

**WELSH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 2014**  
Minutes of WCEC meeting held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February  
@ Ramblers Cymru offices, Cardiff

	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1/14	<b>Members</b> - Gwyn Lewis (Chair), Alan Austin (Vice Chair), Chris Hodgson (Vice Chair), John Cook (Hon Treasurer), Max Grant (Hon Secretary), Diane Davies, Vernon Davies, Kay Davies, Ron Williams, Asta Smith <b>Staff</b> – Angela Charlton (Director Wales),	
2/14	<b>Apologies</b> – Alex Marshall, Jonathan Kipling, Benedict Southworth	
3/14	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest	
4/14	<b>Announcements</b> Expressions of regret were given on the recent death of Colin Yarwood, who for many years was Honorary Treasurer of WCEC and did much work in North Wales Area and Ynys Mon Group. It was also noted that Morgan Parry had died in his mid fifties, who was a Chair of CCW and did much useful environmental protection work in Wales.	
5/14	<b>Minutes of WCEC meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b> – Were agreed and will go on the website.	MG
6/14	<b>Matters arising from all previous minutes were listed on the action sheet.</b> <b>191/13 Review of Affiliated Clubs</b> – it was reported that a paper had been presented by Benedict Southworth, and discussed at the recent BoT meeting on affiliated clubs. This had focused on affiliated walking clubs. Many questions had been asked such as why do we have affiliates, what do affiliates want from the Ramblers, how should affiliates be developed etc? It was agreed that the pilot review as agreed at the last WCEC meeting should be carried out in North Wales Area.	MG
7/14	<b>192/13 Glastir scheme</b> – it was reported that a meeting of the Glastir access stakeholders group is being organised. It was noted that in the recent consultation paper on the Glastir scheme, the only reference to access issues was the statistics of how many farms had included permissive paths and bridleways in their agreements. It was agreed that our disappointment on this should be included in our response.	AC  AC
8/14	<b>194/13 Motions for Welsh Council 2014</b> A shorter draft guidance on motions from Groups and Areas, based on those used at General Council, has been prepared and will be circulated to WCEC. As this is too late to issue for this year's WC, it was agreed that it could be sent to Groups and Areas who send in motions, if appropriate.	MG  MG
9/14	<b>196/13 – Future proposals for Lets Walk Cymru</b> – It had been announced that Ramblers Cymru have been successful in their bid for a three year contract totalling £900k, split between funds from the Ministry of Health (£200k/year), and the Ministry of Culture and Sport (£100k/year). Thanks and congratulations were given to Mel and Angela for all their hard work and expertise in winning this long awaited contract.	

- It was believed that taking Ruth Hussey who is the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, out on a Ramblers Cymru walk had assisted in the decision, and it was requested that more decision makers should be invited on our walks. All
- 10/14 **198/13 Membership –**  
Reported problem with delay in the banking of cheques from members renewing, had been raised with the Chief Executive, and confirmation received that members' cheques are banked weekly.  
A contract with external providers in London is proving successful in encouraging recent leavers to rejoin Ramblers, so that overall membership is levelling out. GL reported on a recent useful meeting with Iain Johnson, Membership Services & CRM Manager, on membership retention procedures. Though Groups are not required to contact lapsed members, they are encouraged to "approach" lapsed members who had been/are active (on walks; at social events) within a Group. All
- 11/14 **203/13 2013-14 budgets –** thanks were given to Glamorgan Group Treasurer for the reduction in their bid for monies.
- 12/14 **210/13 & 211/13 Policy papers on Ramblers website –** these are on the website but are not easy to find. Comments were also made on other difficulties with using the Welsh part of the website when it transfers to the Ramblers GB section. Asta agreed to carry out a small review of the use of our website, in particular in locating papers for Welsh Council, Ramblers Cymru policy papers, & information on local groups, and follow up with a request to Central Office to improve matters. AS
- 13/14 **212/13 Policy Paper on Agri-environment Schemes –** a second draft had been circulated for comment and was agreed. This would be placed on our website. MG
- 14/14 **Directors Report –** a report had been circulated, and the main points were discussed
- 15/14 **Staff changes –** Ceri Thomas had left in January. She was thanked for all her work with us since 2011. Her role is being reviewed as part of an overall review of the structure of the Ramblers Cymru staff team. This review is being assisted by a consultant Steve Evison who is with us for 3 months for 2 days per week. Steve is also looking at the vision process for Wales, and assisting Justin Cooke (who continues with us for one day per week) in the Valley project to assist in our case for open access in the forthcoming green paper (see below).  
The new Walking Policy Advocate post has been agreed with interviews due in late February. This post is mainly to assist with the new green paper on access and recreation.
- 16/14 **CADW partnership –** a reciprocal membership offer has been agreed which will tie in with the Big Welsh Walk in May
- 17/14 **National Trust GB –** Elly Popp was congratulated on her appointment as a trustee to NTGB. This will not affect her work on developing walking hub packs for NT properties throughout England and Wales.
- 18/14 **Membership -** It was noted with pleasure that our membership numbers are slowly rising. It was agreed that monthly membership figures would be circulated to WCEC members. One reason is the telemarketing being carried out in Central Office to persuade leavers to rejoin, which is proving successful. AC
- 19/14 **Access & Outdoor Recreation Bill –** A recent meeting with John Watkins was useful, but noted the publication of the green paper would be delayed until March, with allotments maybe featuring in a separate Bill.  
It was agreed that we should publish our paper on the Llynfi valley as soon as AC

possible to promote our desire for the Scottish model of open access, and protection of the PRoW network.

It was noted that BMC had started a campaign to promote the Scottish model of open access in January.

Research is being commissioned into ways that Ramblers Cymru could manage potential path or access contracts if this appears in the Bill. AC

- 20/14 **Pedometer challenge** – all were encouraged to participate and publicise this initiative, in which participants are encouraged to engage in the Big Welsh Walk.
- 21/14 **General Council** – Will Renwick (Ramblers Cymru Youth Champion) will be delivering a fringe workshop on young people and family engagement at GC. Members and Areas were encouraged to attend GC as delegates.
- 22/14 **Accounts 2013-14 WCEC & WC** – the budget monitoring report up to January 2014 was circulated and discussed.
- 23/14 **Areas & Groups** – a summary of agreed budgets for 2013-14 and current bank balances (@ 31.01.14) were circulated for discussion. An eye was being kept on reserves. Thanks were given to JC for encouraging treasurers to manage their reserves.
- 24/14 **Cardiff office** – the latest statement from Central Office, and the updated figures used at Cardiff office had been circulated. There were no exceptions to report.
- 25/14 **Legal Fund** - There had been no expenditure or expenditure committed from the Legal Fund this year. It was reported that there may be some requests emanating from possible s116 notices in North Wales.
- 26/14 **Report from Board of Trustees** – it was reported that at last week's meeting the following was discussed –  
There had been a successful cleansing of data on the CRM which was cleaner than expected.  
Google and OS are producing new systems in the next few weeks which will dramatically affect Ramblers. It has been agreed therefore to look at apps which can use this new IT, for things such as path problem reporting and using for walking routes. We need to respond fast to these new developments.  
There is a possibility of using the available unused space at the Cardiff office by staff from London.  
A new volunteer approach is to be launched at GC. Richard Trueman, a trustee from Tiger Bay Ramblers, has sat on the volunteer sounding board which has developed this approach.
- 27/14 **Welsh Council 2014**  
With the departure of Ceri, the administration of WC 2014 is being shared by GL and DD. All were encouraged to their Groups and Areas to book their delegates soon, as accommodation deadline is Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February.  
AA confirmed that the Mayor of Newtown has been invited to address the meeting. Nominations for officers and members were discussed. DD agreed to stand as Honorary Secretary as MG is not standing again. A nomination is required for Vice Chair as AA is not standing this year.  
Nominations for president and vice presidents would be similar to last year.
- 28/14 **Ramblers Cymru 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.**  
Before any more details were discussed for celebrations, it was agreed to check what the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday was of, as staff only started work in the 1980s. GL
- 29/14 **Footpath working group conference** – the date for the conference was

discussed, and agreed that 5 weeks notice for key attendees from NRW and partner Local Authorities was insufficient. We need to know who these key delegates and presenters are and when they can attend. There was overall support from WCEC that this was to be a key meeting which we can use to generate publicity.

- 30/14 **Publicity for practical footpath work** – a paper from John Stubbs (who organises the Silver Slashers on Anglesey) had been circulated and was discussed. There was general support from WCEC for the proposals which include – Signs to erect on the stiles, gates, bridges and other furniture our volunteers erect, “Road signs” to explain who, what and why are carrying out the path work, Logos on clothing to publicise Ramblers Cymru. It was agreed to invite John to do a presentation/ stand at Welsh Council to promote the idea. MG
- 31/14 **President’s membership challenge** – a paper had been circulated and was discussed. All agreed that this was a Good Idea and should be progressed with pilot schemes. KD and AS agreed to take this to their Groups, and DMcA would also be asked. GL  
The format of the welcome packs for non members needs to be agreed.
- 32/14 **One Voice Wales** – AC showed the meeting copies of the “Communities on Foot” folders in the Cardiff office which had not been circulated to Community Councils after the completion of the project when it finished early. It was agreed that this was worthwhile pursuing in order for us to raise the profile of PRoW and access to Community and Town Councils. AC
- 33/14 **Freedom of Information request** – it was reported that the FoI requests used by Ramblers England to obtain details of Local Authority spending cuts on PRoW, numbers of path obstructions etc had been used very successfully in the publication of the Paths in Crisis leaflet, and the corresponding campaign. Geoff Williams from Carmarthenshire had suggested that Ramblers Cymru could do something similar. Other influential persons had also suggested this course of action. It was agreed that this could be very useful as part of the next business plan starting this autumn, and this should be conveyed to Geoff. MG
- 34/14 **Circuit of Wales on Rassau Common** – VD distributed a OSS article on the plans to develop common land at Rassau on the heads of the valley. After discussion it was agreed that the local Area Gwent should be contacted to ascertain their proposed actions. MG
- 35/14 AA drew attention to a letter he had received from Dr Madeleine Gray on the proposal to develop a **Cistercian Way in Wales**. The concept was generally supported and it was agreed that AA would reply to her, suggesting that she should contact AC to establish how RC might offer assistance. AA
- 36/14 **Dates and venues for future meetings**  
Saturday 13.04.14 Newtown - before WC  
Sunday 14.04.14 Newtown – after WC

Signed: Gwyn Lewis (Chairman)

10<sup>th</sup> May 2014 (date)