

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 11 November 2014, 16.00-2000**  
**at Scottish Environment Link Office, Shore Road, Perth**

**62/14 ATTENDANCE**

**SCEC**

David Thomson, Convener  
Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer\*  
John Andrews

Ben Douglas  
Alison Mitchell  
Vic Royce

\*from 1600 to 1800 hours only

**Staff**

Benedict Southworth – Ramblers Chief Executive  
Jeannie Cranfield, Games & Legacy Advisor  
Roxanne Kerr, Office Administrator  
Kareen Robertson – Communications & Finance Officer  
Helen Todd, Campaigns & Policy Manager

**63/14 WELCOME**

David Thomson, Ramblers Scotland (RS) Convener welcomed everyone to the SCEC meeting, including Benedict Southworth (BS), Ramblers Chief Executive who is currently acting as the RS Director and Roxanne Kerr, the newest member of staff.

SCEC noted the sudden and unexpected death of Tommy Jeffers, long standing member of the Cunninghame Group. Very recently in September he had attended the Scottish Ramblers Gathering at Mar Lodge. Alison Mitchell said that he and his wife, Christine, had carried out a lot of work for Ramblers and were dedicated members of Ramblers. SCEC expressed their sympathy to his wife, Christine.

**64/14 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ramblers Chair, Jonathan Kipling, SCEC Vice Convener Jim Lawson and SCEC member Liz Lawie.

**65/14 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON TUE, 2 SEPTEMBER (App 1)**

The minutes were proposed by Ben Douglas and seconded by Vic Royce subject to a minor change in Item 40/14.

**66/14 REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING (App 1A)**

All action points had been completed with the exception of the following:

- 1) 49/14 (4a) Benedict Southworth indicated to SCEC that the dispute procedure had not been finished yet but it was expected fairly soon.

## 67/14 FINANCE REPORTS (App 2, 2A)

SCEC noted the following finance reports:

- 1) Benedict Southworth reported on the Brief Commentary and Analysis of the RS budget. SCEC noted that all the additional staff costs above budget had been approved by the Board of Trustees and included the previous Director's final salary arrangements plus additional staff resources.
- 2) Alistair Cant reported on the Scottish Council Financial report. He indicated there was a surplus at year end which is being carried forward into the current year's budget. SCEC said it was disappointing that the money available had been carried forward and agreed that it should be spent within the next six months on volunteer training. SCEC also agreed that there should be closer planning of SCEC and overall RS planned spending each year.
- 3) Alison Mitchell, SCEC member reported on the Scottish Ramblers Gathering Accounts. SCEC noted that there had been lower numbers for the Gathering this year and the planned deficit. SCEC thanked Alison for making these figures available so quickly.

## 68/14 QUARTERLY REPORT ON RS BUSINESS PLAN (App 3)

SCEC noted the first report on the RS Business Plan which included work that had been carried out since the start of the financial year.

SCEC considered the report page by page questioning and asking for more information on specific items

The following points were highlighted:

- 1) Pathwatch – This is a major project in England & Wales but a decision had not been made on how to take this forward in Scotland due to the differences in legislation and information about the path network. SCEC asked to be kept informed of any changes to that decision.
- 2) sportscotland
  - a. 2013-15 (Group Development project) The Group Development Officer for this project resigned from Ramblers mid August and with only 7 months remaining to the end of the project, it was decided not to go ahead with a direct replacement. Instead, a programme of training focusing on walk leader and volunteering skills was being developed.
  - b. 2015 onwards. A proposal for further funding from April 2015 to March 2017 is being developed.
  - c. An audit will be carried out in January by **sportscotland** this year.
- 3) Health walks. SCEC discussed the progression of health walks onto Ramblers walks. Members noted the experiences of groups differed widely. SCEC agreed that involvement of the local authority with the development or progression onto longer walks was very helpful, and that these initiatives take time to build up.

Benedict asked for feedback on the format which outlined progress against every outcome. SCEC indicated that the report had been produced in an easy to read format and that RS staff should continue using this format for future reports.

**AP1** – JC/HT/BS RS to put in a proposal to **sportscotland** for further funding. (see 2b above)

## **69/14 SCEC (Scottish Council Executive Committee) – App 4**

- 1) **Confidential minute**  
Succession planning for SCEC Convener
- 2) **Encouraging people to stand for SCEC**  
SCEC discussed and agreed the following issues regarding changes to the committee and encouraging new members to join.
  - a. A short article should be included in the next edition of the RS newsletter which is due to be distributed the beginning of December. The article should include that RS is looking for people with skills as well as enthusiasm, dedication and interest in our work, and also experience as a trustee for other charities.
  - b. RS should look externally to co-opt people onto the committee but RS need to be clear why we are inviting them on
  - c. Alison Mitchell and staff member Roxanne Kerr will work on a draft paper to give out to people who are interested in being members of SCEC. This paper will be based on the SCEC Training leaflet which has been issued at Scottish Council over the last few years. SCEC agreed that it should be shortened and written in a less formal way
  - d. To encourage younger people to participate in communications around the election we should say that the committee was flexible about having two meetings on a video conferencing (subject to everyone having the right technology set up).
- 3) **SCEC Skills Audit form** The skills audit sheet (App 4) was noted. For future audits, SCEC need to look at gaps and assign members accordingly to specific areas of work.

**AP3** – RK/AM – work on an information paper for people interested in being members of SCEC (see 2c above)

## **70/14 SCOTTISH COUNCIL (SC) 2015 (App 5)**

- 1) SCEC noted that the venue for next year's SC will be at the Queen's Hotel on the Friday evening and on the Saturday at Dundee University which is about a 10 minute walk from the hotel.
- 2) SCEC agreed that RS staff should put together a list of workshops and send to SCEC for approval. RS staff in conjunction with the Convener would decide on timings and others parts of the Agenda. Suggestions for workshops included membership promotion, access legislation and navigating around the Ramblers website.
- 3) The Order paper was an item for discussion by Alistair Cant but he had left at 1800 hours so he did not report on this item.

**AP4** – HT/BS – Put together draft Agenda and send to SCEC for their approval.

## **71/14 DIRECTOR RETIREMENT EVENT**

SCEC noted that Alison Mitchell was working on an event for Dave Morris (retired Director Ramblers Scotland) to celebrate his work with RS over the last 25 years. Alison agreed to approach Dave next week about a suitable date possibly towards the end of March next year.

**AP5** – AM – Contact Dave Morris regarding suitable date for a celebration event next year.

## **72/14 RAMBLERS SCOTLAND VISION (App 6)**

BS presented a timeline for the development of a RS vision statement and a draft membership survey.

SCEC agreed the timeline and that a letter should be sent from David to area chairs and secretaries to inform them.

SCEC discussed the providing feedback on individual questions and decided overall that:

- 1) It needed to provide basic information on the views of members and others in the outdoors community to start off the discussion at Council.
- 2) The questionnaire should be promoted in the next edition of the RS newsletter and online.

**AP6** – RS staff – promote questionnaire in next RS newsletter and finalise questions.

**AP7** – DT – letter to Area Chairs and Secretaries

## **73/14 SCOTTISH RAMBLERS GATHERING**

The 2014 Gathering had gone well despite the numbers being quite low. The event gave people a sense of belonging and reinforced that they belonged to a national organisation

SCEC noted Alison's concerns about the future of the gathering and felt that it needed to change dramatically and SCEC should be working towards that.

SCEC and staff discussed various options for future gatherings including:

- 1) Holding Scottish Council with the Gathering which would enable getting double value from the events but staff time would need to be allocated to this.
- 2) Energise the Gathering by moving it around different locations and combine it with Scottish Council and a walking festival.
- 3) Shrink Scottish Council down to formal business and perhaps organise it when the weather is warmer rather than early March which would fit in with walking festivals.

SCEC agreed to have a year's break and come back in 2016 with Scottish Gathering in a different format.

SCEC agreed to discuss (possibly by putting forward a motion at Scottish Council) a different format for future Scottish Councils/Gatherings at Scottish Council in March.

**AP8** – SCEC – Discuss different format at Scottish Council.

## **74/14 THE WELL-BEING OF GROUPS AND AREAS: PROPOSAL FOR SURVEY (App 7)**

SCEC member Ben Douglas outlined concerns about the welfare of Groups and Areas of Scotland and suggested distributing a survey to Groups and Areas asking for information about the status of their individual group committees ranging from Green (no problems) to Red (crisis situation). Ben felt this was an easy to complete survey and the Area officers and SCEC would then be provided with much necessary and useful information on group well-being.

SCEC noted Ben's comments and discussed whether this should be included in the governance review.

SCEC agreed that RS staff should discuss with colleagues in CE office whether this information could be gathered as part of the forms used to notify changes of positions

**AP9** – RS staff - discuss forms with the CE office

#### **75/14 ACCESS PROBLEMS: GLEN LYON: UPDATE ON SITUATION**

SCEC member John Andrews reported on the access problems in Glen Lyon, Perthshire. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) wrote to Perth & Kinross Council deploring their lack of action on this estate.

The reply from the council was disheartening as they stated that they can't reasonably expect the legislation to apply all year round – there are 30 days per year when you do not have access.

This needs to be dealt with and suggested setting up a meeting with MCofS and Nick Cole (Access Forum Convener). JA felt this was another example of authorities coming up with any conceivable excuse not to do anything.

SCEC member Vic Royce asked about the guidance material on access in Scotland which was recorded in the September minutes (Item 60/14 item 6). John said that work has started on this and he intended putting more 'flesh on the bones' during the Xmas break.

#### **76/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1) SCEC noted that retired Director Scotland Dave Morris will be made an Honorary Fellow of Scottish Environment Link at their AGM at the end of November. This is in recognition of his dedicated work in the environmental field over the last 30 years.
- 2) Helen Todd's article on the need for stronger enforcement of access legislation and more paths gained a high level of response via Twitter.
- 3) Alison Mitchell will attend Scotways AGM in Perth on Saturday, 22 November and she also planned to attend the North East Mountain Trust AGM on 2 December.
- 4) John Andrews put in his apologies for the next SCEC meeting due to be held on Mon, 9 February.

**AP10** – DT to schedule time for feedback on the next agenda for item 3) above..

#### **77/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 9 February at the Link office in Perth.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

David Thomson  
Ramblers Scotland Convener