

SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 9 February 2015, 16.00-20.00
at Scottish Environment Link Office, Shore Road, Perth

01/15 ATTENDANCE

SCEC

David Thomson, Convener
Jim Lawson, Vice Convener
Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer
Vic Royce

Liz Lawie
Ben Douglas
Alison Mitchell

Staff

Benedict Southworth – Ramblers Chief Executive
Jess Dolan, Director Scotland
Helen Todd, Campaigns & Policy Manager
Kareen Robertson – Communications & Finance Officer

Board of Trustees

Jonathan Kipling, Ramblers Chair

02/15 WELCOME

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting adding that this would be the last main meeting of his convenership. He said he was especially delighted to welcome Jonathan Kipling, (Ramblers Chair), Benedict Southworth (Ramblers Chief Executive) and he was absolutely delighted to welcome Ramblers Scotland's (RS) new Scottish Director, Jess Dolan.

Jess said she was only 6 hours into her role but was delighted to be present at the meeting. She said she had a huge role to play and asked SCEC to bear with her while she got to know the Ramblers. She looked forward to spending a bit of time with everyone in the near future.

The Convener asked all SCEC members present to introduce themselves and give a bit of background about their individual roles within SCEC and what they bring to the committee.

03/15 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Andrews, SCEC member.

**04/15 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON
TUE, 11 NOVEMBER (App 1)**

The minutes were proposed by Vic Royce and seconded by Alison Mitchell subject to minor amendments in 74/14.

Confidential minute (69/14) The minute was proposed by Ben Douglas and seconded by Alistair Cant.

05/15 REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING (App 1A)

All action points had been completed.

Matters arising from minutes

- 1) **66/14** Benedict Southworth said that he had just signed off the policy regarding the dispute procedure. It should be distributed to Areas and Groups in the next 2 months but before this happens it will be put to the volunteer sounding board. SCEC member Ben Douglas requested that his name be put forward to join this board and also suggested that his participation could be done via video conferencing.
- 2) **75/14** John Andrews has produced the paper about guidance material on access in Scotland which has been passed onto Helen Todd, Campaigns & Policy Manager. Helen indicated she would look at this over the next few months and feed back to the committee at the next main SCEC meeting after Scottish Council.

AP1 - BD's name to be put forward to volunteer sounding board.

AP2 - Helen Todd to feedback comments about John Andrew's report.

06/15 FINANCE REPORT (App 2, 2A)

- 1) SCEC noted the finance report (App 2) which was produced by the Finance team in London and covers our budget and project expenditure up to the end of December.
- 2) Following on from the training discussion at the November meeting, (67/14, Item 2) SCEC noted that Jeannie Cranfield (Games Legacy Advisor) had produced a draft budget proposal. SCEC agreed that Jess Dolan and Jeannie Cranfield should liaise with Alistair Cant and reach a decision on the best way to spend this. SCEC requested that the draft proposal be forwarded to Alistair Cant and Jess Dolan for clarification and approval.
- 3) Alistair Cant produced the finance report, App 2A. SCEC noted there was a second £5,000 adjustment between the campaign and general funds which relates to a previous year. The campaign fund had previously been very useful to fund specific campaign items.

AP3 – KR to send draft proposal to AC

07/15 BUSINESS PLAN (App 3)

The following points were highlighted in the RS Business Plan report for the period mid November to 31 January.

- 1) Land Reform Act: Today is the anniversary of the Land Reform Act coming into effect. We put out a Press Release and this was picked up by the media including BBC Scotland Radio Highland.
- 2) Golf courses: We visited Turnberry at New Year which has just been bought by Donald Trump who is keen to redevelop and 'improve' the course. Our particular interest is that there is a core path which forms part of the Ayrshire Coastal Path running right across the middle of the golf course.
- 3) Land Reform Bill: Dave Morris, the previous RS Director Scotland is working for us at present on our submission for the Land Reform Bill consultation. A meeting has been held with Stewart Stevenson, MSP who was on the original Justice 2 Committee and is very keen to support our case. We are also meeting with Bob Reid, former Mountaineering Council of Scotland President and advisor to the Land Reform Review Group, and Malcolm Fleming, the First Minister's Special Advisor on environment issues. The draft submission is almost finished.
- 4) Byelaws: We worked with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland on a joint press release to express concerns over the recent consultation by Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park (LL&TNP) Authority. We have asked for a joint meeting

with SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) chair. The consultation has now ended and the LL&TNP will now consider the 300+ responses. A meeting with the Chair of the Park board and RS Convener is to be set up soon.

- 5) Health Walk Progression: SCEC member Ben Douglas and Edna Burnett of the Kinross & Ochils Group were quoted in the GB toolkit package from a Scottish viewpoint. The toolkit encouraged health walkers to progress to Ramblers Groups. SCEC noted that the Scottish section could be extracted and made available to our Groups as it included good ideas for Groups to take up.
- 6) Vision Survey: Benedict Southworth said that the basic analysis of the survey was contained in App 8B. A significant number of members and non-members had responded to the survey. There are still many comments and other items to look at and depersonalise but it has given us a useful snapshot of members' views. SCEC member Vic Royce suggested that a comparison between members and non-members would be very useful.

AP4 - Scottish Office to deal with Scottish section of the GB Healthwalk toolkit

08/15 SCOTTISH COUNCIL

SCEC agreed the Action on Motions 2014 paper as outlined in App 4 subject to a few minor amendments.

Arrangements for Scottish Council

- 1) Order paper: SCEC agreed that Barry Pottle should be given the opportunity to speak to encourage motions at future Councils.
- 2) Motions: SCEC noted that no Motions had been received by the deadline date. Therefore, the hour allocated to Motions 2015 should be reallocated on the Agenda as follows: a) a new slot of 30 minutes to be allocated to an SCEC Q & A session, and b) the remaining 30 minutes should be split between additional time for workshops and plenary session.
- 3) Agenda committee: SCEC agreed that a semi-formal statement be issued regarding the question of declaring an interest at last year's SC. The statement would outline that this had been a one-off scenario and bore no relation to changing our constitution. Alistair Cant agreed to discuss this point with Barry Pottle and agree a suitable statement after the formal end of the Order paper.
- 4) SCEC representative on the Agenda Committee. Ben Douglas, supported by SCEC, was happy to continue as SCEC representative subject to him being a successful SCEC candidate at SC.
- 5) Annual Report: SCEC noted there was no mention of work by Areas and Groups and agreed that the 2016 report should include the work of Areas.
- 6) Future years of SC: SCEC expressed various views on a different format for Scottish Council which included the following:
 - a. The current Ramblers year cycle does not encourage a change of format. De-link the whole timetable of SC as they have done in Wales and hold the event later in the year.
 - b. Drive towards a members' meeting rather than delegate representatives for Areas and Groups.
 - c. A wider discussion to explore the options of combining SC with the Scottish Ramblers Gathering is required.
 - d. There will be items coming out of the governance report so these should be noted.
 - e. This should be discussed with members attending this year's SC.
 - f. Evaluation to include Scottish Council change in format.

AP5 – BD to contact Barry regarding motions for next year's Council.

AP6 – KR to revise the Agenda to take account of additional time due to the non submission of motions.

AP7 - AC to contact Barry regarding statement at end of Order Paper.

AP8 - KR to make a note for SC 2016 that the annual report should include an appendix about Area AGMs.

AP9 – KR to include a question about different format for SC in the evaluation forms

AP10 – BS to include question about different format for SC at workshop on the Running of Ramblers Scotland.

09/15 GENERAL COUNCIL

SCEC noted that General Council would be held over the weekend of 27/28/29 March and that the Kent Area is putting forward a motion about the closing of level crossings.

10/15 RAMBLERS VISION (App 8, 8A, 8B, 8C)

SCEC noted the papers 8A (key points raised at the facilitated discussion by SMT for SCEC on 15 December 2014), App 8B (initial results of the RS Vision survey) and App 8C (The Ramblers: a path to follow – Our Vision and strategic framework 2015-2025 (approved by the Board of Trustees Jan 2015)).

SCEC noted that the Ramblers Vision will be an item for discussion at Scottish Council and will take the form of 3 different workshops running simultaneously. The main item for discussion will be 'what are the big items coming out from the survey'. SCEC discussed the RS Vision and survey and the following points were raised:

- 1) We are not appealing to a diverse amount of people.
- 2) Particularly important items are maintaining access rights and group walks and the health benefits of walking.
- 3) People join because of our campaigning.
- 4) Groups need to be more flexible and less bureaucratic.
- 5) Members expressed various views, no trouble getting people to talk about this survey. Give them a gentle steer to discuss what we raised at our meeting in December.
- 6) Engage with young people.
- 7) What type of flexibility do we need as an organisation? Give them questions on how it will work.

Benedict Southworth indicated that after feedback from SC, SCEC would agree a format for the vision framework document which would then be distributed to Areas and Groups for further discussion. Following this, a final document would be ready for endorsement by SCEC in the autumn and ratification at next Scottish Council.

11/15 THE WELL-BEING OF AREAS & FEEDBACK ON ATTENDANCE AT AREA AGMs

SCEC member Ben Douglas pointed out the difficulties of filling Area positions in his own Area (Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside) and questioned whether this was a trend in all Areas in Scotland. He felt that the function of the Areas has been reduced and suggested that the current function of Areas gathering money should be fed direct to Groups.

Members of SCEC were asked to feedback from their own particular area:

- 1) Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside: Increased membership of 47% for the Kinross & Ochil Group is really good for the Area. This increase was largely due to the Group initiating short, fortnightly walks of up to 4 miles. It is becoming less and less relevant for volunteers to take on an Area role.
- 2) Grampian: There has been no change in governance. They were pleased to welcome Roxanne Kerr to the Area AGM and reported that she had given a good presentation.
- 3) Highland and Islands: Groups are very much an entity in themselves and not very interested in the Area and what goes on. The committee were the

only members who took part in the AGM which was held via teleconference. The Chairman role rotates.

- 4) North Strathclyde: A few officers in the Area have a dual role. Some members have a Group role as well as an Area role.
- 5) South West Scotland. Six people attended. One person on committee stood down and other reshuffled into place. Discussed the function of an Area and questioned if it was necessary.
- 6) Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute: The Area AGM will take place on 28th February. They have formed a new committee. One of their 4 groups is not interested in the Area at all.
- 7) Lothian & Borders Over 70 people attended the AGM – it is a very dynamic Area. They have new Area officials. The Area has worked out from a Scottish perspective what they have to do which is the key.

SCEC made the following comments regarding the Area structure:

- 1) Should Areas be plugging the gaps?
- 2) Areas give good networking opportunities and sharing of good practice.
- 3) Areas are there to exist as a purely administrative function.

Benedict Southworth said that what has been discussed is not that different from other parts of GB. It is clear that are 2 types of Area – rural and urban and the more rural you are the more dispersed you are and the more difficulty there is in finding a suitable model. It is a valuable discussion to have and we need to crystallise what you as a committee want from Areas. What are we looking out for? What are we trying to achieve?

He also added that we need to have someone local who can apply common sense to how money is spent.

12/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SCEC noted the following:

- 1) Alison Mitchell attended the Scotways AGM in November and the North East Mountain Trust AGM in December.
- 2) Alistair Cant indicated that Scotways and Red Rope are both affiliated to RS and both have paid their money.
- 3) Alison Mitchell proposed a motion to General Council congratulating them on Ramblers 80th anniversary. Liz Lawie seconded the proposal and Alison agreed to produce the motion and send it to Executive Office in London by the deadline date. This mirrored a motion from general council in 1985 from Ramblers Scotland.
- 4) Alison Mitchell also indicated that it was 30 years since SCEC was formed and wondered about the possibility of getting a cake for Scottish Council as a celebration. Benedict indicated that they were looking at doing something at General Council to celebrate Ramblers 80th anniversary.
- 5) Helen informed SCEC that our Vice President Dick Balharry is experiencing serious health problems. David Thomson agreed to write to him expressing the committee's concern.

AP11 – DT to write to Dick Balharry

13/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, 7 March at Dundee University. The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.