



## CYNGOR RHANBARTH / POWYS AREA

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### MINUTES OF AREA COUNCIL MEETING: 9 JUNE 2011, PLAS DOLERW, NEWTOWN

#### Attendance

20/11 Alan Austin (Chair), Alan Rugman (Secretary), Harry Chandler, Bob Seabrook, Derek Cosslett, Kevin Jones, Annette Prince, Clive Payne, Emlyn Williams

#### Apologies

21/11 David Bellamy, Michael Rolt, Chris Playford, Stephen Hughes, Matthew Prosser

#### Minutes of last Area Council, 2 March 2011

22/11 The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

#### Action items

5/11 It had not been possible to arrange for Welshpool Group to participate in a 'focus' group but AA had spoken to Vic Smith. The Group was mainly interested in walking and did not engage with many of Ramblers' campaigning and promotional activities. It was however the largest Group in Powys with 117 members.

6/11 AA and AR reported that there were only three affiliated walking groups in Powys (Hafren Ramblers, Guilsfield Hill Walkers and Llandyssil Walking Group), who had not yet been approached about encouraging individuals to join Ramblers. It was AGREED that Council members would provide AR with information about local non-affiliated groups, with a view to encouraging affiliation and/or individual membership. **ACTION**

#### ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

7/11 and 8/11 See Footpath Secretary's report at 25/11.

10/11 AA had the report on Glastir (copy to be forwarded to BS).

11/11 See Rail Rambles report at 30/11.

13/11 KJ had circulated information about the Powys Local Development Plan.

17/11 See Brecknock report at 27/11.

#### Matters arising not covered by agenda items

None

#### Treasurer's report

23/11 The Area's balance of £2041 at the start of the financial year was now £1591, excluding receipt of £210 from unspent money allocated to Rail Rambles. DC confirmed that the mileage rate remained 28p per mile.

#### Membership

24/11 Powys membership had risen from 294 to 300 between February and May 2011. However, BS pointed out that the loss of membership in Powys during 2009/10 was greater than that of any other Area. The reasons were unclear, although a small actual loss in Powys could result in a high percentage because the number of members was relatively low.

#### Footpath matters

25/11 CP spoke to his report. Priority communities and PCC staff changes had been notified to relevant members, who would in future also be forwarded details of temporary restriction orders. Jonathan Dorling had been appointed as PCC Circular Walks Officer; better publicity was needed for these routes. The reported position at Ty Newydd, Meifod and Pentre, Pontrobert was AGREED. Monks Trod continued to be seriously eroded, despite being closed to motor vehicles and motor cycles for five years. Illegal use by scramble bikes was suspected. Shropshire Area had reported a notice prohibiting dogs on a PROW through a churchyard at Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant. There was however no legal basis for banning dogs from a PROW.

26/11 BS explained that central office had recommended against objection to PCC's decision not to confirm our application for a DMMO for the route through Harley Valley. Under general provisions relating to enclosure awards, the road defined in 1814 had to be 30ft wide. Although this was physically impossible at Harley Valley, the likely strength of the landowner's position and the fact that it would still be a dead-end route made it unsuitable as a test case.

27/11 Fencing in BBNP, erected in 2001 to control foot-and-mouth disease, remained in place despite being unlawful and repeated pressure by Ramblers to secure removal. The benefits of some fences for stock control and vegetation management was understood, as was the NPA's position in this respect. It was however AGREED that CP should write to the NPA saying that fences should be removed forthwith where there had been no request for retention.

#### ACTION C Playford

28/11 There was concern about PROW issues where PCC had agreed to take action but actual progress was still awaited. This particularly applied to agreed DM orders and priority communities where problems remained after a community had ceased to be

on the priority list. Barlings Barn, Llanbryn-mair and Dingle Nursery were further examples, on which PCC would be pressed for action. It was AGREED that CP would seek a meeting with PCC on these matters, to be attended by AA, BS and CP.

**ACTION CP**

**Access matters**

29/11 No specific issues were reported.

**Rail Rambles**

30/11 Marion Law's report confirmed that Arriva Trains Wales had now agreed to provide walk leaders with free passes. DC would ask her to submit a budget request by mid July.

**ACTION DC**

**Ramblers Cymru**

31/11 AA said that Rob Hanna had resigned shortly before Welsh Council in April.

32/11 AR reported an email from John Morgan, Chair of Aberystwyth Group, expressing concern about the procedure by which Jane Davidson had been appointed as President of Ramblers Cymru. There was a further issue surrounding her former ministerial responsibility for the Welsh Government's wind farm policy in TAN8, which had led to current widespread anger in mid Wales about wind farms and related grid connections. David Bellamy and others had expressed similar views about the appointment.

33/11 AA explained how the new President had been appointed at a WCEC meeting. It was AGREED that the constitutional position should be clarified. If correct procedures had been followed, it was also AGREED that the appointment should stand. Further consideration might be necessary if there had been constitutional impropriety.

**ACTION AA**

**Planning and countryside matters**

34/11 There was lengthy discussion about the wind farms controversy, the approach taken so far by Powys Ramblers, and how the Area should deal with the issue in the future. It was AGREED that Powys Ramblers should give priority to protection and improvement of PROWs and access to the countryside, while continuing to take a pragmatic case-by-case approach to individual proposals rather than outright opposition to wind energy in mid Wales. This stance also took account of differing views among Ramblers membership. There were other campaigning bodies opposing on-shore wind farms in principle, including CPRW and Conservation of Upland Powys, who were better placed to express such a view.

**Group reports**

35/11 No reports were made.

**Welsh Council, April 2011**

36/11 AA reported discussion about the arrangements for devolution to Ramblers Cymru.

**General Council 2011**

37/11 AA had attended GC. In contrast to 2010, when Concerned Ramblers and the issues surrounding the organisation's financial crisis had dominated proceedings, the 2011 meeting had been much more routine. Ramblers Cymru now had two members on GC: Denis McAteer and Max Grant.

**Any other business**

38/11 DC had asked Group Treasurers to submit budget requests by mid July if expenditure was expected to exceed the formula.

**ACTION GROUP**

**TREASURERS**

**Date, time and venue of next meeting**

39/11 It was AGREED that afternoon meetings remained preferable, with Plas Dolerw the most convenient location.

**The next Area Council will be at 2.30pm on Thursday 15 September 2011 at Plas Dolerw, Newtown**