

RAMBLERS SCOTLAND STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held on Tuesday 07 February 2023, 4.00pm – 6.30pm

**Meeting held at the Edinburgh Training and Conference Venue, Edinburgh
and via Zoom**

01/23 ATTENDANCE**RSSC**

Alison Mitchell	Convener
Beth Dickson (Zoom)	Vice Convener (Interim)
Andrew Bachell	Co-opted Ordinary Member
David Webb (Zoom)	Ordinary Member
Peter Bartos	Co-opted Ordinary Member
Mike Gray	Honorary Treasurer
Sue Thomas (Zoom)	Ordinary Member
Dave Rennie (Zoom)	Ordinary Member

Staff

Brendan Paddy	Director of Ramblers Scotland
Claire Exley	Governance and Events Administrator
John Nicholls	Project Officer: Walk Leadership

Guest

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith	Convener Designate
------------------------	--------------------

Apologies

Lucy Wallace	President
Martha Mattos Coelho	Co-opted Ordinary Member
Mhairi Reid	Co-opted Ordinary Member

02/23 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

The Convener introduced our guest Malcolm Dingwall-Smith who will take over as Convener following the Scottish Council AGM on 04 March 2023.

Malcolm is the Strategic Partnerships Manager at SportScotland, he has been involved with various organisations in a voluntary capacity and is a keen walker / hillwalker.

03/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

04/23 APPROVAL OF MINUTE FROM RSSC NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING

The Committee noted App 01: the minute of the meeting held on the 15 November 2022. This was approved as an accurate record.

05/23 MATTERS ARISING/ ACTION POINTS FROM RSSC NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING

The Committee noted App 02: Action Points Update.

Under matters arising the Committee discussed the content of the Memorandum of Understanding document and how Ramblers Scotland is represented within that document. One Committee member felt that the document was unbalanced in its representation of the devolved nations and others felt that it leaves scope for RSSC to

AP 01

make strategic changes. The Committee felt that the document was sufficient in serving its purpose and recognises that there are differences in Scotland. The Director advised that explicit reference to these differences had been added to the document.

It was agreed that although the document is to be reviewed in 2025 the Committee would conduct a mid-term review to be scheduled next year, which could feed into ongoing discussions across the nations about ways of working.

The Convener will report back to the BoT.

06/23 UPDATE ON BOARD OF TRUSTEE (BoT) MEETINGS

The Convener provided an oral update on the Board of Trustee meeting. The main discussion was around the new strategy development and engagement with internal / external partners supporting the process.

The next BoT meeting is on 22 Feb 2023.

07/23 FINANCE UPDATE

The Committee noted App 03 RSSC General accounts report, for the period 01 Oct - 31 Dec 2022. The Treasurer invited questions.

The Committee noted App 04 & 05 the 2021/2022 examined accounts for RSSC and the Gathering for circulation with the papers to Scottish Council.
The Independent Examiners were noted.

The Committee noted App 06, the RSSC GB Report prepared by the Finance team, for the period 01 Oct – 31 Dec 2022. The Director noted the staffing costs figure was due to the standardising of salaries across the nations and the Office Admin costs will be reforecast once we have a six month period at the new office to compare / review.

The Committee discussed income from membership, noting that there had been a small increase in membership however, this only accounts for one third of our income. Peoples Postcode Lottery provides generous support as well as Paths for All and Active Scotland who fund the various projects.

The Treasurer thanked the finance business partner Lynne Dickson for all her help with the reports.

08/23 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

The Committee noted App 07, Q1 of the Business Plan objectives 2022/23. The Director highlighted the recent successes of the Parliamentary event in helping to raise RS profile, celebrate the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the wider access framework. It was a busy quarter for the Walk Leadership project, the Out There Award Ambassador Scheme and the Social Media Video Campaign 2023 and identifying supporting partners.

The Director reported that Zahrah Mahmood has accepted the invitation to become our President, this will be confirmed at Scottish Council. Zahrah has a large social media profile as the 'Hillwalking Hijabi'.

The Convener thanked staff for all their hard work and recognised the efforts of Helen Todd and John Nicholls with the Parliamentary event.

It was reported that Ramblers Scotland will again participate in the Scottish Walking Awards after a hiatus in recent years.

09/23 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Committee noted App 08, the membership report and discussed membership in general. Discussion included noting that not all members walk with a group, the work being done on keeping members beyond their first year of membership and digital marketing. Nicola Fickling, the Head of Membership is to be invited to a future meeting to present the breakdown of all nation's membership data and how GB are managing long term membership sustainability.

AP 02

10/23 EDI UPDATE

The Committee received an update from staff member John Nicholls on the work being done on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. John invited questions. See appendix 01

11/23 AREA AGM'S

The Committee reported on the various Area AGM's that were attended in the period. It was noted that Lothian and Border Area Committee are now in abeyance. North Strathclyde Area Committee submitted a Motion to amend their Constitution as follows: changing "Chairman" to "Convener" and all associated pronouns. RSSC agreed these amendments.

12/23 SCOTTISH COUNCIL/ DICK BALHARRY MEMORIAL TALK 2023: EVENT UPDATE

The Director updated the Committee on the arrangements for the 2023 Dick Balharry Memorial Talk. Our guest speaker is Alastair McIntosh and the title is Land Reform, Access and Renewal of Relationship. This is a hybrid event with capacity for 60 in person attendees at the Edinburgh Training and Conference Venue. Digital marketing is underway to promote the event taking place on 28 February, 7-8pm.

The Director updated the Committee on the arrangements for Scottish Council 2023, registration closes on 17 February. There are currently 103 people registered. It was reported that there have been no Motions submitted for consideration at Scottish Council.

The Committee discussed and approved the Annual Report for submitting to Scottish Council.

13/23 WORKING GROUPS AND SUB COMMITTEES

The Committee received an update on the Search Committee who have worked hard to promote interest in joining RSSC. A new Convener, Vice Convener and President have been identified, these roles will be formalised at Scottish Council.

The Committee received an update on the Gathering Committee. There were over 70 registered so far for the weekend event in April. It was noted that this event has attracted a younger audience. Alison thanked Jeannie and Danny of the staff team for all their help.

The Committee noted App 10, the draft minute of the Access Sub Committee meeting held on 16 December 2022. The Director will explore options on how Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) exercise their legal duties.

AP 03

The Committee noted concerns around the closure of pedestrian bridges by Network Rail to carry out electrification work in the Perth and Kinross Council area.

14/23 DATES OF NEXT RSSC MEETINGS

The Committee noted the pre Scottish Council RSSC meeting will be online on Friday 03 March 2023, 4-5pm. The new Committee will meet on Monday 06 March, 4-5pm also online.

It was noted that the date for Scottish Council 2024 should be agreed as soon as possible. It was suggested that it should happen slightly later to take the pressure off the finance team as they progress the year end audit. The Governance Administration would confirm when Welsh and General Council AGM's will take place in 2024.

UPDATE:

General Council is proposed for Sat 20 April 2024

Welsh Council may propose 30/31 March 2024

15/23 AOCB / ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the role of the Vice Presidents should be reviewed. The Convener would start this process.

AP 04

The Committee thanked Alison Mitchell, the outgoing Convener, for her services to RSSC.

Claire Exley, Governance and Events Administrator
February 2023

ACTION POINTS

- AP01** To agree a date in 2024 for the Committee to review the MoU
- AP02** The Director to invite Nicola Fickling, Head of Membership to a future meeting.
- AP03** The Director to explore options for challenging Perth and Kinross Council’s view on how they exercise their legal duties
- AP04** The Convener to progress a review of the Vice President role.



Signed..... Date.....
Alison Mitchell, Convener
Ramblers Scotland

Equality and Diversity Outreach Project Development

Update to RSSC – John Nicholls Project Officer (Walk Leadership) – Feb 2023

Our background – The Ramblers

- As a charity we talk about “Helping everyone find their feet” yet membership and engagement does not reflect social demographics in Scotland
- In 2021, just 1.1% of Ramblers Scotland members who told us about their ethnicity in our membership survey are from a Black, Asian, and minority ethnic background. No volunteers identified as from BAME backgrounds in our volunteer survey in 2021.
- Sportscotland EDI Strategy and Toolkit (2022) and Changing lives approach is placing Inclusive design and social purpose at the heart of the physical activity sector across Scotland

Wider picture – not just a challenge for the Ramblers

- Only 1% of visitors to our National Parks are from ethnic minority backgrounds, yet these communities make up 10% of the population of GB and 4% in Scotland ([Ramblers EDI Strategy 2021; Scotland Census 2011](#)).
- Research across the UK concluded that those from an ethnic minority background are 60% less likely to visit the natural environment than the rest of the population ([Leeds Beckett University 2022](#)).
- There is a lack of role models especially for people from BAME background. “Everyone looking at us, nobody looking like us” ([Johal, P. 2021; Leeds Beckett University 2022](#)).
- A lack of companionship can be a barrier for some who do not want to walk alone. Social norms and group consensus can also act as a barrier if walking is not chosen as a social activity ([University of Edinburgh 2019](#)).
- We enjoy world class access rights but some people feel more entitled than others – is the outdoors really *for all*?

Yet

- Walking is great for mental and physical health as well as social inclusion and the groups this programme will work with have most to gain.
- Accessing the outdoors and enjoying the Scottish landscape is an integral part of our national identity and culture.
- Walking is one of the most accessible physical activities
- **We need to think and act differently**

Background work undertaken in 2021/22

- Webinar – Dick Balhary Talk 2021 – Pammy Johal – set us a challenge
- Team Development Day 2021 – staff explored in more details the possible opportunities we have to respond to this challenge
- Desk-based research and stakeholder discussions helped to refine an approach we’d like to test
- Current outreach

- An initial proposal has SLT support, and we are now waiting for a funding decision from PPL to employ a part time officer to test the approach

Next steps 2023 (funding dependent)

- Employ a part time officer – April 2023-24
- Test assumptions approaches to outreach to include
 - Experiences for all
 - Skills for individuals
 - Skills for champions
 - Links to local walking groups
- The project will be staff-led and assets-based – working with communities to help shape shared solutions
- Warm partners in Dundee, Glasgow, Highland, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire – Likely larger urban areas due to population demographics
- We have relationship and experiences from Aberdeen to build on – thanks to Alison
- In 12 months we should know more about what approaches work, our potential reach and the community response
- The work will reflect sportscotland's approach to community engagement and EDI

What it's not

- Not membership acquisition per se
- Not big numbers
- Groups may be asked to create a warm welcome where there is interest in new members joining

Summary - Looking at the project through the Nesta Innovation Cycle:

