

Minutes of Executive Committee of Northumbria Area Ramblers
held at Jesmond Methodist Church, St George's Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2DL
on Monday 28 September 2015 at 7 pm

Present:

Penny Ford (Chair & Alnwick)	Pauline Hawdon (Mins. – Ncle CHA/HF)	Tony Royston (Derwentside)
Richard Fletcher (Walks Sec. Durham)	Alan Mitcham (RoW Co-ordinator)	Nuala Wright (Access)
Stephen Edwards (Ponteland)	Mark Nugent (Independent)	Bill Gallon (Gateshead & PWA)

Action

1 **Apologies for absence:** Gill Atkinson, Dave Turnbull, Ian Tait, Robert Hutchins (Sunderland), Gilbert Roberts (Countryside Officer), Judith Taylor (Training).

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

3 **Matters arising:**

3.1 Tyneside group had agreed a new Constitution amending the date of their AGM in order to precede the Area AGM

3.2 Stephen Edwards (Ponteland) had agreed to be Treasurer following the resignation of Gill Atkinson.

3.3 Area Secretary Position - vacant.

4 **Finance**

4.1 As there was two years' worth of reserves, it had been agreed to ask for money from Central Office for projects only when required. Money was required for publicity. Richard Fletcher would draft a small leaflet using Central Office template for the front and listing Northumbria groups and the national and Northumbria websites on the reverse. He would send a copy to Penny for discussion at the Area Meeting.

Richard Fletcher

5 **Reports**

5.1 Training (Judith Taylor) – courses covering aspects of Navigation, Leadership and First Aid in the field had been arranged in Blanchland to make them accessible to Durham based groups. Attendees agreed the courses had been invaluable, but take-up rate had been low. She raised the questions (a) whether members wanted training opportunities, (b) whether they had received course information, and (c) how to match dates with people's availability. There was interest as 14 names had been received from the Tyneside group but only one had been available on the date the trainer had agreed; some groups appeared not to have circulated information. It was suggested that groups should decide what training they want and when and contact Richard directly

5.2 Access (Nuala Wright) – Work continued with the England Coast Path - anticipated to be completed by 2020. Natural England was investigating coastal access along a 69 km stretch between South Bents (Sunderland/South Tyneside boundary) to Amble, Northumberland, assessing problems, opportunities and constraints, and identifying owners and occupiers of land affected. Nuala was meeting with Natural England in mid-October and hoped to prepare a report giving the preferred route with associated spreading room. If this was agreed, she would require volunteers to carry out some of this survey work. Information was available on Natural England's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast>. Groups who may wish to get involved are Gateshead, Newcastle, Morpeth and Alnwick

Three more coastal access reports had been approved in Kent, Norfolk, and Cumbria.

5.3 Alan Mitcham (Rights-of-Way Co-ordinator) –

5.3.1 He was resigning at the AGM and suggested Paul Hargreaves as a possible replacement. The position could be split into North and South if two volunteers could be found.

5.3.2 Lost Ways – Six people attended seminar in Lancashire to learn about the process of reclaiming Lost Ways. He was compiling a spreadsheet with 8 identified routes which could be reclaimed. He had contacted David Briggs in County and would explore Ordnance Survey maps and historical routes to argue a case for including these on maps. He would welcome anyone interested in suggesting other routes for inclusion or willing to help with research.

5.3.3 Morley Hill farm footpath diversion - land adjacent and east of the farm was to be developed by Banks Group for housing who would buy a strip of land at the side of the industrial site for a footpath. Newcastle City Council would then divert the original path.

5.3.4 Heritage Way – a small group would like to reinstate the Heritage Way and make possible changes. They planned to walk the whole route checking the original instructions, take photographs and gather evidence for writing up a revised route before taking it to the seven local authorities who were involved.

5.4 Countryside Officer (Gilbert Roberts) – He has resigned from this position.

6 Website (Tony Royston)

6.1 Website training for groups had proved useful. Penny had tried to send out information to all those unable to attend.

6.2 Tony had not worked on the website recently. Mark Nugent asked whether a calendar showing all walks for a specific date and area could be downloaded as an “App”. Tony thought this may be possible using the national website, but might be a lot of work for a small number of people. He would send a copy of the programme to Mark Nugent. It was agreed to retain the Northumbria website which had a link to the National site, and visa versa.

7 Pathwatch

Reports were being received from individuals. Penny had reported problems directly to her Parish Council for her local footpaths. There are copies of all reports sent from Ramblers Central Office which they had forwarded to local authorities. Although the Pathwatch form included space for a grid reference and basic particulars, it was more helpful to email directly to the Local Authority Footpath Officer giving full details of the problem.

8 Publication and distribution of Walk Northumbria

Due to lack of content “Walk Northumbria” had been discontinued. Information could be sent to members via emails or through the website but would need someone to be responsible for this.

9 Volunteer Day Seminar Richard Fletcher – had attended in Darlington. The morning session was led by Leah Nichols. The afternoon was broken into workshops (a) designing ramblers routes (b) paths and rights-of-ways (with detailed legal information), although some workshops had not run. An outline of each workshop was available on the website.

A seminar was planned for 16 September 2016 at the University of Durham.

Christine Hathway has been employed for one year to look at ways of linking groups with Central Office.

10 Financial Matters

The change-of-signatories mandate was read to the meeting. The resolution that the Unity Bank Mandate be changed to delete Gill Atkinson as a signatory and replace with Stephen Edwards was agreed unanimously. The four signatories were to be: Penny Ford, Malcolm McVey, Dave Turnbull, and Stephen Edwards.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 Pennine Way Association was to be disbanded on 31st December and discussions were taking place regarding transfer of funds to suitable organisations.

11.2 Mark Nugent mentioned Tyne Walks Facebook page as a way of promoting walks.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Area Council Meeting – Monday, 26th October 2015, at 7.00 pm in Jesmond Methodist Church, Newcastle upon Tyne

Annual General Meeting – Saturday 6 February 2016 in Gateshead

Date of next Executive Council Meeting – Monday 18th January 2016.