

Minutes of Red Rope NC Meeting, 27 January 2025 (Zoom @ 6 pm)

Present: Steve Wright (Chair), Janet Saunders (Minutes), Humphrey Southall, Sue Whittle, David Symonds, Jon Marsden, Sarah Bates, Richard Bennett

Agenda Item	Comment <i>(agenda items were not taken in numeric order)</i>	Action
1	Chair: Steve Minute- taker: Janet	
2	Introductions and Welcome	
3	Apologies: Becky Bates, Gill Platt, Pete Watson, Hugh Wallis, Peter Billington	
4	Minutes of previous meeting 12 October 2024 Accepted as accurate	
5	Matters arising from the minutes: All matters arising covered under following agenda points	
6	Action points from previous meeting 12/ 10 / 2024 (Steve's spreadsheet) 6E.) Members Handbook: Gill has a draft to be developed further, but this has gone no further, partly due to Gill being busy with renewals. 32.) Help with IT services: Janet has appealed via Riseup and one person, but no volunteers yet – work in progress 33.) Group to look at social media use: Work in Progress. There had been a discussion on national Riseup regarding Facebook and the result was we are waiting a year to see what happens. Janet reported we have removed all retweet links to 'X' from our website. We have never had our own 'X' account.	7.) Gill and Humphrey to work on new handbook WIP 32.) Janet to appeal via WebCollect all members 33) Sarah to ask Pete Clark about this. Bluesky and Mastodon were both mentioned

	36.) route and safety cards now on the website, safety article has appeared. 36f) "What to do in an Emergency" summary needed 36e) Updates on Safeguarding still to do	36f) Jon to resend his document for Website, Janet to upload it next to Route Card. 36e) Sue to add Safeguarding to Trips Information
9	Issues Arising from Officer Reports Starting use of Google Forms on trips. This is now implemented. Sue wanted to know if the old Word/PDF form was still available for regional trips and was advised that it is available from Trip Booking page, as before. A question was asked if people's information in the Google Forms could be saved for the next time, to save retyping it.	Janet will change website words to make this very clear that this form is not the Google form so no confusion. Done Hugh is asked to look into this
10	Involving more members in running the club, especially Regional Reps Getting more people to take on NC roles and reaching out to regions – this is an ongoing situation which Pete Watson was moving forward, but he could not be at this meeting. (Note: Committee vacancies existing and forthcoming)	Pete to continue work on this
7a	Club finance - Humphrey Southall Auditing Accounts: Pete had asked Brian Greer to look at Red Rope accounts as an Independent examiner and Humphrey has sent him some information to get started. Brian also wants to look at trip accounts Current Year. BMC raising affiliation fee <i>this year</i> has been absorbed, but makes a rise in membership fees needed January 2026. For this current year, Humphrey has drafted a letter to BMC regarding our reasons for submitting our band 1's as 'unemployed' members' in this year's affiliation. Jon suggested adding words 'dependent on pensions and/or benefits'	Humphrey will reword the BMC letter Humphrey will reword the background notes presented with his motion

Next year's schedule of fees. Humphrey has submitted a draft AGM motion for NC to consider and a spreadsheet of calculations. There has been a lengthy discussion over email about many factors relating to this including:

Staying in the BMC/ forming a non-BMC club

Comparative costs to the membership fees of other clubs

Would we need insurance for day walks vs staying in accommodation?

Could we affiliate to Ramblers instead? Humphrey checking the implications of this with Howdens (who insure both Ramblers and BMC)

If we disaffiliated, there may be problems using BMC huts

Need for membership fees ratio to be maintained across bands
(summary was circulated to NC, see more in 7b and 7c below).

Humphrey reported that our general club costs have dropped since the pandemic

- We have fewer face to face NC meetings and have thus reduced travel costs.
- We have also reduced postage costs.

His proposal is for around 10% increase in fees (importantly not the 23% increase that the BMC has imposed on our affiliation). The detail is in his motion. We have accumulated reserves because of our reduced costs which can subsidize the affiliation over the next few years.

No opposing motion has been presented. Discussion has taken place over email about Hugh's suggestion that Trips account could play a part in subsidizing affiliation, but this would be the subject of a possible amendment and not the motion itself.

The NC meeting unanimously supported this view, so that Humphrey's motion will go forward to AGM, with some background notes. The Chairperson thanked everyone for the work they have done in this area.

7b	Club Finance/ BMC Affiliation (National Sec, not present) One advantage of BMC affiliation is use of BMC/MS accommodation huts, and this is particularly true for Scotland region. Sarah pointed out that although other accommodation was booked this was often because there was no suitable BMC hut in a particular area, and sometimes for better comfort for cheaper prices. The other main reason is for Club Insurance for our activities. It was pointed out that the club does still run occasional climbing trips and climbing and mountaineering activities do take place on our trips, depending on the people and the area visited. Steve reported that investigations some years ago had indicated that legal expenses cover was part of the overall high cost of insurance. Humphrey has tried to discover more about Ramblers' insurance costs for comparison, but is not having much response from Howdens. Steve offered to try.	Note: there is no proposal for us to disaffiliate from the BMC. Our affiliation is part of our Constitution and a change would require a full scale change Steve to try Howden's as they are based in Birmingham. Humphrey to keep trying too.
7c	How members should assess their band (Dave Symonds) Dave explained that he felt strongly that non-income factors should be considered when people were calculating their band. Examples: Finances of a couple compared to a single householder People paying mortgage/rent compared to people no longer paying Other factors such as benefits, concessionary travel It was commented that it would be difficult to put all individual circumstances into a formula. Trusting the membership is important, we would just ask members to use their judgement about their own circumstances. A letter to this effect has already gone out from National Secretary and as part of the renewal process. Richard had submitted some research of his own just before the meeting, suggesting that household income was important. Humphrey pointed out that there was already a 'hardship' provision, in that fees could be waived for someone wanting to join but with very little income. <i>It is not clear where this is recorded or communicated.</i>	National Sec Pete/ Steve? to check the hardship provision for next meeting

	Dave Symonds was invited to check the wording already sent out and suggest more words to be added. It was pointed out that the Banding formula had not changed for 10 years since 2015 and needed re-assessment. It was suggested that a group be set up to look at this and implications for membership and trip income. This should be a separate activity to the upcoming subscription increase.	Dave Symonds to suggest additional words for the renewal letter/ band calculation if needed. Steve to set up a banding group. Done
8	Membership renewals – Gill Platt See Membership Sec report. The renewal (?) letter was circulated to all members with some wording encouraging them to reassess their band. Gill reported that several had now changed bands. NB. Would also need to post the same wording on the website where enquirers click through to membership fees (done). Also needed on Webcollect fees calculation page.	Janet to check the wording on both. Done Webcollect wording now in line with website.
9	Issues/Queries arising from Officer Reports	
9a	Gill raised issue of National Gathering training needed? It would be nice to offer something. While everyone agreed this was a good idea, it was suggested skill sharing options are explored.	Whose job is this? Gill?
9b	National Gathering Treasure Hunt – is Jon willing to do this? Is there someone else who could do it if not? Jon said he did not know the area and was not currently able to say if it would be suitable for a treasure hunt. National Gathering Quiz – Dave S will not be able to organize it this year. National Gathering parking Gill did contact Dovedale House but their responses have been very limited. There is parking at the house with overflow parking in the adjoining NT property. She can't find out what the arrival time is but thinks it's 4pm and we need to clear the place by 10am on the Sunday but we can store our belongings somewhere if we want to go for a walk. Most of this is already in the MIS anyway.	Jon to visit Gill to get a quiz volunteer Gill to update attendees if the arrival time changes.

9c	Sarah raised the issue of Winter Skills Training on the Killin trip, to which she had not had a response, and needed a response ASAP. It was pointed out the club had committed to provide training subsidies to members up to £60 this year, and some funds had already been claimed.	Sarah to supply more information and negotiate with Humphrey and Steve.
11 & 12	Sleeping arrangements on trips There seemed to be several parts to this issue: Bedroom allocation regarding snorers; light sleepers needing an early bedtime and no torches on; gender issues on sharing rooms The Trips subgroup will discuss the general issues of bedroom allocation – it also affects what huts are booked and possibly even who wishes to come on a trip, dependent on the accommodation. Dave suggested this was a topic that should be discussed in the pre-trip meeting and the first night of the trip. A separate subgroup convened by Becky will be discussing the gender issues. Neither of these meetings have taken place yet.	Becky, Sarah Becky and Sarah to have the trips subgroup meeting, add these issues to the agenda, and Becky to liaise with Jon and others about the gender sub-group discussion.
13	Future NCs: Secretary Proposed future dates: AGM: Saturday 5th April (Zoom at 4.00 pm) - Formal notice 4th February - Resolutions 22nd February - Documents out 8th March - Amendments 22nd March National Committees Wednesday 14th May (Zoom) or face to face on a Saturday in May? Friday 25th July (Zoom) September 26th to 29th at CY Hut Pete is out of the country from 10th January until 15th February so Steve is alternative acting secretary for this period. The idea of a face to face in May was raised by Steve, in Birmingham – he will investigate costs and options. Agreement would be pending costs and likely attendance.	Steve to investigate Face to face cost and options.

13	Any Other Business – The Membership' secretary's laptop is irretrievably broken. This officer really needs urgent access to a computer to do the role. It was agreed that: - an appeal would be made among members to see if anybody had a functioning spare one they could donate. - If not then a subsidy towards a new one should be made. Note: Memsec reported she does in fact have a desktop computer which works and thinks she may be able to arrange a solution to her mobile computing	Humphrey to make the appeal and initiate any subsidy.if needed
	Meeting closed at 8 pm	