

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY  
8<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2005**

\* denotes a member of Council (voter)

**PRESIDENT**

Chris Smith\*

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Andrew Bennett\*  
John Bunting\*  
Richard Lloyd Jones\*  
Malcolm Petyt\*  
David Sharp\*

**CHAIRMAN**

Brian Reader\*

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Terry Squires\*

**TREASURER**

Denis Fuller\*

**HONORARY SOLICITOR**

Jerry Pearlman\*

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Kate Ashbrook\*  
Peter Ayling\*  
Annette Cotter\*  
Cath Mackay\*  
Alex Marshall\*  
Kevin Matthews\*  
Alison Mitchell\*  
Owen Plunkett\*  
Terry Pollard\*  
Mavis Rear\*  
Peter Skipp\*

**AGENDA COMMITTEE MEMBER**

John Dowding\*  
Elizabeth Lawie\*  
Ron Moore\*  
Allen Pestell\*  
Sylvia Popham\*

**AVON AREA**

David Clarke\*  
Peter Gould\*

**BERKSHIRE AREA**

Jane Kiely\*  
Stuart Shurlock\*  
Cliff Lambert

**BUCKS & W MIDDX AREA**

John Elfes\*  
John Esslemont\*  
John Frankland

**CAMBS & PETERBO AREA**

Roger Coulson\*  
Steve Horner\*

**CENTRAL, F & T AREA**

Frederick Forrester\*  
Chic Nash\*

**CORNWALL AREA**

Ron Cooke\*  
Christine James\*

## **DERBYSHIRE AREA**

John Hayes\*  
Keith Walkerdine\*  
Keith Howkins  
Joyce Mold  
Arthur Osborne  
Joy Osborne  
Andy Smith  
Allan Snowball  
David Varley  
Chris Vaughan

## **DEVON AREA**

Joan Long\*  
Eric Smith\*  
Eileen Linfoot

## **DORSET AREA**

Kate Gocher\*  
Andy Hopkinson\*

## **E YORKS/DERWENT AREA**

Chris Bush\*  
Malcolm Dixon\*  
Tom Halstead  
Sheila Smith

## **ESSEX AREA**

Len Banister\*  
David Cullington\*  
Hazel Jarrold\*  
Colin Jacob

## **GLAMORGAN AREA**

James Davies\*  
Ian Fraser\*

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA**

Jill Byrne\*  
Gerry Stewart\*  
Kate Stewart

## **GRAMPIAN AREA**

Anne Macdonald\*

## **HAMPSHIRE AREA**

Douglas Shiell\*  
George Williams\*  
David Nixon

## **HEREFORDSHIRE AREA**

Arthur Lee\*  
Sid Palmer\*

## **HERTS & N MIDDX AREA**

David Allard\*  
Norman Jones\*  
David Dickson  
Justin Lumley

## **INNER LONDON AREA**

John Archer\*  
Les Douglas\*

## **ISLE OF WIGHT AREA**

Adrian Burns\*  
Ann Simpson\*  
Geoff Long

## **KENT AREA**

David Law\*  
Peter Whitestone\*  
Leslie Preston

## **LAKE DISTRICT AREA**

Tony Iles\*  
Peter Jones\*

## **LEICS & RUTLAND AREA**

Stan Warren\*

## **LINCOLNSHIRE AREA**

Stuart Parker\*  
Colin Smith\*  
Phil Jacklin  
Pat Mcclure  
Miriam Smith

## **LOTHIAN & BORDERS AREA**

David Grosz\*  
Arthur Homan-elsy\*  
Bridget Wilcox

## **MANCHESTER & HIGH PEAK AREA**

Edgar Ernstbrunner\*  
Terry Perkins\*  
Gloria Gaffney  
Keith Pennyfather

## **MERSEYSIDE AREA**

Gloria Thayer\*  
Vi Williams\*  
Jean Beasor  
Maggie Hems

## **MID LANCASHIRE AREA**

Ron Cheetham\*  
David Kelly\*

## **NORFOLK AREA**

Don Davenport\*

## **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA**

Will Lovell\*  
Maurice Tebbutt\*

## **NORTH & MID CHESHIRE AREA**

John Lilley\*  
Tony Wakefield\*

## **NORTH EAST LANCS AREA**

Susan Baxendale\*  
Allan Richards\*  
Sylvia Franks

## **NORTHUMBRIA AREA**

Pennie Porter\*  
Judith Taylor\*  
Mary Moore

## **NORTH WALES AREA**

Ron Williams\*

## **NORTH YORKS & SOUTH DURHAM AREA**

Jo Bird\*  
David Lawrenson\*

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA**

Hilda Allsopp  
Dave Bettridge  
John Boland  
Carol Bristow  
Anne Burns  
David Dobson  
Alison Farquhar  
Jenny Fillingham  
Mary Foley  
Eileen Gibbs  
Lynsey Hall  
Joyce Hazeldine  
Glenis Kershaw  
Alec Kingsmill  
Ted Limb  
John Lord  
June Lord  
Sarah Matthews  
Andrea Nix  
Gary Olds  
Sarah Pheasant  
Linda Pitt  
Colin Portman  
Blaine Quigley  
Mike Rawdin  
Rita Rippon  
Geoff Rix  
Janet Rix  
Chris Robinson  
Alex Staniforth  
Marian Staniforth  
Brian Stroud  
David Turner  
Judy Valentine  
Paul Wagstaff  
Janice Walker  
Andy Watts  
Arthur Weldon  
Des Whicher  
Rod Fillingham\*  
Chris Thompson\*  
David Hunt  
Alan Rogers

## **OXFORDSHIRE AREA**

Patrick Lonergan\*  
Charles Woolland\*

## **POWYS AREA**

Harry Chandler\*  
Robert Seabrook\*

## **SHROPSHIRE AREA**

Phoebe Mills\*  
Alison Parker\*

## **SOMERSET AREA**

Mary Henry\*

## **SOUTH & EAST CHESHIRE AREA**

Alan Soper\*  
Joan Soper\*

## **SOUTH YORKS & NE DERBY AREA**

Terry Howard\*  
Les Seaman\*

## **STAFFORDSHIRE AREA**

Andrew Griffin  
Geoff Budd\*  
Graham Evans\*  
Joan Budd  
Steve Spencer

## **STRATHCLYDE, D&G AREA**

Hilary Graham\*  
Barry Pottle\*

## **SUFFOLK AREA**

Tony Eden\*  
Jim Richards\*

## **SURREY AREA**

Graham Butler\*  
Keith Chesterton\*  
Denis Holmes\*  
Heather Gumbrell

## **SUSSEX AREA**

Paulette Cowley\*  
Nigel Sloan\*

## **WARWICKSHIRE AREA**

Michael Bird\*  
Steven Wallsgrove\*  
John Garrett  
Alice Sin

## **WEST RIDING AREA**

Keith Wadd\*  
Derrick Watt\*

## **WILTS & SWINDON AREA**

Joan Crosbee\*  
Angela Womersley\*

## **WORCESTERSHIRE AREA**

Clive Bostle\*

## **CAMPING & CARAVANNING CLUB**

Jim Perry\*  
Sylvia Perry

## **COUNTRYWIDE HOLIDAYS**

Margaret Whiteside\*

## **DISABLED RAMBLERS**

Rosie Norris\*  
Maria Davis  
John Norris

## **OPEN SPACES SOCIETY**

Donald Lee\*

## **RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SERVICES**

Stuart Alderman  
Geoff Eastwood\*

## **ULSTER FEDERATION OF RAMBLING CLUBS**

Ronnie Carsar\*

## **YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION**

John Templeton\*

## **GUESTS**

Andrew Bibby  
Irene Bunting  
Kate Cave  
Mark Davies  
Tony Drake  
Hamish Fulton  
Mrs Fulton  
Kathryn Gregory  
Arthur Howcroft  
John Nicoll  
Margaret Sharp

## **YPG**

Dave Ebdon  
Owen Gallagher  
Karen Green  
Jeanette Grose  
Cath Guest  
Mark Hoare  
Rachel Hooke  
Elaine Hughes  
Mark Hydes  
Charlie Jewkes  
David Lacey  
James Levy  
Ken Maddock  
Phil Marson  
Sylvia Mayne  
James Mckenna  
Joanne Mckenna  
Denise Pearson  
Geoff Roach  
Bernie Roche  
Claire Spencer  
Dimitrios Vikeloudas  
Clare Wadd  
John Wainwright  
Andrew Webster

## **STAFF**

Nick Barrett  
Paul Bell  
Rachael Bryett  
Gwen Campbell  
Andrew Chadwick  
Sarah Clements  
Janet Davis  
Des De Moor  
Rebecca Dixon  
Duncan Exley  
Jacquetta Fewster  
Dan French  
Des Garrahan  
Imran Khan  
Catherine Leckenby  
Emma Marrington  
Nick Milton  
Adrian Morris  
Nadia Nath-Varma  
Beverley Penney  
Adrian Ritchie  
Jo Smith  
Chris Sparrow  
Paul Strong  
Eugene Suggett  
Fiona Syme  
Simon Waters  
John Wightman  
Paul Wilkinson  
Sarah Williams  
Sharon Woods

## **1 WELCOME**

- 1.1 David Hunt, Nottinghamshire Area Chairman, welcomed Council members and visitors to Nottingham on behalf of the Area.
- 1.2 David spoke of the historical and social importance of the City of Nottingham, and its associations with Robin Hood (who made a surprise appearance at Council!). He urged everyone to look at the exhibition showing the many delights of the county of Nottinghamshire.
- 1.3 David said that Nottinghamshire Area of the RA was very active. It had 17 Groups and had been the first to have a 20-30s Group, the Notts Derby Walking Group, which had broken further ground in being a cross-area Group. The Area now had over 3,000 members, an excellent website and an improving relationship with the County Council. Efforts by two members, Alex Staniforth and Geoff Rix, were leading to the re-launch of the Trent Valley Way.
- 1.4 David went on to thank all those Area volunteers who had helped with the organisation of General Council, especially since it was for the second time in six years.
- 1.5 In the wider East Midlands context, David was pleased to be able to report that five RA Areas had joined together to produce a regional walking guide, which would be on sale over the weekend. With sadness, he recalled the recent death of Lincolnshire Area President, Brett Collier, a marvellous man who would be sorely missed.
- 1.6 David was pleased to note that there were again fewer motions for debate this year. He saw this as due to the development of a business plan with clear priorities, and the hard work of the Chairman, EC, the Chief Executive and staff.
- 1.7 He was also pleased to see the many quality publications and images that were now being produced within the RA. On a more serious note, membership recruitment, and the holding of reserves by Areas remained serious issues that needed to be addressed. It was very important that the RA did not become complacent or too comfortable: much remained to be done.

## **2 APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

## **3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 3.1 There were no announcements.

## **4 APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS**

4.1 The following persons were appointed:

**Tellers:** Jenny Fillingham  
Glenis Kershaw  
Colin Portman  
Geoff Rix  
Judy Valentine  
Paul Wagstaffe

4.2 **Scrutineers:** June Lord  
John Lord  
John Boland  
Mona Boland

## **5 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 There was no other business.

## **6 MINUTES OF GENERAL COUNCIL 2004**

6.1 There were no corrections, and the Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of General Council 2004 as a true record.

6.2 A number of questions were raised on the report on actions taken to implement motions passed or remitted at General Council 2004.

6.3 John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire & West Middlesex Area) asked if any further information was available on the interpretation of the term 'visible rights of way' as used in the context of cross compliance, and whether there was any mechanism to challenge interpretation by Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government of the EU requirements. A letter from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) was read to Council. This made it clear that in England the cross compliance measures were intended to apply to all rights of way, and that it had been necessary to use the term 'visible' on the basis that a landscape feature, which is defined in the relevant EU Regulation and forms the basis for the introduction of cross compliance on rights of way, can only be described as such if it can be seen. It was further reported that RA staff were investigating how cross compliance infringements could best be reported to the RPA.

6.4 Barry Pottle (Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway Area) asked if any work had been carried out on the Land Registry of Scotland, since the report only covered England and Wales. The issue was more serious in Scotland since less land was registered there. The Chairman said that so far no work had been done on the matter in the Scottish context.

## **7 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

7.1 The Chairman moved the adoption of the annual report. This was seconded by Ron Moore (Agenda Committee).

## **Questions and comments on the annual report**

- 7.2 John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire & West Middlesex Area) noted the strengthening of the powers of regional government in England in the planning context (p.19). He urged EC to investigate how RA Areas could be encouraged to co-operate on regional work. Keith Chesterton (Surrey Area) backed this comment, and gave a further example of the problems associated with regional representation on a Highways Agency User Committee. The Chairman said that it was a matter of common sense that Areas should work together on regional issues.
- 7.3 John Esslemont further commented that he remained concerned that many RA Groups did not understand the full implications of the RA's charitable status. He felt that a simplified version of the RA's guidance for Area and Group Treasurers should be more widely available.
- 7.4 David Kelly (Mid Lancashire Area) said the Report looked attractive but he felt that it lacked detail e.g. on the number of members. Nick Barrett said that the report was intended to be a positive presentation of progress, for the information of potential donors and others outside the organisation. Much detailed information was available internally, via circulars.
- 7.5 Jo Bird (North Yorks & South Durham Area) said that she was concerned about implementation of the access management grant scheme (p.15). Graham Butler (Surrey Area) said that he understood that the grant level had been raised to 75% of costs but that uptake was low. Nigel Sloan (Sussex Area) said that authorities only received the money after the necessary works had been carried out.
- 7.6 John Dowding (Agenda Committee) said that he was pleased to see progress with the extension of access to coastal lands since this was the subject of a previous motion from Essex Area. He was pleased to be able to report that six counties in the south-east were already working on this.
- 7.7 Ron Moore (Agenda Committee) commented that the annual report was an excellent document and that all concerned in its production should be congratulated.
- 7.8 Council agreed to adopt the annual report for the year 2003/04.

## **8 ACCOUNTS**

- 8.1 The adoption of the accounts for the year to 30 September 2004 was proposed by the Treasurer, Denis Fuller, and seconded by Annette Cotter (EC).
- 8.2 The Treasurer then presented the accounts. He said that it had been a successful year with income up by 6%, and that the financial position was good, particularly when compared to the situation five years ago.
- 8.3 The Treasurer gave thanks to the RA Trust for its continuing and generous support, and also thanked those Areas and Groups that had contributed funds to support the establishment of the Volunteer Support Team. It was important that RA money was available for use where it was most needed.



- 8.4 The Treasurer said that the Sun Accounting system, paid for by the RA Trust, and good budgetary controls, were both contributing to the improved financial management of the RA.
- 8.5 The Treasurer thanked Area and Group Treasurers for all their work, and urged those Areas and Groups which had not yet done so to transfer their funds to the Unity Bank. It was important that a unified banking system was in place.
- 8.6 Finally, the Treasurer urged all Areas to make sure that they were represented at the Area Treasurers' Conference in July.

### **Questions and comments on the Annual Accounts**

- 8.7 John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire & West Middlesex Area) commented that he was surprised to see that only eight members had guaranteed to contribute £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up.
- 8.8 Gloria Thayer (Merseyside & West Cheshire Area) said that her Area remained very concerned about returning funds to the centre when they had taken such a long-time to build up. Their preference was to see the money invested so that it would earn interest. Nick Barrett said it was important to have a system in place so that all RA funds could be used to best effect wherever they were needed within the organisation. Areas needed to trust the central organisation to do this.
- 8.9 Alan Soper (South & East Cheshire Area) said that he thought the amount of money received by the RA in legacies was small compared to other charities. He was concerned about lack of information about leaving legacies to the RA. The Chairman assured the meeting that such information was available, and later read out a full statement on legacies policy.
- 8.10 David Law (Kent Area) asked for further information on the Area Treasurers' Conference. Nick Barrett said that it was much more significant than simply a training event for Treasurers. It would look at fundamental issues of funding Areas and Groups; in particular the move to a budget based system, the reserves policy, and unified banking.
- 8.11 Council agreed to adopt the accounts for the year to 30 September 2004.

## **9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 9.1 Officers were elected as follows (nominated and seconded *en bloc* except where indicated otherwise):

### **President**

Chris Smith MP                                      Proposed by Cath Mackay, and seconded by Owen Plunkett

**Vice presidents** (not elected: past presidents automatically become vice-presidents)

Andrew Bennett MP	Mike Harding
Fay Godwin	Peter Melchett

Chris Hall

Janet Street-Porter

**Vice-presidents**

Proposed by Cath Mackay and seconded by Owen Plunkett

John Bunting  
Geoff Eastwood  
John Foster  
Jack Ibbott  
Richard Lloyd Jones

Alan Mattingly  
David Sharp  
Paddy Tipping MP  
Malcolm Petyt  
Jerry Pearlman MBE

**Chairman** (Geoff Eastwood took the chair for the duration of the Chairman's election). Proposed by Terry Squires, seconded by Peter Ayling.

Brian Reader

**Vice-Chairman** Proposed by Peter Skipp and seconded by Terry Pollard.

Terry Squires

**Treasurer**

Denis Fuller

**Hon Solicitor**

Jerry Pearlman LLB

**10. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

It was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Annette Cotter, and seconded by Mavis Rear, that Sayer Vincent be re-appointed as the Association's auditors. This was agreed by Council.

**11. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Ten nominations for places on the Executive Committee were received as follows, Kate Ashbrook, Peter Ayling, Annette Cotter, John Hayes, Kevin Matthews, Alison Mitchell, Owen Plunkett, Terry Pollard, Mavis Rear and Peter Skipp. 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	Owen Plunkett
Peter Ayling	Terry Pollard
Annette Cotter	Mavis Rear
Kevin Matthews	Peter Skipp
Alison Mitchell	

**12. ELECTION OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**

Six nominations for the Agenda Committee were received as follows, John Dowding, Elizabeth Lawie, Ron Moore, Allen Pestell, Sylvia Popham and Nigel Sloan. After a ballot, the Chairman announced the votes cast for each candidate and declared that the following five persons had been duly elected:

John Dowding  
Elizabeth Lawie  
Ron Moore

Sylvia Popham  
Nigel Sloan

### **13. Emergency motions**

- 13.1 Council considered the addition to the agenda of one emergency motion.
- 13.2 It was proposed by Kate Ashbrook, on behalf of the Executive Committee, that an emergency motion on the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act be taken. This was seconded by Donald Lee (Open Spaces Society). Council voted overwhelmingly to debate the motion. The motion is set out as motion [5] under item 15 below.

### **14. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY CHRIS SMITH MP**

Chris began by saying that he could only call himself an MP for another two days, and that the same was true of Andrew Bennett. They were both retiring from the House, and the RA had cause to be very grateful to Andrew for his many years of service in the interests of walkers, both in Parliament and beyond.

Chris went on to say that the outstanding event of the last year was the implementation of access to open country in the lower north-west and south-east on the 19 September, closely followed by access in central southern England on 14 December. The upper north-west and north-east would follow shortly on 28 May. The surprising and heartening thing had been that access had so far been introduced with general public approval. The Country Land and Business Association and the Moorland Association were nowhere to be seen or heard, and it was clear that the RA had won the public argument, and was operating from a very strong position. It was now inconceivable that a future government would repeal the legislation and this was a tribute both to Alun Michael as the Minister who had overseen commencement, and to the RA's campaign work.

There had, of course, been one or two bumps along the way—Chris had now being ignored by Madonna in a London restaurant!

However, the challenge was to take the process on further—to make sure that local authorities were putting up signs and providing stiles and gates, to make sure that members of the public understood where they could now go through the provision of information and guidebooks, and to look to extend access to our coastlines. The Act allows for that extension to be made, and the RA must make sure that the Government doesn't waver. Further efforts are also needed in respect of woodlands, although the Forestry Commission is already being co-operative on the question of dedication.

Despite these successes, the RA does need to remain eternally vigilant. Unexpected legislation could creep up. The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act was an obvious recent example. This will allow the Home Secretary to designate certain land, e.g. areas of Crown Land, on which trespass will be a criminal offence. This is clearly a potential problem to which the RA must return.

Another major achievement of recent times has been to get walking recognised as an important part of a healthy lifestyle, with pedometers becoming the life-style accessory of choice. There is now plenty of advice to tell people that walking is the best and healthiest form of exercise—much better than going to the gym. Awareness of this is growing, and the point is readily accepted. Now, with the General Election fast approaching, was the best time to influence the political landscape. Hundreds of candidates wanted to get elected and voters were in a powerful position to tell them what matters. While it is true that many politicians would see the cause of walking as a fringe issue, if enough people made the point they would start to take notice.

Finally, Chris turned to the issues set out in 'Waymarking the Future'. He had re-read this and noted that one of the strands was about changing the image and moving away from the 'bobble hat'. However, there was no doubt that, whatever the image, the RA was built on two firm pillars—that of voluntary effort at the local level, lobbying local authorities to get rights of way improved on the ground and the increasingly professional organisation at central office. It needed to be acknowledged the staff are highly professional and dedicated and that the RA is one of the most effective organisations in getting its message over to Government.

Both the voluntary and the staff efforts were essential to the RA's operation. Both were based on what the RA believes in—a passion for the fundamental value of sweeping landscapes and wildlands being available to everyone. The RA had always been about this, bobble hats or not.

## **15. MOTIONS**

### **[1.] "Right to Roam"**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of South Yorkshire & North East Derbyshire Area by Terry Howard, and seconded on behalf of that Area by Les Seaman:

This General Council:-

- thanks and congratulates the Ramblers' Association and all other organisations, including Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorlands, who have campaigned long and hard for the "Right to Roam" (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).
- thanks and congratulates all those stalwarts, past and present, who contributed to the campaign.
- thanks all RA officers involved in the campaign whose contribution was second to none.
- thanks the Government for keeping to its promise in introducing the "Right to Roam" legislation and all Politicians who supported it.
- calls upon all walkers to protect, preserve and defend this right, but above all use and enjoy it.

John Esslemont of Buckinghamshire & West Middlesex Area proposed that the following new bullet point be added to the end of the motion; this was seconded by John Elfes of that Area:

- furthermore, applauds the much greater degree of success achieved by the access campaign in Scotland.

The amendment was carried.

John Esslemont, seconded by John Elfes, further proposed that a second new bullet point to be added to the motion:

- calls upon the Executive Committee (or Board of Trustees) to consider adopting the Scottish model as a vision for the longer term future in England and Wales.

The amendment was lost.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council:-

- thanks and congratulates the Ramblers' Association and all other organisations, including Sheffield Campaign for Access to Moorlands, who have campaigned long and hard for the "Right to Roam" (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).
- thanks and congratulates all those stalwarts, past and present, who contributed to the campaign.
- thanks all RA officers involved in the campaign whose contribution was second to none.
- thanks the Government for keeping to its promise in introducing the "Right to Roam" legislation and all Politicians who supported it.
- calls upon all walkers to protect, preserve and defend this right, but above all use and enjoy it.
- furthermore, applauds the much greater degree of success achieved by the access campaign in Scotland.

The amended motion was carried *nem con*.

## **[2.] Inconvenient stiles**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Merseyside & West Cheshire Area by Gloria Thayer, and seconded by Vi Williams of that Area.

This General Council believes that at a time when more and more people are enjoying the benefits of rambling until later in life and the RA is actively engaged in encouraging the provision of access to CRoW land, that the Executive Committee should use its best endeavours to

- (a) ensure that such access to CRoW land is provided by means (e.g. gates etc) less inconvenient and/or difficult than stiles and
- (b) persuade the local authorities to adopt a policy of requiring the provision of, for example, gates etc, rather than stiles when the replacement of access points to existing public footpaths is needed and the general replacement of stiles over an extended period.

The Executive Committee proposed the following alternative form of words:

This General Council believes that at a time when more and more people are enjoying the benefits of rambling until later in life and the RA is actively engaged in encouraging the provision of access to CRoW land, that the Executive Committee should use its best endeavours to persuade the local authorities to adopt a policy of requiring the provision of the least restrictive option, rather than stiles, on rights of way and access land. This policy does not apply to stiles and other path furniture which are heritage landscape features, such as stone squeezer stiles in the Yorkshire Dales.

This was accepted by the movers and by Council.

The amended motion was carried.

### **[3.] Restoration of downland and heathland**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Buckinghamshire & West Middlesex Area by John Elfes, and seconded by John Dowding, Agenda Committee, on behalf of Essex Area:

In the light of the historic disappearance of downland and heathland, as illustrated by the paucity of such land types on the new access maps, the Ramblers' Association calls on the Countryside Agency and its partners in the new confederation urgently to draw up and implement plans for the restoration of downland and heathland, and to associate such restoration with a requirement for dedication as access land.

The motion was carried.

### **[4.] Shooting across public rights of way**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of Somerset Area by Mary Henry, and seconded by Joan Long, Devon Area:

This GC is concerned about the increasing use of firearms in countryside sporting activities. It is also alarmed to learn that there is no restriction in *law* on their use in the vicinity of Public Rights of Way. We therefore ask EC to consider the situation and set out their position and propose any necessary changes.

The motion was carried.

**[5] Emergency motion on criminal trespass on designated sites**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive Committee by Kate Ashbrook, and seconded by Terry Squires.

This General Council expresses deep concern that the government has taken powers, in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, far in excess of those it needs, and has given the Home Secretary the power to designate areas where trespass will be a criminal offence. We call upon the government to review the use and need for such measures within the lifetime of the next Parliament and to revoke those which are not needed.

The motion was carried with one abstention only.

**[6.] National Walking Archive**

The following motion was proposed by John Archer on behalf of Inner London Area, and seconded by Les Douglas of that Area.

This General Council notes that in recent years a number of walking clubs and institutions have been wound up. Their existence has been celebrated but unless there is a facility for retaining a permanent record, the history of their work and activities will disappear into the mists of time.

This General Council also notes that while some high-profile walkers and events achieve celebrity status, the activities of thousands of walking activists go largely unrecorded.

This General Council, therefore, instructs the Executive Committee to actively promote by any appropriate means the creation of a national walking archive, the objectives of which will be to preserve the history of walking, to encourage research and to promote the value of walking as a positive social activity.

The Executive Committee proposed that the third paragraph be deleted and replaced with the following form of words:

This General Council, therefore, requests the Executive Committee to explore the creation of a national walking archive and report back to GC06. The objectives of which will be to preserve the history of walking, to encourage research and to promote the value of walking as a positive social activity.

This was accepted by the movers and by Council.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council notes that in recent years a number of walking clubs and institutions have been wound up. Their existence has been celebrated but unless there is a facility for retaining a permanent record, the history of their work and activities will disappear into the mists of time.

This General Council also notes that while some high-profile walkers and events achieve celebrity status, the activities of thousands of walking activists go largely unrecorded.

This General Council, therefore, requests the Executive Committee to explore the creation of a national walking archive and report back to GC06. The objectives of which will be to preserve the history of walking, to encourage research and to promote the value of walking as a positive social activity.

The amended motion was carried.

**[7.] RA published materials: appropriate reference to England, Scotland and Wales**

The following motion was proposed by Fred Forrester on behalf of Central, Fife and Tayside Area, and seconded by Edgar Ernstbrunner (Manchester and High Peak Area):

This General Council believes that all material issued by the RA national office to areas, groups and the general membership and also the content of the RA website should reflect, as may be necessary in any particular case, the differences between the law of Scotland that of England and Wales. In particular, references to access rights should avoid language that is inappropriate to Scotland. Wherever necessary, statements and guidance notes should refer either to "Great Britain" or to "Scotland" or "Wales" or to "England and Wales".

The Executive Committee proposed that the word "national" be deleted from the second line, and replaced with the word "central".

Peter Whitestone (Kent Area) proposed, and Arthur Holman-Else (Lothian & Borders Area) seconded, that the fourth and fifth lines be amended to read:

"the differences between the laws of Scotland, England and Wales."

Both amendments were accepted by the proposers and by Council.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council believes that all material issued by the RA central office to areas, groups and the general membership and also the content of the RA website should reflect, as may be necessary in any particular case, the differences between the laws of Scotland, England and Wales. In particular, references to access rights should avoid language that is inappropriate to Scotland. Wherever necessary, statements and guidance notes should refer either to "Great Britain" or to "Scotland" or "Wales" or to "England and Wales".

The amended motion was carried.

**[8.] Sparsely trodden paths, use of public transport**

The following motion was proposed by Keith Wadd on behalf of West Riding Area and seconded by Derrick of that Area.



This General Council, with the purpose of combining walking for enjoyment with the RA objective of protecting footpaths, strongly urges Groups to include in their walks programme at least fifty percent of walks within their own Group boundaries in order to facilitate the use and monitoring of sparsely trodden paths and also encourage the use of public transport.

Joan Long (Devon Area) proposed that the words “strongly” and “at least fifty percent of walks” be deleted and that the latter be replaced with “as many walks as possible”. This was seconded by Christine James (Cornwall Area).

The amendment was carried.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council, with the purpose of combining walking for enjoyment with the RA objective of protecting footpaths, urges Groups to include in their walks programmes as many walks as possible within their own Group boundaries in order to facilitate the use and monitoring of sparsely trodden paths and also encourage the use of public transport.

The amended motion was carried.

## **15. Special Resolutions**

With the agreement of Council, Cath MacKay took the chair for the debate of the special resolutions.

### **Block 1**

#### **1 The following resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Brian Reader:**

1. That, conditional upon the passing of resolutions 2 and 3 below, the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:
  - 1.1 In Article 1.2 delete the definition of “The Executive Committee” and substitute the following new definition:  
“the Board of Trustees  
The board of directors of the Association and who as such are charity trustees”
  - 1.2 Substitute “Board of Trustees” for “Executive Committee” or “Executive Committee’s” wherever occurring;
  - 1.3 In Article 1.2 add the following new definitions:  
“Council Members’ Motion  
A motion submitted to a meeting of the General Council or for consideration by the Council Members by postal ballot as referred to in Articles 11.4(c) and 11.6  
Memorandum of Authority  
The Memorandum of Authority setting out the terms and conditions of authority of a Constituent Part as agreed between the Board of Trustees and that Constituent Part”

- 1.4 Delete Article 11.3 and substitute new Articles 11.3, 11.4, 11.5 and 11.6 as follows:
- “11.3 The Annual General Meeting of the General Council shall be held not later than 30 April each year, for the purpose of transacting the following business:
- (a) To consider the Board of Trustees’ Annual Report and audited statements of Accounts;
  - (b) To appoint Officers of the Association as specified in the Articles ;
  - (c) To elect the ordinary members of the Board of Trustees pursuant to Article 22.1(b);  
The absence from the Annual General Meeting of the General Council of a person otherwise eligible shall not debar such person from being elected as a member of the Board of Trustees;
  - (d) To appoint an Auditor of recognised professional status;
  - (e) To receive the report of the Board of Trustees explaining what action has been or may be taken on Council Members’ Motions which have been passed at the previous Annual or Extraordinary General Meetings of the General Council or by postal ballot by the Council Members since the last Annual General Meeting of the General Council.
- 11.4 The General Council may exercise the following powers either at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting of the General Council or by postal ballot (if permitted by the Standing Orders):
- (a) To amend (if necessary) the Memorandum or Articles of Association in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Association, these Articles and the Act;
  - (b) To amend (if necessary) the Standing Orders of the Association in accordance with the provisions of these Articles;
  - (c) To consider, and if thought fit, pass any Council Members’ Motions;
  - (d) To remove a member or members of the Board of Trustees before the expiry of his or their period(s) of office pursuant to Section 303 of the Act;
  - (e) Any powers required by the Act to be exercised by the Council Members in General Meeting; and
  - (f) Any powers in respect of specific matters required by the Articles to be exercised by the General Council.
- 11.5 In exercising their powers, the Board of Trustees must comply with the terms of a Council Members’ Motion, which is passed at a meeting of the General Council or by a postal ballot of Council Members in accordance with the Standing Orders, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT such compliance, in the reasonable opinion of the Board of Trustees after full and diligent consideration, would not be in the best interests of the Association, or would or would be likely to result in a breach of statute or other law, contract, trust or duty of care by the Association or any members of the Board of Trustees, or in damage to the reputation of the Association, or in a legal claim against the Association. At the next Annual General Meeting of the General Council the Board of Trustees shall explain what action has been taken on such a Council Members’ Motion.

- 11.6 A Council Members' Motion shall be a motion submitted to a meeting of the General Council or for consideration in accordance with the Standing Orders by the Council Members by postal ballot which does not relate to any power, business or approval expressly required in respect of a particular matter by the Act, other statute, the Articles or the Memorandum of Association of the Association to be exercised, undertaken or given by the Council Members or General Council (but excluding a power which is only conferred on the General Council by virtue of Article 11.4(c))."
- 1.5 In Article 16.1 delete the first sentence "The General Council shall be responsible for the general policy and control of the Association" and substitute "The General Council" for "It" at the beginning of the second sentence
- 1.6 In Article 17.1 delete the first sentence "The business of the Association is managed by the Executive Committee" and substitute: "The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the management and control of the Association."
- 1.7 In Article 17.2 substitute "No Standing Order made and no amendment to the Articles and no Council Members' Motion passed shall invalidate" for "Nor can it make one which invalidates";
- 1.8 Add a new Article 17.3 as follows:  
 "The Board of Trustees shall, as far as reasonably possible, act in consultation with the General Council, Constituent Parts, Areas and Local Groups.  
 In preparing any major strategic plans for the work and future development of the Association, the Board of Trustees shall consult widely within the Association and shall not implement any such plan without the prior approval of the Council Members at a meeting of the General Council EXCEPT THAT the Board of Trustees may implement the plan without such approval only to the extent that failure to implement, in the reasonable opinion of the Board of Trustees, would not be in the best interests of the Association, or would or would be likely to result in a breach of statute or other law, contract, trust or duty of care by the Association or any members of the Board of Trustees, or in damage to the reputation of the Association, or in a legal claim against the Association."
- 1.9 In Article 18.1 delete "and the Standing Orders"
- 1.10 In Article 24.1 add at the end of sub-paragraph (d) "; or" and add a new sub-paragraph (e) as follows:  
 "(e) is removed as a member of the Board of Trustees pursuant to Section 303 of the Act"

**The resolution was carried. There were nine votes to the contrary.**

**2. The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp:**

- 2 That conditional upon the passing of resolution 3 below, the Memorandum of Association of the Association be, and is hereby, amended by substituting "Board of Trustees" for "Executive Committee" wherever occurring.

**The resolution was carried. There were four votes to the contrary.**

**3. The following ordinary resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp**

- 3 That the Standing Orders of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:
- 3.1 Substitute “Board of Trustees” for “Executive Committee” wherever occurring
- 3.2 In Standing Order A7 substitute “members of the General Council” for “Areas”
- 3.3 Delete Standing Order A13
- 3.4 Renumber Standing Orders A10 to A12 as A11I to A13 and add a new Standing Order A10 as follows:  
“No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the General Council unless a quorum of Council Members is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business. One third of the Council Members entitled to vote upon the business to be transacted and being present in person shall be a quorum at any meeting of the General Council.  
If such a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting, if convened on the requisition of Council Members, shall be dissolved and in any other case shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place or to such other day not less than seven and not more than twenty eight days after the meeting and at the time and place as the Board of Trustees may determine. If at such adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for holding the meeting, the meeting shall be dissolved.”
- 3.5 In Standing Order C5 substitute “Article 10 of the” for “paragraph 7 of the Memorandum and”

**The resolution was carried. There were two votes to the contrary.**

**Block 2**

**4 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Brian Reader:**

- 4 That the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:
- 4.1 In Article 5.1 delete the first and second sentences and substitute:  
“Areas shall be established by the Board of Trustees in accordance with conditions to be approved from time to time by General Council and shall be responsible for carrying out the objects of the Association in their prescribed areas.  
Areas shall conform to these Memorandum and Articles of Association (as may be amended from time to time by the General Council pursuant to Clause 7 of the Memorandum and Article 41 respectively) and to the policy of the Association and to the decisions of the Board of Trustees. For the purposes of this paragraph, policy of the Association shall mean that approved from time to time by the General Council pursuant to Article 11.5 (but excluding any with which the Board of Trustees do not comply as permitted by that Article) or Article 17.3 or implemented by the Board of Trustees without General Council approval as permitted by Article 17.3.”  
SAVE THAT if Special Resolution 1 above is not passed

- 4.1.1 “Executive Committee” shall be substituted for “Board of Trustees” in the sentences substituted above; and
- 4.1.2 delete the sentence substituted above which starts “For the purposes of this paragraph.....”
- 4.1.3 in the sentences substituted above after the words “policy of the Association” add “as laid down by the General Council from time to time”
- 4.2 In Article 5.1 in the fourth paragraph delete: “the General Council or”

**The resolution was carried. There were three votes to the contrary.**

**Block 3**

**5 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp.**

- 5 That, conditional upon the passing of resolution 6 below, the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:
  - 5.1 In Article 1.2:
    - (a) delete the definitions of “The Individual Members” and “The Council Members”; and
    - (b) add the following definitions:  
 “The Council Members  
 The members of the General Council  
 The Individual Members  
 Individual Members of the Association admitted to membership under Article 8  
 Member  
 Council Member, Individual Member, Affiliated Local Organisation and Affiliated National Organisation”
  - 5.2 In Article 8.1 delete the section starting:  
 “If at any time the Executive Committee shall be of the opinion that the lawful interests of the Association so require they shall have power to expel any Individual Member.....” to the end of Article 8.1 and substitute:  
 “If at any time the Board of Trustees shall be of the opinion that the lawful interests of the Association so require they shall have power to expel any Individual Member, Affiliated Local Organisation or Affiliated National Organisation of the Association provided that they shall not exercise such power unless:
    - (a) not less than 14 days’ notice in writing is given to the Individual Member, Affiliated Local Organisation or Affiliated National Organisation concerned of the meeting of the Board of Trustees at which such expulsion is to be proposed and of the grounds for such proposal; and
    - (b) the Individual Member, Affiliated Local Organisation or Affiliated National Organisation concerned is allowed an opportunity to make oral representations in person and also written representations, as he or she or it thinks fit, to the Board of Trustees before the motion for expulsion is put to the vote; and
    - (c) there is a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Board of Trustees present and voting in favour of such expulsion.

A notice sent by prepaid post to the address of an Individual Member, Affiliated Local Organisation or Affiliated National Organisation as appearing in the records of the Association shall be deemed to have been given to him or her or it on the day following such posting.

Any person ceasing to be a Member of the Association shall thereupon forfeit all claim upon or right to the Association, its property and funds which membership of the Association would otherwise confer upon such person."

SAVE THAT if Special Resolution 1 above is not passed "Executive Committee" shall be substituted for "Board of Trustees" in the above amendment to Article 8.1

5.3 Add a new Article 10.2 as follows:

"(a) All Council Members shall have the right to receive notice of, and to attend, speak and vote at, General Council meetings.

(b) (Unless a Council Member) each Individual Member, Affiliated National Organisation and Affiliated Local Organisation shall not have the right to receive notice of, or to attend, speak or vote at, meetings of the General Council."

5.4 In Article 13.1:

(a) add after "a simple majority" the words "(unless a higher majority is required by the Act, the Articles or Memorandum of Association of the Association)";

(b) substitute "Council Members" for "members".

5.5 Add to the end of the penultimate paragraph of Article 31.1:

"and shall be binding on all Members and the Board of Trustees shall use such means as it thinks fit to bring the Standing Orders to the notice of Members. No Standing Order shall contravene any of the provisions of the Memorandum or Articles of Association of the Association or the Act."

SAVE THAT if Special Resolution 1 above is not passed "Executive Committee" shall be substituted for "Board of Trustees" in the above amendment to Article 31.1

5.6 In the last sentence of Article 31.1 delete "initial"

**The resolution was carried. There was one vote to the contrary.**

**6 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp.**

6 That the Memorandum of Association be, and is hereby, amended as follows:

6.1 In Clause 5.1 substitute "members of the Association" for "Individual Members or the Council Members"

6.2 In Clause 9.1 and its heading delete "Council" wherever occurring

**The resolution was carried. There was one vote to the contrary.**

**Block 4**

**7 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Brian Reader.**

7 That, conditional upon the passing of resolution 8 below, the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:

- 7.1 In Article 16.1 delete the sentence starting: “Retiring members of the Executive Committee, those retiring members of the Agenda Committee.....”
- 7.2 Delete Article 22.1 and substitute new Article 22 as follows:
- “22.1 The Board of Trustees consists of:
- (a) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Honorary Treasurer.
  - (b) Nine ordinary members (of whom not fewer than seven shall be either delegates of Areas appointed in accordance with these Articles, or (if eligible for re-election) retiring members of the Board of Trustees proposed in accordance with these Articles) appointed by and from the General Council.
  - (c) Not more than three members co-opted by the Board of Trustees (PROVIDED THAT a candidate who failed to be elected to the Board of Trustees at the immediately preceding Annual General Meeting may not be co-opted).
  - (d) The Chairman of, or another person nominated by, each Constituent Part of the Association, if not already otherwise a member of the Board of Trustees, and such a person may be removed and replaced by the Constituent Part at any time.  
A person is not eligible to be elected, co-opted, or serve under Article 22.1(d), as a member of the Board of Trustees unless he is a Member.
- 22.2 All the ordinary members of the Board of Trustees shall retire at the Annual General Meeting of the General Council held in 2006. The ordinary members of the Board of Trustees elected at that Annual General Meeting shall retire from office as set out in the Standing Orders. They would not then be eligible to be re-elected, co-opted or nominated as any member of the Board of Trustees (except as the Chairman) until they have been out of office as such an ordinary member for one year.
- 22.3 (Subject to Articles 22.2 and 22.4) an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of the Annual General Meeting at which he was elected, at the end of which he shall retire, but shall be eligible for re-election for one further consecutive term of three years; he would then be eligible to be re-elected as an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees when he has been out of office as such an ordinary member for one year.
- 22.4 The General Council shall have the power at an Annual General Meeting to elect an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees to fill a vacancy in such ordinary members which arises as a result of a person ceasing to be such an ordinary member after the previous Annual General Meeting and prior to the expiry of his term of office. A person so elected shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office which was vacated, at the end of which he shall retire, but be eligible for re-election for one further consecutive term of three years; he would then be eligible to be re-elected as an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees when he has been out of office as an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees for one year.
- 22.5 The Chairman shall hold office for a single term of three years from the date of the Annual General Meeting at which he was elected.
- 22.6 The Vice-Chairman shall hold office for a term of one year from the date of the Annual General Meeting at which he was

- elected, at the end of which he shall retire but be eligible for re-election as Vice-Chairman for one further consecutive term only of one year.
- 22.7 The Treasurer shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of the Annual General Meeting at which he was elected, at the end of which he shall retire but be eligible for re-election as Treasurer for one further consecutive term only of three years.
- 22.8 A co-opted member shall hold office for a term of twelve months from the date of his co-option, at the end of which he shall retire but be eligible to be co-opted again for up to two further consecutive terms of office of the same period.
- 22.9 A person shall hold office under Article 22.1(d) for a maximum of six consecutive years.
- 22.10 A member of the Board of Trustees who has held office for six consecutive years shall not be eligible for re-election or co-option as any member of the Board of Trustees (except as the Chairman) until one year has elapsed thereafter. In calculating the said six years, periods of office as a member of the Board of Trustees prior to the Annual General Meeting of the General Council held in 2006 shall be disregarded.
- 22.11 A person shall not be eligible to be elected, co-opted or nominated to an office as a member of the Board of Trustees (excluding the Chairman) if on the expiry of that term of office he would have served more than six consecutive years as a member of the Board of Trustees. In calculating the said six years, periods of office as a member of the Board of Trustees prior to the Annual General Meeting of the General Council held in 2006 shall be disregarded.
- 22.12 For the purposes of Articles 22, 24.1(f) and 26 a “year” means the period between the end of one Annual General Meeting and the end of the next Annual General Meeting of the General Council. For the purposes of Articles 22.10 and 22.11 “year” shall also mean a term of office held by a co-opted member (whether for twelve months or a shorter period) and any period between ceasing to be a co-opted member and the next Annual General Meeting if he proposes to be elected or nominated as a member of the Board of Trustees with effect from that meeting.”
- 7.3 In Article 24.1 add at the end of sub-paragraph (e) “;or” and add new sub-paragraphs (f) and (g) as follows:
- “(f) is a member pursuant to Article 22.1(d) and has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for six consecutive years; or
- (g) ceases to be a Member.”
- 7.4 In Article 26.1:
- (a) Delete the sentence starting “The above Officers.....” and substitute:
- “The above Officers shall be appointed by the General Council at its Annual General Meeting.
- The Board of Trustees may appoint one of their number to fill a vacancy in the office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Honorary Treasurer which occurs between Annual General Meetings of the General Council and a person so appointed shall hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting when he shall



retire, and such period of office shall be disregarded in determining his eligibility to be re-appointed to that office.”

- (b) Delete the penultimate and final sentences and substitute:  
“The President, Vice Presidents and Honorary Solicitor shall hold office for a term of one year from the date of the Annual General Meeting at which they were appointed and shall be eligible for re-appointment for one or more further terms of one year.”

SAVE THAT if Special Resolution 1 above is not passed “Executive Committee” shall be substituted for “Board of Trustees” in the amendments made to the Articles of Association by this Special Resolution 7.

**The resolution was carried. There were five votes to the contrary.**

**8. The following ordinary resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Brian Reader.**

8 That the Standing Orders of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:

8.1 In Standing Order A2 add “ordinary members of the Board of Trustees and” after “The same rule shall apply to the nomination of”

8.2 Delete the second sentence of Standing Order A13  
SAVE THAT if Ordinary Resolution 3 above is not passed the amendment is to delete the second sentence of Standing Order A12

8.3 Add a new Standing Order B 5 as follows:  
“The ordinary members of the Board of Trustees elected at the Annual General Meeting of the General Council held in 2006 shall retire from office at the Annual General Meetings of the General Council set out below:

Year of Annual General Meeting

2007 - The three ordinary members elected with the least number of votes

2008 - The three ordinary members elected with the fourth, fifth and sixth highest number of votes

2009 - The three ordinary members elected with the most votes”

SAVE THAT if Special Resolution 1 above is not passed “Executive Committee” shall be substituted for “Board of Trustees” in the above amendment to Standing Order A2 and the addition of new Standing Order B5

**The resolution was carried *nem con*.**

**Block 5**

**9 The following special resolution was proposed on behalf of EC by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp.**

9. That the Memorandum of Association of the Ramblers’ Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:

9.1 Delete section 3 of the Memorandum of Association and substitute as follows:

3.1 The Association is established for charitable purposes only. The objects of the Association are to promote, encourage or assist in:

- a) The provision and protection of footpaths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot, including the prevention of obstruction of public rights of way
- b) The protection and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the countryside and other areas by such lawful means as the trustees think fit, including by encouraging the provision, preservation and extension of public access to land on foot
- c) The provision of facilities for and the organising of open-air recreational activities and in particular rambling and mountaineering with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities are intended, namely the public at large, and in the interests of health and social welfare (including health)
- d) Advancing the education of the public in subjects relating to access to, and the preservation and conservation of, the countryside and of the health benefits of outdoor recreational pursuits.

The trustees may further the objects particularly by helping all persons to a greater love, knowledge and care of the countryside and urban open spaces, and by encouraging participation in walking for recreation and as a means of transport

**The resolution was carried. There were two votes to the contrary.**

David Grosz, on behalf of Council, thanked Cath Mackay for her relaxed yet confident handling of this complex business, and also thanked the Chairman and Peter Skipp for their thorough and helpful explanations of the proposed changes.

#### **17. VENUES OF FUTURE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Council approved the following venue for its next meeting:

21-23 April 2006– Keele University.

The Chairman invited Areas to come forward with proposals for venues for future meetings.

#### **18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **19. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman commented that it had been another somewhat inward-looking Council meeting, but he was grateful for members' co operation in passing the complex, yet necessary, changes to the Memorandum and Articles.

The past year had been one for major celebrations as access land became available in the south-east and lower north-west. In the south-east, the changes were not enormous. In Surrey, for example, much of the mapped land was already available to the public under access agreements and other measures, but in the north significant gains would be made.

The Chairman counted himself lucky that he just happened to be Chairman at this exciting time and he wanted to pay tribute to all of those who had contributed so much to this successful campaign over very many years, both volunteers and paid staff.

He hoped that there would not be too many problems with landowners over the provision of access to open country. It certainly looked as if there would be fewer applications for restrictions than originally feared. Some initial problems on Snailsden Moor had been dealt with quickly by the rangers. The Chairman had himself already been fortunate enough to do the previously forbidden walk to Ramsden Clough, and he was looking forward to commencement in Wales on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

Of course, other parts of the CRoW Act, in particular rights of way improvement plans and the implications of the cut-off date for definitive maps, and work on the Discovering Lost Ways project, did present the RA with big challenges, so there was no room for complacency.

In Scotland, legislation on access was absolute and far reaching. This was the result of much high-profile campaigning. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code also represented much hard work by volunteers and staff in RA Scotland. Thanks were due to all of them and not just from Scottish walkers: many from south of the border would benefit from their efforts.

The Chairman thanked Nick Barrett, the staff and all volunteers for their work throughout the year. It was a real team effort. He particularly asked Council to thank Cath Mackay, standing down from EC after 19 years, for all her efforts, both locally and nationally. She would be missed on EC but he hoped that she would still be on-hand to provide advice and support.

Finally, the Chairman thanked all of those who had been involved in the organisation of General Council: Jo Smith and the staff team, Nottinghamshire Area and the university staff.

He hoped that everyone would enjoy their walking over the next 12 months, but said that it shouldn't be forgotten that the RA was *the* campaigning charity working for *all* walkers.

The Chairman's remarks were warmly applauded.

**THIS ENDED THE BUSINESS**