



South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire Area Ramblers

ACRoW Cttee and AREA COUNCIL

Held on February 15th 2021 Using Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/95571381528?pwd=L2tXd2lHc2hudkowcHNsaHBpWFo4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 955 7138 1528

Passcode: 093991

AC.15/02/2021/01: Present: Allan Pestell (Chair); Gavin Johns (Treasurer); Malcolm Dixon (Secretary); Les Seaman (Access); Cath MacKay (VP); David Gadd (Donc); Phil Ryder (Roth Metro); Judy Gathercole; John Adler (Sheffield); Phil Lee (DVR); Catherine Hillier (Sheff 20's); Jez Kenyon; Allen Hudson (Sheff 40's); Kate Frizzell and Johnathan Revell (DVR – from c19:50) and Diane Simcoe (Area Support Officer)

AC.15/02/2021/02: Apologies: Mike Pye (VP); Terry Howard (VP); Roly Smith (VP); Nicki Speakman (B&P); Christine Hewitt (SVIPWG); Christine Whittaker (Sheffield); Isobel McCormick (CNED).
(note: Central Office abbreviated throughout as CO)

AC.15/02/2021/03: ACROW Business

1) Minutes of the meeting of November 23rd 2020 had been distributed with the Agenda. True Record

2) Matters Arising - none

Lost Paths Project – no progress to report. Still waiting for information from Central Office.

3) Access Matters – Nothing to Report since Jan's AGM - LS

4) Countryside Matters – Nothing to Report - AP

5) Rights of Way Matters

01) LS reported:- There had been two recent presentations about Upper Don Valley Trail Trust, had been given funding and permission which would go towards creation of a 3 metre wide multi-user path between Langsett and the Sheffield City Centre via Stocksbridge, Deepcar & Owlerton, Penistone Road and connect to Five Wiers Walk at the Wicker. Hope to keep close to river route and to get most of the work done this year despite a number of physical problems. More information:- <https://upperdontrail.org.uk>

6) Any Other ACROW Business

01) BAWI – JK - Nothing to Report on Phase 2 at the moment, but hoped to progress (along with other groups) once allowed. List of suggestions in place – probably 20 stiles and gates still to be done.

02) Refurbishment of various GHB Ward Interpretation panels – GJ - CNED Group had examined them closely and decided against replacement. Found the panels were integrated with frames which made them difficult to refurbish. Would be too expensive to totally replace. Would concentrate on developing an audio trail and associated leaflets and keeping frames clean when they could.

03) SYNED River Walks Project – TH had emailed suggesting we produced a map showing all the waterways in South Yorkshire. Could possibly utilise the map used on the draft new Area Website. DG already had a collection of walk leaflets which could be scanned and uploaded to a section of the website. Could possibly have a sub-committee to look through and select the best. Roth Metro Group already had a database of walk routes which could be downloaded. Could do similar project on Area website.

Suggested that leaflets & other information be sent to Secretary for passing onto Webmaster JR.

04) DS reported that Alan Manning of Manchester & High Peak Ramblers Area interested in getting together with other Areas to formulate a Ramblers Response to the recently updated Peak District NP's Management Plan. Might be a chance to restart the Peak District Coordinating Committee including reps from all six Ramblers Areas within the Peak District and be able to give a unified response.

05) JK reported that Ramblers had a training webinar on March 8th on "Making A Case for Rights of Way". You needed to register. Was already fully booked with a waiting list. Jez felt we needed to make more of a case to our local Councillors & MPs to invest in and support Rights of Way work.

DS said it may be possible to run it again given the demand. She would take this up with Central Office (CO)

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AC.15/02/2021/04: AREA COUNCIL – Attendance & Apologies as before

01) Minutes of November 23rd 2020 AC had been distributed.

02) No Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere)

03) Accepted as a 'True Record'

AC.15/02/2021/05: Matters Arising from the 2021 Area AGM held on Saturday January 23rd 2021

01) Approval of Draft 2021 Area AGM Minutes

These had been sent out in draft form and Secretary had received a number of comments as a result.

A second draft incorporating them would be produced in time for the next meeting.

02) Election of two General Council Delegates & Observer – Saturday April 17th 2021

Would now be a Zoom meeting and observers wouldn't be allowed. However it was hoped it would allow for freer discussion and involvement by Delegates than 2020 AGM had.

November's AC had put forward three nominations – Allen Pestell, Jeremy Kenyon & Nicki Speakman.

Jeremy Kenyon moved by DG and seconded by GJ

Allen Pestell moved by JK and seconded by JG CARRIED

SYNED Area had also sent a Motion on Membership issues, which had been passed at the January Area AGM

AC.15/02/2021/06 Items referred back from AGM

01) To Financially Support the Appeal Against Loxley Valley Housing Development

CM declared an interest and would not vote or take part in discussion other than to provide information.

GJ outlined situation in that a developer had proposed building housing on a disused factory site in Loxley Valley. This had been turned down by Sheffield Council. The developers were appealing against that decision and a Public Enquiry was to be held. Friends of the Loxley Valley had joined with the CPRE to oppose that appeal and were now asking for donations towards their costs.

Ramblers had a FIN011 guidance document which seem to preclude us from supporting other organisations unless it was in line with our own charitable objectives.

AH objected that if we supported this appeal for funds we may be asked to support similar other campaigns. He also questioned the status of the Group asking for the donations.

FoLV couldn't open a bank account due to Covid restrictions and CPRE were maintaining a restricted fund on their behalf to collect the donations. They were equal partners in the legal appeal and represented many local people who objected to the development.

The development was in the Green Belt. There was a footpath element as well as a visual impact element which should concern us. There would be disruption whilst the development took place over a number of years. The application was only in outline. Proper assessments had not been provided by the developers. Everything was only on paper and fairly vague. It would all be in the future and further applications for planning permission would have to be made.

However a number of AC members objected to this use of AC funds. Item put to the vote.

"That the AC Financially Supports the Appeal Against Loxley Valley Housing Development"

moved: MD seconded: AP Those Against = 7 Those For = 5 (with two abstentions CM & JG. DS didn't vote KF and JR only arrived after this vote was taken) Motion LOST

02) To Financially Support the Peak District Access Fund

GJ introduced this item by saying that the Access Fund was ring-fenced to receive donations towards access improvements throughout the National Park. This includes new gates, new and improved paths/rights of way, signage and other infrastructure.

It is independent of the Peak District NP although they administer it. They can't take money out of the Fund or use it for any other purposes.

TH had stated in support of this application that when the CroW Act was passed in 2000 there were grants made to the National Parks to bring its measures about but these have stopped and this is why this Fund was set up for organisations and the public to make donations to improve access within the Park.

He was totally in favour of making this grant to the Fund as it would be used for the public good, although it wasn't going to a charity or a public authority.

TH was suggesting we donate £1,000. We had three sources we could use:-

- the Clarion Call Fund, a restricted account currently holding £4,800 derived from sales of the book and was intended to allow us to reprint the book if felt necessary.

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- the Ivy Cowan Fund currently held £17,000 which was a five year project to allow the Area and Groups to do good deeds in support of the Ramblers Charitable Objects (as per FIN011).
- and we had the Area's General Fund, currently £2,160, but this was not normally used for these purposes. JK proposed we send £1,000 to the Fund, which he said was generally used for items that weren't included in the Authority's statutory duties. Access land exists but there were no funds to do anything with it. The PDNP uses volunteers for most of its work and this would enable them to do the necessary improvement work. Very efficient use of the money spent on matters that mean a lot to us and that we'll see benefits from. He noted that PDNP had donated some of their volunteer time towards the stile improvement work in the Bradfield area.

The Fund was administered by the Local Access Forum although it used the PDNP's bank account. It was ring fenced for access work and we should seek assurance that this was still the case.

We could also ask that it be spent on specific actual work projects and equipment rather than it being open ended and that Ramblers plaques be placed on them to identify our donation and support.

GJ said we would have to get CO approval as we were spending more than £50 (see FIN011), as we had previously had problems when donating to the Great Ridge Project when we had donated the money first then informed CO. We would have to seek approval again, but he saw no reason why we shouldn't donate the money using the Ivy Cowan Fund as it was set up to support the Ramblers Charitable Objectives.

Motion put to the Vote :- CARRIED – ALL in favour, none against. GJ to arrange with CO & make payment. Noted that JK and others objects to FIN011 conditions. Local Groups and Areas should have more autonomy to use non-core funds that they had been given or had raised themselves as they wished without referral to CO. Suggested he takes this up when moving Area Motion at GC.

03) Election of a Vice Chairman and other Officer Positions not filled at the AGM

Area Vice Chairman: Jeremy Kenyon Moved: JG Seconded: AP CARRIED

Area Footpath Officer John Adler Moved: AP Seconded: JK CARRIED

(John is an Inspector for PNFS in Stocksbridge. As AFO he will Chair the ACROW Meetings, coordinate the Group Footpath Officers and coordinate Responses to Consultations to DMMOs and Planning Applications, so that we spoke with one voice to the various Councillors and Council Officers in the Area.

We also needed to be getting onto Councillors and MPs to support their Rights of Way Units more)

We still needed someone to help with Area Publicity and possibly help generate Social Media content on behalf of the Area. This might become easier once the new Website was up and running.

In the meantime it was hoped that Groups continued with this valuable work on behalf of themselves as well as Area.

04) Review of Arrangements & Attendance of the Area AFGM

Although the Area had 2,000+ members only 33 actually 'attended' the virtual AGM.

We knew many didn't like using Zoom but with it they wouldn't have had to travel to get there.

Noted that fewer had attended this year than in 2020. Hopefully a physical meeting would be possible in 2022, but would have to make sure there was adequate publicity to make sure all members knew it was happening and where, possibly using the websites, newsletters and Area Annual Report more.

Could never please everyone all the time. Just as not everyone would use Zoom, others were not happy to travel long distances. May have to look at a hybrid situation that combined the two.

Reported that other organisations had meetings with much better attendances now they were using Zoom. Need to improve our contact with Members, keeping them informed.

DS wondered if CO could provide more training, workshops and support for Area AGMs possibly throughout the year rather than just in the run up to AGMs.

But people coming to them would need email addresses and be happy using Zoom.

JK suggested that Walk magazine either published, or had an insert, a list of the dates of all AGMs, along with an article explaining what an Area is, and what it does, and how they can get involved in helping run and support it. DS replied they had tried this year but lots of AGMs hadn't been arranged by the time of the magazine's deadline for publication. Hopefully things would be clearer by next year.

Used to get this information in the Members Handbook and ideally should now be in the Walk magazine instead. Most information could be found on the Ramblers website. DS would take concerns back to CO.

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AC.15/02/2021/06: Officer's Reports

01) Chair Nothing to add to what was said at Area AGM

02) Secretary 1) Ramblers HQ (CO) has moved from Camelford House to the Third Floor at no 1 Clink Street, London SE1 9DG. CO had found most staff happy to work from home and had moved to what was a smaller office suite with lower costs. Would still provide a central hub and training/meeting areas.

2) There would be a rebranding and refreshing of the Ramblers Brand, Logo and Website later this year. Still waiting news and involvement in this.

3) Area Membership update – we were still losing membership overall. Still getting new members but others were leaving or not renewing. Net loss of 45 since December and nearly 2,000 nationally.

01 /10/2019	371	224	522	238	144	151	210	239	73	2172	102151
2020	SD01	SD02	SD03	SD04	SD05	SD07	Sheff20	Sheff40	n/a	SYNED	national
Sept	353	228	507	229	135	150	167	251	44	2064	98717
Oct	359	235	509	225	138	150	164	249	45	2074	99216
Nov	363	234	506	230	135	146	158	247	46	2065	99229
Dec	361	236	509	230	136	148	156	245	44	2065	99408
2021											
Jan	359	226	507	221	136	144	149	234	44	2020	97275
End Feb	355	225	506	218	135	141	144	231	42	1997	96708

03) Treasurer 1) Malcolm Dixon's name had been added to list of those officers who could authorise Area payments by cheque or, now more commonly, online (in place of David Gadd).

2) CO had cancelled our Q2 funding allowance as we had said it wasn't required due to our lack of activity.

3) General Account had £2,160 in it. With what was in Bradfield Ancient Ways Acc, Ivy Cowan Acc and Clarion Call Fund we had £34,229 in our bank account.

04) Website Working Party - A brief Report of initial meeting had been circulated (& Appendix 'A' below) The list was very aspirational of what we would like to see the website provide as a way of supporting our Groups and local members in the Area. Would need support and input from everyone on the Area Council. Would be using same system (Joomla) and templates as some 200 other Ramblers Groups, including Doncaster and Dearne Valley. Popular and easy to use and would have more support available, if needed. New webmaster, Johnathan Revell, reported that everything was now in place. He just needed more spare time to continue developing it. (Had a deadline of May 24th when current site would be closed down).

05) Publicity / Newsletter / other Social Media - nothing to report

AC.15/02/2021/07: Group Reports

01) Sheffield - were looking at possibility of organising a mini Walking Festival to herald the beginning of the end of lockdown with a week of walks in various places around the city on every day for the first week of 'Step 2' from April 12th - 18th. Still at the planning stage and awaiting dates and guidance from the Government and Ramblers. Still limited on where we could go, even for recces. (JG & MD)

02) Dearne Valley Ramblers – had hoped to celebrate their 25th Anniversary in March but that was on hold pending everything opening up again. Had hoped to do the Barnburgh Anniversary Walk. AP and CM asked to be invited whenever the Group did get chance to walk the route. (KF)

AC.15/02/2021/08:AOB :

01) AC/ACRoW/Area AGM - Dates and Venues for 2021 usually: February, June, September, November with the Area AGM to be held in January 2022. It was suggested that we provisionally go for Monday June

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14th. But Government announcements on "opening up" were expected in a week's time and it was quite possible we may be able to have a physical meeting in the Quaker Meeting House by then.
Agreed that a Zoom Area meeting would be scheduled but Secretary and Chair were given flexibility to make alternative arrangements for a physical/online or hybrid meeting on a different date if circumstances were changed and could allow for this.

This indeed became the case and a hybrid physical/online meeting had now been arranged for **Monday June 28th** at the Quaker Meeting House, St James Street, Sheffield. However, only **11** people can be there in person, the rest will have to join us on Zoom. As usual, the ACROW meeting would start at **6:30**, with the Area Council meeting following on from **c7:15pm**. Note: we will all have to finish and be out by 9pm.

02) Area AGM 2022 - It was agreed to hold this at the Crookes Social Club in Sheffield as this had been the intended 2021 venue and could accommodate upto 100 socially distanced people if still required to. It would be held on either Saturday January 22nd or 29th to fit with Area President, David Blunkett's arrangements. Later confirmed as **Saturday January 29th 2022** from 2pm at Crookes Social Club, Mulehouse Road, Sheffield S10 1RD. All members welcome. (Chesterfield would be asked to host the 2023 Area AGM)

03) Use of SYNED Zoom Pro Licence by constituent local Ramblers Groups. Secretary reported that after a few initial issues with it, a number of our local Groups (Dearne Valley, Rotherham Metro, Chesterfield and Sheffield) as well as SYNED Area were now using Zoom on a regular basis for Group and/or Committee or other meetings. So had proved worthwhile getting and probably worked out cheaper than renting rooms. Was available for all our Groups to use and meetings were diaried to avoid clashes. We had it until October.

04) Update on the proposal to reprint the "Sheffield Country Way" booklet.
Sec reported that TH was chasing someone in Sheffield Council to get a definite estimate for the reprint. A member of Sheffield 40's had suggested some revisions/amendments but these had been kept to a minimum to keep costs down. Booklet was virtually ready to go to the printers. Reported that demand for booklet had continued even in or because of lockdown.

05) Area Support Officer – Diane Simcoe (contact at "**diane.simcoe@ramblers.org.uk**")
DS thanked us for the invite and explained that she was the Northern Area Support Officer and was based in North Yorkshire, working from her home. There were similar Area Support Officers in the South. There to help if any Area was struggling to find officers and to promote Ramblers and their charitable aims. So where things were going well you wouldn't see much of her, unless specifically called upon. Were currently holding Cluster Meetings where volunteers could meet and work together across Area boundaries. Could share concerns but also share skills, experiences, ideas and good practice and thereby increase our voice and impact at consultations and other events. Two specialist clusters in particular had been formed. One was involved in Areas that had Mayoral elections in 2021 such as Manchester and High Peak and London and would try to increase our impact and influence during the campaigning. A second special interest group would be focusing on membership, area volunteers working with the CO Membership Team. There was still room & time for more people to get involved, didn't have to be Area Leaders although that was usually who got invited, but others could get involved if interested. If there was something that you felt could or should be shared with other areas you should come forward and get involved. These forums existed to help develop your ideas.
The online walk leadership training had now gone live and was available to anyone who was registered as a walk leader. Wanted more members to become walk leaders. There was a short film they could watch and then they could contact their Group Chair or Secretary to get registered.
There was still time for members to stand as a Ramblers Trustees for voting on at April's General Council. Details were on the website. Contact Diane at "**diane.simcoe@ramblers.org.uk**"

Meeting closed at 20:45 Everyone thanked for attending and contributing.

Area website: www.synedramblers.org.uk - our new Area Website address and is already LIVE - do try it)

National website: www.ramblers.org.uk

Area Secretary: Malcolm Dixon, 27 Longford Drive, Sheffield S17 4LN

secretary@sheffieldsramblers.org or **0784-253-0128**

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APPENDIX 'A'

Area Website Working Party - First Meeting Report to February 15th SYNED Area Council (v3.31/01)
Present: Johnathan Revell, Jeremy Kenyon, Christine Whittaker and Malcolm Dixon

Website should be the public face of the Area.

Supporting local Groups not duplicating their efforts

A "One Stop Shop" for all walkers - with links to as many other Groups and organisations.

Agreed the 'new' website would use Chris Vaughan's RamblersWeb website template.

JK would contact CV & start process of setting up new Joomla template including (free) hosting of the website.

Sheffield 40's currently looking after the "synedramblers.org.uk" domain name which would be transferred to the new website. (Assumed Ramblers (or SYNED) would take over paying for this and/or hosting).

Some discussion on themes and how rigid Ramblers' were.

Agreed that a number of people would have access to the site as well as the Webmaster.

Site would have multiple log-ins. JK, DG & MD initial suggestions. Training would be provided.

Would be "secure" (ie would be https) have an SSL certificate as part of deal, though didn't think there was much risk of our website getting hacked. Website would be backed up at least once a week.

Area Website – Home page – Map of Area covered - signposting visitor to 8 Local Ramblers groups and their websites. Also have links to affiliated and other walking Groups, and like minded organisations

A Front Door & Welcome to our Groups and to walking as relaxation – exploration – socialising – benefits. Promoting and pushing walking across our Area

Promoting walking to all – for people just getting into walking
for people wanting group walks of different lengths, times and days
for independent walkers
for dog walkers and other special interests and differing abilities

To be the Walkers' Voice

To make things easier to see/find and encourage them to become involved (whether members or not)

To be more open - less cliquy (or perception of that)

To promote what we do across the Area – eg: Did you know the Ramblers do this?

Local work – at either Group or Area level and promoting national campaigns

To tell people about the Ramblers Charitable Mission and Objectives

To tell people about what we've done and are doing – getting more publicity, more recognition
and hopefully recruiting more volunteers

To tell each other what we are doing and what we could do - more and better - together

Promoting ACROW and path maintenance work across the area

Encouraging more people to get involved – including non-members

Non skilled would get training – but might have other skills which could be utilised

Everyone could become a path warden – make sure all paths in the Area are checked at least once a year
(can also be combined with walks programme)

Promoting Lost Ways research in area. Campaigning against 2026 cut off

Responding to Planning Applications & DMMO Orders

One stop shop for walkers and walk leaders

Pull in walks from across the Area using GWEM via CV's widget

Pages of Resources and useful information for walk leaders

Useable routes – easy to upload & download – Ramblers Routes;

Links to LDWA & other websites & lists/Apps

Links to Slow Ways Initiative

Possibly an OS map and self guided route plotting ability

Car Parks Finder

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Public Transport – news & information - links & route planner

Newsfeed – RSS Feed – pull items from other sites and could be shared with other Groups

Promote events – Area Walks – Joint Walks - Walking Festivals

Different walks – shorter/longer walks – day walks/evening walks

Area Governance – Notice of Meetings (Area & Group)
Area Council & ACROW Minutes Archive
Constitution and Standing Orders
Who's Who in the Ramblers
Who's Who in the Area + job descriptions
General document library

How to Join the Ramblers & links to National website

Contacting & engaging with Members & Non-members

Using Facebook & Twitter (Possibly embed into site)

Promoting walking in the Area – walks to enjoy & Hidden Gems (keep adding/changing)

Groups to input descriptions/films of walks they have done & enjoyed

But also reporting path problems (links to RoW depts)

Set up generic emails & mail boxes for Area Officers

How to contact SYNED (email/phone)

Once CV has set up template & Domain established, JR does basic design using Joomla

Transferring stuff from old website as necessary

Others to write articles/send photos

Create & test a Draft Site

Try it out internally.

Modify it if necessary

Keep it simple and uncluttered. Mobile friendly.

More people to be involved and inputting stuff

Needs to be in place by May 24th (old site closed and links transferred to new site)

Embed 303 notices (?) signposting to new website

Need to establish the website and move it up Google rankings

Appendix 'B' - Postscript to AC & AGM Meetings Jim Conibear reported:-

I've just come across this report from Peak District NP which covers the question I asked at the AGM about what had happened with the Ramblers £10,000 donation to work on the Great Ridge path.

Work would be ongoing for 8 weeks from March to May 2021. The footpath would be closed for the duration of the restoration work, due to finish in May 2021. This closure would be in place to ensure that the public remained safe during the construction period. During this time, the bridleway running just below the ridgeline, parallel to the Great Ridge, would remain open, and offer an alternative route.

https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/learning-about/news/current-news/restoration-works-on-the-iconic-great-ridge-due-to-start?utm_campaign=12249506_LR_e-Footnotes_UKVersion_18Mar2021&utm_medium=dotmailer&utm_source=HFHolidaysLimited&dm_i=17WG,7AJS2,NQ7OJC,TKWKZ,1

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