

WELSH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
JUNE 2011

Minutes of extra WCEC meeting held on Tuesday 21st June 2011
By TELECONFERENCE

		Actions
	PRESENT	
128/11	Members - Denis McAteer (Chair), Gwyn Lewis (vice Chair), John Cook (Treasurer), Max Grant (Hon Secretary), David Allison, Diane Davies, Vernon Davies, Invited - Alex Marshall (vice President),	
129/11	Apologies – Alan Austin (vice Chair), Chris Hodgson,	
130/11	The Chair welcomed all to the teleconference, and announced the agenda as – President of Ramblers Cymru Priorities for staff in Cardiff Office Welsh Council 2012 – duration Update on Devolution Working Party Richard Lloyd Jones	
131/11	Following the last WCEC meeting of 5 th May 2011 and the announcement that Jane Davidson had become the President of Ramblers Cymru , there had been numerous emails and phone conversations about the matter. In particular there had been a paper from the Aberystwyth Group entitled “The constitutional position on the co-option of a president by the Welsh Executive Council” which stated that WCEC actions had been unconstitutional and illegal. This paper and other correspondence had been sent to the Ramblers office in London, who had forwarded it to their legal advisers.	
132/11	The Chair read out the legal advice received by email from James Thorne of Farrer & Co (which had been circulated to all WCEC members except DA & VD), which was – (i) The constitution for Welsh Ramblers provides that the President is an Honorary Officer (paragraph 5.1.1) and that it is the business of the AGM of the Welsh Council to elect the Honorary Officers (para 6.12). (ii) The constitution sets out the process by which Honorary Officers such as President are to be nominated (paragraph 6.7). (iii) The Memorandum and Articles of the Ramblers Association itself makes clear, in Article 4.5, that each Constituent Part is to elect its own officers. (iv) Accordingly, I think the proper procedure which should be followed for the appointment of the President of the Welsh Ramblers is for the candidate to be nominated and put forward for election at the Welsh Council. (v) I see that the last Welsh Council was held in April 2011 and so I imagine that there is not a further one due until April next year. (vi) The constitution of the Welsh Ramblers also provides how to deal with vacancies which arise between each AGM. The Welsh Council Executive Committee is given the power to fill any places 'being vacant... through a member withdrawing from the Committee' (para 9.3). The reference to a member here is to a member of the WCEC which includes the President (para 9.2.1). So the WCEC should deal with the appointment of Jane Davidson the President until the next AGM if it has not already done so. (vii) I have not looked very carefully at the reasoning in the objections from the Aberystwyth Group but I do not think they are well-based in suggesting that paragraph 9.3	

does not apply to the appointment of the President; I think the Group is wrong in suggesting that the President is not a 'member' for these purposes because of ex officio nature of his membership.

- 133/11 All members of WCEC present were asked for their views on whether WCEC had been **constitutionally correct** in appointing Jane Davidson as President. All present agreed that WCEC had been correct, although it was agreed that the constitution should be reviewed in order to remove any ambiguity. The Chair noted that CH dissented and agreed with the Aberystwyth Group's view. AA's views following the advice from Farrer & Co was not available.
- 134/11 As objections to JD becoming President mainly revolved around her position as Minister regarding wind farms, the Chair explained the following – TAN 8 as a document was in place before JD became a Minister. All decisions on wind turbines over 50Mw and pylons are made Parliament in London. Decisions on wind turbines under 50Mw are made by planning authorities, with appeals going to the Minister, so it is inappropriate for the Minister to make comments on applications before then. JD has supported renewable energy in particular tidal energy. JD has never had any role in the wind industry. JD will strongly support arguments in favour of undergrounding power lines in the Welsh countryside. The Chair also gave his views on why he wished **JD to be President**, including such facts as understanding how devolution works, has excellent contacts, was instrumental in the promotion and financing of the Wales Coast Path, and the financing of RoWIPs in Wales, and being a keen walker which will assist in promoting walking in Wales. Her strong environmental credentials are recognised by both CPRW and RSPB (who have awarded her the golden curlew).
- 135/11 All members of **WCEC** present were asked for their **views** on whether they agreed that JD should continue to be President. All agreed except VD who reminded the meeting that he was unhappy with way that JD had not supported the extension of the Gower AONB to include Mynydd y Gwair.
- 136/11 The Chair's proposed to draft up the conclusions he has reached following this WCEC meeting, and would ask JD to give a statement on what she wants to bring to Ramblers Cymru. These would then be announced. All present agreed with this **way forward**, and that JD's position as President would be ratified at WC 2012.
- 137/11 **Priorities for staff in Cardiff** – the priorities had been minuted at the May WCEC meeting and were summarised by the Chair. Also raised was that we should look at working with CPRW on calling for a review of TAN 8. Other items discussed were who should be the Ramblers Cymru rep on WEL – it was agreed that it should be a staff member, but Beverley Penney was also on the committee.
- 138/11 **Welsh Council 2012** – all members were asked for their views on the format for next year. There was no consensus on whether it should be a half, full or two day event, although it was considered that cost was important and it should concentrate on business rather than other items such as walks. The Chair would circulate comparative costs for the different options.
- 139/11 **Devolution Working Party** – the Chair updated the meeting on the latest position which was that the Memorandum of Authority was agreed but finances were still to be agreed with officers. Both the MofA and finance agreement would go to the Board of Trustees in July.

- 140/11 Richard Lloyd Jones's retirement gift was discussed, either a painting or a poetry book. It was agreed to nominate Richard as a Vice President of Ramblers Cymru at WC 2012.
- 141/11 It was noted that Maggie Thomas had resigned from WCEC, and Helen Lloyd Jones had resigned from Ramblers Cymru.
- 142/11 **Dates of next meetings** – as agreed at WCEC meeting of 9th May 2011
Shrewsbury September 5th
Cardiff December 5th
Shrewsbury February 6th

Signed.....(Chairman).....(date)