

**WELSH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 2013**

**Minutes of WCEC meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013**  
**@ Gateway Centre, Shrewsbury**

		<b>Actions</b>
	<b>PRESENT</b>	
1/13	<b>Members</b> - Gwyn Lewis (Chair), Alan Austin (vice Chair), John Cook (Treasurer), Max Grant (Hon Secretary), Diane Davies, Vernon Davies, Chris Hodgson, Ron Williams part. <b>Staff</b> – Angela Charlton (Director Wales)	
2/13	<b>Apologies</b> – Alex Marshall, Maggie Thomas, Jonathan Kipling, Benedict Southworth,	
3/13	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.	
4/13	<b>Announcements</b> There were no announcements.	
5/13	<b>Minutes of WCEC meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b> – These were agreed following clarification of a few items.	
6/13	<b>Matters arising</b> <b>176/12 Legal Fund procedures</b> – The final draft had been circulated before the meeting, and the following comments were made – The initial form, procedure and appendices should be separate documents. The white space can be reduced in the electronic version. The contents of the document were agreed, and it will be available in the members section of the website.	AC
7/13	<b>178/12 Welsh Council 2013</b> – The draft minutes of Welsh Council had been circulated. There were no comments.	
8/13	<b>179/12 Constitutional changes</b> – A final version of the motion for Welsh Council 2013 had been circulated and was agreed. DD would propose and RW would formally second. DD was thanked for all the work involved in preparing this.	DD RW
9/13	<b>180/12 Cambrian Way celebrations</b> – RW had circulated the latest position on the proposals for a memorial wooden bench for Tony Drake on the Cambrian Way at the Tyn Cornel youth hostel, which have been agreed with the Elenydd Wilderness Hostels Trust. The cost will be born by funds from Central Office, so no fund raising is required. A working party from Aberystwyth Group can assist with preparing the site. CH reported that he has organised a walk on June 22 <sup>nd</sup> from Soar y Mynydd chapel so that all on the walk will be at the hostel for the ceremony at 2.00pm. Speakers and light refreshment will be arranged. Those wishing to stay overnight should contact RW.	CH AC RW

- 10/13 **181/12 Guidance document for WCEC members contacting staff –**  
It was confirmed that this will not be placed on the website
- 11/13 **191/12 Renewable energy review –** the revised draft of the “Ramblers Cymru policy on renewable energy development” had been circulated with the proposed motion for Welsh Council 2013.  
It was agreed that the new sentence in paragraph 7 commencing “Single turbine projects .....” was incompatible with the next sentence commencing “Small scale projects .....”. This would be taken back to the working group for consideration. AC
- 12/13 **Accounts 2012-13  
WCEC & WC**  
The budget monitoring report had been circulated and was accepted.
- 13/13 **Areas and Groups**  
A spreadsheet showing all Areas and Groups with their budgets (request for, or actual, funding) for 2011/12 and 2012/13 had been circulated. The spreadsheet also included 2011/12 final figures for income, payments, reserves, and reserves as a percentage of reserves over payments.  
Some of the higher reserves were discussed. It was agreed that these need to be discussed with the Area and Group Treasurers. If this cannot be achieved at WC 2013 then a separate meeting may need to be arranged. JC  
There will be a session on Area and Group finances at WC 2013. JC  
The report was accepted.
- 14/13 **Cardiff Office including staff**  
It was reported that these were on target – there were no exceptions to report.  
The agreed budget figures for 2012-13 are –  
Cardiff office £72k  
Staff £124k  
Areas, Groups, WC, WCEC £41k  
Legal Fund £25  
Total £237 plus legal fund  
The new Interim Ramblers Finance Director, Gary Davies, will be visiting staff at Cardiff Office to expand more on the finances under the devolution agreement.
- 15/13 **Legal Fund**  
Expenditures for 2011/12 and 2012/13 (so far) were reported as £2,100 and £2,606 which had been spent on the energy review. There had been no applications from Areas for use of the Legal Fund.
- 16/13 **Director Wales update –** had been circulated  
Highlights reported and discussed were –  
Staff – in addition to the 3 full time staff, there were currently two grant funded posts.  
**Mel Jones** is the Lets Walk Cymru Development Officer (funded until May 2013). We are still awaiting a response from Welsh Government on proposals on taking this project forward.  
**Elly Popp** is our Youth Engagement Officer (funded until October 2013) mainly engaged in Walking Hubs being developed for BIG Welsh Walk launch in May.  
**Membership** continues to decline. Total for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013 is 5,904, a decrease of 169 compared with year beginning 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012. AC noted that staff are having to cover a diverse area of work, and whilst this isn't currently an issue, future support from other sources will need to be considered. GL  
**SMT (Senior Management Team)** working was discussed, and it was agreed to raise this at both the Board of Trustees and CPC (Constituent Parts Committee) meetings. It was noted that the last two CPC meetings had been cancelled. GL MG

**Active Travel Bill** – we are liaising in partnership with Living Streets in particular with regard to concerns on shared paths.

17/13 **Affiliated Clubs –**

CH had circulated an email which had included details of all affiliated organisations in Wales. These were discussed and the following points were made.

Correct number of affiliates was queried. This varied from 40, to 33 on the circulated schedule, and 27 which Cardiff Office is aware.

Should we be trying to recruit members of affiliates to be Ramblers members, and if so how?

It was noted that there are 9 Community or Town Councils affiliated to Ramblers in Wales. It was suggested that it would be more beneficial to try to recruit more Councils to be affiliates, and that this feature in next year's business plan.

Most affiliated walking groups are purely for led walks, and do not cover the other Ramblers charitable objectives.

It was suggested that more work is needed to promote the work Ramblers do, and so encourage more membership. Is there an image problem that Ramblers led walks all have dozens of walkers, are of great distance and walk fast.

In order to address these issues it was agreed to set up a Working Group to propose how we should tackle the whole matter of affiliates. AC

18/13 **Glastir scheme**

MG gave an update on Ramblers involvement in the Glastir agri environment scheme.

A meeting had been held in February 2012 between Ramblers Cymru and Welsh Government officers from Glastir, at which it was agreed that Ramblers Cymru should set up a stakeholders group to advise on improvements to the parts of the scheme dealing with public access to the countryside, in particular on publicity and usefulness of access.

So AC organised a meeting of stakeholders on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Those attending were RC staff and volunteers, Glastir officers, OSS, BMC, CPRW, CCW, LAF chairs' Chair. Notes of the meeting are to be circulated. MG

Actions to come out of the meeting were -

LAF Chairs to be briefed on how best to produce or review their maps on advice of permissive access for farmers in the Glastir Advanced scheme.

Actions to improve maps and publicity for permissive access routes and areas.

Actions to improve information to farmers on PRow and open access on their land.

Look at better maps to show which farms are in Glastir Entry and Glastir Advanced schemes, so that the public know which PRow should be fully maintained.

19/13 **WCEC meeting locations**

CH had circulated proposals for holding meetings at different locations around Wales, rather than just Cardiff and Shrewsbury. This was primarily to try to encourage younger members of Ramblers Cymru to put themselves forward as WCEC members.

These were discussed but there was no consensus, although the idea of holding meetings in Wrexham rather than Shrewsbury was thought possible.

The idea of inviting members to WCEC meetings as observers was again mooted.

It was agreed to agenda this at a WCEC meeting after Welsh Council, for discussion with new WCEC members. MG

20/13 **Event evaluation report**

AC had circulated a report on an evaluation of events attended by staff and members during the last year.

The report was discussed and the conclusions agreed. Vale of Clwyd will be contacted to see if they are intending to take part in the Eisteddfod 2013. AC

- 21/13 **Welsh Council 2013**  
 The audited accounts had been circulated and will be presented at WC 2013  
 The number of applications from members to attend WC was low, and all were requested to encourage their local volunteers to attend.  
 No motions had been received from Areas so far. If there were no motions received this would allow a chance to add the Environment Bill to the agenda for a general discussion. Staff will discuss workshops at their next team meeting.  
 It was agreed that DD and AC would finalise the programme. DD AC
- 22/13 **Nominations at WC**  
 All present were requested to send in their nomination forms with the appropriate signatures if they wished to stand for election at WC 2013. The proforma would be circulated. All  
 Nominations for officers have to be in Cardiff Office by 23.02.13.  
 Vice chair – RW agreed to stand as second VC if there were no other nominees. RW  
 President – Jane Davidson had decided to stand down at WC, but will continue as a member and give advice as appropriate.  
 It was agreed that CH should approach Tori James to stand as a figurehead president. CH  
 It was agreed to ask Denis McAteer if he would stand as Vice President or President. MG
- 23/13 **Environment Bill 2014**  
 AC gave an overview of the priorities for Ramblers Cymru and the programme for the Bill. Our input to WG will be required by October 2013, with the Bill enacted during 2015. This will probably be the most important item on our agenda over the next year if we are to succeed in getting our requests into the Bill and the Act. More resource will be required for this, and it was agreed that this would be a good use of the Legal Fund. AC  
 A letter from Carl Sargeant (Minister for Local Government and Communities) to Edwina Hart dated 14.01.13 was tabled by VD. This includes the statement that a revised approach for amending rights of way classifications will not be included in the Active Travel Bill, but will be included within the Environment Bill. A discussion followed.  
 A request by Lee Waters of Sustrans has been made to meet WCEC. It was agreed to invite him to the beginning of the next full WCEC meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April in Cardiff. AC  
 AC reported that she has arranged a one and one half hours meeting with the new CEO of Natural Resource Wales, Emyr Roberts, this month, during which the Environment Bill will be discussed.
- 24/13 **Ramblers Cymru Policies**  
 A question regarding our current policies was raised at last year's WC. A list of all motions passed at General Council for the last 20 years or so has been collated by Kate Ashbrook. DD agreed to trawl through these and list out which ones are currently relevant to Wales. MG will send list to DD. DD  
 MG
- 25/13 **Proposed dates and venues for future meetings**  
 The schedule on the agenda was discussed and agreed, except that the April 2013 meeting would be Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> rather than Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> which many members could not attend.
- 26/13 **Natural Resources Wales**  
 It was reported and agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding should be negotiated with NRW to replace that which was signed with CCW. AC

27/13 **Membership retention**

A discussion was held on the possibilities of contacting members who do not renew their subscriptions, and how to find their details from the membership information sent to Area Membership secretaries every month.

28/13 **Dates and venues for future meetings**

Saturday	23.03.13	Cardiff pre Welsh Council
Sunday	24.03.12	Cardiff post Welsh Council
Monday	22.04.13	Cardiff
Monday	15.07.13	Shrewsbury
Saturday	14.09.13	Cardiff
Monday	25.11.13	Shrewsbury
Saturday	8.02.14	Cardiff

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