

Minutes of the 28th Annual Meeting of Welsh Council

9th & 10th April 2016

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter, Ceredigion



wrth galon cerdded
at the heart of walking

Mae Cymdeithas y Cerddwyr yn elusen cofrestredig, (rhib Cymru a Lloegr: 1093577, rhib yr Alban SC039799) ac yn gwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant, wedi ei gofrestru yng Nghymru a Lloegr (rhib cofrestru'r cwmni 4458492). Swyddfa Cofrestredig Cymdeithas y Cerddwyr: Ail lawr, Tŷ Camelford, 87-90 Glannau Albert, Llundain, SE1 7TW. **Croesawn ohebiaeth trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.**

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ATTENDANCE LIST

President	Denis McAteer
Welsh Council Executive Committee	
Alan Norton (Chair)	Gwyn Lewis (Vice Chair)
John Cook (Treasurer)	Max Grant
Chris Hodgson (Vice Chair)	George Allingham
Diane Davies (Secretary)	Maggie Thomas
Ramblers Scotland	Alison, Scottish Convener
Board of Trustees Representatives	Kate Ashbrook Des Garrahan
Area and Group Representatives	
Guests	Gill Lee
Staff	Benedict Southworth (Chief Executive) Angela Charlton (Director Ramblers Cymru) Christine Grant (Director of Services) Mel Jones (Ramblers Cymru) Rebecca Brough (Ramblers Cymru) Elly Hannigan Popp (Ramblers Cymru) Kate McCabe (Ramblers Cymru) Victoria Matthews (Ramblers Cymru)

1. WELCOMES

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all, and explained housekeeping arrangements. Delegates were urged to complete nomination forms for the elections to WCEC by the deadline of 11.30am.
- 1.2 The Ceredigion Area Chair, Chris Hodgson, welcomed members and guests to Lampeter and Ceredigion. He spoke of the excellent work Ramblers members do in the area leading walks and maintaining footpaths, and the positive benefits that walking has for people's health. He introduced Elin Jones.
- 1.3 Elin Jones, Plaid Cymru, Candidate for Ceredigion in the Assembly Elections, thanked Council for the invitation to speak. She reflected on how walking had become a more mainstream part of public policy over the 16 years she had been an Assembly Member, and that she expected this to continue. She recognised the economic and health benefits of walking, citing the Wales Coast Path and its impact on the area's tourism. Enhancing community walking opportunities and widening access to walking are areas where she believes Ramblers Cymru have a crucial leading role.

2 INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

2.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were given by Vernon Davies and Ron Williams.

2.2 APPOINTMENT of TELLERS & SCRUTINEERS

Tellers and scrutineers were appointed

2.3 MINUTES of WELSH COUNCIL 2015

The minutes of Welsh Council 2015 were proposed seconded and passed. There were no matters arising.

2.4. REPORTS FROM ALLIED BODIES

Reports were noted.

3. ANNUAL REPORT: WC CHAIR, ALAN NORTON

The Chair spoke of the significant amount of learning he had done over his first year, and the new people and staff he had met. He thanked the previous Chair and current Secretary for their guidance and advice, and to all the Executive Committee members for their support. Part of the learning has been identifying clearly what Welsh Council (WC) is responsible for, and producing three documents (circulated to areas in March) describing the roles and responsibilities of WC and WC Executive Committee (WCEC) and how they work.

Outlining some of the work of the Welsh Council Executive Committee over the previous 12 months, including work on the vision and strategic framework, the business plan and Motions from Welsh Council, he spoke of his practice of sending notes of key WCEC discussion points to Area Chairs and Secretaries for further dissemination. He highlighted the commitment to achieving equality in senior volunteer positions by 2020, and encouraged female members to put themselves forward for election.

4. REPORT FROM CAMBRIAN WAY WORKING GROUP: MAX GRANT

With reference to his report, Max Grant thanked Geoff Williams for his photographs of the Cambrian Way which were displayed and clarified that Alan Austin was also part of the working group, though not mentioned in the report. He referred to how the route has been divided amongst coordinators and they are liaising with groups and areas along the way regarding surveying.

In discussions, Geoff Williams drew attention to press coverage he had secured on the International Ramblers Network website. Alan Austin expressed appreciation for the fantastic job the working group has done in moving the Cambrian Way forward. Discussions then moved towards the merits of seeking National Trail status for the Wales Coast Path, and in time the Cambrian Way. The general feeling of Council delegates was that Ramblers should support the Wales Coast Path becoming a National Trail and this should be explored by WCEC.

5. **ANNUAL REPORT: DIRECTOR WALES, ANGELA CHARLTON**

The Director Wales introduced her annual report on Ramblers Cymru and invited each member of the Ramblers Cymru staff to speak about their highlight from the past year. These included securing Approved Activity Provider status with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards; launching the Ramblers Cymru manifesto with ministerial and cross-party support; the continued growth and success of Let's Walk Cymru. The Director stressed the importance of having the support and guidance of members and evidence of what members are achieving to help Ramblers influence decision makers. She cited the example of how the ex-Chief Medical Officer for Wales became engaged with Ramblers by working with staff and volunteers, and has now become President for North Wales Area upon her retirement from the civil service.

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT AND OTHER FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

- 6.1 The Honorary Treasurer John Cook spoke to the published accounts which had been circulated.
- 6.2 There are now reports on 4 areas of finances: Ramblers Cymru 'operational' & legal fund; WCEC; Areas and Groups.
- 6.3 Groups and areas are continuing to look at reducing reserves if possible and some progress has been made. Clarification was sought on the appropriate level of reserves, and Christine Grant explained that they monitored levels to ensure that monies are being used on charitable aims as set out in the Treasures guidance.
- 6.4 It was noted from the floor that legacies provide a significant proportion of income.
- 6.5 The legal fund allocation for Wales had not been used during the financial year, though it was noted that cases are underway in Wales but these will fall into next year's accounts.
- 6.6 There is an impetus to move away from cheques to direct payments into accounts: relevant bank details can be given on the finance forms.

Workshops

In addition to formal business, three workshops were held on:

- What is WCEC and what can we do for you?
- Working with Community Councils
- What will the National Assembly elections mean for Ramblers and walking, and how can you get involved?

7. **REVIEW OF MOTIONS FROM WELSH COUNCIL 2015**

7.1 Reforming the Area and Group structure

Work by WCEC reviewing Area and Group structures has highlighted positive features and possible improvements, resulting in a role description for Areas, which has been circulated to Areas and agreed. Further work is required, but it is note currently expected that there will be proposals to change the current Area and Group structure.

7.2 Dedicated staff in the northern half of Wales

While recent recruitment specified North Wales as the ideal location for the Area Support Officer, the successful candidate was from South Wales. WCEC could consider developing a business case for a defined post and then bid for central or external funding to support it.

7.3 Cropping on paths

Welsh Government is shortly expected to issue revised guidance on Rights of Way which will contain the requested section on cropping.

7.4 Public rights of way on agricultural maps

Ramblers Cymru is to write to Natural Resources Wales to reflect the Council's view that the current situation is unsatisfactory.

8. PRESENTATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE RAMBLERS GB

The Chief Executive highlighted the many challenges ahead, which should be viewed as opportunities, including: the huge interest in health and wellbeing; the increasing scientific evidence on the benefits of being outdoors and walking; the friendlier legal and political context in Wales, including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; local government cuts and reorganisation and our potential to help them deliver. He referred to the longer term ambition of world-class access and the need to speak the new government's language, or others will get their ahead of Ramblers. In relation to devolution within Ramblers, he stressed that WCEC has the opportunity to change how things are done in Wales, with guaranteed resources from GB. He urged members in Wales to 'look up and look out' to new people, and groups who need our help and support and with whom we can work in partnership while protecting the core of what we do.

WCEC made a small, fun presentation to the Chief Executive in recognition of his support and thanked him for his work for Wales during his time as Chief Executive.

9. DISCUSSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER MOTIONS

9.1 Constitutional motion on delegate selection

The motion, revising Article 3.4 of Ramblers Cymru's Constitution, was passed unanimously.

9.2 Ensuring that plans submitted with planning applications show public rights of way

Submitted by Powys area, Alun Austin thanks Alun Rugman for his work on this motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

10 VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- 10.1** The Chair WC presented the Vision and 8 Mission statements that have been agreed by WCEC on behalf of Welsh Council.
- 10.2** The Director Wales, explained the 3 priorities in the strategic framework and noted its focus on communities, which is a slight variation from the GB strategic framework. She urged members to share current activities and future ideas which will help Ramblers deliver on these priorities over the next 10 years.

11 ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT, DENIS McATEER

The President spoke of the freedom Welsh Council Executive Committee has via the devolution agreement to shape how we do things in Wales, and to choose to take a different position or structure for its business. He quoted Mark Twain "I'm all for progress, its change I don't like". His view was that Ramblers should be seen as leading walkers in Wales and members should take the opportunities to lead the way.

He expressed serious concerns at the lack of female representation on Welsh Council Executive Committee, and the prominence of other outdoors charities, such as BMC and Sustrans in initiatives which Ramblers are not a part of. He personally thanked the Chief Executive for his understanding, support and improvement of the staff structure which in turn supported members.

12 ADRESS BY KATE ASHBROOK, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kate thanked the Lampeter group for their work, especially in securing Walkers are Welcome status for Lampeter. She highlighted the key opportunity presented by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act within which Ramblers fits so well. The local influence on public service boards through this Act will be important for local volunteers. She encouraged people to get engaged with the forthcoming elections by attending local hustings.

13 ELECTION OF WELSH COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS

The following people were confirmed as officers for the coming year:-

President	Dennis McAteer
Vice Presidents	Jane Davidson Ron Williams Richard Lloyd Jones Huw Irranca Davies
Vice Chair	Chris Hodgson Gwyn Lewis

Honorary Treasurer John Cook

Honorary Secretary Diane Davies

14. ELECTION OF WCEC MEMBERS

14.1 The following people were elected :-

Max Grant
George Allingham
Simon Longman
Stan Winstanley
Steven Hughes

14.2 Representation on other bodies

It was agreed that the following individuals would represent Ramblers:

- National Access Forum: Director, Ramblers Cymru
- Mountain Training Board: David Allison
- BMC Cymru: Max Grant indicated his desire to step down from this role: Stan Winstanley will consider becoming the representative and this will be discussed at a forthcoming WCEC meeting.

With both the BMC Cymru and Mountain Training Board roles, Ramblers Cymru staff will offer support to the representatives as appropriate.

15. ELECTION OF AUDITOR

15.1 John Cook proposed that the current Auditor, David Arwyn Howells, be reappointed and confirmed that they had agreed to continue. Carried.

16. ADDRESS OF CHAIR AND CLOSE OF WELSH COUNCIL

16.1 Des Garrahan, Chair Ramblers GB addressed the meeting and conveyed his thanks for the invitation to attend, and to the Lampeter group for hosting. He expressed his support for the comments of the President regarding equality of representation and those of Kate Ashbrook regarding the importance of influencing government. He thanked the Chair, WCEC, the staff and all the volunteers who deliver our mission and whose passion makes Ramblers a thriving healthy organisation.

16.2 Alan Norton, Chair WC, closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming, and the volunteers, WCEC, Ramblers Cymru staff for their work. He encouraged delegates to complete the survey monkey feedback which would be circulated via email.

16.3 The next Welsh Council will be at the Stackpole Centre, Pembrokeshire on 8th & 9th April 2017.

Signed (Chair)

Dated