

Red Rope AGM Minutes

24th April 2021 via ZOOM 5-6.30

Apologies were received from Dave Coles, Don Kinniburgh, Carol Dixon, Rob van Beeke, Angela Brown

1. **Introduction** by Humphrey Southall, chair. Heather Morris to take the minutes.
2. **The minutes of the 2020 Zoom AGM** from 3/10/20 – on the website - were approved. [AGM-2020-MinutesV2.pdf \(redrope.org.uk\)](#)
3. **Matters arising from the minutes**: A motion to change the timing of the AGM has been implemented by the NC.
4. **Election of officers**: All officers were willing to stand again except Janet Saunders, publicity officer, an important role within the club, and were elected unopposed. People were encouraged to come forward to stand for all the positions, and particularly for the publicity officer. Humphrey Southall suggested that people considering standing could work as 'partner novices' alongside existing officers as there is a dearth of people coming forward as replacements. The forthcoming meeting to discuss recruitment will need a publicity officer -an essential role - so replacement is urgent. No volunteers as yet, it was hoped someone would come forward before the end of the meeting. Janet says that lots of materials are in existence, leaflets, templates etc, and can be built on by the new recruit. David Symonds & Humphrey offered thanks to Janet for her work in the role although she is going to continue with administering the website. David Symonds stayed his intention to stand down next year so we need replacements for big changes ahead.

List of officers for the coming year:

National Secretary	David Symonds
Assistant National Secretary	Steve Wright
National Treasurer	Humphrey Southall
Membership Secretary	Gill Platt
National Trips hut-booker	Rebekah Bates & Sarah Bates
Trips Treasurer	Adrian Jones
Training officer	Robert Manby
LMC Hut Liaison / Booking Sec	Barbara Segal
Publicity officer	<i>*Vacancy*</i>
IT officer	Dave Doody
MIS editor	Jon Marsden
Bulletin editor	David Symonds
BMC Rep	Malcolm Donne
Ramblers Rep (vacancy)	Dave Doody now acting as Ramblers contact
Access and Conservation	Pete Watson, informally

Matilda Simon suggested that officers present briefly introduce themselves as people may not know them.

David Symonds – has been National secretary for 2.5 years, bulletin editor since 2007.

Steve Wright- assistant National secretary, not elected.

Robert Manby – new training officer

Barbara Segal – Liaises with the LMC regarding hut bookings, and works on improving relations with the LMC.

Dave Doody – IT officer, does website servicing, creating documents.

Jon Marsden – MIS Secretary and Zoom organiser –needs to be told about all events in all regions in order to make the MIS as effective as possible.

Malcolm Donne -Not much has happened re the BMC this year but acts as a mailbox contact.

Ramblers Rep – Dave Doody has taken over.

Pete Watson- informally, access and conservation officer.

5. **Treasurer's Report**: LINK TO WEBSITE NEEDED. THIS IS MEANINGLESS WITHOUT THE GRAPH WHICH WOULD NOT COPY.

HS: The 2020 AGM changed the club's financial year to run from 1st of January, matching the years for which members pay subscriptions. Although it would be possible to draw up accounts to cover the six months from the end of our last financial year, i.e. 1st July 2020 to 31st December 2020, it seems more useful to present them for calendar year 2020 and also for the two previous calendar years. This takes the accounts back to January 2018, which is when we started using the WebCollect system (the refunds we paid out in 2018 because of the change in membership years have been counted as 2017 expenditure, so do not appear here). Red Rope Annual Accounts 2018-2020

	2018	2019	2020
Income Subscriptions	8,440.12	9,164.71	8,811.93
Regional Transfer	200.00	200.00	200.00
Donations	20.00	100.00	20.00
Misc. (hut, T-shirt)	121.50		
Blea Tarn appeal	571.74		
2020 Easter trip deposits	719.74		
TOTAL:	8,781.62	9,836.45	9,751.67
Expenditure Affiliations	4,841.35	4,470.75	5,614.30
AGM (net)	101.15	394.39	43.17
Bulletin/MIS	2,122.16	705.09	1,532.78
NC expenses	681.89	913.85	209.50
Mem. Admin.	603.11	497.91	413.60
Publicity	180.76	193.75	61.19
Regional support	200.00	55.00	220.00
Training	220.00		
Misc. (hut, T-shirt)	91.83	68.95	
BMC Mend Our Mountains	1,000.00		
Transfer to Trips a/c	350.00		
LMC Blea Tarn Appeal	1,000.00		
TOTAL:	10,172.25	8,519.69	8,094.54
Surplus (or loss)	-1,390.63	1,316.76	1,657.13

"Operating surplus" -40.63 1,745.02 937.39 31st Dec balance 18,086.42 13,490.74 17,909.912 Perhaps surprisingly, the Covid pandemic has had only a limited impact on these figures. Most members had renewed for 2020 before the first lockdown, so subscription income and our largest item of expenditure, affiliations, were little affected. The largest consequence is that we spent much less on physical meetings, with only one physical NC meeting and an online AGM. Subscription income in 2021 will probably be down (see below), but our three main costs will automatically scale back: BMC/Mountaineering Scotland affiliation fees, Bulletin printing and postage, and membership administration costs (mostly postage of membership cards). As always, there are some exceptional items, highlighted in italics (the "operating surplus" is the difference between income and expenditure ignoring these items). These two items affect our current situation, partly as a result of the pandemic:

- In 2019, the National Committee agreed to donate £1,000 to the Lancashire Mountaineering Club's Blea Tarn Appeal, to assist with major improvements to the "other" LMC hut, in the Lake District. We also agreed to appeal to the membership for further donations, which would then be matched by national funded. In other words, we have already paid LMC £1,000 and will pay them a further £1,143.48 (£571.74 x 2) once work resumes.
- The Easter 2020 to Clapham was planned as an experiment in online booking using WebCollect, which meant the deposits came into the admin account, and then stayed there when the trip was postponed because of the pandemic. We now have a new booking at Clapham, and all but two of the members who booked in 2020 are going on that, so most of this money will be transferred to the trip account with two refunds due.

The relationship between income and expenditure and the amount of money actually in the bank account is quite complex, as subscriptions paid in at the end of one year are in fact for the following year, and some items of expenditure are not paid for until well after a year ends. The figures above doe "31st Dec balance" are based on the actual bank balance on that date, but are less than the bank balance because there are three other "Red Rope accounts" also held in the same bank account:

- Action Fund: £2,000.52
- Hut Fund: £145.67
- Sheffield Region funds: £460.90

The resulting total of £2,607.09 has been deducted from the end-of-year bank balance for all three years, because there was no income or expenditure associated with any of them during 2019 or 2020. In December 2020 a member paying by cheque donated £9 to the Action Fund, which will appear in the 2021 accounts; the Hut Fund's last transaction was in December 2018, when we bought some saucepans for the LMC

Cae Ysgubor hut; and the Sheffield funds have been untouched in the three and a half years I have been treasurer. I do wonder if there is scope for some rationalisation. The graph below shows the actual amount in the bank account as a continuous time series. It makes very clear how seasonal the club's finances now are: subscription income comes in at the start of each year, and then a substantial part of it is fairly quickly paid out as affiliation fees. The reason why the end-of-year balance for 2019 was low in the above table is simply that we were a little late sending out renewal emails; and the graph ends where it does in March 2021 because we have just sent off the BMC affiliation payment, but Mountaineering Scotland comes a little later. The total amount of 2021 subscription income received as of March 26th is £6,812.66, so it is significantly down on the previous three years, although we hope more members will renew as we resume walks and trips.

Officer statements: ALL NEEDING LINKS TO THE WEBSITE [National Secretary's report](#) from December 2020 I collated the agenda and background notes for the NC meeting on 26 Jan, 2021 and have done the same for the NC meeting on 22 March, 2021. I have also collated and edited this set of reports. I attended, and briefly spoke at, a very good BMC NW Clubs Zoom meeting at the end of February, which was organised by Dominic Oughton. Two other members of Merseyside RR also attended and spoke. BMC Clubs Contact, Jane Thompson, was the invited speaker. The main theme of the meeting was preparation for the lifting of restrictions. The BMC urged to help publicise affiliated clubs. I would encourage regions to have plans in place for when the current restrictions are eased. It is obviously concerning that we have lost 81 members from the 2020 total of 300, as noted in the Membership Secretary's report. Hopefully some of those will re-join in April when we can get together more and the club can also gain some new members. Bulletin editor's report from December 2020 I designed and edited the December 2020 edition of the bulletin. I was pleased with the submissions given the effect of the lockdown on the club's activities. The next edition will be out in late May. The deadline for submissions is 30 April. David Symonds 17/ 03/ 21

National Trips report Our work over the last few months has centred on rearranging postponed trips - these were finalised for the March MIS. Response has been positive with trips filling up quickly. We have added extra places for the July trip to Clapham and booked additional dates at a cottage in Borrowdale to extend the October Lakes trip which attracted 30 members – we now have 3 separate trips there. First Aid training is on offer at one of these weeks and Navigation training at another with the former being full at 8 participants. Numbers for Muir Cottage in August are, at the time of writing, relatively low at 6 or 7 but this is an adequate number for the trip to go ahead. Clapham will be the first of our national trips and, as trips organizer, Becky will need to consider arrangements/adaptations to help everyone feel comfortable. We suggest an NC sub-group meeting to discuss the ideas Humphrey wrote about in the December 2020 Bulletin, and anything else which is relevant. Suggestions can then be shared with trip participants, discussed further and finalised. Trip payments Cheques have been difficult to manage with some having been paid in for trips that were subsequently postponed, and others expiring. The majority of members are opting for bank transfer so we just need to check reference protocol which should include name of trip, surname of members and date, and whether Adrian is happy to keep track of payments and liaise with the trip organiser/treasurer prior to the trip. Becky and Sarah Bates 17/ 03/ 21 MIS Editor's Report The MIS was prepared and distributed throughout the lockdown months of 2020 via WebCollect, using the current membership list. It gave a monthly update of the situation regarding trips as they were cancelled, postponed, or new ones booked. Some regional programmes of walks were included as and when they were reinstated when the lockdown rules were relaxed during the Autumn. Each month links were included to the most recent advice on walking and climbing from the BMC, from the UK government, and from the national governments of Scotland and Wales. The October issue had a brief report on the successful AGM via Zoom, which was amplified in the Bulletin and by the official Minutes being published on the Red Rope website. In January and February, the programmes of day activities were removed as they were again suspended, but postponed trips and new trip bookings continued to be published as organisers looked optimistically towards the future. Following an NC decision, the MIS continued to be distributed to members who had not yet renewed, in addition to currently paid-up members. The March issue included the West Midlands walks programme, newly reinstated in anticipation of the relaxation of lockdown rules, and the April issue will contain Sheffield's reinstated walks programme, as well as further trip bookings which continue to be made. It is hoped that more regions will submit their programme of local walking and climbing activities for publication in the MIS, as they are re-established through the Spring and Summer months. Jon Marsden 15/03/21

Membership Secretary's Report Gill Platt, 21/03/21 This last year has seen a fall in renewals, probably partly because of Covid and members getting that bit older and starting to feel too incapacitated to be able to join walks. I'm one of those as far as walking is concerned, so I have had plenty of time to try and get to grips with the current membership. We now have 219 members. It has been heart-warming that we had 8 new members last year and 3 so far this year. It is also quite encouraging that 207 members (and the four mentioned) have used WebCollect to pay their subs, which has made my job easier. However I'm always happy to receive cheques or bank transfers to facilitate membership payments. I'm still having issues with the database, for example, if a member changes their band, they can appear on the database any number of times, so I have had to remove them whilst I am sorting out the current information to send to regional reps. I have today compiled a list for each region with their current members and those who have not renewed, so regions can chase up former members. I have also compiled the spreadsheet below. If the club is to continue we need to think about how to attract new members. The fact that 11 have joined during lockdown suggests that there are people out there who are interested in Red Rope even if the chances of walking have been reduced. I have admired the way some regions have tried to have walks with limited numbers or done virtual walks, so the enthusiasm is out there. I am happy to continue as membership secretary unless someone has a burning desire to do the job themselves. Just getting to grips with WebCollect has been challenging but I think I've finally got there. My thanks to Janet Saunders yet again for the help she has given me to get the membership cards printed and the renewal letters to work on a mail merge.

6. Statement by the national trips secretaries, Becky Bates and Sarah Bates:

Trips and Covid 19

Currently any activity involving more than 6 requires a risk assessment to comply with BMC guidelines but in planning for our trips to resume we have reached provisional decisions on trip arrangements. These will be reviewed after huts re-open.

1. Transport

- No change - banding to be applied for shared cars only unless no alternative is available when public transport will be banded

2. Food

- No change for evening meal
- Breakfast and lunch opt out option
- New food hygiene guidelines will be produced, based on LMC hut document and this will be shared and agreed at the first trip meeting

3. Covid testing before trips

This was ruled out as a requirement but a declaration must be signed by all trip participants

'It is important that you do not join a trip if you or any of your household/bubble

- *Have symptoms of Covid 19*
- *Have tested positive for Covid 19 in the last 14 days*
- *Are awaiting the results of a Covid 19 test*
- *Have been asked to self isolate*

4. Cancellation

- Any trip cancellation made owing to any of the points from 3. (above) will be fully refunded

5. Adhoc trips eg May camping trip

- Campsite costs will be banded
- Transport and food will not be banded

6. Reduced hut occupancy

If it becomes necessary to reduce numbers at huts

- Ask all booked on whether anyone is willing to drop out and join a later trip
- Prioritise lower bands, members living in cities and consider date of booking

Next Steps

- Add hygiene advice to website
- Add Covid declaration to website and booking form
- Arrange another meeting in June or when huts re-open

Extra trips needed?? Questions:

Arthur Bowling: Will Covid passports or vaccination cards count as trip security documents? RB -The declaration should be enough, it has been decided not to ask for vaccination status. Trip organisers have some latitude to organise slightly differently within each trip to accommodate C-19 rules.

Steve Smyth: Thinks it's illogical not to ask people for tests. Lateral Flow test are very easy to get, shouldn't everybody get one prior to a trip? Barbara S, seconded by Pete C, says they are not reliable.

Gill Cox- lateral flow tests are not totally useless but tend to make people more negligent of other hygiene measures.

Further questions raised re car-sharing, huts reopening etc and the need for very detailed risk assessments. Things are changing all the time so further discussion deemed necessary with Gill Cox's input.

7. Resolution for AGM 2021: Pete Watson:

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will make access to the countryside and the right to protest more difficult. Wild camping could become a criminal offence. We assert our right to roam, and will make it a main campaign issue for the club. Proposals Red Rope therefore opposes this bill. We resolve to make it a main campaign issue for the coming year and to carry out the following actions:

- a) To encourage regions and individual members to support local and national opposition to the Bill and to prioritise a local campaign to keep rights of way open, by getting involved with the Ramblers' "Don't Lose Your Way" campaign, for example.
- b) We will support the Kinder Trespass 90th anniversary on 23 April 2022 and Winter Hill 125th anniversary on September 5th, 2021. This to include donations of £50 to each of the two campaigns if they have fundraising requests.
- c) To maximise turn out for the Kinder event we book a national trip to coincide with the 90th anniversary. Hayfield or nearby would be the best venue.
- d) The bulletin to carry articles on the issue, including the history of trespass, book reviews and legal pieces on our right to roam and camp.
- e) Red Rope should support and participate in opposition to the bill as a national club.

Summary of Pete's preamble: He had taken part with other Notts members in a trespass with support from many passers-by - 'Red rope needs to have clear policy of opposing the police bill.

It will increase stop and search powers, limit and criminalise our right to protest, and be used against gypsy traveller and Romany communities specifically in England and Wales. It is a threat to wild camping, protest camps and any form of trespass in a country where 92% of the land is in private hands. Outlawing 'unauthorised encampments' will threaten our right to roam. Currently trespass is dealt with under civil law. If there's no damage to property or breach of the peace it is unlikely to lead to court proceedings. Trespass could be criminalised. Also a new offence of 'residing on land with/without a vehicle' Currently a civil offence, this could threaten protest camps or wild camping.

On the specific bullet points of the motion, rights of way should not be restricted but should be expanded. Red Rope members may wish to use the 'don't lose your way' campaign of the Ramblers. Putting my postcode into the search engine showed 532 miles of paths on a radius which could be identified. (Try this with your own postcode.) We should support the anniversary actions of Kinder and Winter Hill. My view is that we should have a new national Banner, designs could be proposed and the most popular choice created, so that we can advertise our club at these events.'

Discussion: Humphrey S- resultant action may be low without a planned course of action e.g nobody has availed themselves of support for XR action.

Nigel Green asked for the donation amount to be raised to £75, this amendment was accepted and unanimously.

Julian Batsleer pointed out that the club had veterans of the 1982 Kinder Trespass and the club should have a presence at the 2022 protest.

There were no speakers against the motion and a Zoom vote was carried out using the Raise Hands feature with some 'chat' votes also. The motion was passed with 33 votes in favour, none against and one abstention.

8. Discussion of ways to increase membership:

DS: There needs to be a clear regional walks program 6 months in advance to attract new members. Merseyside saw an increase in membership when walk frequency increased from 1 to 2 per month. Word of mouth was important, also the internet could be useful in ways we have not thought of.

JS: Agreed with David. Coventry had experimented with using Meet-up; 4 walks were put on the site resulting in 60 people signing up and communications opening up with 10 potential members. Sadly this initiative was curtailed by C-19 but she has written a bulletin article about it. Jon M pointed out there was a fee for using Meet-up. £15-18 per month according to Janet but suggestions that the national funds could pay that.

Steve Smyth: Had used Meet-up for a sailing club, lots of people sampling the activity but no long term interest – butterflies! He had more success with Socialise Sheffield which brought in more members and was free to use. Thinks use of social media eg Twitter, Whatsapp is essential.

Steve Wright – Also Meet-up only listed Birmingham as a region whereas they wanted to draw people from a wider West Midlands field.

Pat Nichol: The national website could be improved, it's hard to find local walks info – needs tweaking to make it more accessible. She pointed out that if there's an increase in the level of publicity we need to be prepared for the level of response.

HS: From using WebCollect a trickle of people find access to the club purely on line and they need to be quickly involved in their local regional activity.

Steve W: Sub-committee work has been done on membership, could this be reused? Has it been implemented? JS- years ago, may need updating. SW offered to coordinate that.

Ways of harnessing social media were briefly discussed – Twitter, Whatsapp etc. Janet mentioned the RR facebook page which has been dormant this year. Some page content has been paid for, we have 400 followers. She reiterated the need for a social media secretary.

HS: We need to find out more about new/prospective members perceptions. Phil Webster - current ban on car-sharing may make the club seem unwelcoming.

8. AOB: Malcolm Donne mentioned H2O, (Hills to Ocean) a BMC initiative to clean up the environment of litter in places popular for climbing and walking. He is taking litter-picking equipment to the ad hoc camping trip to Derbyshire, it has been risk-assessed and he plans to promote the collection of litter at Black Rock.

Humphrey Southall raised the question of the Hathersage weekend which will not need to include the AGM so can be a 'celebratory' weekend. There was discussion of what members might like to see, all optional, training, structured discussions etc. Treasure Hunts, climbing introductions and the pleasing prospect of a private booking at the open air swimming pool were mentioned as possibilities.

The end of formal business was declared at 18.32. No volunteer came forward for the important role of Publicity Officer.