

Scottish council 2017 minute

RAMBLERS SCOTLAND SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2017 MINUTE OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL MEETING Held on Saturday - Sunday 11/12 March 2017 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro Hotel

Saturday 11th March

Morning and Afternoon Session

- 1.1 Ray Findlay from Stirling & Falkirk District Ramblers led a four mile walk around the hotel at 9am before registration.
- 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2.1 Colin Thomson, chair of Stirling and Falkirk Ramblers, welcomed everyone to Scottish council. He wished everyone an enjoyable weekend and stay at the conference. This was Dunblane's third time hosting Scottish council and various Stirling and Falkirk Ramblers were volunteering over the weekend on reception, as tellers and scrutineers, returning officer and leading three walks. Colin encouraged everyone to participate and enjoy the weekend.
- 2.3 Alison Mitchell, Scottish council convener, welcomed everyone and was grateful to everyone for coming along. Alison stated this is a great opportunity for members to come together and hear what Ramblers have done in Scotland. Alison thanked director of Scotland, Brendan Paddy and his staff for organising the weekend.
- 2.4 Alison formally welcomed Vanessa Griffiths who is new in post chief executive of Ramblers GB, Kate Ashbrook (board of trustees member), Des Garrahan (chairman, Ramblers GB) and Christopher Hodgson, vice chairman, Ramblers Cymru.
- 2.5 Alison said that buddies were available for those attending for the first time. Volunteer buddies, Dorothy Stewart and Roger Smith stood to identify themselves.
- 2.6 There was a photography competition where delegates could vote on their favourite photo over the weekend, the winner being announced on Sunday. Photographs were submitted by members and non-members with a walking holiday of £500 prize.
- 2.7 Alison noted that Ramblers Scotland is keen to capture members' views over the weekend. There are post-it notes available in delegate packs and an exhibition board with the headlines training needs, what you most enjoy about Ramblers Scotland and how walking has changed your life for the better. There was also a Ramblers Routes template for members to mark their favourite walk. Alison encouraged delegates to view the various exhibition stands throughout the weekend.
- 2.8 Alison noted the deaths of several long standing volunteers; Elizabeth Longley (Highland and Islands area), Gordon Wallace (Paisley group) and Bernadette McDougall (Moffat group). All three made significant contributions in their groups and areas. Condolence notes have been sent to their families.

- 2.9 Alison ran through some housekeeping notes. An induction loop is available for those who require it, fire alarm rules and toilet locations. Alistair Cant advised that expense forms were to be completed and handed into Faye Henderson.
- 2.10 There were roughly 105 delegates who attended which is a slight decrease from the previous year. Representatives included 36 groups, seven areas and one young walkers group.
- 2.11 Alison noted there was a page of A4 paper which detailed staff profiles. Alison noted that Brendan Paddy is currently interim director of Scotland whilst Jess Dolan is on maternity leave.

3. INTRODUCTION AND FIRST IMPRESSION

- 3.1 Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive, Ramblers GB thanked everyone for the warm welcome she had received. Vanessa stated that she had been in post for 12 weeks now and wanted to speak about her background, a review of the work done together in 2015/2016 and her first impressions of the organisation. Vanessa also thanked Ray Findlay for leading a wonderful walk in the morning which was very enjoyable.
- 3.2 Vanessa stated that she joined Ramblers because of her love of walking and believes people are poorer without it. She loves the countryside, nature and would describe her character as a doer, team person and walker. Vanessa explained her background of starting in the private sector and eventually settling in Wales with her family. Vanessa highlighted that as she lives and has worked in Wales she understands the difference of being a nation and that it is important to find the right solutions that work for everyone.
- 3.3 Regarding the Vision and Strategic Framework, Vanessa emphasises this is fantastic, exciting and visionary. A country designed for walking is not all about paths in Scotland but about upholding access rights. This will be done through the use of the Pathwatch app, getting Core Paths on to OS maps and continuing the work on the Loch Lomond camping byelaws. Helping people find their feet is encouraged through Medal Routes which is currently in phase two working closely with health boards. There are similar conversations happening across GB with Let's Walk Cymru and Walking for Health partnership with MacMillan which will come to an end in 2018 and there are productive conversations happening to keep this work going. Ramblers Scotland is at the forefront of this work and is leading the way in regard to policies around equalities and safeguarding. Vanessa stated that we are fortunate to have the People's Postcode Lottery partnership which supported the walking festival held in September 2016. Ramblers Scotland hosted their flagship event in Balloch Castle Country Park which was a success. Ramblers GB will listen to the feedback from groups, areas, Scottish council executive committee and board of trustees to ensure the next walking festival in 2018 will be bigger and better. The Ramblers aim to be the leading walking charity and an ambassador for walking, all working as one team. Therefore the Ramblers are doing great things internally to support staff and volunteers. For example the infrastructure survey which will run until the end of March, area support and trustee working group helping areas in abeyance and Ramblers Roadshows taking place in Edinburgh (July) and Kilmarnock (September) where members can meet volunteers and get involved.

3.4 Vanessa posed five questions for Scottish council to think about and feedback to her, staff and Scottish council executive committee over the weekend:

- It is a great ambitious framework over ten years. How to we turn that into operational delivery plan?
- Are we really taking into account what is coming over the hill externally
- What do the following mean for Ramblers; Brexit, Network Rail, Social changes, Parkrun.
- What can we do differently to improve communications and in the long term have a better use of technology.
- How do we stay relevant to our supporters?
- How do we make our investment decisions?

4. ANNUAL REPORT (YEAR IN PICTURES)

4.1 Brendan Paddy thanked Vanessa Griffiths for her presentation and attending Scottish council. Brendan also thanked Alison Mitchell, Ramblers Scotland staff and Jess Dolan.

4.2 Brendan introduced the annual report in pictures. The slideshow demonstrated Ramblers Scotland's achievements over the last year and highlighted the diversity of walks programme available.

5. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

5.1 Brendan Paddy highlighted that he started in October 2016 and is covering for Jess Dolan whilst she is on maternity leave. Brendan told the conference about his background and his love of the outdoors and walking.

5.2 Brendan noted that the Ramblers Scotland Vision and Strategic Framework is broadly similar to Ramblers GB however the detail is different. It outlines the three goals; a country designed for walking, finding your feet and connecting people through Ramblers.

5.3 In regard to a country designed for walking, Ramblers fought hard for access rights and are now trying to defend them. More could be done to join up the local campaigning across groups and John Andrews is doing great work on access matters at group and local level. There is currently work being done to bring together the good work of groups, staff and the rest of recreation sector. An engagement campaign will be run which aims to draw in other walkers and recreational activities. There has been an extraordinary response from the public regarding core paths not marked on OS maps. Nearly 1,000 people have backed the campaign and 90% are not Ramblers members. Ramblers Scotland also wants to inspire people and showcase what Scotland has to offer walkers, therefore Ramblers Scotland will bid to bring Euroorando 2021 to Scotland.

5.4 Vanessa Griffiths touched on how Medal Routes related to people finding their feet. Brendan noted that over 6,500 people using the Medal Routes app are not Ramblers members. Groups are also offering more accessible walks for those who do not already walk or current members who can find other walks too strenuous. Medal Routes are also a new way for people to get into walking. Brendan noted that if you are not familiar with the hills in Scotland it can be difficult to reach the top.

- 5.5 Other activities are also helping to connect people through Ramblers. Groups are now offering family walks. This initiative was led by Lucy Hunter and attracts lots of families with young children who want to get out walking. Brendan joined his local Edinburgh family walks and noted this was a fantastic way to meet new people in Edinburgh and get out walking with his family. A walk leadership framework is also being piloted by Ramblers Scotland staff member Katy Robinson. This will aim to use the knowledge and experience members have to develop new walk leaders. This will help Ramblers Scotland diversify and expand the number of walks on offer. Brendan noted there are closed Facebook groups available for Ramblers Scotland members. They are available for members with similar interests to share information, get advice and ask questions.
- 5.6 Ramblers Scotland aims to lead the recreational sector and improve equalities and safeguarding policies. Brendan noted that Ramblers Scotland is currently at the beginning of this journey and is something that will be progressed. Brendan thanked all for the welcome he has received to Ramblers Scotland and encouraged members to come and say hello during the weekend.

6. QUESTIONS AND ADOPTION OF ANNUAL REPORT

- 6.1 Alison Mitchell thanked Brendan for his report and asked Scottish council to adopt the Annual Report and ask questions. It was noted that Siggi Skulason was also involved in the reviewing of Scottish council procedures as mentioned in the convenor's Foreward. On the membership pie chart it was noted that areas North Strathclyde and South West Scotland areas were missing and this would be corrected for Scottish council 2018.
- 6.2 The Annual Report was proposed by Michael Doherty and seconded by Elizabeth Lawie and was therefore formally adopted.

7. APOLOGIES

- 7.1 Alison Mitchell read out the apologies received from all Honorary Vice Presidents and noted the sad death of Dennis Canavan's daughter.
- 7.2 Apologies were also received from Vic Royce (Scottish council executive committee and Highland & Islands area), Eleanor Peacock (Glasgow group) and Ann Rankin (SLOW group).

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS TO SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE AND AGENDA COMMITTEE

- 8.1 Barbara Butler was identified as the Returning officer and nominations forms should be handed into her by 3.45pm that afternoon. Alison Mitchell highlighted that due to the motion passed at Scottish council 2016 anyone who had been a member of Ramblers Scotland for at least one year could now stand for the elections. Alison encouraged those to stand who have the skills that will enhance the work Ramblers Scotland does. If there were less than seven nominations received there would be no election.

9. APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS

- 9.1 Eric Davidson and Margaret Cook, Stirling and Falkirk Ramblers were appointed as tellers and scrutineers. They identified themselves to Scottish council and will count the votes over the weekend.

10. APPROVAL OF SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2016 MINUTE

- 10.1 Scottish council accepted and approved the minute. This was proposed by Jim Campbell (Isle of Bute) and seconded by Michael Doherty (Paisley).

11. STATEMENT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS

- 11.1 The honorary treasurer, Alistair Cant, gave details of the income and expenditure audited accounts (04) and the Ramblers Gathering Accounts (05). Alistair highlighted that in comparison to previous years there has been a deliberate spend due to a carry forward of money from previous years. Alistair took questions from the floor and noted that as the Scottish council budget now sits with staff, next year's accounts will show a significant drop.
- 11.2 The adoption of accounts was formally approved. This was proposed by Catherine Watt (SCEC) and seconded by Catriona Webster (SCEC).

12. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FINANCES OF RAMBLERS SCOTLAND

- 12.1 Alistair Cant provided a summary of Ramblers Scotland finances (06). Alistair ran through the highlights and noted that Scottish council executive committee receive similar reports every quarter to track Scotland's spending in relation to Ramblers GB. Questions were opened to the floor regarding the accounts. The paper was for information and did not require formal adoption.

13. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

- 13.1 The appointment of Paul Kenny for the independent examiner for Scottish council accounts was made. The appointment of David Fenlon for the independent examiner for the Scottish Gathering accounts was made. Scottish council accepted both appointments.

14. FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF PRESIDENT

- 14.1 Brendan Paddy asked Scottish council to formally accept Ben Dolphin's nomination for president. Ben is very active on social media, is a country park ranger and has an interest in landscape and wildlife. Brendan noted that Ben was very humbled when approached to take on the role and is excited about the role. Unfortunately Ben could not attend Scottish council, however a short video of Ben was played.
- 14.2 Alison Mitchell explained that Brendan and Andy Malby (vice-convener) had met with Ben previously and said how wonderful it was to have Ben as Ramblers Scotland president.
- 14.3 Scottish council agreed unanimously to accept Ben's nomination for president.

15. FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF HONORARY OFFICERS

- 15.1 There was only one nomination for convener and vice convener and therefore the following honorary positions were announced:

Position	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
CONVENER	Alison Mitchell	Jane Catto	David Fenlon
VICE CONVENER	Andy Malby	Alison Mitchell	Alistair Cant
TREASURER	Alistair Cant	John Holms	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Denis Canavan	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	John Foster	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	David Grosz	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	John Holms	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Cameron McNeish	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Dr Rennie McOwan	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Malcolm Payne	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Dr Andrew Murray	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby

16. GROUP SUCCESSES

- 16.1 There were six presentations which highlighted different aspects of group successes.
- 16.2 First was the announcement and presentation from the winning group of the Scottish council 2016 challenge. Ramblers Scotland encouraged groups to get more people walking and joining their group. The group with the highest membership percentage increase was the winner. The winning group was Aberdeen Young Walkers who won kit worth up to £250 and three days of dedicated staff time. Eily Macdonald said how her group increased their membership by 320% (five members to 21). Eily spoke how MEETUP and Facebook greatly helped increase their membership. She also stated that the money will be a huge help to buy kit such as group shelters, purchase cheap phones and organise leadership training.
- 16.3 Lucy Hunter from Edinburgh Ramblers presented on setting up family walks. Lucy spoke how Jeannie Cranfield from Ramblers Scotland staff put her in touch with the right people and got the group up and running. The group has been active for 18 months, uses MEETUP and currently has 20-30 participants. Walks take place every fortnight and have a structure in place that is suitable for families. To make the walks interesting for children the walks cover suitable terrain but are still challenging. Lucy emphasised that the children love to be outdoors and explore nature. It also gives the older children responsibilities to look after those younger than them. Lucy gave tips on making family walk work, such as being friendly, introducing people, going over rules and telling them about the next walk to get them excited. Lucy encouraged other who were interested in setting up family walks to come and speak to her over the weekend.

16.4 Jenny Mason from North Hertfordshire Ramblers presented on leading walks for dog walkers. Jenny started the group as there were no dog walking groups in her area. Jenny took up the challenge to start her own dog walking group and has found it very rewarding. She started with a couple of walks, advertising them online and in her groups walk programme. Jenny stated that the response was amazing and people with and without dogs were signing up. Members liked the format of arriving at a pub, booking lunch, going on five to six mile walk and then returning for lunch. The group has progressed over the last eight years and now has 100 people are registered. Jenny explained that it is important to learn how to take a dog into the countryside in a responsible manner. The group now has 35 walkers with 20 dogs and there has never been a problem or any complaints from land owners.

17. **BREAK (15.20 – 15.30)**

17.1 During the break nomination forms for Scottish council executive committee and agenda committee were handed into the returning officer.

18. **GROUP SUCCESSES (CONTINUED)**

18.1 Ronnie Wilkes from Edinburgh Ramblers presented on leading walks for the visually impaired. Ronnie has had a visual impairment since birth and lost his sight completely at 26 years of age, however this did not stop him from getting involved in activities and sport. Ronnie joined Edinburgh Ramblers as he wanted to meet new people and felt confident doing so. Ronnie also runs visual impairment awareness sessions which teach people mutual respect between a visually impaired person and their guide. Ronnie stated that leading visual impairment walks is not for everyone but would encourage people to try it if their group receives such a request. Ronnie offered his knowledge and to come and talk to groups who would like to learn more about visual impairment walks. Ronnie took questions from the audience and thanked everyone for listening.

18.2 Trevor Jones from Lochaber & Lorn group presented on developing group training programmes. Trevor gave some background information about the location and terrain covered by members of his group and how membership has increased over the years to 91. Previously the group offered mainly leisurely walks however now they offer a range of walks, two walks every week for 52 weeks of the year. Due to the level of walks now on offer and the terrain, the group offer basic training on navigation as this helps to bring other members into the group so they get enjoyment out of walking and reading a map. The group also offers night navigation, winter skills, avalanche awareness, scrambling, first aid and are working with Katy Robinson on walk leadership. The aim of training is to keep members safe and ensure their enjoyment on walks. Trevor spoke about how Ramblers have helped his group develop this training that ensures members and leaders are trained to the level that the walks dictates. Ramblers also pay 50% of the training costs with members pay the remaining 50%, **sportscotland** in 2014/15 provided extra funding for training and this provided a platform for the group to grow. Lochaber & Lorn aim to keep providing challenging walks, expand on the knowledge that already exists so they can support and give confidence to members. The group's primary focus is to keep members safe on walks and work together with Ramblers Scotland. Trevor answered questions put to him from the floor.

18.3 Dorothy Stewart from Lothian & Borders area presented on implementing an area wide training scheme. She noted that Trevor had already spoken about why training is so important to ensure the safety and enjoyment of members on walks. Dorothy spoke about how the role of area training officer came about. Previously the Lothian

and Borders area chair wanted the area to be relevant to its groups and came to the conclusion that training is essential to groups and could be coordinated at an area level. Therefore in 2013, with the support of Jeannie, the area offered training to all of its groups. Walk leadership, navigation and outdoor first aid were all offered with some being funded by Ramblers Scotland. The location of the training tends to be in Edinburgh as this is an easy location for everyone to get to. Dorothy emphasised that it saves money to run area wide training and promotes collaboration and learning from each other, however, there are some challenges to overcome such as the organisation involved, monitoring cost and ensuring the right communication is going out from the area to promote the training. Dorothy took questions from the floor and thanked the audience for listening.

19. INTRODUCTION TO SPEED WORKSHOPS

19.1 Alison Mitchell thanked all of the presenters for coming to speak at Scottish council. She introduced the speed workshops; delegates were to attend three workshops each lasting 15 minutes. These workshops would also be available tomorrow so delegates had the opportunity to attend six out of the ten workshops on offer. After completion of the workshops, delegates were asked to check into rooms and reconvene at 7.30pm for dinner followed by the Dick Balharry Memorial Talk. There would also be “adventures after dark” challenge for those who wished to take part.

19.2 The following workshops were held:

- Attracting young people, Andy Malby
- Promoting your activities through social media, Danny Carden
- Leading high quality walks, Katy Robinson
- Getting involved in decision making, Faye Henderson
- The Core Paths campaign, Brendan Paddy
- Organising yourself as a group, Siggi Skulason
- Communicating with your members, Catriona Webster
- Managing your group’s money, Mike Gray
- Dealing with local access issues, Helen Todd
- Attracting volunteers, Rob Burns

19.3 End of afternoon session

20. EVENING DINNER AND DICK BALHARRY MEMORIAL TALK

20.1 Delegates attended the dinner followed by a talk from Will Copestake, Scottish and UK 2015 Adventurer of the year. Alison Mitchell provided background on the Dick Balharry memorial talk and Andy Malby introduced Will Copestake.

21. ADVENTURES AFTER DARK

21.1 Katy Robinson asked delegates to participate in a night time navigation challenge with prizes for the winners to be announced at the end of the conference.

21.2 End of Saturday evening session.

Sunday 12th March

22. WELCOME

- 22.1 Alison Mitchell welcomed everyone back to the conference and thanked Katy Robinson for organising and running the “adventures after dark”. Alison reminded delegates to vote in the photo competition and put up post-its in the ‘capturing members’ views’ exhibit board.

23. APPROVAL OF ORDER PAPER

- 23.1 Convener of the agenda committee, Barry Pottle, stated the agenda committee is responsible for considering the competence of motions submitted to Scottish council and any amendments to such motions that are submitted timeously. Barry also noted there is an updated order paper (10) and motions paper (11) printed on green paper and available on delegates’ tables. The agenda committee reports to Scottish council their recommendations on the competence of each motion and it is then for Scottish council to decide to accept, reject or amend the order paper. Barry indicated that the meeting was in breach of standing orders by not considering the order paper on the forenoon of the opening day. On a point of order Douglas Tullis drew attention to standing order B2.1 which only required the order paper to be made available to Scottish council members by posting or by distribution on the forenoon of the opening day. That had been done. Barry accepted that he stood corrected on that point
- 23.2 Barry provided background to what happened at the 2014 Scottish council due to the conflict of interest of motions being submitted from the same area as those sitting on the agenda committee. This background was relevant to the two motions submitted this year.
- 23.3 The first motion was submitted by Alistair Cant and Andy Malby, both officers of the Scottish council executive committee. In accordance with the 2014 decision the Scottish council executive committee members of the agenda committee excluded themselves from deciding on the competence of the motions. However the remaining three member of the agenda committee constituted a quorum and unanimously agreed the motion could be accepted as competent.
- 23.4 The second motion was submitted by the North Strathclyde area and therefore those on the agenda committee from this area excluded themselves from this decision. The other three members of the agenda committee found the motion competent. However, a request to amend this motion was submitted after the deadline, therefore Scottish council must decide by two thirds majority whether or not to accept the amended wording of the motion.
- 23.5 Alison thanked Barry for presenting the order paper and opened the floor up for comment. There were no comments and therefore the order paper was accepted.

24. MOTIONS

- 24.1 **Motion 1 – submitted by members of the Scottish council executive committee**
- 24.2 Alison Mitchell called on the proposer, Alistair Cant (SCEC honorary treasurer), and seconder, Andy Malby (SCEC vice convener) of the first motion to explain the motion to Scottish council and the reasons behind submission. The motion stated:

ADD NEW STANDING ORDER 2.4

A member of the AC may participate and vote in its deliberations on a motion or amendment to a motion notwithstanding that he or she is

- (a) a member of the Area or Group that submitted it,*
- (b) a SC delegate of the affiliated organisation that submitted it or*
- (c) one of the two Honorary Officers, SCEC members, AC members or Board of Trustees representatives that submitted it,*

and the relevant Order Paper made available under Standing Orders B2.1 or C2.2 shall, in relation to any member of the AC to whom (a),(b) or (c) applies, disclose the position in that respect.

RENUMBER EXISTING STANDING ORDERS A2.4 to A2.7 as A2.5 to A2.8

- 24.3 Alistair expanded on the reasoning from Barry. There has been uncertainty in the agenda committee on the position of members claiming interest in motions submitted from their area. The motion is procedural and will ensure the smooth running of the agenda committee if accepted by Scottish council. Alison Mitchell thanked Alistair and opened up to the floor for debate. Barry stated more reasons why, as a member of North Strathclyde, this motion would be beneficial for future years.
- 24.4 Alison noted that as this was a constitutional motion and therefore required a two thirds majority to pass and asked delegates to vote.
- 24.5 The motion was unanimously accepted with no votes against or abstentions.

25. **Motion 2 – submitted by North Strathclyde area**

- 25.1 Alison Mitchell opened the floor as to whether or not Scottish council should accept the amended wording of the motion submitted by North Strathclyde under Clause 6.11 of the Constitution which states that “other business not affecting the Constitution may be moved by a council member as a matter of urgency with the agreement of two thirds of those present and voting.” This vote was not around content of the motion but rather the process of accepting the wording of the motion.
- 25.2 Elizabeth Lawie stated that the wording of the motion was changed as the Highland Council is no longer axing their ranger services and this decision was only discovered after the deadline for amending motions. Having discussed with Ramblers Scotland staff it was decided that as other local authorities are also considering axing their ranger services a more general motion would be appropriate for Scottish council. There was discussion from the floor around whether or not this constituted an emergency situation and it was noted that if the amended wording was not accepted the motion would be irrelevant.
- 25.3 Alison asked Scottish council to vote on accepting or rejecting the amended wording of the motion.
- 25.4 For: 59
- 25.5 Against: 3
- 25.6 Abstentions: none
- 25.7 Amended wording of the motion was accepted and council moved on to debate the content of the motion as stated:

This Scottish Council gives full support to the Ramblers' Scotland Office regarding any protests to any Local Authority who show intention of axing Ranger services in their area.

- 25.8 Alison asked Scottish council to invite Brendan Paddy, Director of Scotland, to say a few words on the motion from a Ramblers Scotland staff perspective. Scottish council accepted this invitation. Brendan stated that staff welcomed the motion as rangers are an essential part of local authorities.
- 25.9 Anne Thomson (North Strathclyde area) formally proposed the motion and Isabel McQueen (North Strathclyde area) formally seconded. Alison opened the floor to debate the motion. Elizabeth provided information as to why this motion would be useful moving forward and also gave some background about why rangers are in danger in local authorities. Elizabeth emphasised that the ranger services are a great link between people and the outdoors. Rangers motivate people to appreciate the countryside whilst also showing them how to take care of it. It was noted that local authorities are having to make cutbacks but this is too important an area to let slip away. There was also discussion around the clarity of the wording 'full support' and it was agreed this meant in practical terms Ramblers Scotland staff, when in meetings and having conversations, could speak with Scotland wide authority and are representing members views.
- 25.10 Alison asked Scottish council to vote on accepting or rejecting the motion. The motion was unanimously accepted with no votes against or abstentions.

26. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AGENDA COMMITTEE

- 26.1 Six nominations had been received for Scottish council executive committee for the seven places available, therefore no election was necessary. Those elected were; John Andrews, Trevor Jones, Elizabeth Lawie, Douglas Tullis, Catherine Watt and Catriona Webster. They all stood to make themselves known to Scottish council. Alison Mitchell noted this left Scottish council executive committee with one vacancy and this would be discussed at their post Scottish council meeting taking place that afternoon.
- 26.2 There was also no election necessary for the agenda committee as three nominations had been received for the three places available. Those elected were James Bennett, Liz Hunt and Barry Pottle.

27. INFORMATION ON LINK

- 27.1 Helen Todd, Campaign and Policy Manager, spoke to Scottish council about Scottish Environment LINK. This is a forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisation, with over thirty-five member bodies representing a range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. Helen noted that LINK is thirty years old this year and is a great way for organisations to work together, share experiences and bounce around ideas. Helen is currently the Chair of LINK until November and found this a useful tool to meet MSPs and others. Being Chair of LINK has also helped raise the profile of Ramblers Scotland among decision makers. LINK also has counterparts in England, Ireland, Wales and Europe. As part of their thirtieth anniversary celebrations they are all coming together in Edinburgh. Helen emphasised that it has been a useful experience to become a trustee and enriches the work she does at Ramblers Scotland. Alistair Cant echoed

what Helen said in her presentation and how this has provided a beneficial bond between LINK and Ramblers Scotland.

28. REFLECTIONS ON SCOTTISH COUNCIL

- 28.1 Alison Mitchell invited the chair of Welsh council executive committee, Christopher Hodgson, to say a few words about his first Scottish council. Christopher said it was a privilege to attend Scottish Council and what a great weekend it had been. Christopher thanked Ramblers Scotland staff team and Alison Mitchell for putting on an excellent Scottish council. He noted in particular it was fantastic to hear the group successes and to hear all of the achievements over the past year.

29. SPEED WORKSHOPS

- 29.1 Another round of the speed workshops was held and delegates had the opportunity to attend three different workshops from the previous day.
- 29.2 After completion of the workshops there was a thirty minute coffee break.

30. DEVELOPING A WALK LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

- 30.1 Katy Robinson, walk leadership project officer, presented to Scottish council regarding her work at Ramblers Scotland. Katy has been in post for just under one year and stated that the walk leadership in Ramblers Scotland will eventually become a GB project. Katy provided background information as to the funding received from **sportscotland** and the aim of the project. Katy highlighted that members have a wealth of experience and it is important to give something back to these volunteers. It was also noted that many groups need more walks programme in order to run a varied walk programme. Katy spoke regarding her four key deliverables; create a volunteer sounding board, gather an accurate picture of walk leaders, pilot basic walk leader training and start on a training framework for everyone.
- 30.2 There are currently seven members on the sounding board and it exists to be a reflection on what the walk leadership project does. The sounding board has met twice already and another meeting will take place soon. Katy stated that the sounding board has been invaluable to moving the project forward and thanked all those involved. Katy had spent a great deal of time data collecting on statistics of Ramblers Scotland walk leaders. Having spoken with each group there are roughly 1,200 walk leaders in Scotland and 18% of members volunteer. The gender split of walk leaders is roughly 50/50 and the average age of a walk leader is 64. There are over 3,500 group walks annually which averages 65 walks per group. A digital and hard copy questionnaire was made available to walk leaders in order to gather information on current walk leaders. Katy noted that there is a draft training framework which is currently being worked on and is a work in progress. This will build on the strengths that Ramblers Scotland already has and will be flexible to meet the needs of members. Katy will aim to build up a network of walk leader mentors at group level, trainers and training coordination at area level. There have been seven pilot courses set up so far which aims to build confidence, soft skills and teaches how to manage challenges walk leaders might face on a walk.
- 30.3 Katy emphasised that she is happy to deliver this training to any groups that have a need for it. Alison Mitchell thanked Katy and the sounding board for all of their hard work and opened up the floor for questions.

31. CAMPAIGNING IN SCOTLAND – HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- 31.1 Helen Todd spoke to Scottish council about how to get involved in campaigning in Scotland. It was noted that volunteers are already doing so much but Helen hoped to provide ideas and options in order to get involved. Helen stated that there are members who do not want to walk with groups but join in order to support the work of Ramblers Scotland. Getting involved in campaigning is a great way to engage this audience of the membership.
- 31.2 Helen explained campaigning and how it is about making a positive change and making the world a better place. For the last eighty years Ramblers Scotland has been involved in numerous successful campaigns. Campaigning variously from taking to the streets, sitting behind a desk and walking with politicians. By attending a group walk this is also contributing to achieving Ramblers Scotland's charitable objectives. Helen listed the following examples as a way to get more involved in campaigning; engage with members who do not walk, work on local initiatives to raise group profiles, make groups more vibrant and more attractive to new members and help everyone get out walking. Helen spoke about promoting walking, securing access, developing paths and protecting the countryside. She then asked delegates to discuss in groups what they might do to also get more involved. Helen highlighted that Ramblers staff are here to help and getting involved in campaigning will promote vibrancy in groups and make them attracting to new and existing members.

32. NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS

- 32.1 Alison Mitchell invited Des Garrahan, chair of the board of trustees, to talk about the national volunteer awards. Des thanked Alison for inviting him to Scottish council and noted that it had been a very pleasant weekend with great conversations taking place. Des stressed that Ramblers cannot perform any of its mission without volunteers who give their time to support the aims and charitable objectives of the organisation. The group successes presentations from the previous day Des found particularly inspiring. The aim of the national volunteer awards is to recognise the commitment from volunteers and to show appreciation for all that they do. Des encouraged delegates to nominate volunteers for local or national awards to thank them for their time and effort.

33. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 33.1 Alison Mitchell thanked Siggie Skulason and Vic Royce for serving on Scottish council executive committee.
- 33.2 Brendan Paddy presented Catherine Watt with an Isle of Skye walking guide for completing the Ramblers Routes template which marked her favourite walk. Brendan also presented Alan Watt with a walking holiday worth £500 for winning the Walking Pals photo competition. Runners up were Jean Cloherty and Peter Chisholm
- 33.3 Katy Robinson presented prizes for the "adventures in the dark" challenge held on Saturday night.
- 33.4 Jeannie Cranfield presented the Scottish council 2017 challenge. Ramblers Scotland is inviting groups to pitch an idea or initiative to Scottish council executive committee, Dragon's Den style. There will be up to £500 available for groups to implement their idea and applications are due in by 11 June 2017. The winning group will have eight months to initiate a project and will be invited to Scottish council 2018 to speak about how they got on.

34. CLOSING REMARKS

- 34.1 Brendan Paddy thanked Jeannie Cranfield for organising the weekend and to all of the delegates who attended. Brendan also read out the key themes that came out of the capture board; the best thing about being part of Ramblers Scotland is the friendships made and members would like more training available in navigation, winter skills and social media.
- 34.2 Alison Mitchell asked delegates to complete the evaluation forms in the delegate packs and to return them as they exit the conference. It was noted that delegates should complete and hand in their expenses form to Faye Henderson.
- 34.3 Alison thanked everyone for attending the conference and for representing their group or areas. Special thanks were given to the following people; Vanessa Griffiths (chief executive), Des Garrahan (chair, Board of Trustees), Kate Ashbrook (Board of Trustees member), Christopher Hodgson (vice - chair, Welsh council), Ramblers Scotland staff members, walk leaders, volunteers from Stirling & Falkirk group and the tellers and scrutineers.
- 34.4 Alison noted that Colin Thomson and Val Smith would be leading two walks that afternoon. Those attending the walk were asked to gather in reception and take their packed lunch with them. Alison wished everyone a safe journey home. Kate Ashbrook thanked Alison for chairing the weekend.
- 34.5 Scottish council concluded with a video promoting Ramblers Scotland.
- 34.6 Meeting closed at 1.20pm.

Faye Henderson, area and governance administrator, 16 March 2017