

Minutes National Committee Meeting

Date: 2nd December 2021 7.30 pm to 9 pm

Present:

Steve Wright (Chairperson), Janet Saunders (Minutes), Jon Marsden, Barbara Segal, David Symonds, David Doody, Humphrey Southall, Sarah Bates, Damien Connor, Jenifer Mirdamadi, Pat Nicholls, Olive Bowers, Amber Makenzie

Apologies received from:

Gill Platt, Malcolm Donne, Becky Bates

Minutes of the meeting

Agenda items – discussion notes in italics, additional notes in red	Action
1. Review of minutes from the October NC meeting. Minutes have been circulated and accepted as accurate and published. Matters Arising: a) <i>Has Mark Ryle or Rob Manby shared the Scottish COVID guidance document they promised?</i> b) <i>Proposal for London to organise a new Red Rope banner for demonstrations: Humphrey has approached London region over this with very little interest so far, however there has not been a London Committee meeting during the elapsed time period, at which to discuss it. Humphrey to follow this up again.</i>	a) Sarah Bates to follow up with Mark and Rob b) Humphrey Southall to follow this up with London
2. Clarification of the policy regarding policy regarding complaints about fellow members' behaviour. Raised by Merseyside Region 1. Can this policy be completed? - currently it has comments & track changes. 2. Can the policy be in a more visible place on the website? 3. Can the policy be in a downloadable format? 4. Can a refreshed draft policy be shared with regional contacts for comment? 5. Can the policy name 2 officers who should be contacted - currently policy states the NC and nowhere on website lists the NC members, unless you search old minutes? It was noted that several policy documents which were being reviewed in 2015 had not been finalised. Pat Nicholl/ Jennifer Mirdamadi <i>Steve said he has a version which is more up to date than the one on the website. Barbara had also been working on this but had been</i>	Steve Wright and Barbara Segal to resume their work on this and complete it. All officers – please respond to any drafts of this in a timely fashion. The document should be easy to find and a PDF. Steve: Draft a Complaints policy as a separate document, also a PDF. Janet to check the location of the Constitution document and make it easy to find.

<i>waiting for responses to the draft. Steve and Barbara to liaise on this to finalise the policy and bring it up to date.</i> <i>It was pointed out it was a policy to NOT put named officers on the web but use their @redrope address – this saves confusion when people change jobs. (Addenda: It also avoids spam.) Currently, the appropriate person(s) for any complaint that cannot be sorted out in a region, should be the National Secretary.</i> <i>Addenda: It was proposed (and clarified after the meeting) there could be a separate address to receive Complaints which would re-direct to several NC members who could then approach NC and set up an appropriate Complaints inquiry (not necessarily dealing with the Complaint themselves – appointing others to do so as appropriate). Jon M has said he doesn't mind being one of the persons on this address.</i> <i>There have been 2 suggestions for this: Complaints@redrope.org.uk, or NationalCommittee@redrope.org.uk - Exact wording tbc.</i>	Janet, Barbara & Steve to liaise to split Complaints policy into separate PDF. Janet to locate it on Website so it can be easily found. All NC officers can be found via the Contact Us tab Dave Doody/Janet to get this additional address established
3. Coventry Region members want to close due to lack of active members. Requires transferring existing members and bank-account funds to the West Midlands group. Janet Saunders Janet reported that the closure of Coventry's bank account by HSBC had prompted this discussion – the group is down to 2 active walkers out of 4 members, all of whom voted at their recent AGM to merge the group with West Midlands. <i>The deletion of Coventry region has already been done on WebCollect and the members moved over. There are some actions still to do with web presence, contact addresses etc which is being managed by Janet.</i> <i>Humphrey noted that several regions were down to 2 members, which may need considering further at a later time.</i>	Janet: Complete any outstanding actions.
4. Trips: a) RR Bookings for weekends at CY, Beddgelert, in 2022. There is one weekend still available. Barbara Segal has asked regions if they are interested, with only Manchester replying. She has therefore asked, "If I get no response, or if it's only from Manchester and/or Merseyside, which have had frequent trips to CY, should we instead make a June booking for an NC meeting – which could also be a national trip? An alternative would be for it to be a simply national trip."	Action: Sarah and Becky to finalise some dates.

• <i>It was suggested this should simply be a national trip, June – Neither Becky nor Sarah would be free to join a suggested NC meeting/national trip to CY trip in June but support the idea in principle.</i>	
5. National Trips. Becky and Sarah Bates a) August/September – trips officers hope to book a week’s trip to The Yorkshire Bunkhouse at Rosedale – either starting 20/8, 27/8, 3/9 (best option) or 10/9. Are there any other preferences on dates? • <i>This discussion revealed no date preferences. Sarah said that she & Becky would think about how to ‘split the difference’ to accommodate school holidays and bank holidays.</i> b) An idea – could we promote the April Kinder Trespass anniversary trip as our ‘gathering’? <i>However, April gathering is in 2 venues not co-located – it was considered not viable as a National Gathering for that reason. It has just been publicised in Bulletin, so hopefully will attract more bookings now.</i> c) <i>Scotland May Trip – Becky and Sarah to investigate an additional trip if the currently booked trip is over-subscribed</i> d) <i>CY trip date to be decided as above.</i> <i>Barbara thanked Becky and Sarah for getting our National Trips programme going again. All agreed THANK YOU!</i>	Sarah and Becky to sort out dates for Yorks trip Becky and Sarah to arrange a message to go out on the national discussion list about bookings for April Kinder Trespass in due course Scotland National Trips and CY trip - B & S
6. Review of the work on automatic membership renewal. Humphrey Southall Humphrey reported as in his email to this effect (see below) He has now sent confirming emails to all who replied YES or No. Humphrey noted NC members should be prepared to explain things if members asked them.	
Text of proposed Email re. Membership Renewal On October 23rd, I emailed all 270 current members who had paid for their 2021 subscriptions by direct debit, asking whether they would be OK with a change to auto-renewal. The results are: • Six replied to say they are not renewing: health problems, moving to a different area, etc, leaving 264 potentially renewing. • 20 said NO. • 217 said YES.	

• 27 have still not replied, despite several reminders. That means that, out of 264 potential renewers, 82 per cent have replied and opted for auto-renew. Out of all who have replied, 92 per cent have opted for auto-renew. Unfortunately, using the WebCollect system we use for membership administration, it is not possible to make auto-renewal an option for individual members: either everybody in a band who uses direct debits has theirs set for auto-renew, or nobody does. This is why the National Committee required 80 per cent agreement for the change, not just a simple majority. That threshold has been met, so with effect from the start of 2022, Red Rope subscriptions paid by direct debit will be set to auto-renew: • If you replied YES, no further action is needed: your membership will renew on January 1st. • If you replied NO, we will cancel your direct debit and you will need to pay some other way. • Based on the replies we have had, we think the majority of members who have not replied would also say YES to the change, so we will not be cancelling their direct debits -- but they will have a couple more opportunities to tell us what they want. • If you have always paid by cheque or postal order, nothing is changing. There are also various special cases, including the three members who have joined since October 23rd. I will be writing separately to everyone affected by the change, spelling out what will be happening with their memberships. In general, though, no action is needed unless you have already been written to and have not replied.	
7. The use of WebCollect and the national list – Jon Marsden. • The current situation where DS has to send messages via Jon seems a bit bizarre! • Is there an issue about email “overload” (for which people have very different thresholds) being the reason why some members do not subscribe to the national list – i.e., they only wish to receive messages that they consider absolutely essential? Who should be authorised to use the un-opt-outable channel of communication that WebCollect provides? (I think this is something which has developed accidentally, but I agree that it needs to be reviewed. DS) <i>Some members are not happy to receive frequent emails, so we should be cautious how we use the WebCollect facility – it should clearly be</i>	Action: Janet / Barbara Gill/ Humphrey re. welcome and renewal letters. Action: Humphrey: It was decided to add the National Secretary, (with some ‘training’ on how to use it). Any officer should consult with one or two others when considering sending to the list. Action: Humphrey and David Symonds agreed to write a clarification to do with use of Webcollect by officers as

<i>for messages which need to go to ALL Members, such as the AGM papers.</i> <i>Individual officers should preferably not use the WC list – people with access are currently Jon Marsden (for sending MIS), Humphrey as ‘creator’ and treasurer, Gill Platt as Membership Secretary and Janet has Admin access to assist Gill with technical issues.</i> <i>It was agreed the monthly MIS email is a proper place for this kind of notice to be added.</i> <i>Anyone wanting to send one-off messages via the list, should first consider the MIS, and if a separate message needed, must consult with one or two others who have access to sending.</i> <i>BS proposed that we need to advise new members in the Welcome Letter (and similarly after annual renewals) that this is how we message them, i.e. MIS and occasional important one-off messages, so that people take notice of the MIS messages and to encourage existing members to re-join the national list (which is currently just under 80% of members).</i>	a way of contacting all members. Dave Symonds to write something to clarify benefits of being on the national list and to encourage those who have unsubscribed to re-join.
8. Training Robert Manby recently stood down as training officer. I asked Robert what he thought we might want to prioritise as far as training was concerned. This might be difficult to deal with in the time available but a short discussion could be valuable. If more people felt confident navigating it should increase the number who are prepared to lead walks. At the moment there seems to be fewer people who are prepared to take on that role. DS “There’s plenty of opportunity for learning. The mountaineering councils sponsor instructional courses at every level from introductory through to everything needed for Scottish winter & beyond. There are plenty of other providers doing all this too. Of course there’s a wealth of experience within Red Rope and sharing skills & knowledge within clubs is acknowledged as an excellent way of learning. There is a downside to that approach I think. Most of us tend to have learned a particular way of doing things or have arrived at a fixed understanding at some point. In terms of mountaineering practice this means that we also tend to pass on skills in a particular way. At its very worst this can mean perpetuating poor practice and the possibility of things going wrong. (That’s just painting the worst possibility though.) It’s perhaps not just people who are new to hill walking & climbing who should be going to skills courses. Those who lead, guide or instruct after all have to keep up to date with what they do and it’s	

normal for skills to deteriorate over time and for bad habits to develop... Perhaps being open to new ways of thinking, taking wide advantage of learning opportunities as they arise and reading widely are good. Very best wishes, Robert''	
Discussion about training, specifically navigation <i>Barbara suggested we should remind members (and especially new members) that Red Rope is a collective where people are intended to take collective responsibility, not a service organisation running walks.</i> <i>Olya – said in Northeast region they had a leader and co-leader of walks to help share the task and learning.</i> <i>Steve – we also do this in West Midlands but doesn't always happen.</i> <i>Barbara – Ramblers offered nav training days we could book on.</i> <i>Janet, and Jon – suggested we encourage regions to run navigation days (single days or on trips if they wish) with a budget available for a trainer.</i>	Actions: ALL to continue discussion by email. When a policy agreed, Janet to put something on web training page with Nat Sec as contact, and David to communicate to regions
Addenda: On behalf of the National Committee a big Thank You to Rob for stepping in as Training officer over the last two years and his useful contributions in the role. THANK YOU!	
A.O.B. Humphrey raised issue of "How the club does its business". He pointed out we have had no face to face meetings throughout the last 18 months – and suggested we plan a day for one of these next year. Most others felt zoom meetings worked well and were focused, if sometimes too brief for full discussions. Humphrey also plans to contact regional treasurers for their accounts, after renewals are dealt with. Next Meeting Feb 3rd – evening Zoom meeting time to be agreed Face to face meeting: Saturday June 11th, Birmingham	Dave Symonds/Jon M to arrange zoom meeting. Steve to find a venue for June. Humphrey to act on regional accounts.
Meeting closed around 9.15 pm.	