

SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minute of meeting held on Monday 11 September 2017, 17.00 – 18.30
by telephone and video link (GoTo)

84/17 ATTENDANCE

SCEC

Alison Mitchell – convener
Andy Malby - vice convener
Elly Macdonald

Trevor Jones
Catherine Watt

Staff

Brendan Paddy, interim director for Scotland
Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive
Helen Todd, campaigns & policy manager

85/17 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Alison Mitchell, convener, welcomed everyone to the teleconference. Apologies were received from Des Garrahan, Ben Dolphin, Douglas Tullis, John Andrews, Alistair Cant, Elizabeth Lawie and Catriona Webster.

86/17 DRAFT RAMBLERS SCOTLAND BUSINESS PLAN 2017-18 (APP1 & 2)

The discussion of the draft Ramblers Scotland business plan was the only item on the agenda for this special SCEC meeting.

General comments

Brendan Paddy introduced the business plan paper, explaining that the main purposes of the meeting were to ensure that SCEC were comfortable with the business plan and to ensure the business plan reflected the direction already agreed by SCEC. It was important that SCEC understood what was being proposed, that they were in broad agreement with the paper and that they had an opportunity for any clarifications, changes or suggestions to be made, albeit that any major changes may have budget implications which would also need to be considered if the plan was to be amended accordingly.

SCEC agreed that they understood what was being proposed and why.

SCEC confirmed that they agreed with the strategic priorities set out in the plan and understood that the activities sat under each strategic heading but some were cross-cutting.

SCEC confirmed that they were in broad agreement with the business plan, but there was one suggestion that the links to national objectives to increase levels of walking and health walk programmes were not made strongly enough. Brendan agreed to ensure this aspect was strengthened, beyond the existing mention of the National Walking Strategy action plan.

Specific comments – page 1, Connecting people through Ramblers Scotland

The following points were made:

- There was a query regarding the proposed range of programmes for training, and how this related to the GB roadshow programme. Brendan explained that the roadshow programme had been a pilot for 2016-17 and SMT were currently discussing the future strategy with regard to national member events.
- It was felt that there should be training for members beyond walk leaders, helping to raise awareness of our charitable objectives to all members. Members should be more aware also of the broader opportunities for getting involved and how to get started.
- Scottish Council offered training opportunities but this should be seen as a different approach to roadshows, focussing more on the needs of groups.
- It was noted that the pilot Facebook network groups had been one example of encouraging members to engage with our mission more broadly but they needed to be reviewed in light of experience.
- The Young Ramblers needed to be better connected, although this was more likely to be a GB comms project.
- There was support for the increased use of office interns and volunteers
- There was support for the work with areas on providing training across the area's groups.
- It was pointed out that roadshows need to be located beyond the Central Belt to make sure that those geographically remote members feel included.
- Brendan reported that Simon Barnett of Ramblers GB had pointed out the need to reference the GB approach to volunteering in the document, and also to ensure that we were creating the right volunteer opportunities to deliver the RS strategy.

Specific comments – page 2, A Scotland designed for walking

The following points were made:

- Most groups/members are unaware of core paths and their importance within the path network, so there's an opportunity to have engagement activities to help audit core paths in each area. Helen Todd noted that the action to produce a strategic approach to paths work within the business plan would include core paths within its remit, as well as the wider path network and how this all sits with access rights.
- There was a query over the research on the economic value of outdoor recreation which Brendan explained would likely be desk-based research to highlight the importance of walking, etc, in terms of its monetary value and contribution to the economy, to try to make the case for more/continued investment.
- In terms of path maintenance it was pointed out that other organisations already do this so we should be careful of duplicating efforts. Brendan recognised this issue but said it was most likely we would be working directly in partnership with local authorities which would help to give us a more positive basis for engaging with them.
- The proposed parliamentary/local authority events will include the Out There parliamentary launch (now provisionally to be held on 10 January 2018), but also another event which may be carried out in partnership with other recreation bodies through SORA (Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance).
- In answer to a query about the European Ramblers Association (ERA) Brendan and Alison explained how the experience of researching a bid for the EuroRando 2021 event had led to a good relationship with Event Scotland

which we were keen to develop and this may include the possibility of hosting an event such as the ERA AGM in Scotland in future. It was felt that a stronger relationship with the ERA would help to develop our involvement in tourism activities in Scotland but at the same time Van is going to attend the next ERA meeting with a view to exploring joint work in future, such as hosting the AGM or supporting partner festivals. In addition it was important to share reflections on the EuroRando 2021 bid process with Ramblers GB and also ERA, and consider how best to make use of the information we had gathered together.

- With regard to existing walking festivals it was noted that work is ongoing within GB on a long term events strategy. It may be found to be most effective to support other events which are already happening rather than to produce our own event. At the moment, we don't gather information on the extent to which our members are already involved in the organisation of local walking festivals. Groups could also be encouraged to get involved if they aren't already, perhaps by having a stand.
- Other suggestions for promoting walking included inviting other local groups to join Ramblers walks or encouraging our groups to hold "invite a friend" walks to increase membership.

Specific comments – page 3, Helping everyone find their feet

The following points were made:

- Brendan explained that he was waiting for sign off from GB on an extension of Medal Routes to complete the project but it was unlikely that long term sustainable funding would be found. This would leave a gap in terms of what work on health Ramblers Scotland is able to offer, but it is a different environment here with the existence of Paths for All. While GB is considering the next steps for Walking for Health, we don't have a similar situation of existing health walk groups and staff experience of running them.
- We need to promote our message/key selling points better so that people know why they should join the Ramblers.
- More groups should be encouraged to use GWEM as that simplifies their own promotion, but it would be better if the system linked to Ramblers Routes so that groups can store their routes. Competitors to Ramblers Routes were also mentioned, but Brendan felt that there was an action to discover what our members and other walkers wanted in terms of a routes database and this should be done at a GB level.
- There was a discussion about the future of the Gathering and how it may be linked to a Ramblers walking festival in future. Currently the Gathering isn't aimed at non-members but its format needs to be updated and SCEC could learn from the national young walkers event held in Edinburgh this year. It was noted that there are a lot of good local walking festivals already in Scotland so we need to do an audit to look for opportunities to collaborate and ensure any events we hold avoid any clashes. SCEC needs to decide on the Gathering's future but there could be an incremental change across a number of years towards a more outward-facing event. There was a reminder that any event should be as inclusive as possible. Van remarked that an iterative process between the current offer of the Gathering to a future updated event was a good approach but we need to be clear what our events are for, why we'd be collaborating with others, and whether the membership team should be involved at any event if it is for non-members.

Specific comments – page 4, Leading from the front

The following comments were made:

- Brendan outlined that this section was about the way SCEC and the staff operate.
- It was suggested that KPIs would be helpful to monitor how well we're performing and particularly for activities listed on this page. Brendan agreed that he would be discussing KPIs with Jess and Alison in due course.
- As well as the networks listed, other organisations such as SYHA and John Muir Trust should be included. It was noted that mapping the NGOs which members of SCEC already have an involvement with would help make links and was an important element of giving SCEC members a sense of momentum and of being more involved in the organisation.
- Succession planning should be for groups as well as areas.

Final comments were made as follows:

- Brendan outlined comments made in his absence by John Andrews, with regard to volunteer roles and the importance of access and paths.
- Van thanked SCEC for letting her sit in on the meeting and said she felt this was a good plan but it was important that SCEC felt a sense of ownership and monitored the implementation of the plan.
- The Ramblers GB plan will be presented to the board of trustees at their next meeting and would include KPIs to measure progress against the charitable objectives. It was felt that where possible Ramblers Scotland's KPIs should align as much as they could with Ramblers GB. Brendan said he would circulate the draft Ramblers GB plan to SCEC for their information.

AP1 – Brendan to amend draft business plan to take account of the comments received from SCEC, and to forward the Ramblers GB business plan to members.

87/17 Conclusions

Alison thanked SCEC for taking part in the meeting and it was agreed that the teleconference system had worked well.

18.26 close of meeting.

End of minute.

SIGNED: AM Mitchell

DATE: 13 Nov 2017

Alison Mitchell

Ramblers Scotland Convener