

Minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting of the Ramblers Association (Lancaster Group) held on Tuesday 21st November 2017.

Present:

27 members attended.

Apologies:

Maureen Leach, Sue Brown, Angela Bolton, Susan Lucas, Nina Brindle, David Simpson.

Minutes of previous meeting:

Approved.

Matters arising:

Extension to Yorkshire Dales National Park has now taken place.

Treasurer's report (David Todd):

The treasurer presented the balance sheet (attached). He reported that our finances are healthy overall. Sales of books are holding up well. The Group gave donations towards improvements to bridges.

David thanked the independent examiner, Anne Donnelly, and Phil Wraith for help with some technical aspects of the accounts and Sheila Jones for organising the selling of books. He reminded members of the income available through the Walking Partnership (Ramblers Worldwide Holidays).

Secretary's report (David Johnson):

The secretary delivered a brief report (attached) highlighting the year's events. Sandra requested that photos submitted for the web site and Facebook be accompanied by location information. She suggested that we could also include information about footpath checks, maintenance and problems.

Footpath Secretary's report (Neil Herbert and Jean Walker):

Neil presented the Footpath Secretary's report (attached). Joy presented a report on Lost Ways, also attached. Ian asked about a bridge east of Farelton Fell, which was removed after being damaged during Storm Desmond.

Chairman's report (Brian Jones):

Brian thanked the officers and members of the committee, remarking that we had a good working team. He also thanked all the volunteers who, in their various roles, made us the effective Group we are, including Gill for treks and holidays, Sheila for book selling, Sandra Todd and Sandra Pedley for web site and social media maintenance, Libby and Maureen for walks programme production, all event organisers and those delivering newsletters, programmes and posters.

The English Coastal Path is progressing and active; we anticipate a draft route next spring. Our detailed report is being used as input to the project.

Election of Officers:

There were no new nominations to the committee. Ray Peel, Sandra Pedley and Libby Hacking are leaving the committee. Sue Pope proposed that the officers and committee members be re-elected, seconded by Pam Gorham. This was agreed unanimously.

The meeting unanimously agreed that Anne Donnelly should continue as Independent Examiner.

AOB:

The meeting closed at 7:40.pm and was followed by a presentation given by Diane Simcoe, Ramblers Area Support Officer for North of England. Diane reviewed the structure and governance of the Ramblers Association, and outlined her role as a bridge between Groups/Areas and Central Office. Gordon Phillips thanked the speaker on behalf of the meeting.

During refreshments we were able to watch a slide show of photographs, old and new, of people and places through our Group's history.

Ramblers Association Lancaster Group
Income and Expenditure for Year ending 30th September 2017

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>
Sale of books	
Less Publication costs	Walks related
956.95	65.40
<u>-32.13</u>	
924.82	Walks Leader Training
Less decrease in Stock	249.06
<u>-316.66</u>	
608.16	Campaign/Casework
Walking Partnership	164.80
	Practical Work
Refunds from Area (Lost Ways)	1000.00
73.70	
Donations	Meetings
25.00	174.30
Other	Fundraising costs
60.00	
	Admin
	134.46
	Other
	10.00
	<u>1798.02</u>
	<u>-941.16</u>
	<u>£856.86</u>
	Less Expenditure over Income
	<u>£856.86</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2017

Accumulated Fund as at 30.9.16	1358.16
Deficit for year	<u>2727.34</u>
	<u>£4085.50</u>
	Stock of Books
	Cash at Bank
	<u>£4085.50</u>

Audited and agreed:
A. Donnelly
15/11/17

The Ramblers, Lancaster Group, Secretary's Report to AGM 2017

Walks

The Group organised and ran twice-weekly walks throughout the year, with additional weekly evening walks in the summer months, and also some on Sunday afternoons. We have continued offering a choice of two walks on some weekdays.

Stocks of the Group walk booklets "Walks from the Limestone Link" and "Walks in the Lune Valley" are running low, so we have an army of volunteers walking and checking them before revising and reprinting them next year. Thanks to all those volunteers who endured some very wet conditions underfoot!

Riverside car park is no longer free (and has a time limit) and so is no longer suitable as a meeting point for walks. We now meet at Kingsway Retail Park (formerly referred to as PC World) and move unused cars to another location, usually the aqueduct car park but often Barton Road for walks south of Lancaster.

We introduced a Leaders Form for information purposes and requesting leader's experience so as to tailor suitable leader training. The aim is to build confidence and enjoyment by enhancing leadership ability and developing new leadership talent for the future. A "Leaders' Day" has been organised for 27th January 2018 to address some concerns raised on the Leaders Form. "Map and Compass" training will follow and we are looking again at "First Aid" training. Thanks to all the leaders who completed the form.

Last December we issued a Guide for Leaders and a Guide for Walkers both of which encompassed information from the Ramblers Central Office website and information specific and pertinent to the Lancaster group. These documents are updated as necessary and at least on an annual basis and are available on the website. I would urge you to look at these documents and pass any comments or suggestions on to Neil Herbert. In addition, RA central Office have just introduced a new Guide for Leaders leaflet to keep with you on a walk. These have been requested from Central Office and we hope to have them soon to hand out.

Events

The popular Group Holiday was to Eastbourne in March, with lots of lovely walking on the South Downs. Other Treks were in the Lake District and at the Ramblers Chalet at Stair. All these events were organised by Gill.

The MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood, Cat Smith, has accepted our invitation to join us on Gill's walk on Sunday (26th November).

Committee work

The committee has been meeting monthly throughout the year.

A number of planning applications have been reviewed throughout the year, and responses made to those which affect footpaths or our enjoyment of them.

The newsletter is published 3 times per year. I welcome any ideas or items you would like to submit for publication.

We continue to support or otherwise became involved in a number of projects, including the English Coastal Trail, walks from the University, Big Pathwatch and the Lost Ways project.

We have seen no progress on widening the availability of the disabled "tramper" (towards which we made a contribution) to areas in Arnside & Silverdale AONB outside the RSPB reserve. We are actively seeking to rectify this or re-consider our contribution.

We also contributed to improvements to Fisherman's Bridge, Sedbergh, after the damage sustained by Storm Desmond.

The Lancashire "Local Delivery" scheme, with which our path maintenance team was registered, has now ceased. The team has done some clearance work for the Parks and Recreation service but it is unclear how effective they can be on public rights of way without the co-operation of the Local Authority.

Other

Membership has been up and down ending the year 5 down at 261. To raise our profile, we try to place articles in the Lancaster Guardian's "Social Scene", but this relies on leaders or walkers writing a few words after a walk. So, if you can, please help by writing one yourself - I can help with any questions you may have. We have evidence that these articles attract membership enquiries.

Our social media presence is limited to Facebook at the moment, with Sandra Todd and Sandra Pedley posting photographs (send them to photos@lancasterramblers.org.uk), updates and responses to queries and comments.

The email distribution system now reaches 84 members who have signed up for delivery of Walks Programmes, Newsletters etc, saving considerable time and postage costs. Please visit our web site to register for this service, or contact me.

David Johnson, Secretary, November 2017.

Email: secretary@lancasterramblers.org.uk

The Ramblers' Association - Lancaster Group - Footpath Secretary's Report to the AGM 2017

The year 2017 has continued in the regular routine of reporting footpath issues to LCC or to the local RA footpath secretary for paths outside our area, regular footpath check walks and local authority and group liaisons. In addition our path clearance work has finally started under Mary's direction.

All footpath complaints continue to be documented on a computer database. The files are backed up in two additional locations and hard copies are produced annually and filed with the earlier books. They are filed both chronologically and by Parish for ease of review.

This year (Nov'16 to Oct'17) we reported 82 problems (down from 100 last year), broken down into 66 to Lancashire, 10 from our 3 Cumbria parishes (Barbon, Middleton and Casterton), now part of the YDNP, 0 from our 3 original Yorkshire Dales National Park parishes (Sedburgh, Dent and Garsdale) and 6 from "other" areas, Cumbria, Lancashire south of our area and North Yorkshire. In addition a further 57 issues were noted. The most common problems were stiles - broken, difficult or blocked, waymarking - missing, fallen or damaged, often fingerposts from a road and over/under growth. Local authority cuts continue to cause problems in fault clearance and clearance reporting to the RA. For Lancashire as a whole outstanding problems are at 4525 (July 2017 data) up from 3805 (July '16). With new reported problems typically exceeding clearances, LCC do clearances by priority rather than chronologically and so many of the problems we reported this year have been cleared, so keep them coming in. Many pending DMMOs seem to be stuck in Legal but can be located from the LCC website. From the LCC Register of Public Rights of Way Applications to the end of October there were no DMMO applications and only 1 PPO application in 2017 in the Lancaster area compared to 4 and 2 respectively last year.

The LCC Local Delivery Scheme which enabled volunteer groups such as the Ramblers to do path clearance work has been terminated. To date our path-clearing group, under Mary's direction has only completed 1 job - at Crook o' Lune. A second job at Condor Green is pending - postponed from a stormy day last month. We are still investigating ways to get further jobs, over and above vegetation trimming on footpath check walks.

There has been a full programme of Footpath Check Walks organised by Jean Walker with 9 scheduled this year. We appreciate your support on these walks and it is a good chance to walk some local paths and to practice your map reading skills. If you have any suggestions for areas to check, please contact Jean at jw281@phonecoop.coop. Similarly, if you walk a path in our area and all is well, then please let Jean know so we can cross it off the "to do" list.

Diversion, Creation and Stopping-up Orders issued by the Authorities have

continued to be monitored. The temporary path closures due to the new Link road have been removed but there are still a couple of outstanding issues.

The RAs new Pathwatch project has been on-going this year but in Lancashire and Cumbria the response has been poor with just 32 complaints being logged for our area of Lancashire for over 10 months but with 4 2-week periods where I have been unable to obtain data. Eleven of these problems had been previously reported by ourselves.

The English Coastal Trail is progressing well with the sections through our area from Silecroft to Silverdale and Silverdale to Cleveleys nearing the end of Stage 2 (of 5) "Develop". A report is expected at the end of February 2018.

Finally thanks to those who took part in the footpath check walks and those regularly reporting path issues. May it continue next year.

Please report footpath issues to Neil Herbert at footpaths@lancasterramblers.org.uk

Lost Ways Report

For those of you who are not familiar with this project, Lost Ways are routes that are, or were, used by the public on foot, or in some cases on horseback, but are not shown on the Definitive Map, and therefore not on current Ordnance Survey maps. If these routes are not identified and claimed by 31st December 2025, (only 8 years away) they will not be legally accessible to the general public without permission of the landowner.

We therefore set up a working group to identify them in our area. So over the last couple of years three of us, Brian Jones, Neil Herbert and I have scoured the current and old 1849 & 1889 Ordnance Survey maps, the latter fortunately on the Internet, looking for possible routes. And I'm glad to say that this summer we have completed that part of the task.

The potential cases we found came to a grand total of 348, but after discussions and a bit more research, we've decided to further investigate just 120 of these at present. There are another six that maybe suitable to submit, but they will be affected by the decisions on the English Coastal path, due out in 2018.

The remaining routes however have not been found in vain, for, although there is no historical evidence for previous use, the details of thirty of this remainder will be forwarded to Lancashire County Council for consideration in their RoWIPlan as they would greatly improve the footpath network. Twelve, which involve changes in status from bridleway to footpath in part of a route, have been forwarded to the Horse Societies to pursue if they wish; this status change does not affect a walker's ability to complete the route. A further fifty, we consider to be current mapping errors, for example when a right of way on the map stops just short of a road, These will be again passed to the County Council. And lastly, fifteen would give further access to Access Land.

So where do we go from here? The next stage is the really interesting part, looking at really old, pre-O.S. maps and Tithe, Inclosure and Finance Maps plus their Schedules. However it can be somewhat tedious at times, and apt to take longer than expected. Also we have to drag ourselves away from our computer screens and take a train to the County Archives in Preston. Our first exploratory meeting there took place a few weeks ago, looking at 13 examples we had found in Borwick, Priest Hutton and Over Kellet. I thought we might take slightly longer than the usual morning session of 10am to 1pm, but we didn't leave till around 4 o'clock. It looks like we're going to have many similar days this winter, but maybe most will be cold and wet so we won't begrudge losing a day's walking.

If you would be interested in whiling away a few hours pouring over maps in a warm, well lit room on a damp winter's day, you would be welcome to join us. (I

can be contacted on Lancaster 32816)