

**Minutes of Executive Committee of Northumbria Area Ramblers
held at Jesmond Methodist Church, Newcastle upon Tyne
on Monday 16 March 2015 at 7 pm**

Present:

Penny Ford (Chair) (Alnwick)	Pauline Hawdon (Mins. – Ncle CHA/HF)	Tony Royston (Derwentside)
Gill Atkinson (Treasurer)	Rob Hutchinson (S/land Walking Club)	Ian Tait (Northumberland Walking Group)
Richard Fletcher (Walks Sec. Durham)		Dave Turnbull, Media (Newcastle)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Alan Mitcham, Nuala Wright, Malcolm McVey, Mark Nugent, Bill Gallon and Gilbert Roberts.

2. **Minutes of the previous Executive Meeting** were approved.

3. **Matters arising:**

The Tyneside Group had agreed changes in their Constitution.

4. **Executive committee vacancies**

4.1 Secretary: Jon Davison had resigned since the last meeting.

4.2 Publicity Officer

4.3 Auditor

4.4 Alan Mitcham intended to stand down as Rights-of-Way Co-ordinator

5 **Rights-of-Way Co-ordinator report for March 2015 (Alan Mitcham)**

5.1 Morley Hill Farm footpath still not reopened. There were delays with Newcastle City Council diverting the path to avoid obstructions; concern about financial risks (landowner compensation). We are pressing for a timescale to complete.

5.2 Steve Germain and Alan Mitcham attended North Tyneside Council workshop with other relevant user groups. They were seeking views on the state of the ROWs in the LA area and recommendations for ongoing improvement.

5.3 Re-opening Lost Ways – one-day workshop in Birmingham on 20 June organised by Ramblers Central Office. 5 people from Northumbria Area booked in to attend.

5.4 Meeting held with all Tyne & Wear authorities and Durham CC to agree route and strategy for re-instating the Heritage Way. Bill Gallon and Alan looking at changes to the route in some areas. LAs are enthusiastic and fully co-operative.

5.5 Wind Farms: Some concerns but formal planning stage for the Air Farmers wind farm at Middleton Burn had not materialised. They may be waiting results of Belford Burn Wind Farm, which was rejected by Northumberland CC in October but may go to appeal.

6 **Financial Matters (Gill Atkinson)**

6.1 There were five signatories at present but 4 would be sufficient. £7,846 was in the bank and £4,250 was due from Central Office. Anticipated expenditure for programmes, website, training, the Heritage Way and publicity was not expected to exceed the existing bank balance, and Gill proposed we did not claim the additional funds from Central Office. Should they be required next year, then a claim could be submitted then. This was agreed.

6.2 Malcolm McVey was to look after the Maps Library (approximately 350 maps) and this had been approved by Tyneside Group. It was agreed for a trial period of 4 months that the Area would cover the postage costs for Malcolm to send out maps and the borrower would pay the return postage.

6.3 Any expenses should be sent to Gill as soon as possible.

6.4 Communications: When groups ordered items, would they advise Gill of the item and costs so that she would know beforehand whether or not invoices were correct.

6.5 Dave Turnbull said he would enquire at General Council what other groups spent their money on.

6.6 Out-of-pocket expenses for coach excursions should be included in coach costs. Expenses incurred for Area meetings, AGM, and Executive meetings could be claimed from the Area fund, but expenses for group activities should be claimed from group funds.

6.7 Three groups had not had their accounts audited: a) Short Circuits, b) Derwentside, and c) Berwick. Penny would contact Short Circuits and Berwick; Tony Royston would communicate with Derwentside.

6.8 To date donations had been made to The Open Spaces Society, Scot Ways, and Northumberland & Newcastle Society. Gill was concerned that funds given to The Ramblers were being donated to other groups and would investigate this.

6.9 It was confirmed that Advertisers in the Walks Programmes were also included on the Website, so readership would remain the same. Approx. 5 people advertised and were charged £40-£60.

6.10 It was agreed that at future AGMs, voting must be made for individuals rather than as a block.

7 Website

The Walk Northumbria website was running in parallel with the Ramblers National site. Central Office was encouraging groups to use the national site. The main difference was the walks programme. However, entering the location, linked with Northumbria groups and gave a full 6-months' programme. Using the national site would be free and it had many additional features.

It was suggested we organise an event to train and encourage those who are not confident to have their own web-pages. This would also give joint feedback to Central Office. Penny would co-ordinate a meeting with groups.

8 Training

Judith Taylor has organised Spring and Autumn training days and Tony Royston had put them on the website. Application forms were to be returned to Judith. Penny would contact Secretaries to let them know.

9. General Council (28 & 29 March 2015)

Ian Tait, Penny Ford, and Richard Fletcher would be attending General Council.

10. Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Next Meeting: Area Council meeting on Monday 13 April at 7 pm in Jesmond Methodist Church.