

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL AND THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BATH  
7th-8th APRIL 2001**

\* denotes a member of Council (voter)

**PRESIDENT**

Andrew Bennett MP\*

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

John Bunting\*  
Geoff Eastwood\*  
Chris Hall\*  
Alan Howard\*  
Jack Ibbott\*  
Richard Lloyd Jones\*  
Alan Mattingly\*  
David Sharp\*  
Paddy Tipping MP\*

**CHAIRMAN**

Cath MacKay\*

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Brian Reader\*

**HONORARY SOLICITOR**

Jerry Pearlman\*

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Kate Ashbrook\*  
Peter Ayling\*  
Jo Bird\*  
Annette Cotter\*  
John Holms\*  
Kevin Matthews\*  
Alison Mitchell\*  
Terry Pollard\*  
Mavis Rear\*  
Peter Skipp\*  
Terry Squires\*

**AGENDA COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Tony Clarkson\*  
Sylvia Franks\*  
Ron Moore\*  
Allen Pestell\*  
Sylvia Popham\*

**AVON AREA**

Peter Gould\*  
Audrey Lennox\*  
Jim Abbott  
Kate Amore  
Kath Benson  
Erin Bland  
Beverley Bleasdale  
Kathleen Bullen  
Alan Burton  
George Clark  
John Davis  
Monica Davis  
Christine Day  
Malcolm Dyke  
Trevor Fawcett  
Jim Grant  
Sally Haddon  
Chris Harrison  
Ray Hart  
Jen Hawkes  
Jill Holley  
Graham Hoyle  
Val Ingram  
Daphne Lovelace  
Brian Marsh  
Peter Mills  
Geoff Mullett  
Julia Mullett  
Tristan Mullett  
Sharifa Naqui  
Pauline O'Hanlon  
Andy Pearson  
Dorothy Peddle  
Fred Peddle  
Brenda Prentice  
Barbara Rees  
Jerry Riches  
Eric Robinson  
Mary Singleton  
John Slowley  
Connie Smith  
Peter Smith  
Marietta Starbuck  
Cyril Trenfield  
Anna Wilson  
Mike Wittamore  
Sandy Wittamore

**Circular: 01/97**

**BEDFORDSHIRE AREA**

Ian Gradwell\*  
Chris Meadows\*  
Bob Wallace

**BERKSHIRE AREA**

Pam Hall\*  
John Moules\*  
Jane Kiely  
Cliff Lambert

**BUCKS & W MIDDX AREA**

David Bradnack\*  
Brian Shelley\*

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AREA**

Janet Cartwright\*  
Steve Horner\*

**CENTRAL, F & T AREA**

Charles Nash\*  
Linda Nash\*

**CORNWALL AREA**

Ken Dawe\*  
Christine James\*  
Hazel Perham  
Mary Weston

**DERBYSHIRE AREA**

Keith Walkerdine\*

**DEVON AREA**

Bryan Linfoot\*  
Eileen Linfoot\*  
Joan Long  
Jean Mills

**DORSET AREA**

Mike Heckford\*  
David Riches\*  
Jack De Carteret  
Kate Seymour  
Keith Seymour

**DYFED AREA**

Peter Evans\*  
Geoffrey Williams\*

**E YORKS/DERWENT AREA**

Chris Bush\*  
Ann Cumberland\*  
Michael Addy

Edward Marsh  
Dennis Parker

**ESSEX AREA**

John Barnard\*  
John Dowding\*  
Adrian Vincent-Jones\*  
John Holness

**GLAMORGAN AREA**

Ian Fraser\*  
Alex Marshall\*  
Richard Garman  
Barbara Palmer

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA**

Tony Drake\*  
Susan Warren\*  
John Brown  
Kathy Bullen  
Coralie Dustin  
Michael Garner  
Fred Gray  
Sheila Gray  
Bill Irving  
Jane Irving  
Gwyn Jenkins  
Sheila Jenkins  
Robin Lawrence  
Charlie Morriss  
Dianne Stamp  
Margaret Taylor  
Harold Wood  
Frank Wragg

**GRAMPIAN AREA**

Jane Catto\*  
Irene Cruickshanks\*

**GREATER GWENT AREA**

John Ridley\*

**HAMPSHIRE AREA**

David Mason\*  
Owen Plunkett\*  
John Thackray\*  
Brenda Parker

**HEREFORD & WORCS AREA**

Trevor Antill\*  
Richard Hemmings\*  
Derek Starkey

**HERTS & N MIDDX AREA**

David Allard\*  
Mark Westley\*

Eunice King  
**HIGHLAND & ISLANDS AREA**

Ken Davidson\*  
Brian Spence\*

**INNER LONDON AREA**

John Archer\*  
Mike Biggs\*  
Les Douglas

**ISLE OF WIGHT AREA**

John Hague\*  
Geoff Long\*

**KENT AREA**

Chris Barrow\*  
Kath Gill\*  
Ken Wright\*  
Jean Bomber

**LAKE DISTRICT AREA**

Harry Hawkins\*  
Jo Leighton\*  
Jean Gilligan  
Elizabeth Hawkins  
Joan Hibberd  
Freda Leighton  
Audrey Shaw

**LEICS & RUTLAND AREA**

Terry Bates\*  
Ellen Sandeman\*  
Ray Phipps  
Frances Waite

**LINCOLNSHIRE AREA**

Brett Collier\*  
Colin Smith\*  
Stuart Parker  
Miriam Smith

**LOTHIAN/BORDERS AREA**

Joan Martindale\*  
Bridget Wilcox\*

**MANCHESTER AREA**

Janet Cuff\*  
Terry Perkins\*  
Gloria Gaffney  
Keith Pennyfather

**MERSEYSIDE & WEST CHESHIRE AREA**

Gloria Thayer\*  
Vi Williams\*  
Mike Kendrick

David Wall  
**MID LANCASHIRE AREA**

Kevin Jackson\*  
David Kelly\*

**N YORKS/S DURHAM AREA**

John Collier\*  
John Holmes\*

**NORFOLK AREA**

Patrick Bonham\*  
Donald Davenport\*

**NORTH EAST LANCS AREA**

Susan Baxendale\*  
Bill Clegg\*  
Joan Clegg  
Fred Edwards  
Frank Parrott

**NORTH WALES AREA**

Mary Robinson\*  
Doug Whitehouse\*  
Pete Bland

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA**

Peter Ellement\*  
Jean Perkins\*

**NORTHERN AREA**

Mavis Harris\*  
Nuala Wright\*  
John Blacklock  
Ann Key  
Mary Moore  
Ann Pollard  
Margaret Porter  
Maggie Ramsdale  
John Swift

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA**

Sarah Rich\*  
Chris Thompson\*  
Jenny Fillingham  
Rod Fillingham

**NTH/MID CHESHIRE AREA**

Geoff Hill\*  
Tony Wakefield\*

**OXFORDSHIRE AREA**

Patricia Kingsnorth\*  
Colin Ogbourne\*

**POWYS AREA**

Harry Chandler\*

**S & E CHESHIRE AREA**

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**S YORKS/NE DERBY AREA**

Christine Deakin\*  
Peter Deakin\*

**SHROPSHIRE AREA**

Vivienne Hodges\*  
William Hodges\*

**SOMERSET AREA**

Stephen Barnard\*  
Tony Goverd\*  
Pam Roberts

**STAFFORDSHIRE AREA**

Richard Clamp\*  
Graham Evans\*  
Edith Bayley  
Adrian Bond

**STRATHCLYDE, D&G AREA**

Elizabeth Lawie\*  
James Riddell\*

**SUFFOLK AREA**

Anthony Eden\*  
Jennifer Eden\*

**SURREY AREA**

Graham Butler\*  
Keith Chesterton\*  
Alan Lewis\*

**SUSSEX AREA**

David Barber\*  
Janet Barber\*  
Brian Cheater

**WARWICKSHIRE AREA**

Frank Mackey\*  
Steven Wallsgrove\*  
Angela Bravington  
Lynsey Cosgrove  
Richard Eccles

**WEST RIDING AREA**

Keith Wadd\*

Rodney Waddilove\*

**WILTS & SWINDON AREA**

Pat Crabb\*  
Angela Womersley\*

**CAMPING & CARAVANNING CLUB**

Jim Perry\*  
Sylvia Perry

**COUNTRYWIDE HOLIDAYS ASSOCIATION**

Margaret Whiteside\*

**DDA DISABLED RAMBLERS**

Mike Bruton\*

**HF HOLIDAYS**

Daphne Forrest\*  
John Cass

**OPEN SPACES SOCIETY**

Donald Lee\*

**RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SERVICES**

Stuart Alderman\*  
Kathryn Gregory

**RED ROPE**

Barrie Dobson\*

**YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION**

John Templeton\*  
Sue Cassell

**GUEST**

Irene Bunting  
Val Davey MP  
Arthur Howcroft  
Margaret Ibbott  
Pat Lloyd Jones  
Malcolm Mackay  
Malcolm Petyt  
Kate Sayer  
Margaret Sharp  
Irene Tipping

**STAFF**

Nick Barrett  
Rebecca Brewin  
Rachael Bryett  
Lucy Burnett  
Gwen Campbell  
Salli Carson  
Kate Conto

Janet Davis  
Jayne Desmond  
Jacquetta Fewster  
Dan French  
Des Garrahan  
Sue Gittins  
Murray Hatcher  
David Joseph  
Katrine Macphail  
Claire Madron  
Adrian Morris  
Donna O'Brien  
Charlotte Prager  
Emily Richmond  
Adrian Ritchie  
Bruce Samuel  
Janice Samuel  
Jackie Sanders  
Christopher Sparrow  
Paul Strong  
Eugene Suggett  
Russell Todd  
Nicky Warden  
Julie Wildey  
Ian Woodhurst

Des De Moor

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF  
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BATH  
7th APRIL 2001**

**1. ATTENDANCE**

- 1.1 Attendance was as for the ordinary General Council meeting, with the following exceptions:

Joan Long and Jean Mills replaced Bryan Linfoot and Eileen Linfoot as delegates for Devon Area for the duration of the special meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 Council noted apologies from John Foster (vice-president), David Hunt (treasurer), Gerald McGuire (vice-president), Cameron McNeish (president of RA Scotland), Roger Payne (British Mountaineering Council), Tom Sinclair (Long Distance Walkers Association) and Paddy Tipping MP (vice-president).

**3. APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS**

- 3.1 The following persons were appointed:

**Tellers:** Jim Grant

Cyril Trenfield

Sharifa Naqui

Brenda Prentice

Pete Smith

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 4.1 Council noted with sadness the death of Bob Hicks, of Avon Area, who had been an active volunteer in the Bath Group, and had worked with other members in the Area on the organisation of the meeting.

**5. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 5.1 The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Terry Pollard and seconded by Brian Reader:

That the words 'President or' be deleted from the last sentence of clause 8 of the Ramblers Association constitution.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.

**THIS ENDED THE BUSINESS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BATH  
7th-8th APRIL 2001**

**1. WELCOME**

- 1.1 Valerie Davey MP, president of Avon Area, welcomed delegates and visitors on behalf of the Area. She spoke about the wonderful variety of walks within the area, which encompassed town, countryside and coastline. Speaking as an MP, Val thanked all members for the support they had shown during all stages of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, particularly in ensuring that amendments were tabled which improved the Act for walkers. This was a time to celebrate the Act reaching the statute book and the creation of two new national parks, the New Forest National Park and the South Downs National Park.
- 1.2 Val thanked all members for the care and responsibility exercised during the current foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, and sent good wishes on behalf of the association to all those directly affected. It was important, however, to remember that the epidemic, and the effect it was having on access to the countryside, was temporary, and not to let it detract too heavily from the celebration of the countryside and the future greater freedom to roam. Val thanked the association for inviting her to speak and wished all delegates an enjoyable meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 Council noted apologies from John Foster (vice-president), David Hunt (treasurer), Gerald McGuire (vice-president), Cameron McNeish (president of RA Scotland), Roger Payne (British Mountaineering Council), and Tom Sinclair (Long Distance Walkers Association).

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 3.1 Council noted that Jo Leighton replaced Peter Jones as Lake District Area delegate, and Kath Gill replaced Michael Collins as Kent Area delegate.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS**

- 4.1 The following persons were appointed:

<b>Tellers (Saturday):</b>	Jim Grant Cyril Trenfield	<b>(Sunday):</b>	Sharifa Naqui Brenda Prentice
	Sharifa Naqui		Trevor Fawcett
	Brenda Prentice Pete Smith		Sally Hadon
<b>Scrutineers:</b>	Malcolm Dyke Julia Mullett		Geoff Mullett Tristran Mullett
<b>Timekeeper:</b>	John Slowley		

**5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 5.1 Council noted that three emergency motions had been submitted, two on foot and mouth disease and one on the former Director of Campaigns and Policy.

## 6. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

- 6.1 Andrew Bennett MP, president of the association, began by saying that he would be happy to serve another year as president if he were elected, though he feared that, were this a students' union, now the rules had been adapted to make it possible, it would be voted against!
- 6.2 Andrew said that he had found being president of the association a very enjoyable job. It had reaffirmed his faith in humanity. The association's volunteer network of local Groups worked for the general good, and it was this act, of doing things for others without profiting from it, which was one of the better features of society. For this reason, he wanted to thank all volunteers and all members, whatever their contribution.
- 6.3 Andrew went on to say that, though the association was very good at organising campaigns and training volunteers in a wide range of skills, he was concerned that not enough help was being offered to volunteers carrying out ordinary tasks. Were those who chaired meetings, took minutes, looked after accounts, or were expected to keep the complex RA structure working in harmony being adequately supported? There were very few volunteers for Group and Area officer posts, and those that took the jobs on were expected to go from reluctant volunteer to expert overnight. Therefore, he called on the association to offer more support to its volunteers. Computers and the internet should help in this.
- 6.4 Andrew went on to thank staff for the patience shown when listening to complaints and moaning. He then extended these thanks to all within the association for their tolerance when dealing with the oddballs, the members whose social behaviour was sometimes trying. Most Groups, Andrew claimed, had one. Some Groups had quite a lot. It could be argued, he said, that some Groups were made up entirely of oddballs. Andrew praised the tolerance displayed by all Groups when dealing with the oddballs, those with few friends who were, perhaps, not accepted by work colleagues, but whom the RA welcomed. Here they found companionship and friendship, and Andrew thanked members for the tact and skill displayed in dealing with the more difficult members - it was very valuable.
- 6.5 Andrew then congratulated all ramblers on the restraint they had shown during the foot-and-mouth outbreak. There had been no examples of ramblers complaining about the restrictions, and it had shown that all walkers were responsible people concerned with the well-being of the countryside. Some walks programmes had switched from country to urban walks. Andrew had stressed the importance and attractions of urban walking when the House of Commons select committee, which he chairs, examined that issue. Andrew was, however, keen to look more closely at the way the rights of way closures had been handled. 90% of Scotland was foot-and-mouth free, as was a large part of Wales, and much of England south of a line from the Humber to the Exe, where there had been no new outbreaks for three weeks. The good local authorities were reopening their rights of way, and John Spellar, Minister of State for Defence, was going to Essex, Kent and Wiltshire checking that disinfected and foot-and-mouth disease-free land was open and back to normal. Nevertheless, many local authorities were not doing enough to open their rights of way. Andrew asked that he be informed of local authorities which were being slow about re-opening their rights of way. He said that he saw no good reason why most of the UK's rights-of-way network could not be re-opened. Getting back to normal meant having footpaths open. Andrew listed the facts that he wanted to promote to help this happen - there were no examples of walkers spreading foot-and-mouth disease and no examples of walkers spreading swine fever. No-one was suggesting walking in infected areas which is what would be necessary to pick up the infection in order to spread it. It was therefore a very low risk. Andrew asked all members to do their bit to get paths open and in use.
- 6.6 Andrew then spoke about the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, which was now on the statute book, and the issues of mapping and Local Countryside Access Fora. Andrew compared the securing of the Act to a party; it had been great fun, but now the washing-up needed doing. We had the Act, now it was time to get down to the really hard work of implementation. The 1949 Act had offered possibilities which had not been fully utilised. This must not happen with the CROW Act. Phased-in implementation should begin as soon as possible. The association should lobby to convince the government to phase-in the new access provisions. The association should also lobby



local authorities to ensure that funding allocated for rights of way work was being spent as it was intended.

- 6.7 The general and local elections scheduled for the coming months would provide the association with opportunities to lobby and to secure pledges. During the last general election many pledges had been made, and most kept, and it was now time to reward those who had shown their support by giving credit to all MPs who had been supportive of the association's aims during the progression of the CRoW Bill. These included MPs from all parties. Andrew thanked Gordon Prentice and Paddy Tipping for their work during the last year. Paddy, in particular, had been instrumental in ensuring that the timing of the CRoW Bill was favourable. Andrew also thanked Ann Taylor and Val Davey for their support. It was time to ensure that MPs gave pledges to do what was necessary to get the Act fully implemented. Lobbying could also be done at county council level during local elections to press for the spending of rights of way funding on rights of way improvement. Andrew encouraged all members to keep up the good work.
- 6.8 Andrew spoke about walkers' love of the farmed landscape, a landscape threatened by foot-and-mouth disease, changes to traditional field boundaries, and other problems instigated by European farming policies which had caused agriculture to cease to be sustainable. Methods must change for the benefit of all. It was possible to have safe food and an attractive, managed countryside. The Common Agricultural Policy needed reforming to ensure that the public could have safe food at a reasonable price and still enjoy the countryside.
- 6.9 Finally, Andrew wished all members happy walking, but expressed his hope that the association continue as an effective lobbying and campaigning organisation, not just a walking club.
- 6.10 Andrew took questions from the floor on the future of MAFF, relations with the farming community and the implications for disabled access to the countryside of, for example, new fencing, all in the context of the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

## **7. MINUTES OF GENERAL COUNCIL 2000**

- 7.1 There were no corrections, and the chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of General Council 2000 as a true record. This was proposed by David Kelly and seconded by Terry Pollard.

## **8. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

### **Annual Report**

- 8.1 The chairman moved the adoption of the annual report. This was seconded by Ron Moore (Agenda Committee).
- 8.2 The chairman thanked members, volunteers, donors, sponsors and Ramblers Holidays for their support over the year. The chairman then drew Council's attention to some key strategic decisions taken by the Executive Committee. These were the appointment of Nick Barrett as chief executive; the continuation of the governance review; the overseeing of the staff workplan; the endorsement of the long-term strategic plan; the adoption of a long-term financial strategy; clarification of the role of the committee in directing the chief executive, who in turn took responsibility for the operational running of the offices; and the production of the annual report for the year 1st October 1999 - 30st September 2000.
- 8.3 The chairman then introduced Alan Mattingly, who had acted as interim manager for much of the time covered by the report, and Nick Barrett, who began work at the association as chief executive designate on 6th September 2000.
- 8.4 Alan Mattingly began by pointing out that the association, as a charity, worked for the public benefit. The last year had seen the association working to bring public benefits to millions. The main achievements had been the securing of a legal freedom to roam over wild open country, and legislation to enable the designation of national parks in Scotland. Neither were likely to have

happened without many years of campaigning by members. It was, therefore, important to acknowledge the great deal of work done by volunteers which, though it received little publicity, was of great benefit to many.

- 8.5 As well as these major campaign successes, work of great importance continued on footpath protection, through the Association's legal work, e.g. the van Hoogstraten and Pentre Farm cases, and Abig hit's campaigning; encouraging walking, through the festivals of walks; and in countryside protection, with work done to preserve the New Forest, South Downs and Lake Windermere.
- 8.6 The publication of a report by Professor Peter Midmore entitled 'The economic value of walking in rural Wales' had proved critical in winning backing for the freedom to roam within the Welsh Assembly.
- 8.7 The first younger people's Groups event in Llangollen in September had been a great success and would prove to have historic significance in future years.
- 8.8 All work done on the association's charitable aims depended on the behind-the-scenes work of volunteers at national and local level.
- 8.9 Alan then spoke about the appointment of Nick Barrett as chief executive. It was, Alan felt, a very good appointment and Nick had so far displayed a great deal of vision and commitment. He was determined to make sure that the association would succeed. Nick was, Alan claimed, an Airon fist in a velvet glove and was not afraid to be tough when necessary. On reflection, Alan suggested that a 'Very tough foot in a lightweight Brasher boot' was a more appropriate metaphor.
- 8.10 Nick Barrett then spoke about priorities since joining the association in tying up the work of the last year. These included the Festival of Winter Walks, the progress of a bid for Lottery funding in Scotland and the continuing input into the new national park boundaries. Many things were going well despite the association's financial challenges and foot-and-mouth disease.
- 8.11 Nick spoke about his view of a positive partnership between staff and volunteers, with this being the key to success for the association. He gave examples of this type of partnership in action. An essential part of building this effective partnership was to re-establish confidence by keeping spending in check and getting the central finances back to good health, while keeping enough funds at local level for local activities. However, bringing some capital back to the centre for use in strategies to increase membership was necessary. Membership recruitment was a key future activity. 120,000 new members would bring £2.5 million to the Association. However, Nick said, there must be balance, and he was looking to devise a reserves policy with flexibility and was happy to negotiate with Area and Groups to establish the best policy.
- 8.12 Finally, Nick thanked delegates for all the invitations to AGMs, launches, walks and other meetings, which he had received since joining the association. He was learning a great deal from his experiences.

## **9 Questions on the Annual Report**

- 9.1 David Kelly (Mid Lancashire Area) questioned the style of the report, and he considered that it lacked detail. He pointed out, as an example, that precise membership figures were not quoted. He suggested that the format and contents of future reports should revert to that used in the mid 1990s.
- 9.2 John Barnard (Essex Area) asked for action to be taken on safe road crossings as this was an issue of very longstanding concern, and had been the subject of two motions at General Council in recent years.
- 9.3 Alan Howard (Vice-President) questioned the academic style of the report on 'The economic value of walking in rural Wales' and asked that any future similar publications be produced in a more easy-to-read format.

- 9.4 Allen Pestell (Agenda Committee) asked what progress had been made on a new logo for the association. He also expressed concern at the estimated cost of postal balloting.
- 9.5 Don Davenport (Norfolk Area) asked for the report to provide more detailed information and to avoid the use of vague terms.
- 9.6 Alan Mattingly and Nick Barrett responded to these comments. The annual report was written to meet the Charity Commission=s requirement that it should offer a summary of the main achievements of the association during the year. More detail was available to Areas in other documents - EC minutes, *The Rambler*, circulars, the RA website, etc. As explained in the report on action taken on GC 2000 resolutions, EC did not have the resources at present to launch a national campaign on safe road crossings, but recognised the importance of this issue. He re-iterated EC=s sympathy with the desire for action on this issue, but said that without additional resources it was not possible to begin a campaign due to existing priorities. Comments on the Midmore report would be carefully borne in mind for future similar projects, but perhaps the report=s academic status was one reason for the fact that it had considerable influence with the government. Work on reviewing the association=s image and logo was progressing, and would be the subject of internal consultation. Postal balloting would be discussed later on in this meeting.
- 9.7 Council agreed to adopt the Annual Report.

## **10. Accounts**

- 10.1 The adoption of the accounts for the year to 30 September 2000 was proposed by the vice-chairman, Brian Reader, in the absence of the treasurer, and seconded by Chris Bush (East Yorkshire and Derwent Area).
- 10.2 Council agreed that the accounts be presented by David Joseph (Director of Finance and Administration).
- 10.3 David acknowledged volunteer treasurers= efforts in preparing individual accounts and consolidation returns. Their work had enabled the finance team to get the accounts finalised earlier than in previous years, ready for distribution prior to General Council.
- 10.4 David went on to talk about the overall financial stability of the association, with ,1.6million held in reserves at the end of the financial year. There were, however, problems with the way in which this money was distributed, when compared with the areas where there were the most pressing needs. A great deal of expenditure had occurred over the last year on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, with no overall financial planning for the association as a whole.
- 10.5 There had also been the perception that the association was cash-rich, caused by a large legacy at the end of the 1998-1999 financial year.
- 10.6 David reassured council that the new regime at the centre, which included a budgeting system and more emphasis on income generation, and the inception of the Finance and Audit Subcommittee, would help ensure that the difficulties would be addressed and not allowed to worsen.
- 10.7 The chairman introduced Kate Sayer, of the auditors, Sayer Vincent. Council agreed that she should speak about the role of the auditor. Kate reassured delegates that the auditor was appointed to report to members, and looked independently at financial management by the Executive Committee and the senior management team. She said that they would report if there were any problems with this management. Kate stated that the last audit report had been confined to one page, which indicated that there were no serious problems overall.
- 10.8 Kate explained that the auditor=s work went on year-round, to identify ways in which they could contribute positively to improving the financial management of the association. Sayer Vincent aimed

to make recommendations to the Executive Committee at least twice a year. Currently, they were working to develop performance indicators for management.

- 10.9 As a charity, the association is audited with its charitable objectives in mind, which had proved very complex. Sayer Vincent would work with the Executive Committee and senior management team to make sure that the charitable objectives were being addressed and met.

#### **11. Questions on the Annual Accounts**

- 11.1 Tony Clarkson (Agenda Committee) asked if there was an easier way of presenting the financial information by using diagrams or other charts. David replied that he would look at the presentation of accounts for future reports.

- 11.2 Mike Heckford (Dorset Area) asked how restricted and unrestricted figures were calculated as some Areas had not specified this in their accounts. David replied that follow-up research had been done, and that there would be changes to the way this information was collected in future.

- 11.3 Sylvia Franks (Agenda Committee) asked whether Area and Group funds raised at local level would be protected for use at local level in any future recommendations. Council granted Kate Sayer permission to answer this point. Kate stated that the auditors were aware of this and that there would be guidelines issued in the near future.

- 11.4 Colin Ogbourne (Oxfordshire Area) asked if it were possible to determine how much was being spent at Area and Group level on membership recruitment. David replied that this would also be investigated.

- 11.5 Mary Robinson (North Wales Area) asked for more information on legacies in the equalisation accounts. David replied that the LEA last appeared in the RA's accounts in the year ending 30/9/1998. The balance in the LEA was transferred to General Funds in 1998/1999.

- 6 Sue Baxendale (North East Lancashire Area) asked if the credit card scheme was still a viable source of income. David replied that income from the credit card was minimal, with there being limited scope for take-up when so many organisations had similar schemes.

- 7 Susan Warren (Gloucestershire Area) asked whether an increase in subscriptions could be used to raise funds. Council granted Adrian Ritchie (Director of Fundraising and Membership) permission to answer this point. He said that subscription options would be looked at over the coming months, but that the key income-generating strategy at the current time was encouraging members to fill in Gift Aid forms.

- 8 Gloria Thayer (Merseyside and West Cheshire Area) asked what could be done to ensure that, if Areas were donating funds to the centre, there would be support for local issues. David replied that the designation of funds would be discussed with the auditors.

- 9 John Thackray (Hampshire Area) asked for greater clarification on income from sales shown in the accounts.

- 10 Rodney Waddilove (West Riding Area) asked if the figures relating to Area reserves included stocks of unsold books and other items.

- 11 David Joseph asked that these and any additional questions which delegates wished to put to him be sent in writing to central office.

- 12 Council agreed to adopt the accounts for the year to 30 September 2000.

#### **REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON RESOLUTIONS PASSED OR REMITTED AT GENERAL COUNCIL 2000**

- 1 Council considered and noted a report from the Executive Committee on action taken on resolutions passed at General Council 2000.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Officers were elected, as follows:

<b>President</b>	<b>Proposed by:</b>	<b>Seconded by:</b>
Andrew Bennett MP	Kate Ashbrook	Cath MacKay

**Past Presidents:**

The following past presidents automatically become vice-presidents:

Fay Godwin  
Chris Hall  
Mike Harding  
Gerald McGuire  
Peter Melchett  
Janet Street-Porter

**Vice-Presidents:**

John Bunting	Kevin Matthews	Mavis Rear
Geoff Eastwood		
John Foster		
Alan Howard		
Jack Ibbott		
Richard Lloyd Jones		
Alan Mattingly		
David Rubinstein		
David Sharp		
Wally Smith		
Paddy Tipping MP		

Geoff Eastwood temporarily took the chair for the election of the chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and honorary solicitor.

**Chairman**

Cath MacKay	Terry Squires	Terry Pollard
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**Vice Chairman**

Brian Reader	Terry Squires	Terry Pollard
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**Treasurer**

David Hunt	Terry Squires	Terry Pollard
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**Hon Solicitor**

Jerry Pearlman LLB	Terry Squires	Terry Pollard
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**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

It was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Alison Mitchell, that Sayer Vincent be re-appointed as the association's auditors, for the ensuing year. This was agreed.

**PROPOSAL FOR HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

It was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Cath MacKay, and seconded by Mavis Rear, that Stuart Alderman be elected an honorary life member of the association. Cath said that Stuart was about to retire as chief executive of Ramblers Holidays, and that during his period of office there he had secured enormous commercial success for the company. This had been to the great financial benefit of the Ramblers= Association. The proposal for honorary life membership was agreed with acclaim.

### **ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Ten nominations for the Executive Committee were received. After a ballot, the chairman announced the votes cast for each candidate and declared that the following nine persons had been duly elected:

Kate Ashbrook	Alison Mitchell
Peter Ayling	Terry Pollard
Jo Bird	Mavis Rear
Annette Cotter	Peter Skipp
Kevin Matthews	

### **ELECTION OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**

Seven nominations for the Agenda Committee were received. After a ballot, the chairman announced the votes cast for each candidate and declared that the following five persons had been duly elected:

Terry Bates	Ron Moore
Tony Clarkson	Sylvia Popham
Sylvia Franks	

### **MOTIONS**

#### **EMERGENCY MOTIONS**

Council considered the addition to the agenda of two emergency motions.

It was proposed by Kate Ashbrook and seconded by Annette Cotter, on behalf of the Executive Committee that an emergency motion on foot-and-mouth disease be taken. This motion was a composite of a motion proposed by the Executive Committee and another motion on foot-and-mouth proposed by Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area. Council voted overwhelmingly to debate the motion and to do so before other policy motions. (The text of the motion is as in motion 1A, item 19, below.)

It was proposed by Alan Howard and seconded by Chris Hall (vice-presidents) that the following emergency motion on the former Director of Campaigns and Policy be taken:

General Council records its immense gratitude to all RA volunteers and members of the staff who worked to secure the passing of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the right-to-roam legislation therein. Council however notes with regret and dismay that, despite the motion of heartfelt good wishes and gratitude to David Beskine (Campaigns and Policy Director of the RA until January 2000), which was adopted enthusiastically and without dissent by delegates, friends and visitors to last year=s council, neither the Annual Report nor *The Rambler* has acknowledged or even mentioned his crucial and outstanding leadership in securing the access legislation in a campaign which began in 1985.

Council therefore instructs the Executive Committee to set the record straight by causing a substantial article by a competent and qualified writer, paying full tribute to David=s services to the RA and his success in the right-to-roam campaign in particular, to appear in *The Rambler* at an early date.

This motion was not accepted by Council as an emergency motion, by 62 votes to 40. There were 25 abstentions.

#### **OPEN SESSION MOTIONS**

## **Emergency motion on foot-and-mouth disease**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Kate Ashbrook and seconded on behalf of Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area by David Bradnack:

This General Council expresses its deep sympathy to all affected by the foot-and-mouth epidemic, recognises that the prime objective must continue to be the eradication of the disease and applauds the responsible attitude taken by RA officers and staff on the current outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

The government, through its vets, has now advised local authorities on the reopening of public rights of way without causing risk of spreading the disease. We call on local authorities to follow that advice and to:

- (a) arrange for the advice to be publicised through its vets, as a further encouragement to local authorities to follow it,
- (b) publicise the Countryside Agency's code for walkers as widely as possible (and arrange for similar advice to be published in Wales),
- (c) reassure local authorities that they, and anyone working on their behalf, will not be liable for any claim of loss caused by an outbreak of the disease following the reopening of a public right of way in the vicinity.

The motion was carried nem con.

## **Countryside and Rights of Way Act (Executive Committee)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Kate Ashbrook and seconded by Jo Bird:

This General Council warmly welcomes the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the Act) and calls on the Executive Committee to seek its implementation as quickly as possible and to the best possible advantage to walkers.

In particular, General Council calls on the Executive Committee to take steps to ensure that:

- Areas and Groups in England and Wales are encouraged to and are able to play a full part in the implementation of the Act;
- Areas and Groups in England and Wales are encouraged to appoint Area and Local Access Officers to coordinate the RA's work on the implementation of the Act locally;
- Areas and Groups in England and Wales are able to represent the RA and walkers' interests effectively on every local access forum.

The motion was carried unanimously.

## **Definitive maps (Staffordshire Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Staffordshire Area by Graham Evans and seconded by Richard Clamp:

This General Council supports the government's aim of seeking to ensure that all definitive maps are complete and accurate, but, in view of the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act which will effectively extinguish any unrecorded historic rights of way in 25 years time, it calls upon the government to provide, through the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales, sufficient resources for properly funded research and order-making programmes within every surveying authority in England and Wales.

The motion was carried.

### **Strategic planning process** (Executive Committee)

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Kevin Matthews and seconded by Peter Skipp:

This General Council recognises that long-term planning is essential for the growth and success of the Association and urges the Executive Committee to give it high priority.

Council therefore welcomes the Executive Committee's decision to produce a strategic plan for a five-year period beginning not later than October 2002 and to consult widely during the preparation of this plan.

Council instructs the Executive Committee to present that plan to it at General Council 2002.

The motion was carried unanimously.

### **Promotion of rambling by disabled people** (DDA Disabled Ramblers)

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the DDA Disabled Ramblers by Mike Bruton and seconded by Barrie Dobson (Red Rope):

The DDA Disabled Ramblers warmly thanks the Ramblers' Association at national, Area and Group levels for its continuing encouragement and support of policies and events promoting rambling by disabled people.

In the light of the CROW Act, the General Council asks the Executive Committee to encourage further promotion of disabled rambling by providing advice and support to Areas and Groups with particular emphasis on the following local actions:

- i) to monitor highway authorities to ensure they adequately fulfil the statutory requirements of the CROW Act of making proper provision to enable disabled people to make better use of local paths and trails in their path improvement plans;
- ii) to champion representation of disabled people on all local access fora, and to work with such representatives in progressing the cause of better access.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.

### **Legislation shopping list** (Executive Committee)

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Brian Reader and seconded by Peter Ayling:

This General Council instructs the Executive Committee:

- (i) to carry out a thorough review of the RA's legislation shopping list in the light of the provisions which now appear in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and recent General Council resolutions;
- (ii) to amend the list accordingly, and to ensure that it includes provisions to further restrict the use of green lanes and other unsurfaced routes by mechanically propelled vehicles, to limit the dangers arising from bulls in fields crossed by public rights of way, and to provide adequate protection for public rights of way which are subject to erosion by the sea or rivers;
- (iii) to urge the government to enact this legislation at the earliest possible opportunity.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.



### **Quarrying in national parks (Manchester Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Manchester Area by Terry Perkins and seconded by Janet Cuff:

General Council, mindful that the Environment Act 1995 places a statutory duty on all arms of government to have regard to national park purposes, which include the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, in its decision making and its activities and 2001 being the fiftieth anniversary of the first four of our national parks, calls on the government to implement this duty and reaffirm its support for national park protection by:

- X giving a commitment that because of its unsustainable and destructive nature, large-scale aggregates quarrying in national parks will cease at the first available opportunity;
- X proceeding with the introduction of the aggregates levy at the earliest possible date;
- X revisiting the problems that old minerals permissions are continuing to cause, particularly in the Peak District;
- X paying special attention to the threat to the Dartmoor National Park caused by the proposed expansion of china clay extraction and tipping in the Blackabrook Valley and on Shaugh Moor;
- X ensuring that the DETR=s research project on building stone pays particular attention to the conflicts that its extraction in the Peak District is causing with national park purposes.

The following amendment was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Terry Pollard and seconded by Terry Squires:

Delete first bullet point and replace with:

- X giving a commitment that because of its unsustainable and destructive nature, new quarry permissions should not be granted in national parks unless overriding national need is clearly demonstrated and there are no alternatives (including alternative ways of meeting the need), and that where quarrying does take place in national parks, it is undertaken to the highest possible standards of environmental protection

The amendment was lost.

Remission was proposed by David Kelly (Mid Lancashire Area) and seconded by Geoffrey Williams (Dyfed Area).

Remission was lost.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.

### **The Cuillins (Executive Committee)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Alison Mitchell and seconded by John Holms:

This Council regrets the failure of both the UK and Scottish Governments to fully investigate the validity of the titles claimed by private landowning interests in the internationally-acclaimed Cuillin mountain range on the Isle of Skye. It deplores the lack of real effort by the Crown Estate Commissioners to establish the extent of land in this area which might still remain in Crown ownership. Council therefore calls upon the Secretary of

State for Culture, Media and Sport to issue guidance to all distributors of lottery funds to prohibit the use of lottery funds to acquire any of the land in the Cuillins which was offered for sale in the year 2000 by Macleod of Macleod of Dunvegan and to communicate this advice to all other public organisations that might be approached for funds to help in the purchase of land in the Cuillins.

The following amendment was proposed on behalf of Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway Area by Elizabeth Lawie and seconded by James Riddell:

Line 7 - delete Aprohibit and replace with Asuspend

Line 8 - between AMacLeod of MacLeod of Dunvegan and Aand to communicate insert Auntil the title position is adequately clarified.

The amendment was lost.

The motion was carried.

#### **Joint action on lottery funding to improve rights of way network (West Riding Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of West Riding Area by Keith Wadd and seconded by Rodney Waddilove:

The General Council recommends that the Ramblers Association explores joining with like-minded bodies to apply for lottery funding to improve the rights of way network. In particular, the expertise and assistance of bodies such as Sustrans should be sought now that its work and funding for the millennium cycle network is coming to an end.

The following amendment was proposed on behalf of Avon Area and Inner London Area by Peter Gould (Avon Area) and seconded by John Archer (Inner London).

Delete entire second sentence.

The amendment was carried by 47 votes to 37, with seven abstentions.

The amended motion was lost.

#### **Coastal access (Executive Committee)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Terry Squires and seconded by Terry Pollard:

This General Council, recalling that a very substantial proportion of the coastline of Wales is of exceptionally high scenic and environmental quality and regretting restrictions on access in many parts of the coastline, calls upon the Countryside Council for Wales to initiate and take the lead in implementing a long-term plan for securing access on foot to all sections of that coastline, and in so doing to set an example to relevant authorities in all other parts of Britain on how best to secure greater access to the coastline.

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.

#### **Reproductions of definitive maps (Cornwall Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Cornwall Area by Ken Dawe and seconded by Bryan Linfoot (Devon Area):

This General Council instructs the Executive Committee to use all possible means to seek to ensure that reproductions of definitive maps can readily be obtained and held by members of the public, including officers and volunteers of the Ramblers Association, and that highway authorities are not prevented from doing so by restrictive licences and claims of copyright by the Ordnance Survey.

The motion was carried.

## CLOSED SESSION MOTIONS

(The vice-chairman took the chair for motions 11 to 16.)

### Postal Voting for Executive Committee members (Executive Committee)

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Jo Bird and seconded by Peter Ayling:

This General Council agrees to amend the constitution and standing orders of the Ramblers Association as follows:

#### Clause 8. Officers

Line 10. Delete AThe above Officers shall be appointed annually by the General Council, and insert  
AThe President and Vice-presidents shall be appointed annually by the General Council. The Chairman, Vice-chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Solicitor shall be appointed from amongst their number by the Executive Committee.

#### Clause 9. Executive Committee

Delete existing wording in its entirety and replace with: AThe Executive Committee shall consist of the following:

- (a) The President
- (b) Twelve members, who shall have been individual members of the Association for at least one year prior to the closing dates for nominations, elected by postal ballot of the membership
- (c) The Chairmen of the Welsh and Scottish Councils, if not already otherwise members of the Executive Committee
- (d) Should the Executive Committee decide that none of their number is suitably qualified to be appointed Honorary Treasurer or Honorary Solicitor, the Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt to fill either or both posts.

#### Clause 10. General Council

Lines 21 to 27. Delete sentence commencing ARetiring members ... in its entirety.

#### Clause 11. Annual General Meeting of the General Council

Sub-para (b). Between Aappoint and AOfficers insert Athose.  
Sub-para (c). Delete in its entirety, and re-letter subsequent sub-paragraphs.  
Lines 9/10. Delete sentence commencing AThe absence... in its entirety.

#### Standing Order A12

Line 4. Delete AAnnual general meeting of General Council, and insert Apostal ballot of the membership.

Council further agrees that, unless otherwise decided by this Council before 15 April 2002\*, the above changes shall come into effect on that date.

Council instructs the Executive Committee to draft regulations for postal balloting and any further necessary amendments to the constitution and standing orders and present these for approval to a meeting of this Council not later than 14th April 2002.

Council instructs that the first Executive Committee to be elected under the amended clause 9 above shall take office immediately after the annual meeting of this Council in 2003, and that elections under the new arrangements shall be held in good time to allow that to happen.

(\* 15th April 2002 is the day immediately after General Council 2002.)

The following amendment was proposed on behalf of Kent Area by Ken Wright and seconded by Chris Barrow:

In paragraph starting "Council further agrees" delete "15th April 2002", substitute "the date immediately following General Council 2004".

In the penultimate paragraph delete "14th April 2002", substitute "last day of General Council 2004".

In final paragraph delete "2003" substitute "2005".

The amendment was carried.

The following amendment was proposed by Geoff Williams (Dyfed Area) and seconded by Graham Butler (Surrey Area):

Delete reference to Clause 8.

In paragraph referring to Clause 9, line (b), delete "Twelve" and replace with "Nine". Also delete line (d).

In paragraph referring to Clause 11, delete first line.

The amendment was carried.

The amended motion was lost overwhelmingly.

#### **Nomination of EC candidates** (Executive Committee)

This motion was withdrawn.

#### **Clause 9 Executive Committee** (Ramblers= Association Services)

This motion was withdrawn.

#### **Area Entitlement** (Executive Committee)

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Annette Cotter and seconded by Peter Skipp:

##### **Standing Order C10**

Change last nine words to:

... and twenty-five per cent shall be known as Area Entitlement and shall be allocated as specified in these standing orders.

##### **Standing Order C11**

Change the first two lines to:

Area Entitlement shall be paid to each area, on request by the area, according to the following formula:

### **Standing Order C12**

Insert after AThe Treasurer shall= Aon request by the area,=

**Add** the following standing order and renumber subsequent standing orders accordingly:

### **Standing Order C13**

After taking advice from the auditors on the procedure to be adopted, the Treasurer may set deadlines before which areas must claim Area Entitlement to which they are entitled. Any Area Entitlement not claimed before those deadlines shall be retained for central funds.

The following amendment was proposed on behalf of Dorset Area by Mike Heckford and seconded by John Thackray (Hampshire Area):

Delete all wording after

AStanding Order C12 Insert after AThe Treasurers shall= >on request by the area=

The amendment was lost.

The motion was carried.

### **Postal ballots (Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway Area by Elizabeth Lawie and seconded by James Riddell:

### **Standing Order A9**

In the first paragraph of Standing Order A9, delete the second sentence and substitute the following:

AUnless the requisition shall specify that the postal ballot must be held as a matter of urgency, a copy of the requisition shall first be sent by post to each nominated member of the General Council with an invitation to submit within twenty-one days comments for or against the proposal to be put to the postal ballot and/or to submit amendments to the proposal.

If any such responses are received, then as soon as practicable after the expiry of the said twenty-one days, a meeting of the Agenda Committee shall be held to prepare a summary of such comments for circulation with the voting paper and any amendments submitted.

Thereafter a voting paper, providing for options to vote for or against the proposal and any amendment submitted, shall be sent by post to each nominated member of the General Council, accompanied by the Agenda Committee=s summary of comments received (if any) and a request that it be returned to the Auditor within twenty-one days from the date of service, and the result shall be declared in accordance with the voting papers returned within that period.

In the case of a requisition specifying that the postal ballot must be held as a matter of urgency, the voting paper shall be sent by post to each nominated member of the General Council with a request that it be returned to the Auditor within twenty-one days from the date of service, but any papers accompanying the voting paper shall be scrupulously neutral on the matter which is the subject of the ballot.

The result shall be declared in accordance with the voting papers returned within the said twenty-one day period.=

The motion was carried, by 40 votes to 25.

**Involvement of volunteers (Avon Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Avon Area by Peter Gould and seconded by Sylvia Popham (Agenda Committee):

Recognising that the active involvement of unpaid members in its work is one of the Association's greatest assets, an asset not to be squandered, this General Council calls on the Executive Committee, as it implements plans for the long term future of the Association, to

- I) minimise the burden of mere administration laid upon such members and
- ii) bear in mind that managerial techniques and procedures acceptable in professional life may not be appropriate for them.

The motion was carried.

**Area funding (North Wales Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of North Wales Area by Mary Robinson and seconded by Doug Whitehouse:

- A. General Council notes that funds held by Areas and Groups totals over ,1m and that there is much disparity between amounts held, with some Areas holding large sums and others small.
- B. EC is instructed to examine the following:
  - I) the formula for Area entitlement;
  - ii) spending by Areas and Groups;
  - iii) activity of Areas and Groups.
- C. In the light of the above EC is further instructed to:
  - I) devise a mechanism for Area funding which takes into account the disparity in funds held by Areas and Groups and makes sure that Areas and Groups can pay for their pursuit of the RA's charitable objectives;
  - ii) circulate the above for discussion;
  - iii) implement a new funding mechanism based on the results of the above steps.

Remission was proposed Alan Howard (vice-president) and seconded by Terry Squires (Executive Committee).

Remission was lost.

The motion was lost, by 57 votes to 48, with 17 abstentions.

**Assaults on walking group leaders and footpath officers (Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Area)**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Hertfordshire and North Middlesex Area by Mark Westley and seconded by David Allard:

This General Council demands that the Ramblers' Association adopts a zero tolerance policy towards assaults on our walking group leaders and footpath officers in pursuance of their business, provided that they are on a designated right of way.

The following amendment was proposed by Allen Pestell (Agenda Committee) and seconded by Don Lee (Open Spaces Society):

Delete all after Abusiness=.

The amendment was carried.

The amended motion was lost.

On the closing time for discussion of motions having been reached, the following motions were remitted to the Executive Committee:

**.] Personal accident cover for members (Mid Lancs Area)**

This General Council is appreciative of the good work done by RA working parties, plus also of the goodwill and useful publicity this gains for the RA.

However, General Council is concerned about the limitations of the cover provided by the present RA insurance policy. Council therefore instructs the Executive Committee to urgently investigate the possibility of extending the insurance policy to include personal accident cover for members of RA working parties.

**.] Office relocation (Merseyside and West Cheshire Area)**

This General Council calls upon the Executive Committee to carry out an in depth feasibility study into relocating to a base outside London and the home counties. This study to be a major step to reducing the high operating costs of the Ramblers= Association London head office. The rapid expansion of communication facilities between personnel and locations emphasises the desirability of reconsidering this move for the major part of the Ramblers= Association administrative operation.

**.] The Rambler magazine (Norfolk Area)**

This Council is concerned that *The Rambler* magazine is increasingly becoming full of commissioned articles and is failing to devote sufficient space to the activities of the Areas and Groups. The Council therefore reminds the editorial staff of the magazine that one of its prime objectives is to carry reports and photographs of members= activities. Council instructs the editor of the magazine to expand the coverage of such activities and to correspondingly reduce the volume of walks and equipment reviews which are best carried by specialist magazines.

**.] Rules for candidates seeking election to the Executive Committee or Agenda Committee (Nottinghamshire Area)**

This General Council urges the Ramblers= Association to revise the rules for candidates seeking election to the Executive Committee or Agenda Committee by introducing the following measures:

- (a) to prevent any biographical information being presented to the General Council in support of a nomination which was not submitted by the closing date for such nominations;
- (b) that the General Council has absolute right to examine any biographical information presented in support of any nominations.

**.] Election of the Executive Committee through regions (Essex Area)**

This General Council instructs the national Executive Committee to reconsider, in conjunction with a system of one member one vote, our 1998 motion, that Areas in each government region in England should nominate and elect an NEC member to represent them, rather than NEC members being elected at General Council as at present.

**VENUES OF FUTURE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Council accepted that the 2002 meeting would be held at the University of Newcastle on 12-14 April, as Durham University had proved unsuitable for disabled delegates. Council noted that the 2003 meeting would be held at the University of Lancaster on 11-13 April. It was recommended by Executive Committee that the 2004 meeting be held at the University of Exeter. The recommendation was accepted.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Council agreed that good wishes be sent to the Treasurer, David Hunt, who had been very unwell.

### **CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

- 1 The chairman spoke about the team effort which goes into the organisation of this and every Council meeting, with staff, local Area volunteers, organisers of fringe events, delegates and visitors working together to make the most of the meeting.
- 2 Special thanks were given to the host area, Avon, which had arranged tellers, scrutineers, microphone monitors, time keepers, registration staff, walk leaders, guidance from the station, and had given an enormous amount of time helping to arrange a successful meeting.
- 3 Thanks were extended to the university staff.
- 4 The chairman asked why all this effort was made each year in the organisation of the General Council meeting. The answer was that the association mattered a great deal to its members, and this meeting was key to giving the association direction for the coming year, as well as ensuring that it would be left in a strong position for future generations. The Council meetings were part of the glue that held the association together.
- 5 The last year had seen the association reach a defining moment. There was now a chance to look to the future and build new partnerships.
- 6 The chairman thanked, on behalf of the RA, all those who had played a part in bringing the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to the statute book. There was, however, still a great deal of work to be done in ensuring that the Act was implemented to the best advantage for walkers. The extension of access to coastline, especially in Wales, would demand further efforts from the RA. In Scotland, the draft access Bill had been produced for consultation and there were issues of considerable concern surrounding the suspension of access, and possible criminalisation of trespass. Support for the RA campaign in Scotland would be needed over the coming months.
- 7 The chairman then spoke about Nick Barrett and his role as chief executive. Nick had identified the challenges facing the association and now he was initiating the strategic review in order to build on past achievements for future success. The production of the staff workplan and the financial strategy had established a meaningful dialogue between staff, EC and the membership, and this openness should continue as comments and input to the strategic review were sought.
- 8 The Area Treasurers' Conference had seen open and frank discussion of the financial situation. The Governance Review would be looking at the role of Areas and Groups over the coming year, and there would be consultation on this. Overall, a feeling of partnership and cooperation across the organisation would be encouraged. There was a great deal to be done in implementing the access legislation and the ability to deliver to members would be weakened if the association's internal house was not in order.
- 9 If all were to enjoy a valued and cared-for landscape, town and country needed to work together. The economic value of walking was now obvious and the association should help the rural community to capitalise on this during its recovery from the foot and mouth outbreak. Those who had criticised walkers during the debates on the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill had been proved wrong in saying that walkers never observed restrictions.
- 10 The chairman ended by saying that the van Hoogstratens of the world, the Pentre Farm owners who disregarded the law, the would-be sellers of the Cuillins, the funicular builders, all needed to learn that the land belongs to everyone. With this in mind, perhaps those present would look back at this time as one when the Association took pride in its achievements, grasped the issues of the moment and rose to the challenges of the future.
- 11 The chairman's remarks were warmly acclaimed.



**THIS ENDED THE BUSINESS**

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