

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT KEELE UNIVERSITY  
21<sup>ST</sup> - 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2006**

**ATTENDANCE LIST**

\* denotes a member of Council (voter)

**PRESIDENT**

Chris Smith\*

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Andrew Bennett\*  
Geoff Eastwood\*  
Richard Lloyd Jones\*  
Alan Mattingly\*  
Malcolm Petyt\*  
David Sharp\*

**CHAIRMAN**

Brian Reader\*

**VICE CHAIRMAN**

Terry Squires\*

**HONORARY SOLICITOR**

Jerry Pearlman\* (also vice-president)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Kate Ashbrook\*  
Maxwell Ayamba\*  
Peter Ayling\*  
Annette Cotter\*  
Alex Marshall\*  
Kevin Matthews\*  
Alison Mitchell\*  
Chic Nash\*  
Owen Plunkett\*  
Terry Pollard\*  
Mavis Rear\*  
Peter Skipp\*  
Ian White\*

**AGENDA COMMITTEE**

John Dowding\*  
Ron Moore\*  
Nigel Sloan\*

**AVON AREA**

Jill Fysh\*  
Geoff Mullett\*

**BEDFORDSHIRE AREA**

Robert Wallace\*

**BERKSHIRE AREA**

John Moules\*  
Stuart Shurlock\*

**BUCKS & W MIDDX AREA**

John Esslemont\*  
Tom Fisher\*

**CAMBS & PETERBO AREA**

Roger Coulson\*

**CORNWALL AREA**

Christine James\*  
Jane Sloan\*

**DERBYSHIRE AREA**

Andrew Emerson-Smith\*  
Frank Ogden\*

**DEVON AREA**

John Howell\*  
Mike Sanderson\*

**DORSET AREA**

Kate Gocher\*  
Brian Panton\*

**EAST YORKS/DERWENT AREA**

Chris Bush\*  
Malcolm Dixon\*

**ESSEX AREA**

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

**FV, FIFE & TAYSIDE AREA**

Fred Forrester\*

**GLAMORGAN AREA**

Bernon Davies\*  
Ian Fraser\*

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA**

Tony Drake\*  
John Gerrard\*

**GRAMPIAN AREA**

Yvonne Keilloh\*

**HAMPSHIRE AREA**

Brenda Parker\*  
Douglas Shiell\*

**HEREFORDSHIRE AREA**

Arthur Lee\*  
Phil Long\*

**HERTS & N MIDDX AREA**

Philip Greswell\*  
Justin Lumley\*

**HIGHLAND & ISLANDS AREA**

Ken Davidson\*  
Brian Spence\*

**INNER LONDON AREA**

John Archer\*  
Phil Marson\*

**ISLE OF WIGHT AREA**

Geoff Long\*  
Ann Simpson\*

**KENT AREA**

David Law\*  
Peter Whitestone\*

**LAKE DISTRICT AREA**

Tony Iles\*  
Peter Jones\*

**LEICS & RUTLAND AREA**

Ken Storer\*  
Stan Warren\*

**LINCOLNSHIRE AREA**

Stuart Parker\*  
Colin Smith\*

**LOTHIAN/BORDERS AREA**

Joan Martindale\*  
Bridget Wilcox\*

**MANCHESTER & HIGH PEAK AREA**

Janet Cuff\*  
Gloria Gaffney\*

**MERSEYSIDE AREA**

Ingrid Donakey\*  
Gloria Thayer\*

**MID LANCASHIRE AREA**

Tony Clarkson\*  
David Kelly\*

**N YORKS/S DURHAM AREA**

Jo Bird\*  
Simon Gotch\*

## **NORFOLK AREA**

Eleanor Martin\*  
Richard May\*

## **NORTH EAST LANCS AREA**

Peter Aizlewood\*  
Susan Baxendale\*

## **NORTH WALES AREA**

Max Grant\*  
Ron Williams\*

## **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA**

Will Lovell\*

## **NORTHUMBRIA AREA**

Ken Hughes\*  
Dave Turnbull\*

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AREA**

Rod Fillingham\*  
Chris Thompson\*

## **NTH/MID CHESHIRE AREA**

Tony Wakefield\*

## **OXFORDSHIRE AREA**

Patrick Lonergan\*  
Susan Maguire\*

## **POWYS AREA**

Harry Chandler\*  
Robert Seabrook\*

## **S & E CHESHIRE AREA**

Alan Soper\*  
Joan Soper\*

## **S YORKS/NE DERBY AREA**

Terry Howard\*  
Allen Pestell\*

## **SHROPSHIRE AREA**

Trevor Allison\*  
John Newnham\*

## **SOMERSET AREA**

Roger Mitchell\*

## **STAFFORDSHIRE AREA**

Graham Evans\*  
Janet Palmer\*  
Geoff Loadwick  
Sally Smith  
Andrew Griffin  
Audrey Gittens  
Brian Benn  
Brian Furness  
Cathy Tench  
Celia Cox  
Chris Furness  
Cliff Farnell  
Clive Taylor  
Dave Thomson  
David Cashmore  
David Fowler  
David Mason  
David Thompson  
David Wilkinson  
Derek Sweet  
Dick Turton  
Don Evitts  
Dorothy Wilson  
Eddie Dawson  
Geoff Dale  
George Greensides  
Georgina Pritchard  
Gerald Gittens  
Harry Pugh  
Heather Evans  
Helen Barnett  
Helen Millington  
Isabel Lowe  
Jane King  
Jean Ratcliffe  
Jim Kinniburgh  
Joan Thompson  
John Craxford  
John Lane  
John Massey  
John Scott  
John Simmons  
Joyce Scott

June Taylor  
Liz Charlton  
Lynn Birch  
Marguerite Greenwood  
Marjorie Cashmore  
Mike Boston  
Mike Peate  
Mollie Sanders  
Norman Dracup  
Pam Bradley  
Pat Conlong  
Pat Evans  
Patricia Griffin  
Peter Barnett  
Peter Figg  
Philip Birtles  
Richard Benefer  
Rob Cox  
Rob Yardley  
Sandra Davies  
Sheila Bratt  
Shirley Benn  
Shirley Lunt  
Stan Holmes  
Steve Spencer  
Steve Tyler  
Susan Tappin  
Terry Evans  
Tony Radcliffe  
Tony Smith  
Valerie Figg  
Vera Wilkinson  
Viola Kading  
Richard Clamp  
John Hammond  
Jean Groutage  
Peter Matthew  
Sandra Davies

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

Hilary Graham\*  
Jean Highet\*

#### **SUFFOLK AREA**

Neil Mahler\*  
James Richards\*

#### **SURREY AREA**

Graham Butler\*  
Des Coles\*  
Jane Warner\*

#### **SUSSEX AREA**

Ian Fawkner\*

#### **WARWICKSHIRE AREA**

Michael Bird\*  
Steven Wallsgrove\*

#### **WEST RIDING AREA**

Michael Church\*  
Gwendoline Goddard\*

#### **WILTS & SWINDON AREA**

Pat Crabb\*  
Joan Crosbee\*

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE AREA**

Clive Bostle\*  
John Coleman\*

#### **CAMPING & CARAVANNING CLUB**

Jim Perry\*

#### **OPEN SPACES SOCIETY**

Donald Lee\*

#### **RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION SERVICES**

Robert Fisher\*

#### **ULSTER FEDERATION OF RAMBLING CLUBS**

Ronnie Carser\*

#### **YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION**

John Templeton\*

## **GUESTS**

Stuart Alderman  
Rod Carne  
Christine Elliott  
Peggy Frampton  
Arthur Howcroft  
Peter Sanders  
David Kidney MP

## **VISITORS**

Margaret Baker  
Helen Beaven  
Peter Callery  
Mark Chedgzoy  
Annie Clement  
Malcolm Combey  
Jenny Derbyshire  
David Dickson  
Anne Donegan  
Pat Evans  
Jenny Fillingham  
John Frankland  
George Garrard  
Kathryn Gregory  
David Grosz  
Tom Halstead  
Ellen Harden  
James Harrower  
Mike Heckford  
Joyce Hilton  
David Hilton  
David Hunt  
Hazel Jarrold  
Ann Key  
Jane Kiely  
Cliff Lambert  
Peter Leese  
Eileen Linfoot  
Cath Mackay  
Sarah Matthews  
Geoff Mercer  
David Palmer  
Keith Pennyfather  
Hazel Perham  
Sylvia Perry  
Harry Scott  
Rachelle Sellek  
Miriam Smith  
Clare Wadd  
Carol Walsh  
Mary Weston  
Glyn Williams

## **STAFF**

Alexis Badger  
Dominic Bates  
Daniel Berelowitz  
Davie Black  
Gwen Campbell  
Rob Cann  
David Carter  
Andrew Chadwick  
Sarah Clements  
Kate Conto  
Justin Cooke  
Janet Davis  
Des De Moor  
Rebecca Dixon  
Martin Dowson  
Zosia Durniat  
Jacquetta Fewster  
Dan French  
Des Garrahan  
Richard Granville  
Anwen Hughes  
David Joseph  
Mike Mills  
Adrian Morris  
Dave Morris  
Beverley Penney  
Sarah Perry  
Jeff Smith  
Paul Strong  
Fiona Syme  
Frances Warneford  
Simon Waters  
Caroline Watson  
Ruth Wembridge  
Paul Wilkinson  
Chris Wingrove  
Sharon Woods

## **YPG**

James Binning  
Rachel Burnett  
Robert Clifford  
Owen Gallagher  
Karen Green  
Anna Grigson  
Jeanette Grose  
Cath Guest  
Cheryl Hadnutt  
Andy Holbrook  
Rachel Hooke  
Karen Hornsby  
Beverley Lufkin

Russell Matthews  
Caroline Mcdonagh  
Teri Moore  
Doug Morgan  
Lynne Richards  
Bernie Roche

Clare Whitlock  
Lindsey Woosnam  
Claire Spencer  
Geraldine Thompson

## **1 WELCOME BY GRAHAM EVANS, STAFFORDSHIRE AREA CHAIRMAN**

- 1.1 Graham Evans warmly welcomed Council members, visitors and RA staff to Staffordshire Area and to Keele University.
- 1.2 Graham spoke of the history of the University, which had been innovative in the structure of its degrees and subjects offered since its beginnings in the 1960s and 70s, and also of the estate on which it had been built, which had belonged to the Sneyd family who had once held extensive land and mining interests in the county of Staffordshire.
- 1.3 He went on to describe the important industrial heritage of the county - pottery, crystal, production of anchors and cables, and mining - but said that this didn't detract from what was some of the finest countryside in the country, crossed by several long-distance paths, including the Heart of England Way.
- 1.4 Graham was pleased to be able to report that Staffordshire Area was now twenty years old. It had 1,000 members when first established but now had 3,300 in 14 Groups. Since the Area comprised several conurbations in which heavy industry had declined resulting in the usual social and environmental problems there was much work to be done, and the Area was actively campaigning on many fronts. They were involved in the 'Walking out' project and walking for health and outreach initiatives, they had secured definitive maps for the previously unmapped areas of Burton and Stoke-on-Trent. They were campaigning for increased rights of way budgets, they had done much work on open access mapping in both Regions 2 and 7, securing the mapping of extra land through their efforts. They were also very active on the practical work front.
- 1.5 The big issue now was to encourage more people to walk and, if possible, to get them to join the RA. We needed to give people confidence in their abilities and to engage their interest. The RA needed to be a broad church providing walks of various lengths and types. There was a lot of work still to be done to get more political backing for the cause. Graham had heard a local councillor say that the public were not interested in walking. It was up to the RA to show otherwise.

## **2 REMEMBRANCE OF ADRIAN RITCHIE BY ALAN MATTINGLY**

- 2.1 The Chairman invited Alan Mattingly, vice-president, to speak in remembrance of Adrian Ritchie, the RA's Director of Membership, Fundraising and IT, who had died very suddenly in January.
- 2.2 Alan said that whilst General Council should be a positive occasion and that it was perhaps a little out of place to think about this tragic loss, Adrian's immense contribution to the work of the RA needed to be put on record. To this end, a tribute book was in preparation and a memorial walk was being organised on 17 June.
- 2.3 Over the last 25 years, Adrian had done more than anyone else to raise money for the RA and also to save the organisation money. Alan had first met him 25 years ago when, as a freelance computer consultant, he had set up the computerised

membership system. He eventually joined the staff and in later years was a member of the Senior Management Team with responsibility not only for the membership system but also for fundraising and IT. At the time of his death he was acting Chief Executive.

- 2.4 He was a great charity administrator and his work on the membership system and, later, on fundraising and donations had saved the RA millions of pounds over the years. Adrian had worked tirelessly, often doing the work of two or three people, never demanding the sort of salary he might have got elsewhere, and avoiding the use of expensive outside expertise. All of this meant that more money was freed up for front-line campaigning work.
- 2.5 Adrian was far from conventional, and the antithesis of a 'smoothy in a suit', eschewing even shoes and socks if he could. However, he showed through his work that what a charity needs is dedicated and competent people. He looked for those talents in others and nurtured them when he found them.
- 2.6 His contribution had never been properly recognised when he was alive but that was something that could be put right now by putting on record our acknowledgment of his huge contribution to the achievements of the RA. Adrian's death was a huge and painful loss but he wouldn't have wanted us to be mournful. Instead we needed to take encouragement from his example.
- 2.7 Alan finished by saying 'Adrian—the RA salutes you. We thank you and formally acknowledge your unique contribution to the work of the RA'.
- 2.8 One minute's silence in memory of Adrian was then observed.

### **3 WELCOME TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESIGNATE BY THE CHAIRMAN**

- 3.1 The Chairman introduced the Chief Executive designate, Christine Elliott, to General Council. Christine said that she had been delighted to be able to accept the invitation to the meeting and that she was greatly looking forward to joining the RA staff on 22 May.

### **4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 4.1 Apologies for absence were received from Sylvia Popham, Paddy Tipping MP, Elizabeth Lawie, Denis Fuller, Rodney Whittaker, Peter Sanders and John Bunting.
- 4.2 Council sent best wishes to Denis Fuller who had undergone surgery following an accident and was unable to attend council.

### **5 APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS**

- 5.1 The following persons were appointed:

<b>Tellers:</b>	Stan Holmes Chris Furness Brian Furness Tony Smith
5.2 <b>Scrutineers:</b>	Helen Millington Lynn Birch June Taylor Clive Taylor

Sheila Bratt  
Shirley Lunt

## **6 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 There was no other business.

## **7 MINUTES OF GENERAL COUNCIL 2004**

7.1 One correction was noted. The last line of p.16 should read 'Derrick Watt' .

7.2 It was proposed by Terry Pollard, and seconded by Andrew Bennett that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of General Council 2006 as a correct record.

7.3 In respect of the report on actions taken to implement motions passed or remitted at General Council 2005, John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area) asked if the Board of Trustees was satisfied that the RA's proposed amendment to the Highways Act in respect of shooting across rights of way was sufficient to introduce the safeguards we were seeking. The Chairman said that he was grateful for John's input and that the wording would be further reviewed. What was essential in the first instance was to enter into a dialogue with the Home Office and the Department for Transport about this.

## **8 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

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

8.2 Jacquetta Fewster, joint acting Chief Executive, spoke to the report. She highlighted the fact that after 60 years of RA campaigning, 2005 had seen the realisation of the most comprehensive access rights in Europe under the Land Reform Act in Scotland, and that in England and Wales this had been complemented with the full implementation of access to open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

8.4 In respect of other aims in 'Waymarking the Future', the RA's five-year strategic plan, she noted that promoting walking had been taken forward by the *Cerrig Camu/Stepping Stones* project in Wales and *Bums off Seats* in Scotland. In addition, a new staff team had been created at central office to work particularly on encouraging people from disadvantaged groups to start walking.

8.5 The volunteer support team was now working to raise the profile of volunteering and to promote new volunteering opportunities so that more people, whatever time they had to spare, could find a rôle in the RA.

8.6 On protecting the outdoor environment, energy had been the focus of recent work. Whilst the RA was in favour of renewable energy it needed to be generated in the right place. Current financial incentives were resulting in the development of wind farms on a huge scale—in Scotland there were currently 300 planning applications for wind farms in many of our wildest and most unspoilt landscapes, although at Whinash, just outside the Lake District National Park, a proposal to develop the largest windfarm in Europe was defeated by the RA and its allies. However, until the government changed the funding formula and did more to promote energy conservation more applications of this kind would appear.



- 8.7 The scope and depth of the RA's footpath work continued to be enormous: surveys, practical work, lobbying and enquiries. Highlights in the past year had been the creation of a definitive map for Stoke-on-Trent, successful action under section 63 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to remove obstructions, and budget increases for rights-of-way work in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cornwall.
- 8.8 There were still challenges for the future: the decline in membership needed to be reversed, and there was much work to be done in seeking a right of access to the coasts of England and Wales, and also to much chalk downland and many woodlands and riversides which remained out of bounds. In Scotland, the RA would be a driving force behind the creation of the core path network. Finally, the coming year would see the RA taking a case to the House of Lords for the first time ever. That would be expensive but the reason that many people join the RA or donated to it was to enable this kind of work to be done to protect the rights of the public.
- 8.9 Jacquetta finished by thanking volunteers for their work for the RA on behalf of staff, and on behalf of the acting Chief Executives she thanked the staff for their support.

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

- 8.10 With reference to p.3 of the annual report, John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area) asked whether sufficient attention was being paid to publicity materials other than the website, for example, the full-listing of Festival of Winter Walks events only appeared on the website. He considered that some of the paper material was inadequate and not sufficiently professional. The acting Chief Executive replied that it was regrettable that **walk** could not show the full listing but that the number of events precluded this. Also, the walking festivals were very much aimed beyond the membership so the website and press information were better places to advertise them. She agreed that the current display panels were out of date and that some of the leaflet designs were rather old. The Board of Trustees would be considering the way forward on these issues as part of their work on recruitment and publicity issues. This might involve the employment of a new member of staff to look at best practice and to advise Areas and Groups on this type of work.
- 8.11 Janet Cuff (Manchester and High Peak Area) said that she didn't think that the RA's charitable objectives were set out in the annual report. The acting Chief Executive agreed that these did need to be kept in mind always but she felt that they were covered in the report because it was cross-referenced to 'Waymarking the Future' which was built around the charitable objectives.
- 8.12 Clive Bostle (Worcestershire Area) said that he was concerned about the timetable for the Countryside Agency's 'Discovering Lost Ways' project. The acting Chief Executive said that it was understood that in the pilot counties of Wiltshire and Cheshire the archive work had been completed and that the Countryside Agency was now taking the opportunity to assess how best to take the project forward before moving on to the next batch of counties, the names of which had been released. Because the Countryside Agency project was evolving so slowly the RA was setting up its own 'Forgotten Paths' project as one of the new volunteering initiatives.
- 8.13 Alan Soper (South and East Cheshire Area) noted that 'Waymarking the Future' would expire in 2007 and asked what work was being done to produce a replacement strategy. The acting Chief Executive said that work on this would be progressed in the coming year. Nick Barrett had initiated some work on it but his departure and

Adrian Ritchie's death meant that further work had been delayed until the new Chief Executive was in place.

- 8.14 Council agreed to adopt the annual report for the year 2004/05.

## **9 ACCOUNTS**

- 9.1 In the absence of Denis Fuller, the adoption of the accounts for the year to 30 September 2005 was proposed by Annette Cotter (Board of Trustees), and seconded by Mavis Rear (Board of Trustees).
- 9.2 Annette Cotter highlighted the Board's concerns about the membership figures. She also drew council's attention to the generous contributions of the Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust. They had made a general grant of £400,000 in each of the last two years.
- 9.3 David Joseph, acting chief executive, spoke to the accounts. He noted that the total income for the year had been £5.9 million, a record for the RA, and that Areas and Groups had generated £1.3 million from sources outside the RA. 90% of the income was spent on delivering the charitable objectives and only the remaining 10% on fundraising and governance.
- 9.4 £2.7 million was raised from the membership subscription. This was the major source of income, and significant increases in membership numbers were needed even though the fundraising team was continually looking for new sources of income.
- 9.5 While overall the financial picture was good, with an increase in the reserves, this position couldn't be taken for granted and further efforts were needed to maintain and increase income.

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

- 9.6 John Gerrard (Gloucestershire Area) asked about 'Related party transactions' with reference to the Honorary Solicitor (p.20 of the financial statement). The Chairman said that Jerry was not a trustee and that an agreement set out those matters on which he acted in an honorary capacity and those for which he could be paid. Jerry Pearlman said that this was in line with Charity Commission guidelines and that it was Charity Commission best practice that such transactions be specified in the financial statement.
- 9.7 Rod Fillingham (Nottinghamshire Area) asked what plans were in-hand to re-dress the question of large Area reserves. Annette Cotter said that this would be addressed by way of an amendment to Standing Orders at General Council 2007.
- 9.8 Malcolm Petyt (vice president) pointed out an error on p.4 of the financial statement. The president should not have been listed as a trustee. Council agreed to correct the error.
- 9.9 John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area) queried why, on p.11, coach rambles and other social events were now being listed as providing incoming resources from 'charitable activities' when this had not previously been the case. David Joseph replied that the change was in line with SORP—the accounts now recognised that these activities did serve to promote walking but they still needed to remain cost-neutral. If they became profitable further legal advice would have to be taken.

9.10 Council agreed to adopt the accounts for the year to 30 September 2005.

## 10 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

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

### **President**

Chris Smith MP                      Proposed by Brian Reader, and seconded by Alison Mitchell

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

Andrew Bennett  
Chris Hall  
Mike Harding  
Peter Melchett  
Janet Street-Porter

### **Vice-presidents**

Proposed by Brian Reader and seconded by Owen Plunkett

John Bunting	Alan Mattingly
Geoff Eastwood	David Sharp
John Foster	Paddy Tipping MP
Jack Ibbott	Malcolm Petyt
Richard Lloyd Jones	Jerry Pearlman MBE LLB

Cath MacKay was nominated as a new vice-president by Brian Reader and seconded by Terry Pollard.

**Chairman** Proposed by Peter Skipp and seconded by Mavis Rear  
Kate Ashbrook

**Vice-chairman** Proposed by Chic Nash and seconded by Peter Ayling  
Kevin Matthews

**Treasurer** Proposed by Annette Cotter and seconded by Kate Ashbrook  
Denis Fuller

**Hon Solicitor** Proposed by Geoff Eastwood and seconded by M Ayamba  
Jerry Pearlman LLB

## 11 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was proposed on behalf of the Board of Trustees by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Mavis Rear, that Sayer Vincent be re-appointed as the Association's auditors. This was agreed by council.

## 12 ELECTION OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Seven nominations for the nine places on the Board of Trustees were received as follows: Des Coles, Tom Fisher, Kate Gocher, Gwendoline Goddard, Owen Plunkett, Terry Pollard and Brian Reader. An election was not therefore necessary. However, because of changes made to the Memorandum and Articles at General Council in 2005 it was necessary to determine which three candidates would serve for three years, which three candidates for two years and which candidate for only one year. After a ballot to determine this, the Chairman announced the following result:

Kate Gocher, Gwendoline Goddard and Brian Reader would serve for three years; Des Coles, Tom Fisher, and Terry Pollard would serve for two years; and Owen Plunkett would serve for one year.

[Terry Pollard and Owen Plunkett had received an equal number of votes and, following the toss of a coin, Terry Pollard had opted to serve for two years.]

The Chairman also introduced to General Council the three people who had been co-opted to the Board of Trustees during the course of the last year and who would continue to serve. They were:

Maxwell Ayamba (co-opted October 2005)

Ian White (co-opted March 2006)

Rodney Whitaker (co-opted March 2006)

### **13 ELECTION OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**

Six 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:

John Dowding  
Elizabeth Lawie  
Ron Moore

Sylvia Popham  
Alan Pestell

### **14 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY THE LORD CHRIS SMITH OF FINSBURY**

Chris said that the past year had been one of real achievement although it had been a difficult time for staff with the departure of Nick Barrett and the sad loss of Adrian Ritchie. However, it was a tribute to the professionalism of the staff that the show had stayed on the road.

Chris had used the opportunity of his maiden speech in the House of Lords to speak about the full implementation of the access provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act across England and Wales. He said that for all its eccentricities, the House of Lords was a very important place for the discussion of those issues of importance to the RA. The quality of the debate was high and on the CRoW Act even landowning peers had admitted it was a good thing! This tells us something important about the access provisions. The RA had envisaged that there would be many challenges and problems but in fact there has been consensus. This was a tribute to all of those who were involved at all stages of the Act's development. The situation in Scotland was even better.

There was, of course, some dissent. Mr van Hoogstraten was still describing walkers as 'serfs and scum' with no rights whatsoever but his belief that only landowners should have access to land made him a lone voice.

Challenges remained. Having won access to open country there was no room for complacency. We needed to use it to show how important it was so that there would be little chance of seeing the legislation rolled back. And we needed to clarify what was meant by downland, and to continue the campaign in respect of woodlands, riverbanks and the foreshore.

Other campaigns had continued. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act delivered more protection for green lanes than was originally thought possible, and Natural England, the successor body to the Countryside Agency and English Nature, will need to balance the interests of nature conservation and recreation, rather than giving priority to the former as had been feared. And the 'Use Your Paths' challenge took the RA back to one of its fundamental aims—keeping paths open and using them. However, despite these successes and exciting new projects there were still worries to address.

The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act had given the Home Secretary power to designate land on which it would be a criminal offence to trespass. This was a sweeping provision of great concern. Chris was pressing the Home Secretary to review these powers at an early stage since such broad powers were not necessary for the protection of Royal palaces and other public buildings.

In Scotland, it was of concern that funding for promoting walking projects was in jeopardy. This appeared to be because of fears that the work was only reaching a middle-class audience but this was wrong—it was reaching all parts of society.

There was therefore much still to be done. However, the RA was entering a new phase. It had a new Chief Executive, and a new chairman following in the steps of Brian who had done a terrific job. The political climate was also very much in the RA's favour: the exercise and obesity issue was always in the news and even the leader of the Conservative Party was showing his green credentials. So how ambitious could we be? The most exciting challenge now was to try to increase membership. The National Trust had 3 million members and the RSPB 1 million. We should be aspiring to those kinds of numbers. With those numbers would come the power to engage in politics with a small 'p' in the way that the RSPB did.

Chris finished by saying that in a few weeks he would be in the Lake District where exercise amongst the hills helped to put life into perspective. In the past year he had lost his two closest political friends, Robin Cook and Mo Mowlem. Both were keen walkers. When Robin died people had questioned his wisdom in undertaking hill walking. They were completely wrong. Walking was an excellent way of getting physical exercise but it also provided the sort of emotional and mental refreshment that only came from enjoying open country and free space. Long may the RA continue to protect this.

## **15 MOTIONS**

### **[1] National Parks Finance**

The following motion was proposed on behalf of North Wales Area by Max Grant, and seconded by Jerry Pearlman, vice-president:

This General Council congratulates Jim Knight, the landscape minister, and Gordon Brown, the chancellor, for having overturned the decision to freeze the budgets of national park authorities in England, and increased funding by £3 million. National parks bring wide-ranging benefits to all elements of

society and deserve support. We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that National Park authorities in Wales are funded adequately and that their membership continues to reflect the national interest in these iconic landscapes.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

## **[2] Rights of Way available by 2015**

The following motion was proposed by Chris Thompson on behalf of Nottinghamshire Area, and seconded by Rod Fillingham of that Area.

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees working in partnership with major agencies and local highway authorities in England and Wales, to establish a commitment that by 2015 all rights of way will be fully available, legally defined and promoted for public use.

(It is accepted that the work of establishing the Lost Ways project will continue alongside until 1st January 2026.)

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Owen Plunkett proposed remission of the motion. Remission was seconded by Peter Ayling, also of the Board of Trustees.

The proposal to remit the motion was carried by 57 votes to 47.

## **[3] Rural Payments Agency**

The following motion was proposed by John Newnham of Shropshire Area and seconded by Trevor Alison of that Area.

This General Council deplores the approach taken by the Rural Payments Agency in its letter of 30.9.05 to all Local Authorities which "invites" them "to consider whether (local authorities) might be willing to assist in these new arrangements" when, clearly, crop obstructions on public rights of way, as the RPA acknowledges, are a major obstacle to access to and enjoyment of the English countryside (especially in the context of the local authorities' responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980) and calls upon the Agency to strengthen its advice to local authorities.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Terry Pollard proposed remission of the motion. Remission was seconded by Mavis Rear, also of the Board of Trustees.

The proposal to remit the motion was carried.

## **[4] Duplication of Volunteer Projects**

The following motion was proposed by Sue Baxendale of North East Lancashire Area, and seconded by Peter Aizlewood of that Area.

This General Council believes that the "Use Your Paths Challenge" and "Footpath Guardian" projects, whilst admirable in theory, were ill conceived in practice. The resulting influx of problem reports into local highway authorities will be un-coordinated, inconsistent in methodology and duplicated in many instances. This will result in more administration for the highways authorities and so loss of time and money being spent of resolving footpath problems

themselves – many of which the authorities will already be aware of. The local RA footpath officers, at both Area and Group level will feel totally undermined as if their efforts and achievements are being totally ignored and undervalued at Central Office.

We therefore call upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that all initiatives should:

- Support and build on the work of the existing volunteer structure
- Avoid duplicating local work and arrangements
- Be directed towards national activities such as the extension of “Right to Roam” to coasts and rivers, and campaigns on issues such as Green Lanes.

General Council considers that such campaigns and national representations are the *raison d’être* of Central Office and the duplication of work being done by areas and groups is a misuse of RA funds.

The motion was lost.

#### **[5] European Climate Change Programme**

The following motion was proposed by Janet Cuff of Manchester and High Peak Area, and seconded by Gloria Gaffney of that Area.

- The first 5 years of the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP), which sets out the actions Europe needs to take to implement the Kyoto Protocol, has a serious omission: the Programme has concentrated on technological solutions to the transport emissions problem and failed to include walking and cycling.
- This Council urges the Board of Trustees to write publicly to the European Commission fully supporting the need for the European Climate Change Programme to include clear guidance on promoting zero-emission modes such as walking.

The motion was carried.

#### **[6] Coastline and Riverside Erosion Monitoring**

The following motion was proposed by Tony Drake on behalf of Gloucestershire Area, and seconded by Arthur Lee of Herefordshire Area.

This Council is alarmed at the prospect that climate change will cause greater erosion of coastline and riverside paths due to rising sea levels and more turbulent weather. It calls on the Board of Trustees to campaign for legislation which will require highway authorities to monitor paths at risk, and to take remedial action either to protect paths, or to provide alternative routes.

The motion was carried.

#### **[7] Creation of a Coastline Path**

The following motion was proposed by Peter Whitestone on behalf of Kent Area, and seconded by David Law, also of that Area.

This General Council proposes that the RA, in campaigning for access along the whole coastline in England and Wales should ensure that there is a means of retaining good quality access along the coast when restrictions under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act are imposed.

The motion was carried.

## **[8] RA Stationery**

The following motion was proposed by David Kelly of Mid Lancashire Area, and seconded by Tony Clarkson, also of that Area.

- This General Council believes that the Ramblers' Association letter headed paper should be changed to include reference to the objectives of the Association. Therefore the following text should be added to the letter headed paper:  
*'The Association promotes walking, protects rights of way, seeks to maintain & extend access to open country and defends the beauty of the countryside.'*
- The objectives in a shortened form should also be used in the signature of Emails when writing on behalf of the Association.

On behalf of Strathclyde Dumfries & Galloway Area, Hilary Graham proposed the following amendment. This was seconded by Jean Highet, also of that Area.

That the second sentence beginning 'therefore the following text' to the end of the motion be removed and replaced by:

'Therefore this General Council instructs the Board of Trustees in consultation with constituent parts, Areas, staff and marketing resources (preferably 'in-house'), to review, modify and modernise the letter heading and email signature accordingly. The proposed wording to be presented to GC 2007 for approval.'

The amendment was carried.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council believes that the Ramblers' Association letter headed paper should be changed to include reference to the objectives of the Association. Therefore this General Council instructed the Board of Trustees in consultation with constituent parts, Areas, staff and marketing recourses (preferably 'in-house'), to review, modify and modernise the letter heading and email signature accordingly. The proposed wording to be presented to GC 2007 for approval.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Kevin Matthews proposed remission of the motion. Remission was seconded by Owen Plunkett of the Board of Trustees.

The vote on remission was lost.

The amended motion was carried.

## **[9] Signposts**



The following motion was proposed on behalf of West Riding Area by Mike Church, and seconded by Gwendoline Goddard, also of that Area.

This General Council strongly recommends to Defra that all Definitive Rights of Way signposts should carry the number of the right of way (as is the case in the Isle of Wight), thus making it easier for all walkers to report blockages, obstructions or dangers.

The motion was carried.

#### **[10] Email Addresses**

The following motion was proposed by Phil Marson of Inner London Area, and seconded by John Archer, also of that Area.

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to urge central office to make the best use of email in communications with members and potential members, where this does not prejudice our inclusivity and does not use disproportionate staff time.

John Esslemont (Buckinghamshire and West Middlesex Area) proposed remission but his proposal was not seconded and so failed.

The motion was carried

The closing time for discussion of motions having been reached, the following three motions were remitted to the Board of Trustees.

#### **[11] Legal Panel Consultation (Merseyside and West Cheshire Area)**

That this General Council urges the Board of Trustees that when the Legal Panel does not believe that an issue raised by an area or group warrants legal assistance, the area or group has an opportunity to discuss the matter further with the Legal Panel, and to assist: that the Legal Panel's budget is substantially increased.

#### **[12] YHA Closures (Northumbria Area)**

This General Council deeply regrets the YHA's decision to close 32 of its rural youth hostels.

We urge the YHA to continue to seek partnerships with other agencies to maintain its network of rural hostels especially those close to national and other long-distance trails where alternative accommodation is limited. We shall support the YHA in its efforts to press local authorities and regional development agencies to assist with the necessary investments and by arguing the benefits which youth hostels provide to the rural economy.

This General Council further calls upon the Trustees to encourage the use of Youth Hostels by RA members and to work with the YHA in promoting walking initiatives.

#### **[13] Encouraging Affiliated Clubs (Norfolk Area)**

This Council views with concern the continuing decline in membership of the RA, and the resulting loss of income. As part of a campaign to reverse this process, Council proposes that the Board of Trustees actively promotes affiliated club membership, in order to bring in to the RA a financial contribution from those organisations who

benefit from our work, and whose members may in due course be persuaded to become individual members and active supporters of the RA.

## **16 RESOLUTIONS TO AMEND THE MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES**

With the agreement of Council, Terry Squires, vice-chairman, took the chair for the debate on these resolutions.

### **BLOCK 1**

**The resolutions in Block 1 were proposed on behalf of the Board of Trustees by Brian Reader, and seconded by Peter Skipp**

### **SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

- 1 That, conditional upon the passing of resolution 2 below, the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:-
  - 1.1 In Article 11.3(c) delete the paragraph starting "The absence from the Annual General Meeting....."
  - 1.2 Insert new Article 11.3(f) as follows:  
"To elect members of the Agenda Committee in accordance with the Standing Order of the Association."
  - 1.3 In Article 16.1(a) delete "The retiring Board of Trustees, those retiring members of the Agenda Committee" and substitute "The members of the Board of Trustees, the members of the Agenda Committee"; and insert "the President," before "Vice-Presidents"
  - 1.4 In Article 16.1 in the last sentence substitute "immediately preceding" for "last"
  - 1.5 Delete Article 22.1(b) and substitute new Article 22.1(b) as follows:-  
"Nine ordinary members elected by the General Council".
  - 1.6 Delete the last sentence of Article 22.1 and substitute:  
"A person is not eligible to be elected as a member of the Board of Trustees (but excluding the Honorary Treasurer) pursuant to Articles 22.1(a) and (b) unless he has been an Individual Member for at least twelve months as at the latest date by which nominations for such elections must be received by the Association in accordance with the Standing Orders.  
A person is not eligible to be appointed as the Honorary Treasurer or to be co-opted pursuant to Article 22.1(c), or serve pursuant to Article 22.1(d), as a member of the Board of Trustees unless he is an Individual Member."
  - 1.7 In Article 22.2 in the first sentence insert "end of the" before "Annual General Meeting"
  - 1.8 In Articles 22.3, 22.5, 22.6 and 22.7 "end" shall be substituted for "date" wherever occurring

**The resolution was carried.**

### **ORDINARY RESOLUTION**

2. That the Standing Orders of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:-
  - 2.1 In Standing Order A2 delete "which must be in writing, duly proposed and seconded, and accompanied by the consent of the nominee" and substitute:  
"and members of the Agenda Committee to be elected by the General Council".
  - 2.2 In Standing Order A3 delete "the previous year"; and add a final paragraph as follows:

- “A member of the Agenda Committee elected by the General Council shall hold office from the end of the Annual General Meeting at which he was elected until the end of the next Annual General Meeting of the General Council.”
- 2.3 In Standing Order A4 substitute “officer of the Association, member of the Board of Trustees or Individual Member” for “member of the Council who is an officer of the Association or”
- 2.4 Delete Standing Order A12 and substitute new Standing Order A12 as follows:-  
 “A nomination for a person to stand for election to the Board of Trustees as the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Treasurer or an ordinary member of the Board of Trustees must be proposed by three Individual Members who have been Individual Members for at least thirty six months as at the latest date by which nominations for such election must be received at the Central Office.  
 A nomination for a person to stand for election to the Agenda Committee must be proposed and seconded by any Council Members.  
 A nomination for a person to stand for appointment as the President, a Vice-President or the Honorary Solicitor must be proposed and seconded by any Council Members.  
 Any member may only nominate or second one person for election at an Annual General Meeting of the General Council to each of the Board of Trustees and the Agenda Committee.  
 All nominations must be in writing and accompanied by the consent of the nominee.”
- 2.5 In Standing Order B5 insert “end of the” after “shall retire from office at the”

**The resolution was carried.**

## **BLOCK 2**

**The resolutions in Block 2 were proposed on behalf of the Board of Trustees by Peter Skipp, and seconded by Brian Reader.**

## **SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

- 3 That, conditional upon the passing of resolution 4 below, the Articles of Association of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:-
- 3.1 Delete the last sentence of Article 8.1(a) starting “In respect of all subscriptions received from (a).....”
- 3.2 Delete Article 31.1(b) and renumber Articles 31.1(c) to (g) as Articles 31.1(b) to (f)

**The resolution was carried unanimously.**

## **ORDINARY RESOLUTION**

- 4 That the Standing Orders of the Association be, and are hereby, amended as follows:-
- 4.1 Delete Standing Orders C10 to C15 inclusive and substitute new Standing Orders C10 to C12 as follows:-  
 “C10 Each Area must submit to the Board of Trustees an annual budget together with any request for funding the Area may wish to make, in accordance with a timetable, procedure and format laid down by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall consider the budget and any funding request from an Area submitted in accordance with the above requirements. The Board of Trustees may vary the amount of funding which has been requested.  
 C11 The Treasurer shall pay to each Area as soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the Association’s financial year one-fourth of the funding agreed by

the Board of Trustees for the Area pursuant to Standing Order C10 or in accordance with any other payment procedures or timetables set out by the Board of Trustees C12 The Board of Trustees may on request during the course of the Association's financial year consider paying further grant to any Area if the Area's circumstances change and a revised budget is submitted by the Area and agreed by the Board of Trustees."

4.2 In Standing Order C16(a) delete "proportion of its Area Entitlement and other area"; and renumber Standing Order C16 as C13.

4.3 Renumber Standing Orders C17 to C22 as C14 to C19.

4.5 Insert new Standing Order C20 as follows:

"The following transitional arrangements in this Standing Order C20 shall apply only for the period up to and including 30 September 2006. The provisions of Standing Orders C10 to C13 shall not apply in respect of that period. During such period those provisions shall be replaced by paragraphs C10 to C16 of the Standing Orders which were in force immediately prior to the 2006 Annual General Meeting of the General Council and as if such paragraphs were still in force and incorporated in the Standing Orders."

**On behalf of Dorset Area, Kate Gocher proposed, and Brian Panton seconded , the following amendment:**

Add to the end of the last sentence, which reads 'The Board of Trustees may vary the amount of funding which has been requested' "after consultation with the Area."

**There were 48 votes for the amendment and 52 against. The proposed amendment was therefore lost.**

**The substantive resolution was carried.**

### **BLOCK 3**

**The resolution in Block 3 was proposed on behalf of the Board of Trustees by Brian Reader and seconded by Peter Skipp.**

### **ORDINARY RESOLUTION**

5 That the Standing Orders of the Association be, and are hereby, amended by inserting a new Standing Order C21 as follows:

"All bank accounts of Areas and Groups shall be held with the principal bankers of the Association as notified to Areas and Groups from time to time by the Board of Trustees."

SAVE THAT if Resolution 3 above (a Special Resolution) is not passed the above new Standing Order shall be inserted as Standing Order C23.

**The resolution was carried unanimously.**

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

Council approved the following venues for its next three meetings:

Reading University: 30 March – 1 April 2007

Winchester University: 4 – 6 April 2008

Harper Adams University, Shropshire: 24 – 26 April 2009

## **18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

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

The Chairman said at the end of his term of office he had tried to leave the incoming Chairman with a clear desk. It was a time of change for the RA—he had been very sorry when Nick Barrett had resigned last year. Nick had been 'head-hunted' by the Outward Bound Trust, but in his five years at the RA he had made important and valuable contributions to its work and great thanks were due for this. The recruitment of his replacement had taken longer than anticipated but work had gone on as usual with Adrian Ritchie as acting Chief Executive until his sad and untimely death in January, and with Jacquetta Fewster and David Joseph taking over as joint acting Chief Executives then. He thanked Jacquetta and David and also Dave Morris and Beverley Penney, the Directors in Scotland and Wales, for steering the organisation through this difficult period.

Christine Elliott had now been successfully appointed as Nick's successor and she would be starting work on 22 May. The Chairman gave her a warm welcome into the RA fold.

The past year had been a good one in that it had seen the full implementation of Part I of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act across England and Wales. The importance of RA volunteers in securing both this and the superior access provisions in Scotland should not be underestimated and the RA was working hard to increase both volunteer recognition and opportunities. This was being done largely through the work of the Volunteer Support Team. Lots of challenges remained: rights of way improvement plans, lost ways, coastal access and renewable energy were all important policy issues, and promoting walking issues were much in the news as the importance of walking for health was recognised. There was also much to be done in terms of encouraging the disadvantaged and minority groups to start walking.

Internally, membership recruitment and retention did require urgent attention but the Chairman felt sure that the new Chief Executive, staff, volunteers, Areas and Groups were in a strong position to tackle all of these challenges.

The Chairman thanked the seven members of the Board of Trustees who were stepping down from office this year: Terry Squires, Peter Skipp, Mavis Rear, Chic Nash, Alex Marshall, Annette Cotter and Peter Ayling. He also thanked Daniel Berelowitz, who had carried out the organisation and administration of Council with no previous experience of even attending a previous council! Special thanks were also due to the team of Staffordshire Area volunteers who had supported Daniel, ably led by Geoff Loadwick and Sally Smith.

The Chairman finished his address by exhorting everyone to keep up the good work and to have a safe journey home. The Chairman's remarks were warmly applauded.

Kate Ashbrook, incoming Chairman, thanked the Chairman for all of his hard work over the last three years. She praised his commitment to the Association, his diligence and attention to detail. His knowledge of the Memorandum and Articles was extremely useful. He had combined active work on the ground in Surrey with leading the organisation, and he had provided invaluable support to the board, staff

and volunteers. She was delighted that he would be continuing to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Kate's thanks were fully endorsed by Council.

**THIS ENDED THE BUSINESS**