

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014, 16.00-1810**  
**at Scottish Environment Link Office, Shore Road, Perth**

**30/14 ATTENDANCE**

**SCEC**

David Thomson, Convener	Ben Douglas
James Lawson, Vice Convener	Elizabeth Lawie
Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer	Alison Mitchell
John Andrews	Vic Royce

**Staff**

Benedict Southworth – Ramblers Chief Executive (by teleconference)  
Dave Morris – Director Scotland  
Kareen Robertson – Communications & Finance Officer

**31/14 WELCOME**

David Thomson, Ramblers Scotland (RS) Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting adding that discussions should be kept to a minimum due to the governance review meeting for SCEC members starting after the break.

SCEC welcomed back Jim Lawson who has spent the last two months recovering from major surgery.

**32/14 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ramblers GB Chair Jonathan Kipling.

**33/14 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2014 (App 1) and pre and post SCOTTISH COUNCIL (App 1A)**

**SCEC Minutes – 10 Feb 2014**

The minutes were proposed by Alison Mitchell and seconded by Ben Douglas subject to a minor change in Item 17/14.

**SCEC Minutes – 8 March 2014 (pre and post Scottish Council)**

The minutes were proposed by Alison Mitchell and seconded by John Andrews.

**34/14 REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS**

All action points had been completed. The following points were highlighted:

- 1) AP11 – SCEC to feedback idea on Paths Fund proposal. The Director Scotland said that staff would still welcome feedback and this should be directed to Helen Todd. SCEC also noted that the John Muir Trust had recently initiated a campaign to raise funds for path work on their land.
- 2) AP2 (post Scottish Council) – it was noted that the GB toolkit had been used as a workshop at the Volunteers' Training Day in November.

### **35/14 FINANCE REPORT (App 2, 2A)**

SCEC noted the finance report produced by Alistair Cant, Hon Treasurer. SCEC noted that we were still awaiting an invoice for the Scottish Council (SC) costs for the main event on the Saturday which was held at Glasgow Caledonian University. The Holiday Inn had invoiced us for dinner and accommodation on the Friday evening and this has been paid. The full SC costs will therefore be updated for the next meeting.

SCEC also noted the brief commentary prepared by Nicky Russell, Management Accountant at central office. Vic Royce SCEC member said the figure of £24,000 under re-forecast was unclear and asked Alistair for an explanation. Benedict explained that this figure was the agreed additional cost for the remainder of the year.

### **36/14 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (App 3)**

Dave Morris highlighted the following points from his report as shown in App 3:

- 1) The membership position as at 1 May is quite encouraging showing an increase in total RS membership of 180 since the beginning of the financial year (1 October 13). It is an encouraging picture for the organisation as a whole with the England and Wales figures also showing an increase for the same period.
- 2) The dispute resolution issue which arose with Stirling & Falkirk Group is complete and will not re-open for further discussion. SCEC had noted it had taken up a huge amount of staff time, particularly the Director's time, in dealing with the situation. SCEC member Ben Douglas pointed out that he, along with David Thomson, had also been very much involved with this dispute during the autumn and winter months. Ben had received emails in excess of 200 which had consumed about 50 hours of his personal time. He said it was one of the most difficult situations he had to deal with in his volunteer life and felt strongly that Area officials should not be embroiled in cases of this type to the extent he had been.
- 3) SCEC agreed there was a lack of a system process for areas of disagreement within the Group/Area structure. SCEC felt that Ramblers did not provide a clear structure and there was confusion regarding the authority of Group/Area committees. Benedict Southworth said that due to this and other recent cases, Ramblers were now working on putting a clear procedure in place.
- 4) SCEC noted that the RS office had been asked to investigate another dispute between members of a Group, with the complaint stretching to 21 pages of text, and the Director Scotland was currently dealing with this.
- 5) Loch Leven Heritage Trail Louise Batchelor, a retired BBC Scotland Environment correspondent, is involved in the public opening of the trail on 30 May. She wants to demonstrate the mass appeal of a multi-use path and is keen to encourage lots of walkers, cyclists and horseriders at the actual launch. The rallying point is likely to be the Findatie car park, the east side of Vane Farm, near the RSPB Reserve. SCEC agreed that an email should be sent to local groups informing them of the launch and asking them to take part in a walk.

**AP1** – RS staff to send email to local groups about the launch of the LLHT

### **37/14 REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES (App 4)**

This report has been prepared for the Ramblers Board meeting in June to give a review of progress on the 2012-14 RS Business Plan. The update covers the period October 2013 to March 2014. The Director highlighted the following items:

- 1) Medal Routes were successful in gaining £28K funding from the Ordnance Survey GeoVation challenge to develop a Mobile App which will be launched in August 2014.
- 2) Funding The Medal Routes funding runs out in October this year – SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage), Paths for All and RHCT (Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust) have supported the project since October 2011. SNH has indicated they would be interested in supporting funding for a further 2 years from November 14. **sportscotland** has confirmed a further year for the Group Development Officer post up to March 2015.
- 3) Jeannie Cranfield (Games Legacy Advisor) is currently funded by Ramblers through to September and we hope to receive £25K from PfA (Paths for All) for her post in the next financial year. However, there is still uncertainty as to whether PfA will support us as they are currently awaiting a decision from the Scottish Government on their budget for April 14 to March 15.
- 4) SCEC noted the Ramblers Chair document (App 4A) dated April 13. This was produced last year and outlined what was required for RS and RC (Ramblers Cymru) reports to the Board of Trustees. The following comments were made by SCEC:
  - a. They would be interested to know the Board's thoughts on the overall performance of SCEC and RS.
  - b. Our membership is on the increase and it would be helpful if Areas' performance could be highlighted. For example, red, amber and green could be used to show the state of an Area with green showing it was healthy and vibrant and red meaning the Area was in difficulty.
- 5) The problems with the Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute Area were noted, specifically the lack of committee members. SCEC member Jim Lawson and the Director Scotland will be attending the special general meeting on Saturday, 10 May.

The Director also added that virtually all the land which supported Caledonian Forest on the south side of Loch an Eilein on the Rothiemurchus estate near Aviemore has been sold to Forestry Commission Scotland. SCEC noted that this was one of the most famous parts of the northern Cairngorms, in the heart of the national park, and yet complete secrecy had surrounded this land transfer.

### **38/14 ROADSHARE CAMPAIGN REPORT**

SCEC noted this report produced by Helen Todd, Campaigns and Policy Manager. The report outlined the Roadshare Campaign which aims to change civil law in Scotland so that vulnerable road users are better protected. This would introduce a system of presumed liability in accidents with motorised drivers presumed liable for accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians and cyclists presumed liable for accidents involving pedestrians. Similar arrangements are in place in most other European countries. SCEC noted that other NGO interests (eg Sustrans and Living Streets) were not supportive as they were not convinced that such a change would make a significant difference. Nevertheless SCEC agreed to support the Roadshare campaign, accepting that such presumed liability appeared to help pedestrians and cyclists in places like Copenhagen where motorists appeared to be far more respectful of other users than in Scottish cities

**AP2** –HT to inform Roadshare that we support their campaign

### **39/14 SCOTTISH COUNCIL**

#### **1) Action on Motions**

- a. **Motion 1** No action is required. This is a re-affirmation of policies which are already in place and is part of the core work of RS.

- b. **Motion 2** No action is required. The work requested in this motion is already being carried out by RS. Alistair Cant thanked RGB for producing the finance paper for Scottish Council over the last 2 years.

**2) Evaluation**

SCEC agreed that the procedure for the Agenda Committee (AC) order paper could be improved and suggested that the order paper comes just before the motions on the Agenda. SCEC discussed the question of AC members declaring an interest. Alistair Cant agreed to consult Barry Pottle (AC Convener) about any constitutional change next year. SCEC noted that workshops proved popular this year and we should therefore ensure that workshops are part of the Agenda for 2015.

**3) Venue and Date for Scottish Council 2015**

SCEC agreed that the date for next year's Council should be 6/7 March (Fri-Sat) with same format as last year and asked Kareen Robertson to look at venues in Dundee and Stirling.

**AP3** – KR to change format of SC Agenda so that the order paper comes before motions

**AP4** – AC to consult Barry Pottle about any constitutional change next year.

**AP5** – RS staff to ensure that workshops are part of the Agenda for SC 2015.

**AP6** – KR to look at venues for SC in either Dundee or Stirling.

**40/14 GENERAL COUNCIL**

SCEC noted that David Thomson, Jim Lawson, John Andrews, Liz Lawie, Alison Mitchell and Vic Royce and the Director Scotland had all attended General Council. John Andrews said that the age level of people attending had gone down considerably and David Thomson commented that over 40% of the attendees were attending for the first time. There were no motions directly related to Scotland.

**41/14 RAMBLERS SCOTLAND VISION**

1) SCEC noted App 11 produced by Jim Lawson. SCEC agreed that a survey should be distributed to members to obtain views of individual members. This would be done via the September edition of the RS quarterly newsletter distributed with *Walk* magazine. Jim also said he was going to discuss this issue with Benedict and SCEC suggested that this should be done sooner rather than later.

2) Committee Minutes

SCEC discussed Jim's suggestion that Group minutes and annual reports should be copied to the Area Secretary and that Area minutes and annual reports be made available to SCEC members. There were opposing views by SCEC as to whether Group minutes should be made available or not but the general consensus was it was an onerous task for Area secretaries to keep track of Group minutes and there was no real benefit.

**AP7**– JL to discuss RS vision with BS and also collate information for the survey to obtain views from individual members in Scotland.

**42/14 DEVOLUTION COMMITTEE**

1) SCEC noted that David Thomson and Alistair Cant had taken part in the devolution committee meeting via teleconference. The SCEC noted that the Devolution Committee had recommended that the 3-year financial element of the original devolution agreement for Ramblers Scotland and Ramblers Cymru, which is due to expire this October, should run for another year.

- 2) SCEC also noted that a review of the services provided by Ramblers GB to RS will be starting this year. A similar review had been carried out in Wales last year.
- 3) It was noted that the result of the independence referendum this September will be an issue for discussion at the October Devolution Committee meeting.
- 4) David Thomson said that he understood that the Director Scotland will be integrated into SMT (Senior Management Team) as part of the revised management structure.
- 5) Benedict Southworth complimented RS on their funding achievements over the last few years. His advice to SCEC is to look at governance, the vision and how to improve Council. This is being actively discussed in Wales and at the GB level. Benedict said that we need to find some way of connecting SCEC into these discussions and giving an update on what has been happening so far.

**AP8-** SCEC to look at governance, the vision and how to improve Council

#### **43/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

SCEC noted the following:

- 1) Meikleour Estate. The Director Scotland, Helen Todd (Campaigns & Policy Manager) and SCEC member John Andrews have been making plans for the walk demonstration protest on 22 June. Its focus will be on the problem of 'private estate' signs which remain in place despite access authority requirements that they should be removed.
- 2) Level Crossings. The Convenor of the National Access Forum recently had a meeting with the Office of Rail Regulation to discuss level crossings, but there is still no indication of whether the Scottish Law Commission's report will be taken further.
- 3) Need for guidance material on access matters. There was no time to discuss this issue due to the governance review meeting. This should be placed on the Agenda for the SCEC September meeting.

**AP9** – KR to place 'need for guidance material on access matters' on the Sep SCEC Agenda.

#### **44/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next SCEC meeting will be held on Tuesday, 2 September 2014.

The meeting closed at 1814 hours.

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

David Thomson  
Ramblers Scotland Convener

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