

Scottish council 2018 minute
RAMBLERS SCOTLAND SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2018
MINUTE OF THE THIRTY FIRST ANNUAL MEETING
Held on Saturday - Sunday 10/11 March 2018
at the DoubleTree by Hilton Aberdeen Treetops Hotel

Saturday 10th March

- 1.1 Anne MacDonald, Aberdeen Ramblers led a morning walk from the hotel at 9am before registration.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Alison Mitchell, Scottish council convener, welcomed everyone. She then gave a background on famous local personalities and the history of Aberdeen Ramblers. She thanked Jeannie Cranfield and all Ramblers staff for organising the council meeting.
- 2.2 Elly Macdonald, from Aberdeen Young Walkers, spoke about the group and her experience of Scottish Council and on SCEC, including a television appearance on a recent programme about access rights.
- 2.3 Alison welcomed Van Griffiths (Ramblers GB chief executive), Des Garrahan (Chair of Ramblers GB), Kate Ashbrook (Vice Chair of Ramblers GB) and Chris Hodgson (Chair of Welsh Council Executive Committee), as well as the Ramblers GB staff. She said that buddies were available for those attending for the first time. Volunteer buddies, Anne MacDonald and Roger Smith stood to identify themselves.
- 2.4 There was a caption competition where delegates could enter ideas for captions on one of a number of photos over the weekend, the winner being announced on Sunday. The hashtag for the weekend was #RamblersSC18.
- 2.5 There were 128 delegates attending which is an increase of over 20% from the previous year. Representatives came from 7 areas, 38 groups, and a number of local exhibitors.

3. Working as *One Team*

- 3.1 Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive of Ramblers GB (RGB), thanked everyone for the warm welcome she had received and added that she had enjoyed the morning's walk. She spoke about her reflections on 2017 and her priorities for 2018, thanking everyone for all they do for encouraging people to get out walking and protecting the environment in order to do so. She noted the importance of the organisation adapting to technological, political, and economical changes and challenges, in order to remain relevant. She praised the work of volunteers and how much they give, and highlighted the need to pass our collective wisdom and experience on to younger generations.

4. ANNUAL REPORT (YEAR IN PICTURES)

- 4.1 Jess Dolan thanked Vanessa Griffiths and Alison Mitchell. She spoke about the annual report in pictures. The slideshow demonstrated Ramblers Scotland's activities and achievements over the last year.

5. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- 5.1 Jess Dolan gave her update on the Ramblers Scotland's 2016-2017 year while she was on maternity leave. She praised the work of interim director for Scotland, Brendan Paddy, and thanked the Ramblers Scotland staff and SCEC for their hard work and commitment.
- 5.2 Jess spoke about the Ramblers Scotland 10-year strategic vision and the achievements of 2016-17 as shown in the year in pictures. Key projects over the year have been Medal Routes, Walk Leadership project, Out There campaign. She then gave an update on events since September 2017, such as the 15th anniversary of the Land Reform Act and the well-received Parliamentary reception in January.

6. QUESTIONS AND ADOPTION OF ANNUAL REPORT

- 6.1 Alison Mitchell thanked Jess for her report and asked Scottish council to adopt the Annual Report and ask questions. One question was whether RS has any contacts with cycling organisations, and Jess replied that RS is part of the Active Travel Alliance which includes cycling.
- 6.2 The Annual Report was accepted by the Council and therefore was formally adopted.

7. The role of SCEC and achievements

- 7.1 Alistair Cant, Honorary Treasurer of SCEC, gave a presentation on the role of SCEC within Ramblers Scotland, how they work with RS staff, RGB staff, WCEC and BoT. He explained the structure of SCEC and the Agenda Committee, and encouraged delegates to apply to be elected to SCEC if they felt they could add to it.

8. Formal business

- 8.1 Alison Mitchell read out the apologies received from all Honorary Vice Presidents and from Catriona Webster (SCEC).
- 8.2 Alison intimated the obituaries of key members and volunteers who had sadly died in the last year: Alan Bridges (Vice Convener of Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside (FVFT) Area), Vic Royce (SCEC, Lochaber & Lorn group), Ishbel Cowie (Dundee Ramblers), Gordon Wallace (Paisley Ramblers), Bill Forsyth (Scottish Officer from 1985 – 1989), and RGB honorary solicitor Jerry Pearlman.

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS TO SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE AND AGENDA COMMITTEE

- 9.1 Aileen Philips, Stonehaven Ramblers, was identified as the Returning officer and nominations forms should be handed into her by 3.45pm that afternoon. If there were seven or fewer nominations for SCEC and/or three or fewer nominations for the Agenda Committee received there would be no election, but if there were more there would be an election on Sunday morning.

10. APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS

- 10.1 Dawn Tuckwood, Inverurie Ramblers, and Sue Galloway, Stonehaven Ramblers, were appointed as tellers and scrutineers. They identified themselves to Scottish council and will count the votes over the weekend.

11. APPROVAL OF SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2017 MINUTE

- 11.1 Scottish council accepted and approved the minute. This was proposed by Michael Doherty, Paisley Group, and seconded by Liz Lawie, SCEC. There were no matters arising from the minute.

12. STATEMENT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS

- 12.1 The honorary treasurer, Alistair Cant, gave details of the income and expenditure audited accounts (04), the Ramblers Gathering Accounts (05), and of Ramblers Scotland finances (06). Alistair highlighted that in comparison to previous years there has been a significant drop in income and spending as the Scottish council expenditure is now included in the Scottish Office accounts.
- 12.2 Alistair expects future years' financial reports to look similar to 2016/17 accounts, and noted that the money in the now little-used campaign fund had been spent. The campaign fund had originally been set up to help support various historical campaigns, especially the introduction and support of the 2003 Land Reform Act. It had not been used recently but could be resurrected if required. It was suggested that Ramblers Scotland and SCEC's income and expenditure could be presented in a graph/chart format for Scottish Council 2019.
- 12.3 The adoption of accounts was accepted by the Council and was therefore formally approved.

13. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

- 13.1 The appointment of Paul Kenny as the independent examiner for Scottish council accounts was agreed. The appointment of David Fenlon for the independent examiner for the Scottish Gathering accounts was agreed. Scottish council accepted both appointments.

14. REPORT AND ACTION TAKEN ON 2017 MOTIONS

- 14.1 Alison presented the paper outlining the actions that were taken on motions passed at Scottish Council 2017. There were no questions on the report.

15. FORMAL ELECTION OF PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS, AND HONORARY OFFICERS

- 15.1 It was agreed that Ben Dolphin would continue to stand as President.

There was only one nomination for convener and vice convener and therefore the following honorary positions were announced:

Position	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
CONVENER	Alison Mitchell	Jane Catto	David Fenlon
VICE CONVENER	Andy Malby	Alison Mitchell	Alistair Cant
TREASURER	Alistair Cant	Andy Malby	Douglas Tullis

VICE PRESIDENT	Denis Canavan	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	John Foster	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	David Grosz	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	John Holms	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Cameron McNeish	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Dr Rennie McOwan	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Malcolm Payne	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby
VICE PRESIDENT	Dr Andrew Murray	Alison Mitchell	Andy Malby

BREAK

During the break nomination forms for Scottish council executive committee and agenda committee were collected by the returning officer.

16. GROUP SUCCESSES – DIVERSE, INSPIRING INITIATIVES!

- 16.1 There were seven presentations from the three winners of the Scottish Council 2017 Challenge, who each received £300 to use for a project that fitted with Ramblers Scotland's mission, and four group successes.
- 16.2 Harlaw Bridge – Stan Cartmell (Balerno Ramblers)
Stan spoke about how the area around Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs which is a popular for walking, and focused on the unsafe bridge over the burn between the reservoirs. Balerno Ramblers supplemented the £300 from the SC Challenge 2017 with donations from the Friends of the Pentlands and the rangers. By the end of February 2018 the bridge had been widened and hand rails added on both sides to make it much safer. Stan commented on the value of demonstrating within the local community how a project will benefit all.
- 16.3 Mountains in Mind – Amelia Calvert (Edinburgh Young Walkers)
The project was a photography exhibition which raised awareness of the benefits of walking for mental health and wellbeing. The money from SC Challenge 2017 was supplemented with extra from Baillie Gifford, the Princes Exchange Foundation, and Scotmid. There were 130 photos from 47 different photographers, mainly from EYW, and over 300 people attended the event. 70 prints were sold on the night and 20 were sold later. There were speakers, a raffle and a bake-sale. The project raised £2,000 which will be used towards prizes for Scottish Council Challenge 2018.
- 16.4 The Magnificent Eleven – Gary Linstead (Glasgow Ramblers)
Gary is a Glasgow City Council countryside ranger. Glasgow Ramblers teamed up with Glasgow Countryside Rangers and worked towards creating a circular 11 mile route around Glasgow City, linking several key paths and green spaces. This route had been maintained by Gary since 2004. In 2011 Glasgow Ramblers, who recognised the potential of the route, teamed with other local Ramblers groups to maintain the path. The money from SC Challenge 2017 allowed the Glasgow

Ramblers to partner with various community groups (Friends of the Parks) for volunteer work, as they were able to purchase tools and equipment.

16.5 Developing a long distance trail – Jay Wilson (Inverness Ramblers)

Jay spoke about recent work that has gone on with the John O’Groats Trail, when follows the coastline between Inverness and John O’Groats. Jay is keen that the trail should be added to the map of UK long-distance paths as there are currently none north of Inverness. He spoke about working with local farmers, and receiving funding for improving the quality of fences. The charity is getting more publicity now, and there will be a guidebook and map published in the near future. Jay spoke about setting up some ‘walk-and-work’ weekends over the summer where Ramblers members can volunteer to maintain (and walk on!) the new trail.

16.6 Resolving a local access issue – Linda Moyes (Dunfermline & West Fife)

Core Paths had already existed in the area but they hadn’t previously been promoted, maintained or signposted well, which made it difficult for people to know where they can walk. Volunteers worked with Valleyfield Woodland Trust, Fife Access, Fife City Council, and ScotWays to get a good number of paths mowed, cleared of foliage and overhanging branches, and levelled to make them safer and more accessible, and maintaining gates and benches.

16.7 Making the most of Facebook – Wendy Chisholm (Cumbernauld & Kilsyth)

Wendy spoke about using Facebook, to raise the public profile and promote the group, and to communicate events, walks and updates/cancellations. They have found that the Facebook group has helped to increase membership, especially attracting younger walkers, and there are now more walk leaders too since the launch in November 2015. The Facebook messenger function is used a lot and has helped in sharing information with potential new members. Wendy gave some advice about sharing the workload of maintaining a Facebook group between a few committee members.

16.8 Benefits of being linked to your local community sport hub – David Lyle (Badenoch & Strathspey Ramblers)

David spoke to his prepared handout which was included in the delegate packs.

17. **SPEED WORKSHOPS**

17.1 Alison Mitchell said that based on feedback from Scottish Council 2017, speed workshops would be happening again, with a mix of information-sharing and of information-gathering workshops. Delegates were to attend two workshops each lasting 25 minutes, or one workshop lasting 55 minutes.

17.2 The following 25-minute workshops were held:

- What support Groups would like from Areas (Jocelyn Payne, areas & governance administrator)
- Walk Leadership surgery (Katy Robinson, walk leader project officer)
- Organising a festival activity (Brendan Paddy, consultant, Ramblers GB)
- Area and Group walk programmes – paper versus digital (Catherine Watt, SCEC)
- Problem solving (Tanya Kynaston, disputes & complaints officer)
- Preparing for the new General Data Protection Regulation (Paul Strong, head of ICT and web services)
- Data & Digital Transformation Programme (Laura Scarlett, data transformation director)

- Increasing volunteer participation – what works (Amelia Calvert, Edinburgh Young Walkers)
- Walking is great until it hurts! (Dr Mike Morris, Blairgowrie Ramblers)

The following 55-minute workshops were held:

- Social Media, what's it all about? (Danny Carden, communications and engagement officer)
- Walking in Scotland – Protecting our right to roam (Helen Todd, campaigns and policy manager)

18. EVENING DINNER AND DICK BALHARRY MEMORIAL TALK

- 18.1 Delegates attended the dinner followed by a talk from Ben Dolphin, Ramblers Scotland President who was introduced by Jess Dolan.
- 18.2 There was a multi-round quiz composed by Elly Macdonald and Alison Mitchell.

Sunday 11th March

19. CONVENER'S WALK AND TALK

Alison Mitchell led a short circular walk from the hotel at 7.30am before breakfast.

20. WELCOME

- 20.1 Alison Mitchell welcomed everyone back to the conference and thanked Elly Macdonald for organising and running the evening's quiz.

21. APPROVAL OF ORDER PAPER

- 21.1 Convener of the agenda committee, Barry Pottle, explained that the agenda committee is responsible for considering the competence of motions submitted to Scottish council and any amendments to such motions that are submitted timeously.
- 21.2 There were amendments to Motions 1 and 4 and these had been formally accepted by the proposers, and FVFT Area had amended their own motion (Motion 2).
- 21.3 Alison thanked Barry for presenting the order paper and opened the floor up for debate. The order paper was duly accepted.

22. MOTIONS

22.1 Motion 1 – submitted by Bearsden & Milngavie Group

- 22.1.1 Alison Mitchell called on the North Strathclyde Area Chairman, Jim Lawson to propose the motion on behalf of the group. The motion stated:

As in general mobile phones are much improved, we ask Council to accept a motion to mount a campaign to improve the coverage of mobile devices to ensure the safety of walkers.

Jim spoke about the Health and Safety implications of being able to contact quickly help in an emergency.

- 22.1.2 The motion was seconded by Liz Lawie. Alistair Cant formally proposed his amendment to the word 'coverage'.
- 22.1.3 Douglas Tullis spoke on behalf of SCEC to oppose the motion. Approving the motion would necessitate the building of further telephone masts which may necessitate further access tracks being made, and that the Scottish Government devolution agreement reserves powers over telecommunications to Westminster and so this motion might be better proposed to General Council for consideration by Ramblers GB. It was noted that it was that it was too late to submit to GC 2018 but that it could potentially be submitted to GC 2019.
- 22.1.4 Alistair Cant added that supporting the motion might appear to reduce the relevance of navigational skills that Ramblers teach.
- 22.1.5 Barry Pottle proposed that the motion be remitted to SCEC; this was seconded by Liz Hunt.

Vote - There was a clear majority who voted in favour of remittance to SCEC.

22.2 **Motion 2 – submitted by Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside Area**

- 22.2.1 Alison Mitchell called on the proposer Trevor Abell to present the motion. Alison noted that SCEC are in support of the motion due to its relevance to both safety and conservation. The motion stated:

Scottish Council asks its Executive Committee to give careful consideration to the way in which funding for the repair and replacement of bridges on public paths in Scotland should be provided.

- 22.2.2 Trevor stated that responses to a 2016 survey showed that in general Local Access Officers had only a vague knowledge of the state of bridges on public paths, and that many bridges were completely destroyed. He mentioned that in England and Wales bridges are the responsibility of local councils but this is not always the case in Scotland.
- 22.2.3 Stan Cartmel, Balerno Group spoke about his experience of bridges and mentioned that the local council said there was no money for it and it wasn't their responsibility, and therefore he was in support of the motion.

Vote –The motion was passed unanimously.

22.3 **Motion 3 – submitted by Glasgow Group**

- 22.3.1 Alison Mitchell called on the proposer Steve Cartwright to present the motion. The motion stated:

This Scottish Council wishes to record its appreciation of the excellent work done by Brendan Paddy as Interim Director of Ramblers Scotland.

- 22.3.2 The motion was seconded by Catherine Watt. There were no questions, comments or oppositions.

22.3.3 Brendan thanked Scottish Council, and said he was happy to still be involved with Ramblers as a consultant on walking festivals and as part of family walks in Edinburgh.

22.4 **Motion 4 – Submitted by North Strathclyde Area**

22.4.1 Jim Lawson proposed the motion, which stated:

This Scottish Council advises all Ramblers members of the possibility of the sale of 44 acres at the southern end of Loch Lomond to a private developer, and asks that they help prevent this by signing a petition to the Scottish Parliament, being organised by change.org

Jim added that the area of mature woodland could potentially be turned into a Flamingo Land amusement park and would be a privatisation of an important green space. Petitions against it so far have gained 32,000 signatures.

22.4.2 The motion was seconded by Michael Docherty Paisley Group. Alistair Cant formally proposed the amended wording. SCEC are prepared to support the motion.

22.4.3 Liz Lawie stressed that selling off part of the national park to private investors defy the point of having national parks, and if this sale went through it could be a precursor to more sales of national park lands to private developers. Mike Morris Blairgowrie Group noted the discrepancy that the Loch Lomond and Trossachs national park had introduced bylaws to reduce camping, but the building of a theme park on the land may be approved.

22.4.4 Douglas Tullis urged members to apply to the Scottish government to see if legally binding missives had been passed yet; he can advise on the best way to proceed if they have.

Vote – The motion was unanimously accepted and passed.

22.5 **Motion 5 – submitted by Grampian Area**

22.5.1 Alison declared an interest as she is chair of Grampian Area.

Claire James proposed the motion, which read:

This Council is concerned by the scale of the proposed Glendye windfarm development on Aberdeenshire which will have a negative impact on the landscape around Clachnaben, an area which is much loved by walkers in the Grampian Area. It is hoped that local members will consider objecting to the planning application when it is submitted to the local council for approval, and will call on SCEC to provide guidance for members and groups on how best to respond to large scale developments such as windfarms, powerlines or hilltracks, which will adversely affect the walking environment, so they can more easily engage in the local planning process.

Claire stressed quite how large the planned wind turbines would be, that they would alter the environment which currently provides many birds with homes, and that further hilltracks would be put in for installation purposes.

22.5.2 The motion was seconded by David Fenlon, Aberdeen Group. Douglas Tullis clarified that SCEC were neutral on this specific instance, but supported the motion in terms of issuing guidance for members to engage with planning applications.

22.5.3 Eric Pickering said that as Ramblers Scotland already gives advice on access and planning issues through Helen Todd, the motion seemed redundant. Mike Morris voiced the issue of a national body such as Ramblers Scotland getting involved in local issues. If the area is a designated SSSI then Ramblers Scotland can and should declare an interest and help.

22.5.4 Liz Lawie stated her support for the motion in terms of asking for support from fellow members. She added that opposing windfarms that are put in the wrong place is not the same as being anti-windfarm in general.

Vote –There were 12 abstentions, no opposing votes, and all other delegates voted in favour of the motion. The motion was passed.

22.6 Alison thanked everyone who took part in the debate and proposed motions. Alistair added that there will be Scottish guidelines created this year to help people for submitting motions to SC19.

23. CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

23.1 Jess Dolan chaired a conversation with Grant Moir, Chief Executive of the Cairngorms National Park Authority. Grant presented a show of photographs of the Cairngorms while he gave a short talk on the park, his role, and his vision for the future of the Cairngorms National Park; he then answered questions.

24. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCOTTISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AGENDA COMMITTEE

24.1 Seven nominations had been received for Scottish council executive committee for the seven places available, therefore no election was necessary. Those elected were: Trevor Jones, Elizabeth Lawie, Douglas Tullis, Catherine Watt, Elly Macdonald, Linda Moyes and Ronnie Forbes. They all stood to make themselves known to Scottish Council. Alistair Cant thanked all of those who had put their names forward.

24.2 Alison thanked the two people stepping down from SCEC, John Andrews and Catriona Webster, for their work and presented them with a gift as a token of appreciation. Andy Malby accepted on behalf of Catriona.

24.3 There was also no election necessary for the agenda committee as three nominations had been received for the three places available. Those elected were James Bennett, Liz Hunt and Barry Pottle.

25. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WALK LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

25.1 Katy Robinson gave an update on the second year of the Walk Leadership Project and what is planned for the future, and then answered questions from the Council.

25.2 Katy explained that Areas will hold the budgets for training but members may be required to make a contribution to the costs. She also mentioned the possibility of a future access fund being available to keep training affordable, and added that the hope was that enthusiasm for the training courses would be passed around Scotland

by word of mouth, and that she didn't foresee ever being able to make training compulsory.

26. OUT THERE CAMPAIGN

- 26.1 Helen Todd, policy and campaigns manager, and Danny Carden, communications and engagement officer, spoke about the Out There Campaign. There were questions about linking in with other campaigns to raise awareness; Danny added that this is already happening and it is good for Ramblers to get publicity as a campaigning-for rather than campaigning-against organisation.
- 26.2 Eric Pickering, Clydesdale to Solway Area, asked about how progress is going with getting Core Paths onto maps; Helen explained that RS is working on this as part of a larger National Access Forum to make more people aware that the paths are there and should be mapped and maintained. Jim Lawson commented on his experience with map complaints and Ordnance Survey, and Danny added that it is straightforward to report mapping issues to Ordnance Survey on their website.

27. DATA TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

- 27.1 Laura Scarlett gave a short update on the work of the newly-formed Data Transformation Team and Project and answered questions.

28. SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2018 CHALLENGE

- 28.1 Jess Dolan presented the Scottish council 2018 challenge. Ramblers Scotland is inviting groups to pitch an idea or initiative that supports RS's vision and objectives to a sub-committee of the Scottish council executive committee. There will be up to four awards of £500 available for groups to implement their idea and applications are due in by 1 June 2018. The winning group(s) will be invited to Scottish Council 2019 to speak.

29. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 29.1 Alison Mitchell thanked Alistair Cant for over 25 years of service to SCEC and Ramblers Scotland, and Ben Dolphin presented him with a certificate.
- 29.2 Danny Carden presented prizes to the winners of the caption competition.

30. CLOSING REMARKS

- 30.1 Alison Mitchell reminded delegates that completed evaluation forms and travel expense forms should be placed in the appropriate boxes at the registration desk.
- 30.2 Alison thanked everyone for attending the conference and for representing their group or area, as well as the staff and Board members. Special thanks were given to Jeannie Cranfield for her hard work on the event as well as local volunteers.

End of minute

Jocelyn Payne, area and governance administrator, 30 March 2018