

**Minutes of Executive Committee of Northumbria Area Ramblers**  
**held at Jesmond Methodist Church, St George's Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2DL**  
**on Thursday 26 January 2017, at 7 pm**

**Present:**

Penny Ford (Chair & Alnwick)  
Pauline Hawdon (Mins. – Ncle CHA/HF)  
Nuala Wright, Access Officer  
Neil Allender, Rights-of-Way Secretary  
Tony Royston, Chair Derwentside

Richard Fletcher, Vice Chair  
Judith Taylor, Training  
Alison Emslie, Visitor  
Rob Hutchinson, Sunderland Walking Club

**Action**

1. **Apologies for absence:** Steve Edwards, Malcolm McVey.
2. **Minutes of the previous Executive Meeting** were approved.
3. **Matters arising:**
  - 3.1 **Lost Ways:** Neil Allender reported that a group, formed in Alnwick, hoped to get started soon.
  - 3.2 **Heritage Way:** Judith Taylor stated that Council Rights-of-Way Officers intended to do their own way-marking. Graphic artists were working on leaflets which included the RA logo, and as the target group was the general public an independent website with link to Ramblers site was being set-up. Alan Mitcham was working on maps but would need a licence to use OS maps. He would investigate whether the Central Office licence could be used.  
**Alan Mitcham**
  - 3.3 **Coast Path:** Nuala Wright reported that progress was being made on the section from Amble to the Scottish Border. "Drop in" sessions were being held on 15, 16 and 17 February at Berwick & Bamburgh, Bamburgh & Holy Island, and Alnmouth for people who may be affected by the route. The new section should not be encroached by Dunstan Steads quarrying as this was further inland. Alison would add this to the website.
  - 3.4 **Website:** Old website licence was valid until October but **any queries** would be re-directed from 31 January to the new website. **Those groups with** Independent websites should check with **HO as they may not comply with new regulations**. All groups had been emailed but some had not responded. The Northumbria website was up and running but groups may like training and guidance, **for their web editors, in the first instance**. An Area Meeting could be arranged in a venue with good Wi-fi where people could bring their own laptops for training. Much appreciation was expressed to Alison for all her work and help with the website.  
**Alison Emslie**
  - 3.5 **Walks booklet:** Appreciation was expressed to Tony Royston for the new Walks booklet. There had been changes to the format and any comments should be to Penny before the next publication in May.

**4 Executive Committee vacancies:**

- 4.1 Alison Emslie had been asked to join the Executive Committee as an independent – this would be required to be voted on at the AGM.  
**AGM**

**5 Financial Report – Steve Edwards**

Current balance - £2,342.56. All invoices received had been paid including the February-July Walks booklets, which thanks to Tony Royston was a better product at a better price (£545 v £740). Invoices totalling £180 had been issued for adverts in the two latest walks booklets. He expected to meet the 31 January deadline for despatch of signed Area and Group accounts. Budget Cap – Our appeal against the cap on our budget would be considered at Central Office on 14 February. Money had been committed for a Graphic Artist – allocated beforehand. £500 set aside for Lost Ways. Pressure would continue to be put on Central Office.

Judith asked whether money had been allocated for Training – Penny would email Steve after the meeting  
**PF**

**Expenses were discussed.** Any enquiry for an allocation should include a rough estimate for volunteer hours. Sunderland Group commented that they had kept records of hidden expenses for a year which varied from £750 to £3,500 per year. All groups had their own budgets and could claim for expenses.

**Because of difficulties in finding volunteer committees in some areas, Richard had raised the possibility of stipends to staff, but HO had replied that this would not be possible .People could raise such concerns in the current survey.**

6. **AGM: Saturday 4 February at Croxdale Community Centre.** Richard Fletcher said that Alison Mitchell, Trustee, based in Aberdeen, **would be a speaker, together with Andrew Best, from Natural England, who would talk about Coastal Access.** Durham Footpath man had been invited but was unable to attend. There would be a 4 mile walk around Croxdale before the meeting.

General Council was to be held at Southampton on 1 & 2 April and members would be asked at AGM if they would like to represent us.

## 7. Any Other Business

- 7.1. Data Protection: Anyone sending out leaflets or using email should protect other people's data by "blind" copying their details (b.c.c.) particularly when these were being sent out by a third party. This should be mentioned at the AGM. **AGM**
- 7.2. Malcolm McVey had asked whether his position as Membership Office was worthwhile. It was felt necessary to have someone who could monitor trends, why people are leaving etc. **and take part in the committee**
- 7.3. Ramblers Survey: Penny asked whether we should make an Area response or would people prefer an individual one. Most people seemed unaware that there was a Survey. Response required by 31 March.
- 7.4. **Paul Wright had written about Ruth Dodds and "Historic walking" which was a recent project about walks made during the First World War. Money would be available from his funding award to research these routes. Penny would circulate information when available. Penny**
- 7.5. **Hexham group would like to put Mavis Harris, who joined in 1988, forward for an Award and had asked for further information on her achievements. A name had been suggested, which will be forwarded.**
- 7.6. It was suggested that Cliff Ludman be put forward for a certificate. The procedure was on the National website.
- 7.7. The Alston-Haltwhistle railway had received money to improve facilities and extend to another station, and concern had been expressed to Nuala Wright whether a bridleway/footpath would be incorporated.
8. **Neil Allender— Hadrian's Wall diversion. Our objection had been sent to HO and we are waiting for the new CEO to sign off the letter. She had asked whether local businesses, Parish Council, LDWA or County Councils had expressed a view and this was not felt to be appropriate, as it was the Ramblers viewpoint that should be represented. He would write to Central Office. Neil**
9. Alnwick group members Lost Way project were investigating whether old railway lines could be used as footpaths. It was suggested a "co-operation rather than confrontation approach be made to the Duke of Northumberland as he had the power to close these if he wished.
10. **Heritage Way at Burradon: A disused railway was being used as an easier route, but this also belonged to the Duke of Northumberland.**
11. Penny had been Area Chair for 2 years and was happy to continue **for another year**, but would like to resign at the 2018 AGM.
12. **Robert Hutchinson's Group** had been approached by Radio 4 to ask members on a walk for their views on a variety of subjects.
13. Date of next meetings:
  - AGM – Saturday 4 February
  - Area Council - 6 April
  - Executive Council – 5 October; 26 October Area Council.