

**RAMBLERS SCOTLAND STRATEGIC COMMITTEE**  
**Minute of meeting held on Tuesday 22 August 2023, 5:45pm- 8:45pm**  
**Meeting held at the Melting Pot, Edinburgh**  
**and via Zoom**

**ATTENDANCE**

**RSSC**

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith	Convener
Beth Dickson	Vice Convener
Dave Rennie	Ordinary Member
Andrew Bachell	Ordinary Member
Jacqui Thomson (Zoom)	Co-opted Ordinary Member
Jane Searles	Co-opted Ordinary Member
Mike Dales (Zoom)	Ordinary Member
Sue Thomas	Ordinary Member

**Staff**

Jeannie Cranfield	Volunteer Development Officer, Ramblers Scotland
Brendan Paddy	Director, Ramblers Scotland
Claire Exley	Governance and Events Administrator, Ramblers Scotland

**Apologies**

David Webb	Ordinary Member
Karl-Erik Wilson	Ordinary Member
Jarka Polednova	Ordinary Member
Mike Gray	Treasurer

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made, and apologies noted. Jeannie Cranfield from the staff team was welcomed to the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTE FROM RSSC MAY 2023 MEETING**

The Committee noted App 01a: the draft minute of the meeting held on the 16 May 2023. This was approved as an accurate record.

**MATTERS ARISING/ ACTION POINTS FROM RSSC MAY 2023 MEETING**

The committee noted App 01b: Action Points Update.

There were some outstanding actions. Beth will lead on drafting the guidance for the process for the Search and Co-Option Sub Committee (AP02), Brendan and Mal will review the finance reporting process and define the role of RSSC in financial monitoring (AP03), Brendan will review the EDI reporting format (AP05), Brendan to assist the Access sub committee on ways of accessing legal advice (AP09)

**STANDARD REGISTER OF INTEREST**

The Committee noted App 01c: the standard register of interest. All members have registered their interest. This record would be used for future meetings and committee members would communicate any updates to Claire before any subsequent meetings.

**FINANCE UPDATE**

The committee noted App 02a: RSSC general accounts report for the period to 30 June 2023.

The committee noted App 02b the management information accounts for the period ending 30 June 2023. In the absence of commentary from the GB finance team the Director went through the report line by line.

### **BUSINESS PLAN Q3 AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

The committee noted App 03, Q3 of the Business Plan objectives 2022/23. The Director provided an update on the successes of the recent community engagement work undertaken by Angela Musk. Angela and RS president Zahrah Mahmood would be invited to join a future informal meeting to provide an update on this work.

**AP01**

The committee received an update on the social media responsible access video campaign 2023. This has been very successful with over one million views and 150,000 completions (those who have viewed the full video). All partners are very happy with the results and the committee acknowledged the films were of a high standard this year.

RSSC would like to use this success as leverage to publicly challenge politicians to protect our access framework and not just to prioritise biodiversity over everything else. Brendan will liaise with Helen Todd on political engagement with NatureScot.

**AP02**

Brendan reported that our president Zahrah had made a short film celebrating the first anniversary of the Magnificent 11 route around Glasgow's southside in conjunction with Glasgow Ramblers.

Jacqui reported that Balerno Ramblers were hosting an introductory walk this weekend for asylum seekers and refugees in relation to Angela Musk's work. Jacqui will update the committee at a future meeting.

**AP03**

Brendan flagged that capacity restrictions may impact on reaching targets for the Mapping Scotland Paths project. It has been a busy time for project manager, Luke Phillips, who has been completing new income funding applications for MSP.

Dave Rennie requested an update on an email sent some time ago to Ramblers Scotland from a Ukrainian group based in Dundee. Jeannie would chase this up.

**AP04**

The committee noted that Ramblers GB President Amar Latif is due to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.

The committee noted App 04: the membership report. The Director reported strong growth in Scotland during Q3, this success was credited in part to the Equalities Outreach work and the Out There Award project which provide free memberships. It was noted the Balerno Group Introductory Walk for asylum seekers and refugees are offering free membership for a year to encourage new walkers to engage with the local groups and communities. Introductory Walks rely heavily on support from members who offer a warm welcome. The Director will ask other outdoor recreation organisations in Scotland if they too are experiencing higher levels of engagement in membership.

**AP05**

The committee discussed the geographical breakdown of our membership in relation to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It was noted that 26.75% of our membership sits within the lower half of the index – evidence that we are far more diverse than initially thought. The Director would check if the SIMD breakdown could be incorporated into the membership reporting going forward.

**AP06**

### **BUSINESS PLANNING 2023 / 24**

The committee noted App 05, the business plan 2023 / 24 update. The planning process relates to the 12 months from October 2023. Two distinct processes are running simultaneously, one to develop the long-term strategy and one to develop budgeting and planning for the next financial year.

The BoT are meeting this evening and due to a scheduling issue Mal was unable to attend. The BoT will be discussing the business plan for 2023/24 and RSSC will be updated in due course.

The committee discussed issues around 'business as usual' (BAU) activities and campaigning around Access not appearing on the business plan. The Director reported that this was very deliberately separated from new project proposals being put forward to align with the new strategy.

The committee feel this is remiss not to include the core work in the business plan if there is no reduction in the actual work undertaken. It was generally felt that if core work is not visible in the business plan then there is a risk that it becomes invisible in operational and strategic management reporting terms.

The committee feel this is an area of concern given that the new strategy is still under development. The Director would take this back to the GB leadership team and consider how RSSC visibility of important BAU activity such as access work can be maintained.

**AP07**

Mal will keep RSSC updated on the new strategy as this develops and ensure that RSSC have a reporting tool in place for all the core work should this not appear on the business plan for the coming year.

**AP08**

An additional online session of RSSC will be arranged to discuss the Scottish elements of the business plan when that emerges.

**AP09**

## **WORKING GROUPS AND SUB COMMITTEES**

### Board of Trustees update

Mal provided a verbal update of the BoT meeting that took place on 20 June.

The member engagement survey on the new strategy is open until 01 September, all RSSC were encouraged to complete and submit this and to encourage their groups and areas too.

There are online cluster strategy sessions scheduled in the coming weeks, for Scotland this is on 02 October, 6-7:30pm. Invitations have gone out to RSSC and also to area and group chairs and secretaries.

Any edits to the strategy will follow the cluster sessions, these go to the BoT on 16 October and an EGM has been called for general council to meet in Manchester on 25 November.

The new strategy will commence in January 2024.

### Access Sub Committee (ASC)

The committee noted App 06a, the draft minute of the Access sub-committee.

The committee noted App 06b, the draft of the terms of reference for the ASC. The committee discussed who should chair the ASC.

Andrew to ask the ASC for a process in recruiting its membership, including whether this is restricted to Rambler's members or to include external experts in the area.

The committee would like clarity around who is appointed Chair of the ASC, the preference is that an RSSC member would hold this position.

Andrew and Mike to report to ASC on updates to the ToR re membership & chair recruitment.

**AP10**

The committee noted that the papers for the ASC meetings are available within the Teams folder.

Mike Dales reported that ASC member John Andrews was progressing issues around temporary closures of core paths. A paper is being drafted in partnership with various local authorities and the Information Commissioner to submit to Scottish Ministers and the National Access Forum.

### Scottish Council Sub Committee

Beth provided an update on the recent meeting of this sub-committee. The Westerwood Hotel in Cumbernauld was chosen as the preferred venue. The next meeting is on 18 Sept to draft some content for the day. The RSSC will sign off on all the arrangements at the November meeting.

### Gathering Sub Committee

The committee noted App 07: the note of the Gathering sub-committee on 24 July.

The sub-committee agreed that the Gathering 2024 will be held on the Isle of Bute with support from the local group. Costs are currently being negotiated. Karl will set up an electronic registration platform.

The sub-committee terms of reference are still being drafted.

## **ROLE OF THE GROUPS**

Jeannie Cranfield, Volunteer Development Officer, provided an update on the role of the groups (53) and areas (8) and the challenges they face. Jeannie reported on some good news stories from various groups, volunteering events, training opportunities and communication channels. It was noted that the most successful groups have a social media presence. There are four types of groups: fully constituted groups, subgroups, flexi groups and affiliated groups. There are four areas that have functioning committees and four whose committees are in abeyance.

Jeannie to be invited back to a future meeting to update on the impact the new strategy has on groups. **AP11**

The committee thanked Jeannie for providing valuable support to the groups and for her update.

## **WEBSITE**

The committee discussed issues around the new website.

The new website and links to the various walks display the UK flag and not the GB flag – this was deemed misrepresentation and should be addressed. This has been raised with the digital team for progressing.

The committee received an update on the reasoning behind the need for the new website. This was due to the instability of the old website which was not sustainable.

The committee agree that there are many issues around the new website and how it communicates with Walks Manager, Assemble and the App. There is a risk that walk leaders and group members are lost as a direct result of the challenges of the website in creating, finding and joining walks.

It was suggested that website training sessions were provided and some communication to update volunteers on progress. Jeannie would look at whether any website training could be offered in Scotland, but any updates on the website will be provided by the Ramblers GB team. Jeannie would progress this. **AP12**

Links for the webpages related to the known issues, new issues and future improvements would be circulated. **AP13**

## **AREA AGM'S**

The committee noted App 08: the dates of the Area AGM's. RSSC are to be represented at these meetings, a briefing pack will be provided. RSSC members are to let Claire know what dates they can attend. **AP14**

## **DATES OF NEXT RSSC MEETINGS**

The informal meeting is on Tuesday 26 Sept 6-7pm online. Zoom links will be circulated in due course.

The next formal meeting of RSSC will take place on Tuesday 28 November, 5:45-8:45pm, Edinburgh

## **AOCB / ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Items for the next formal meeting should be emailed to Claire.

**Minute taken by: Claire Exley, Governance and Events Administrator, August 2023**

## ACTION POINTS

- AP01** **Brendan** to invite Angela and Zahrah to a future informal meeting to update RSSC
- AP02** **Brendan** will liaise with Helen Todd on political engagement with NatureScot.
- AP03** **Jacqui** to provide an update on the Intro Walk with asylum seekers
- AP04** **Jeannie and John** to chase up on an email request from a Ukrainian group
- AP05** **Brendan** to approach other sector organisations re increase in membership trend
- AP06** SIMD to be incorporated into the reporting function on membership if possible - **Brendan**
- AP07** **Brendan** to progress BAU into the business plan
- AP08** **Mal** to ensure RSSC have a reporting tool in place for all the core work should this not appear on the business plan for the coming year.
- AP09** An additional online session of RSSC will be arranged to discuss the Scottish elements of the business plan when that emerges – **Mal/Claire**
- AP10** **Andrew and Mike D** to report to ASC on updates to the ToR re membership & chair recruitment
- AP11** **Jeannie** to be invited back to a future meeting to update on the impact the new strategy has on groups.
- AP12** Comms around the website issues to be progressed and future training sessions offered - **Jeannie**.
- AP13** **Claire** to circulate links to the website's 'known issues' page
- AP14** **Members** to let Claire know what Area AGM they can attend



Signed..... Date: 4/9/2023

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, Convener, Ramblers Scotland