

SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 2 September 2014, 16.00-2000
at Scottish Environment Link Office, Shore Road, Perth

45/14 ATTENDANCE

SCEC

David Thomson, Convener
James Lawson, Vice Convener
Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer
John Andrews

Ben Douglas
Alison Mitchell
Vic Royce

Staff

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

Board of Trustees

Jonathan Kipling, Ramblers GB Chair

46/14 WELCOME

David Thomson, Ramblers Scotland (RS) Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting. He added that this would be the last SCEC meeting with Dave Morris in attendance due to his retirement later in the month.

47/14 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from SCEC member Liz Lawie.

48/14 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON WED, 7 MAY (App 1)

The minutes were proposed by Alison Mitchell and seconded by Jim Lawson subject to a minor change in Item 40/14

49/14 REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS AND MATTERIS ARISING (App 1A)

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

1. **AP2** – Helen Todd indicated that the Roadshare Campaign had not been supported publicly yet by RS but this will be done later in the year.
2. **AP4** - SCEC agreed that Alistair Cant would look further into options to try and improve upon the issues around the Order paper and motions which impacted on Scottish Council 2014. It should be an Agenda item for further discussion at the next meeting.
3. **AP7** – A meeting had been held in Glasgow for members to discuss and comment on the Ramblers GB vision and the Ramblers Scotland vision. Jim Lawson said he was waiting on final comments on the first draft of his questionnaire ideas. Jim agreed to send out a second draft of his vision paper to SCEC next week for their comments. SCEC agreed with Benedict Southworth that Ramblers GB should help with developing crafting it into a survey that can

be carried out before Scottish Council 2015. SCEC agreed that a timetable for the development of the vision should be developed and made available to areas and groups.

Matters Arising

4. **Ref: Item 36/14, item 4** SCEC noted that another Group complaint had arisen – this time between members of the Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Group (North Strathclyde (NS) Area. The dispute and issues surrounding it are causing an incredible amount of volunteer and staff time, particularly the involvement of the Director Scotland (DS) and Group Committee members. As a next step in resolving the dispute, a meeting has been confirmed next week. In attendance will be the DS, Helen Todd (RS Campaigns & Policy Manager), and representatives of the Group and NS Area. The DS felt that with the fundamental issues involved, it should have been resolved at a lower level of the organisation - between the Group, Area and individuals - rather than it being escalated up with the involvement of the Ramblers Chief Executive and DS.
 - a. Benedict Southworth told SCEC that a new volunteer complaint and policy procedure had been signed off by the Board and should be distributed to Groups and Areas in the near future.
5. **Ref: Item 37/14, item 5** The DS was pleased to report that the problems concerning the Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute Area have now been resolved. The Area Chair and Secretary had previously highlighted their concern about the lack of Area committee members coming forward and had called a special general meeting on 10 May which the DS and SCEC member Jim Lawson attended. The outcome of the meeting was the election of a new committee consisting of good people with excellent skills.

AP1 (2) – KR to add Order paper and motions as an Agenda item for next SEC meeting.

AP2 (3) - JL to send out a second draft of his vision paper to SCEC for their comments. Create a timetable for the development of the vision and make available to areas and groups.

50/14 FINANCE REPORT (App 2, 2A, 2B)

SCEC noted the finance report (App 2) produced by Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer. It shows the figures up to August of this financial year. App 2A is the analysis and commentary for the RS budget from central office. App 2B gives details of the budget bid for Scottish Council for the next financial year. Alistair said that the underspend from this year's SC budget has been carried forward and allocated to policy development.

51/14 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (App 3)

Dave Morris said this would be his last SCEC meeting as he was due to retire effective 30 September. He said he had joined Ramblers in 1989 and had endeavoured to get a high profile and get the right stuff in the media which at times could be quite controversial. He said he was looking forward to his retirement after 25 years with Ramblers but added that Nelson Mandela didn't get out of jail until he was 72 so maybe the best is still to come!

In relation to his report the DS highlighted the following points:

- 1) A meeting was held a few weeks ago with the Scottish Government's head of physical activity. We asked some questions about whether the best route for

Ramblers to secure funding was through Paths for All, and also how to sustain funding that comes via **sportscotland**.

- 2) One of our current issues is the electric deer fencing within the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) - we have spoken to the CNP authority about this and they are working with the landowner to get crossing points installed. I discussed the issue this morning with Bob MacIntosh, Head of the Scottish Government's environment directorate and he also agreed that electric deer fencing is an impediment to access.
- 3) Hilltracks – we had partial success last month when the Planning Minister announced a form of planning control over all new tracks, although it fell short of the full planning permission we were calling for. We're now working with other organisations through LINK to put together guidance for planning authorities to show them that we are watching and want to ensure the new procedures work.
- 4) Windfarms We objected to the large windfarm proposal adjacent to Rannoch Moor, an extraordinary place for a proposal of this sort. The decision for the Allt Duine windfarm will not come before 18 September. Fife Council has proposals to build windfarms in 5 public areas.
- 5) Ryder Cup – Perth & Kinross Council are using draconian security measures for this event. Golfers are walking up and down the course with all the construction going on and we believe that walkers should be accommodated as well. Restrictions run from beginning of July to shortly after the event ends.
- 6) **Get Outdoors Weekend** – there was a last minute decision to go with this event which was a useful learning experience and quite successful in terms of what we achieved. We are keen to repeat this next year. Our facebook 'likes' were increased by 50% and we also gained several hundred new followers on Twitter. It was promoted across 300 organisations and we had an equivalent of around £11,000 advertising value in the press.

52/14 BUSINESS PLAN – (App 3A)

- 1) SCEC noted the draft RS Business Plan. BS pointed out that there was a limited window in which to make any amendments as it had to be submitted to the Board for their September meeting. SCEC agreed that any omissions, comments or corrections should be sent to Helen Todd by 5 pm, on Tuesday, 9 September. In addition, SCEC agreed that an extra session should be organised after this date to allow more time to discuss the finer details and set priorities.
- 2) For on-going reporting in the next financial year, it was noted that Christine Grant (Director of Services) is devising a reporting framework for all the new business plans.
- 3) SCEC noted that Ben Glencross (Group Development Officer) had left the RS effective mid August and discussed development in this area to end of March when the current funding finishes. Jeannie Cranfield is putting a new proposal together with an emphasis on training rather than group development work. For next year there could be a possibility of employing a training officer rather than a development officer.
- 4) It is clear that the project has been very useful in terms of what is needed within the Group structure. BG produced a final report of his work over the year and it was agreed that this should be distributed to SCEC for information.

AP3 (1) - RS staff to organise additional SCEC meeting to discuss finer details/set priorities for RS business plan.

AP4 (2) - KR to distribute final **sportscotland** report to SCEC

53/14 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The DS attended the Board meeting in June and presented the RS 6 monthly report.

SCEC noted that in order to facilitate and simplify the Directors' reports from RS and RC to the Board and respective committees (SCEC and WCEC), Christine Grant (see also 52/14(2) above) is devising a new reporting mechanism which will take effect in the next financial year.

AP5 – KR to mail the final version of the RS June Board report to SCEC.

54/14 RECRUITMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR SCOTLAND

SCEC noted the following interim arrangements for the RS office after the current DS retires.

- 1) BS indicated that he did not wish to put any additional pressure on Helen Todd by placing her as the Interim Director, a role she had fulfilled previously. BS will cover parts of the operation and will line manage Helen Todd and Jeannie Cranfield in addition to him spending some time in the RS office.
- 2) It is hoped to have the new Director in place early January. BS had met with the Convener yesterday and agreed the type of candidate they were looking for. The process will be run by the HR section in London and it is expected the advert will be issued within the next 2 weeks.
- 3) There will be a small selection panel consisting of the Ramblers Chief Executive, the RS Convener and a third person from outside the organisation, preferably a woman.

55/14 PRESENTATION TO DAVE

On behalf of SCEC, David Thomson presented Dave with a gift in recognition of his work with RS. David said that it had been an honour to have worked with Dave especially during the lead up to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act. He thanked him for all the work he had done for all our members and added that Dave and our previous Convener and President, Dennis Canavan had been 2 of the bravest men he had met.

SCEC discussed an event to celebrate Dave's years with Ramblers Scotland and Alison Mitchell agreed to take this forward.

56/14 GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

SCEC noted that the following in relation to the governance review:

- 1) The working party is meeting and discussing issues. It is hoped that by the end of September, they will send information to Areas and Groups which will allow feedback on ideas that are coming forward. The working party will then make a proposal to the Board who in turn will make a proposal to General Council in March.
- 2) Some of the items discussed in the review are: a) reducing complexity and variety of constitutions and introducing a standard constitution which would cover most circumstances; b) how do we select the Board which would provide well qualified members; c) how do we shorten formal business at General Council; d) how do we increase diversity within the organisation across gender, age, etc.
- 3) JK pointed out that Group feedback should focus on the principles and not minutiae. He also said that the working party would consult with SCEC and WCEC.
- 4) JA said Wales had started discussing their governance and we should start thinking of doing this for RS.

57/14 SCOTLAND VISION PROCESS

- 1) Benedict Southworth told SCEC that they would need to make a decision on how they want to develop the RS vision and how they want to tie it in with the GB vision. He said that Ramblers is a few weeks away from putting out a GB 'draft vision strategic framework' document for members to comment on. Once feedback has been received the Board will approve early in the New Year and it will then be put to General Council in March for ratification.
- 2) Part of the GB vision process included a meeting held in June in Glasgow and ideas that were emerging were cross referenced with Scottish members. Another meeting was held today with Area representatives and he received their feedback on some of the ideas which he hope to cascade out as far as possible over the next couple of months
- 3) Scottish Council should have the final version of Ramblers GB vision which will give some indication of how members are feeling about issues.
- 4) SCEC debated the RS vision and members had various opposing views but agreed that a survey should be communicated via the RS newsletter which would be distributed with *Walk* magazine in December. SC delegates would then get an opportunity to discuss the various views at Scottish Council.

AP6 – RS staff to organise/develop the process for survey and communicate via winter edition of RS newsletter

58/14 SCOTTISH COUNCIL (App 4 and 5)

SCEC noted the financial analysis (App 4) which detailed the costs of SC over the last 4 years. It was noted that the travel costs of delegates were considerably less for last year as the majority of members used public transport, mainly due to the accessibility of the bus and train stations to the venue.

SCEC noted App 5 which gave options for SC 2015 and agreed that the best option was the Queen's Hotel for dinner and accommodation on the Friday with the main conference at Dundee University. DT and KR agreed to visit the venues within the next few weeks.

AP7 – DT/KR to visit venues for Scottish Council 2015 within the next few weeks.

59/14 REGISTER OF INTERESTS/CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

SCEC agreed that RS should adapt the forms devised for the Board members for any conflict or register of interests.

AP8 - KR to look and adapt forms for conflict or register of interests for SCEC members.

60/14 UPDATE ON POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

- 1) The Hilltrack update was discussed under Item 51/14 (item 3).
- 2) Land Reform Review Group – In relation to the forthcoming land reform bill, the recommendations from the LRRG group relating to access are unlikely to feature in the bill but can be achieved through other means.
- 3) National Walking Strategy –we are awaiting an invitation to join the steering group.

- 4) Level crossings SCEC agreed that John Andrews should write to Perth & Kinross Council again regarding the ongoing issue with the level crossing at Walnut Grove and ask how they plan to assert the core path across the locked crossing.
- 5) Meikleour estate During June, Perth Ramblers organised a demonstration walk on the estate, and it appears that a number of non-compliant notices were removed in advance of this walk. The local councillor, Bob Ellis publicly thanked John Andrews and the Ramblers for their success with this access issue.
- 6) Guidance material on access in Scotland Following a motion at General Council about renewing advice material on access in England, John Andrews suggested that similar material could be developed for Scotland. SCEC felt that this was a reasonable idea in principle and agreed that John should take it forward to the next level.
- 7) HT – taking Richard Lochhead out for a walk on Monday 6th October.
- 8) Possible new date for next meeting.

61/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next SCEC meeting will be held on Tuesday, 11 November 2014. The meeting closed at 2000 hours.