the Trustees that they may have made an error in March, as it was not within their constitutional remit for them to ask Sussex Area to amend its motion. This is because it was a constitutional motion and, as such, cannot be amended. The President clarified that it was she who had requested the amendment, as an individual and that she is not a trustee. The Board nevertheless noted Mr Esslemont’s concerns.

**FUTURE BOARD AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING DATES**
B/427/13 The Trustees received and noted a full list of dates of Board and sub-committee meetings to the end of 2014.

B/428/13 Trustees noted that Welsh Council has been scheduled for 13th April in Newtown, Powys, Mid-Wales.

B/429/13 The Trustees approved the uniform inclusion of a mission sub-committee, then a FOSC meeting, in regular sequence before each Board meeting.

DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

B/430/13 Trustees noted that the next Board meeting would take place at 18:00 on 20th September 2013 at Ramblers central office.

THE BUSINESS ENDED AT 3.40 PM

Queries on these minutes should be directed to the Chief Executive