

Minutes of Red Rope NC Meeting, 25 November 2017
Central Library, Liverpool

Present: John Marsden (E. Midlands), Jennifer Mirdamadi (Merseyside), Janet Saunders, David Symonds, Steve Wright, Humphrey Southall, Sherry McLiver, Barbara Segal. Mike Hargaden (Manchester) attended for Items 1, 2 and part of Item 3.

Apologies: Becky Bates, Sarah Bates, John Dickie, Linda Goss, Gill Cox, Dave Doody

Chair for morning session: Humphrey, **minute-taker:** Barbara

The proposed agenda was accepted, with one ordering change for the afternoon session.

1 a). Minutes of June 17 NC. Approved

1 b). Matters arising: None that are not covered on the agenda

2. Draft minutes of AGM: **Steve to circulate** to regions so that all attendees can comment

3. Attracting members to AGMs (Item 3 on Agenda notes):

Attendance at AGMs has been dropping and the 2017 AGM was inquorate. Members have been asked for their views about the AGM weekend via the national email list and a special survey. The survey was completed by 64 members, of whom only 19% regularly attended the AGM; almost 60% had never attended one. Those who attended regularly were broadly positive about the current format – they would probably come regardless. For most of the rest the AGM did not appear to be a priority with quite a few seeing themselves as part of their local group but with little interest in national Red Rope. It was therefore unlikely that attendance could be substantially increased, though changes in format and the choice of location might make some difference. Email comments from members indicated that the enjoyable aspects of the event should be emphasised in the publicity and that the meeting time should be kept to a minimum. Various suggestions re. the timing of the meeting were discussed and it was decided to revert to the former schedule of holding the meeting late on Saturday afternoon, freeing up most of the day for outdoor activities on both the Saturday and the Sunday. This would also enable members from nearby regions to attend just for the meeting and the Saturday evening. A short NC meeting would be held first thing on the Sunday morning.

Don Kinniburgh had sent some information on possible venues, which would be circulated to NC members.

Mike H had proposed a full agenda for the 2018 AGM, focusing on safety issues in the club. At Mike's request safety concerns had already been added as an agenda item and the meeting agreed that it was not appropriate to bring the broader issue of safety into the discussion of AGM arrangements. Mike therefore decided to leave the meeting.

Decisions and Actions:

Name of event: *Annual Gathering* had not caught on and we will try *National Weekend*, thus emphasising the national nature of the club
Scheduling of formal AGM: To be held at 4.00.pm on the Saturday and expected to last around 2 hours. A short NC meeting would be held on Sunday morning.

Officers' reports: To be circulated with the agenda and motions, so that only updates, matters requiring special emphasis and queries from members would need to be raised at the meeting.

Action: National Secretary

Reports to be displayed on a notice board at the venue from the Friday evening. **Action:** Janet.

Don's information to be circulated to NC members. **Action:** David

4. Encouraging more members to go on national trips (Item 4 on agenda notes)

Although national trips have been successful in attracting members Becky was concerned that it was a small sub-set of members who attended. In fact, statistics for Sept 16 to Oct 18 show that around 45 different members went on national trips. Some members might find trips off-putting due to the nature of the terrain in their locations. The two trips to Cornwall had been very popular, as had the West Midlands 'trekking' trips from hostel to hostel. It was agreed that more trips of these types should be tried. Discussion on the shortage of regional trips was deferred to the next NC meeting due to time constraints.

Decisions & Actions:

Organise at least one trip in 2018 to an area that was geographically accessible and where the walking would not be perceived as too demanding. A 'trekking' trip – moving on each day – could also be tried. **Action:** Becky

5. Attracting new members (Item 5 on agenda notes)

Pete Watson had proposed that the recent surge of interest in Socialist politics would suggest that left-wing meetings and publications were currently likely to be the most productive area for recruitment to Red Rope. Pete and Janet have written articles for general use and there are lots of A5 flyers available. Pete will have an article in the next Bulletin and other members would be encouraged to contribute.

Decisions and Actions:

Regions to be encouraged to leaflet suitable events and use contacts to get articles or cheap advertising into suitable publications. **Action:** Janet

Members to be invited to submit articles on this topic for the next Bulletin. **Action:** David

6. Safety issues (Item 3 on Agenda notes refers)

Not discussed as Mike had left the meeting

7. Change of bank signatories (item 7 on Agenda notes)

In view of our change of treasurer we need to change some of the signatories on our bank account.

The following motion was passed unanimously:

It was resolved and declared that in respect of each of the accounts listed at Section 1 Bank Account Details (the Account(s)):

- the Co-operative Bank p.l.c. ('the Bank') shall continue as our bankers in accordance with our original account application, the Business being empowered by and acting within its constitution in giving this instruction
- the Bank shall be authorised to accept instructions (including telephone instructions and written instructions sent by facsimile and electronic instructions through the use of digital signatures and/or identification numbers or passwords) from us in connection with the account(s) and the service, provided that the instructions are given and/or signed in accordance with the signing authority listed in All account signatories Section 2 Part C and shall be authorised to act on Instructions given by signatories/authorised

users in accordance with the Account terms and conditions. Instructions shall mean: cheques, bills of exchange, promissory notes or other orders for payment drawn, made or accepted on our behalf (even if the payments cause the account(s) to be overdrawn) and requests or instructions in writing concerning the account(s), our affairs or property (including the opening of the new account(s), the arranging of facilities and creation of security)

- the Bank shall be authorised to honour all cheques and all other documents made or accepted on our behalf even if such payment causes any Accounts to be overdrawn or increase any existing overdraft, provided that such documents are signed in accordance with the specimen signatures shown in the All account signatories Section 2 Part C
- the Bank shall act on all specimen signatures in accordance with instruction, notice, request or other document in writing concerning our Account(s) (including the opening of new accounts), affairs or property, as shown in the All account signatories Section 2 Part C
- the Bank shall be sent a copy of any future resolutions which affect the terms of these resolutions if required
- the Bank shall be sent a copy of any changes in our Memorandum and Articles of Association/Regulations or Bye Laws if required
- the Bank shall be notified in writing of any change of Directors/Partners/Owners/Officials/Members
- the Bank shall be notified in writing of any change of Authorised User
- the Bank shall otherwise continue to operate our Account(s) in accordance with the signing authority as outlined in Section 2 Part C
- the Bank shall be notified in writing of any overall change of control in the business
- all signatories to the Account(s) are aged 18 or over
- No Directors/Partners/Signatories/Authorised Users have been subject to bankruptcy in the last six years
- No Directors/Partners/Signatories/Authorised Users have had County Court Judgments registered against them in the last six years. [Copied from Humphrey's attachment of 9 November]

Action: Humphrey to contact required signatories and submit changes to bank

Chair for afternoon session: Steve, **minute-taker:** David

8. Redistribution of membership fees to regions (referred from AGM)

It was thought that a 'one size fits all' approach was not appropriate because of the wide variation in the RR regions finances. There was a particular concern in Merseyside because car ownership in the region had declined. This has mainly affected weekend trips which attract proportionately fewer drivers than day walks, leading to the rental of a people-carrier on one trip and a car on the most recent trip in late September. Even though everyone involved had agreed to pay an extra fiver on both occasions, the club lost about £100 over the year resulting in a balance of just under £300.

As Merseyside needs a reasonable float to secure further bookings in 2018 it was decided to give up to £200 from national funds to support this particularly active region, but only after the receipt of the region's annual accounts. Further thought would be given regarding a contribution to other regions for running costs, such as room hire. It was noted that there was no standardised procedure for regions with large surpluses to contribute to a national fund.

Decisions & Actions

Merseyside to be given a £200 grant on receipt of annual accounts for 2016/17. **Action:** David and Humphrey

Other regions to be advised that they can apply for funding on a similar basis if their float is insufficient for them to organise trips. **Action:** Janet to write an article for the Bulletin on this.

9. New charges, membership year and banding (Items 9 (a) & 9 (b) on agenda notes)

a) Introduction of calendar year membership scheme and new charges.(Item 9 a) on Agenda notes)

Linda Goss reported that there had been difficulties in setting up a new I.T. membership system, which were still not fully resolved. There will be a cost to the club of about £1 per member. The annual membership payments and new rates will operate from 1 January 2018, with initial payments being made by 31 Jan. They should appear on the form on the web-site, and be advertised to members asap.

New trip rates (an increase of 10%) for 2018 should apply to all newly publicised trips and those already scheduled for after February. The new rates should appear on the form on the website asap.

Decisions and Actions:

Members and Regions to be informed of new trip rates (**Action: Becky/Sherry**), membership rates and payment schedule (**Action: Linda**).

Membership and trip forms to be updated. **Action: Janet** (now done).

Members already booked onto national trips beyond Feb to be contacted. **Action: Becky**

b) Membership band thresholds, incorporating housing costs.

Deferred to the next NC meeting.

c) Financial impact of lower banding across the club

Linda had flagged up a fall in the average band of members, possibly due to retirements.

Decisions and Actions. Accounts need to be monitored to keep tabs on this. **Action: Linda & Humphrey**

10. RR's involvement with the LMC huts. (Item 10 on agenda notes)

Barbara pointed out that RR had made a slight loss on payment for individual members using the huts. Fewer members had been to the huts in the past year than in the previous year and we were nowhere near using our allocation of bed nights. Three regional trips had been booked for each year.

There are some issues in tracking use of and payment for huts, as it relies on members being proactive.

There was a feeling among some LMC members that Red Rope was benefitting from the same privileged use of the huts as LMC members without putting in any work. LMC is starting on the renovation of The Loft at Blea Tarn and Barbara suggested that we consider a modest fund-raising campaign so as to contribute to this. This would help relationships between ordinary members of both clubs and possibly aid LMC in broader fund-raising. It was decided that this might be possible if we focused on providing a specific item, such as a shower.

Decisions & Actions

Contact LMC to see whether a small donation, as outlined above, would be helpful, and to ask for suggestions as to what we might fund. **Action: Barbara**

11. Officers' Reports (Item 11 on agenda notes)

a) *MIS and Bulletin Editors.* Mark Wallis in Sheffield is standing down as MIS editor and the person responsible for posting the bulletin. David volunteered to look for printers in Liverpool for the next bulletin, due in early March and said that posted MIS copies could also be sorted out by M'side RR. Two of the four annual copies will go out with bulletins. (The printed MIS may need a name change!) Jon Marsden kindly volunteered to become the new editor of the MIS.

Decisions and Actions: Printing of Bulletin and MIS to be moved to Liverpool.

David to investigate printers. **John M** to liaise with Mark about taking over the MIS

b) *Treasurer*. Sherry had updated the AGM accounts to include the AGM itself. This had made a substantial loss of £482, due largely to low attendance and the £186 spent on training.

c) *Training officer*. Still a vacant post. **Action: David** to ask if anyone on Merseyside might take over.

Other reports were taken as read and there were no matters arising which are not covered elsewhere.

12. Role of national secretary

The meeting felt that the role of the national secretary should be expanded to include coordination of the work of the NC and its officers. Adrian Jones has been extremely busy with work, missing the September AGM and this NC meeting. He has said that he would be prepared to continue with admin side of the role but could not be more pro-active than that. It was decided to ask Adrian to stay in place until the September AGM, when a new national secretary with a larger remit would be appointed. In the mean-time it was agreed that Steve Wright would step in to help as Assistant National Secretary.

Decisions and Actions

Review role description of national secretary and redefine in readiness for 2018 AGM. Action: **Steve. Adrian** and **Steve** to decide on a split of responsibilities between now and the AGM.

13. A.O.B.

BMC Organisational Review.

Sherry raised the Review, which had been precipitated by the attempted, and failed, name change without consultation of clubs or individual members. A review of the existing structure revealed that it did not conform to current managerial norms, some of which are legal requirements. Proposals for the new structure included on-line voting and different levels of membership. Barbara had read the summary report and thought that, despite a few positive suggestions, what was generally being proposed was a major restructuring of the organisation, to conform to a much more corporate model.

Sherry encouraged members to attend regional meetings to express opinions and learn more about the proposals. Relevant documents and a member survey about the review can be found here:

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/whats-the-future-of-the-bmc-report-launch-kendal-mountain-festival>.

The results of the interesting member survey held earlier are here:

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0ahUKEwjQ1OCvsObXAhWkBcAKHSOkBPcQFghGMAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thebmc.co.uk%2FDownload.aspx%3Fid%3D1528&usg=AOvVawOTpMJY1OiuzJDapxPFcAxb>

Action: NC members encouraged to engage with the Review.

Next meeting: Saturday 3 March, 11.am – 4pm, Birmingham

Action: Adrian to book venue

Appendices (to be added or included as separate items)

- I.
- II. David's pre-meeting agenda notes, incorporating officers' reports and email input
- III. Survey on AGM participation
- IV. Treasurer's report