

Minutes of the Red Rope Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 6.30pm 18th March 2026 on Zoom

Agenda

- 1) It was agreed that John Dickie chair the meeting. Pete Watson to take minutes.
46 members present, and therefore the meeting was quorate.
- 2) **Approval of the minutes from 2025 AGM.** Approved nem. con.
- 3) **Matters Arising from the minutes.**
No matters arising raised.
- 4) **Statement by the Club's Treasurer and questions.**
This was referred to the chat room. No issues raised by members.
- 5) **Reports from officers and regions.**
This was referred to the chat room. No issues raised by members.
- 6) **Election of Officers.**
The following national officers were re-elected:

Secretary: Pete Watson

Assistant Secretary: Steve Wright

Treasurer: Humphrey Southall

National Trips Organisers: Becky Bates/Sarah Bates

National Trips Treasurer: Hugh Wallis

Membership Secretary: Gill Platt

Bulletin Editor: Dave Symonds

Website/IT Officer: Janet Saunders

Monthly Information Sheet Editor: Jon Marsden

BMC rep: Peter Billington

Mountaineering Scotland Rep: Helen Todd

Safeguarding Officer: Sue Whittle

Hut Liaison Officer: Malcolm Donne

Ramblers Rep: Vacant

Training Officer: Vacant

Publicity Officer: Vacant

Auditor (not on National Committee)

Brian Greer

In favour 25 Against 0

7) Constitutional Amendments, policy resolutions and other resolutions.

Motion 1: New Banding Proposals

Proposed by: National Committee,

Moved by Dave Symonds, formally seconded

The NC has discussed some principles for a new system

- a) There shall be the addition of a 'hardship band' for people who have almost no income.
- b) There will be six bands altogether – this prevents people from simply picking the central band
- c) There should no longer be a 'break-even' band as such – because this tends to be the easy option for people – instead the Treasurer would set a notional 'break even' figure, around which the bands are set. In the table below, for example, the 'break-even' figure is £42, between C and D.
- d) Bands based on figures for 'relevant income' quickly become out of date, and need updating regularly, which can be a difficult exercise. **We propose instead a system based on description of circumstances, see below.**

There is a motion on adjusting fees tabled at this 2026 AGM.

The fees suggested below are therefore provisional.

Band	Description	Suggested Annual Sub
A	Band A is for members with little or no income, not receiving benefits or being supported by anyone else, e.g. asylum seekers.	£5
B	Band B is for members who receive benefits e.g. universal credit, job seeker's allowance.	£20
C	Band C is for members who are in receipt of wages or pensions but need to take care in order to pay their monthly bills. They may be single householders and paying high rents	£30

	on a low income. They would be net recipients of subsidies from other members' fees, to a limited extent.	
D	Band D is for members who manage their expenditure fairly easily. They may, for example, have savings, own their own home or be able to share living expenses. They would pay a small amount more than the full cost of their Red Rope membership each year.	£44
E	Band E is for members who have no financial difficulties and are in a comfortable position regarding housing costs and savings. Their membership fees would go some way towards subsidising less well-off members.	£52
F	Band F is for members who have a high income or savings and can easily meet their outgoings. They are likely to be, or have been, in a well-paid job, and have substantial savings. Their fees include a significant contribution to subsidise less well-off members.	£64

1st Amendment to Motion 1:

Background

The proposal for the new banding criteria is a significant move from our current criteria and although the descriptions for each band have involved a lot of thought and work from the NC, there's no clear idea as to how they will be interpreted across the membership and what effect they will have on our banding distribution. In addition, the motion as written doesn't actually say that the new system will be introduced, or when. Our amendment is therefore as follows:

At the end of the motion add:

"We propose that:

- 1) The banding criteria in the table above be implemented from January 2027
- 2) The new system is trialled for one year, and is then reviewed, in light of its effect on the club's banding distribution."

Proposer: Barbara Segal. Formally seconded

This amendment was accepted by Dave Symonds as mover of motion 1.

Humphrey Southall pointed out that if Motion 2 was passed, then the new rates would come in in November 2026. He did not oppose the amendment.

Brian Greer proposed that Band B should be worded “means tested benefits”: this was not specifically voted on.

The substantive motion was carried 30 votes for with 0 against

2nd Amendment to Motion 1

This AGM welcomes the following features in the Banding Motion

- The new lower band
- Housing costs considered
- Household income considered

While the descriptive representation of the new bands is accepted the wording needs improvement.

Before the band descriptions there should be a preamble which should include but need not be limited to:

- That these are guidelines and members self-assess their own bands.
- That members should remember the socialist principles underlying RR’s operation as a club and consider the need to pay fees appropriate to their incomes to ensure the club can continue to function.
- The factors to be considered – household income, savings, housing costs, dependents.
- An indication of how much of our membership fees go automatically to BMC or MS

As the motion is worded it has shortcomings:

- Band B (benefits) implies about £100/week, much less than the current Band 1 £180/week. Because of the complexity of the benefits system the actual income of someone on benefits could be significantly lower or higher.
- Someone on a low wage, maybe current Band 2, with high housing costs would not get help with the proposed new banding.
- Housing costs and household composition are not mentioned for Bands A and B
- The boundaries between the higher bands, especially E/F depend, on the vagaries of members imaginations. This will likely lead to as many anomalies as the present system.

No estimate has been made of the effect on subscription and trip income, nor any consideration as to how someone with no income would be able to go to participate in any activities.

This AGM instructs the NC to reword the motion and re-submit it at an EGM with a set deadline to be agreed at the AGM which would be in time for the 2027 subscriptions to be adjusted.

Proposer: Richard Bennett, Seconder Mickey McDiarmid.

The amendment was lost 8 votes in favour with 20 votes against.

Motion 2: Adjusting Membership Fees.

Proposed by: National Committee

Moved by Humphrey Southall, formally seconded.

This AGM agrees to add these words to Article 7, clause (d)(iii) of the club constitution: "The NC may adjust all membership fees for the next financial year by the same percentage, this percentage not to exceed the percentage by which the British Mountaineering Council has increased its affiliation fee."

Background Notes:

Article 7 of the Red Rope constitution establishes the National Committee, clause (d) defines its responsibilities, and sub-clause (d) currently just lists, as one of these responsibilities, "Overseeing the financial regulation of the Club". Article 6, defining the role of the AGM, includes "To receive and, if approved, to adopt a statement of the Club's accounts for the previous financial year, to appoint an auditor and to decide Club membership fees and other charges in the context of a budget for the current financial year" (clause (b)(iii)): under the current constitution, all changes to membership fees require an AGM vote, and the motion would give the NC a narrowly defined power to change fees without such a vote.

This change is needed because the British Mountaineering Council has changed how they set their membership fees. Previously they had infrequent large increases, then kept the same rates for several years, but they are now raising them annually, in line with the retail price index. Their new rates for the coming year will be announced "by the end of September", and in 2025 this meant notification on September 30th.

- Two-thirds of our expenditure from our membership income (almost exactly 67% over 2022-25) is on the BMC and the very similar Mountaineering Scotland affiliation fees, and these affiliations are required by the Red Rope constitution: our membership fees have to cover them so must be kept roughly in line.
- Even if we moved the date of our AGM to the autumn, it would be impossible to pass an AGM motion in time to cover the BMC increase: AGM motions require four weeks' notice to the membership, and our new rates for the coming year go into effect at the start of November
- So far, the BMC increases have matched the overall inflation rate, so our other costs will be going up at roughly the same rate. If the BMC fees were to be increased massively, the motion still gives the NC the option not to match the increase.

- Any changes to the banding system, or to the relationship between the charges for different bands, would still be matters for the AGM. If this motion is adopted, all bands would be adjusted upwards by the same small percentage. This would mean that our membership fees would NOT be rounded to the nearest pound, but this is not a problem now that most of our membership pay by direct debit (324 out of 334, as of 31/1/26). The BMC fees themselves are not at all round numbers: the 2026 increase was from £29.33 per member to £30.74.
- The NC is not proposing an immediate change to the membership charge to cover that 2026 increase, as it can initially be covered from reserves, and proposed changes to the banding system would probably require a major revision before the 2027 renewal.

The motion was carried 31 voted for with 0 against and met the 2/3 majority needed for a constitutional change.

Motion 3: Changes to Transport Charges

Proposed by: National Committee

Moved by Hugh Wallis, formally seconded.

Background Notes:

Following the 2025 AGM at which there were resolutions discussed but not passed on aspects of trip transport, it was agreed to set up a working group to look into possible changes. The working group was incorporated into the Trips group and met twice. It discussed two particular issues; firstly people who have to travel by public transport when there is no car available and have to pay more than they would if there was a space in a car and secondly payments to car drivers. There was no consensus on how the rules should be changed, so the discussions were reported to the NC for them to discuss and make proposals.

On public transport it was suggested that the full extra amount paid should be rebated, but this was not agreed partly as sharing the cost of potentially large payments (e.g. because of late booking) seems fairest, partly it is more complicated with the need to assess distance and it is not obviously sensible to link public transport payments to petrol prices (e.g. particularly if the trip was by public transport only). After discussions the NC agreed the simplest proposal would be to increase the refunds of public transport fares.

On payments to car drivers, we noted some confusion and unfairness in which cars were being considered as "trip cars" (i.e. eligible for payments from Red Rope for journeys to/from the trip; all cars are eligible for on-trip journeys) and then applying a multiple to the Band 3 rates to each one. With many smaller trips and the change at the 2024 AGM to reimburse drivers from their home, Red Rope can be paying out large

sums depending on how many cars are trip cars. We discussed applying multipliers of less than 3 when less than 3 people were in the car, but this was not favoured as the view was it wouldn't adequately compensate members for bringing their cars. After discussions the NC agreed the simplest solution would be to keep the payments to drivers at the same level, but increase payments for car users by 20% and then pay 2.5 times the Band 3 rate to drivers (adding 20% and then multiplying by 2.5, is the same as multiplying by 3). Note only under exceptional circumstances would a car be counted as a trip car if it's brought by somebody travelling alone.

It may be helpful to consider an example to understand the consequences of the proposed changes:

1. Suppose the Band 3 car cost for a return journey is £50 (roughly 700 miles, depending on petrol price) and suppose the same journey costs £100 by train.
2. Currently Band 1 people pay 55% of these figures; so £27.50 in car and £55 for train. Similarly Band 2 pay 78%; so £39 in car and £78 by train.
3. A car driver will receive £150 back using the current multiplier (on Band 3 charge) of 3.
4. The change proposed for car passengers is they would pay 20% more; so £33 Band 1, £46.80 Band 2 & £60 Bands 3, 4 & 5.
5. The change proposed for train passengers is Band 1 would pay 40% so £40, Band 2 would pay 70% so £70 and Bands 3, 4 & 5 would still pay £100.
6. A car driver would still receive £150 back using the new multiplier of 2.5.
7. Note in this example going by train currently costs Band 1 people £27.50 (55 - 27.5) more than a car, but if both proposals are adopted the difference would drop to £7 (40 - 33). Similarly for Band 2 the £39 (78 - 39) difference would drop to £23.20 (70 - 46.8).

It is intended these changes would apply for trips happening after the 2026 AGM (the first national trip after the AGM starts on 25 April). Note if changes to banding are also agreed, transport charging will also need to be altered.

Proposed changes to Policies (these are in section G on Club Finance, part 4 about Multi-Day Trips). Wording to be removed is struck through and wording to be added is in bold in red.

These changes would apply for trips happening after the 2026 AGM (the first national trip after the AGM starts on 25 April)

4i Each person who brings their own car on a trip at the request of the trip organiser, will receive reimbursement, ~~at the prevailing rate, based on the number of passengers, up to a maximum of three (including the driver). Reimbursement at the same rate will be given where car owners are asked to bring equipment or food in lieu of passengers~~ **2.5 times the Band 3 rate.**

4l Members attending national trips may choose to use public transport to and/or from the trip. Those choosing to use public transport will cover their own transport costs to

and/or from the trip and will not receive, or give, any subsidy. However, if there is no suitable place available in a trip vehicle, those in Bands 1 and 2 will receive a subsidy appropriate **related** to their band; **this is 60% for Band 1 and 30% for Band 2.**

4n For travel during the trip that (such **as** to or from walks) is by car, members will be charged at the appropriate rate for their band multiplied by the distance travelled. Reimbursement to drivers will be at the Band 3 rate times **32.5**. If public transport is used, those in Bands 1 and 2 will receive a subsidy ~~appropriate to their band~~ **as detailed in 4l above**. Those in other bands will pay their own fares.

4v If members have bought public transport tickets for travel to the trip, refunds of fares paid (after any refund received on the unused tickets) will be paid at the same rates as detailed in 4l above.

Motion was carried 27 votes in favour, with 2 against

Speaker: Lewis Winks from the Right to Roam Campaign

Motion 4: Regional Transport Charges

Proposed by: Richard Bennett, formally seconded.

Policy C 11

Currently

“Members going on trips organised by other regions are responsible for their own transport costs.”

To be replaced with

“Organising regions should welcome members from other regions on their trips. Unless they have opted to travel independently, members travelling via the organising region on their way to a venue will be included in the transport arrangements and charges between the organising region and the venue. Regions are encouraged to include all travel for any member who has not opted to travel independently in the trip transport arrangements and charges as it would be for a national trip.”

The motion was carried 35 votes in favour, with 0 against

Motion 5: To alter the quorum at Annual and Emergency General Meetings

Proposed by: National Committee

Moved by Pete Watson, formally seconded

"This AGM agrees to delete all reference to the current AGM quorum of 50 members or 10% of the current membership in part 6 of Red Rope's constitution and replace with a quorum of 20 members."

The motion was carried 22 votes in favour, 12 against, but failed to reach a two thirds majority for constitutional change and therefore fell.

Motion 6: on the use of Meta products

Proposer: Richard Bennett, formally seconded.

"This AGM deplores the actions of Meta, in particular Facebook, in aiding repressive regimes and exploiting vulnerable people in the pursuit of profit. Red Rope will cease to use Facebook for publicity or any other purpose. Where possible not-for-profit provided services shall be used instead of other Meta products"

Pete Clark proposed that a small group get together to explore the issue of ethics of using different brands of social media.

The motion was lost. 9 votes in favour with 16 votes against.

Motion 7: Code of Conduct

Proposed by: National Committee

Moved by Sue Whittle, formally seconded.

It is resolved that:

- 1) The AGM ratifies the Code of Conduct (Annex 8 in the Club policies on the website)
- 2) Authorises the National Committee to make small amendments to the Code of Conduct as they see fit. These can be ratified at the following AGM but come into force immediately.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

Red Rope is committed to supporting and respecting all members regardless of sex, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age or disability and expects all members to do likewise.

This requires tolerance and respect for those who may hold different views to you and a conscious effort to try and not upset others. An ability to agree to disagree is vital.

1. EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

The following behaviours are expected and requested of all members:

- Please be kind and courteous.
- Remember and respect that people will have different opinions.
- Assume that everyone acts with good intentions.
- Attempt collaboration before conflict.
- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour and speech.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow members. If you notice a dangerous situation, someone in distress, or violating of this Code of Conduct, even if they seem inconsequential, be prepared, in the first instance, to raise your concerns with the individual.
- All members should be receptive to constructive feedback about safety aspects or their conduct.

2. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The following behaviours are considered harassment and are unacceptable within our community:

- Violence; threats of violence; or violent language directed against another person.
- Sexist, racist, ageist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or otherwise discriminatory jokes and language.
- Sharing or displaying sexually explicit or violent material.
- Posting or threatening to post other people's personal information
- Personal insults, particularly those related to sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disability.
- Inappropriate photography or recording.
- Inappropriate physical contact. You should have someone's consent before touching them.
- Unwelcome sexual attention. This includes sexualised comments or jokes; inappropriate touching, groping, and unwelcome sexual advances.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following (online or in person).
- Offensive, provoking, insulting, threatening, sexualised or otherwise inappropriate messages shared through digital media.
- Acting in a way which could threaten the safety of others.
- Advocating, encouraging or inciting any of the above behaviours.

3. WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE SOMEONE HAS BREACHED THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

We should be prepared to give and receive constructive feedback. However, it is important that this is carried out in a respectful and appropriate manner. Best practice is:

Giving Feedback

1. Ask if you can give feedback. If the person is upset you may need to suggest speaking later.

2. Describe behaviour [NO ACCUSATIONS] (e.g. WHEN you reorganised the walk today)
3. Explain your feelings [NO BLAME] (e.g. I FELT left out)
4. Offer preferred outcome [NO DEMANDS] (e.g. I WOULD LIKE to explore ways of involving me in future decision making)

Receiving Feedback

1. Thank for feedback, Check understanding (e.g. So what you are saying is.....)
2. Identify feelings & needs of the person giving feedback [ASK DON'T TELL] (e.g. WHAT needs to happen for this to feel right for you? WHY is this so important to you?)
3. Explain your feelings & perspective [NO BLAME] (e.g. WHEN I decided to do it that way, my reasoning was....)
4. Share & solve [ASK DON'T TELL] (e.g. So WHAT can we do so that you get.... And I get...?)

If the individual is unwilling to engage in this process or you are unwilling or feel it is inappropriate to approach the individual then you should report your concerns to the Trip Organiser, the Safeguarding Officer or a member of the committee. However please consider that none of us likes to be talked about behind our backs and it is inappropriate to simply talk about your concerns to others.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Unacceptable behaviour from any member, including Facebook group members and those with decision-making authority, will not be tolerated.

Anyone asked to stop unacceptable behaviour is expected to comply immediately.

If a member engages in unacceptable behaviour, the committee may take any action they deem appropriate, up to and including a temporary ban or permanent expulsion from the club.

5. ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

If you feel you have been falsely or unfairly accused of violating this Code of Conduct, you should notify The Secretary with a concise description of your grievance. Your grievance will be handled in accordance with our existing Grievance Policy.

6. CONTACT INFO

Secretary: secretary@redrope.org.uk

Safeguarding Officer: safeguarding@redrope.org.uk

The motion was carried 25 voted in favour with 0 against.

Amendment to club policies if motion 7 is passed.

Moved by Steve Wright, formally seconded.

I propose that, subject to motion 7 being passed, the wording of the Code of Conduct should be added to the club's policies as Appendix 8 and section K1 should be reworded as follows:- Members must observe the rules and protocols laid down by the Constitution and these Policies. **They are also expected to follow the Code of Conduct guidelines as detailed in Appendix 8.**

The motion was passed, 23 votes in favour, with 0 against.

Motion 8: Safeguarding

Proposed by: National Committee

Moved by Sue Whittle, formally seconded.

“It is resolved that: 1) The current policy on Child Protection and the accompanying form shall be deleted and 2) replaced with the following:

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Red Rope has a positive attitude both towards introducing children to outdoor activities and to supporting parent Members in maximising their child's walking, climbing and mountaineering opportunities. All Members are, therefore, expected to show normal levels of care for the safety and well-being of children attending Club Events and Trips.

This Policy and Guidelines apply to all persons under the age of 18.

The term “parent” includes parent or legal guardian. Words used in the singular include the plural and vice versa.

Children Attending Club Events/Walks

Where a Member is intending to bring their child on a Club Event or Day walk they are advised, particularly if they are not familiar with the location, to contact the Trip/Walk Co-ordinator to discuss the safety of the venue/location. The Member bears full responsibility for deciding to take part in the Trip, and for their child throughout the stay or activity.

In addition to the above where a Member is intending to bring a child who is not theirs they should ensure that the parent of that child is aware of this Policy and Guidelines and gives their consent to the Member acting in Loco Parentis.

General Safety Considerations

Consideration should be given, by the parent or adult acting in loco parentis:

1. to the location of the Meet, given the age and ability of the child;

2. to the activity arranged for the Meet, and the safety of the child whilst the adult is participating; and
3. to the age and level of ability of the child generally.

Children Staying on Club Trips

Where a Member is intending to take a child to stay on a Club Trip, then in addition to the above they are advised to contact the Trip Organiser. The Club considers that it is not reasonable to expect Members and their guests to modify normal standards of behaviour on a Trip (subject to the Code of Conduct). Parents or adults acting in loco parentis are, at all times, responsible for the safety, care and control of any child. The Trip Organiser has the right to prevent a child from attending the Trip if they think it is inappropriate.

Additional Safety Considerations

1. The standard of hygiene and cleanliness may be less than at home.
2. There may not be guards on electrical sockets.
3. There may be open fires and/or hot surfaces.
4. Members may leave hot and cold drinks on the floor and low surfaces.
5. Members manoeuvring in congested car parks assume that adults will keep out of their way and they will not expect the presence of children.
6. Sleeping accommodation on trips varies and should be considered carefully.

Allegations of Abuse or Child Protection Issues

If, at any time during a child's attendance on an official trip, there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it must be reported to the parent or adult acting in loco parentis, and (where applicable) to the trip Co-ordinator, and the Club's Safeguarding Officer.

If the allegation could constitute a criminal offence then this should be referred to the police by the parent or adult acting in loco-parentis, or, failing them, by the adult whose concern has been aroused. Where there is doubt about how to proceed then advice can be sought from the Club's Safeguarding Officer.

Following any allegation of abuse the Club's Safeguarding Officer will advise the Committee on any possible changes to procedure which may avoid a similar occurrence.

Any other child safeguarding issues should be directed to the Club's Safeguarding Officer, whose details appear on the Club's Website.

There is a requirement placed on the Club by its insurers that all allegations of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that could lead to a claim for damages are reported to them. The Club's Secretary must be informed of all such allegations so that this may be effected.

All trip organisers will have the details of how to ask for advice or information from or report an issue to the Safeguarding Officer.

Where a discrepancy exists between this policy and the BMC Safeguarding policy the BMC policy will prevail.”

Sue Whittle agreed to put information on the website in case she, as the safeguarding officer, was not available.

The motion was carried by 27 votes in favour, and 0 against.

8) AOB

- 1) Provisional date for the next AGM- Wednesday March 17th 2027.
- 2) Gerry Mathews clarified rules about being a blood donor, which she will circulate in an email. There is national shortage of donors.

END