



CYNGOR RHANBARTH / POWYS AREA

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MINUTES OF THE 2014 AGM OF THE POWYS AREA OF RAMBLERS CYMRU OFFA'S DYKE CENTRE, KNIGHTON, 30 NOVEMBER 2014 (SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION)

Chairman's introduction

Alan Austin welcomed those attending, including John Jones, Powys Area President, Arry Beresford-Webb, Development Manager, Ramblers Cymru, and Peter Carr, Shropshire Area Chair. He thanked East Radnor Group for arranging the venue and the afternoon walk.

Attendance

A total of Powys 25 members attended, including Area Officers.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Derek Cosslett, Annette Prince, Marion Law (Rail Rambles), Mike Scott-Archer, Rebe Brick, Sheila Turner, Roger Garratt, Fran Johnstone, Richard Tyler, Nicky Colston, Kay and Mark Birchley and Jackie Hanratty.

Minutes

The minutes of the 2013 AGM were approved without amendment and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

2014 Welsh Council: The Powys motion, urging the Welsh Government to show public rights of way on maps sent to farmers applying for support payments, had been approved. It since appeared that delays in digitising definitive maps, not least in Powys, remained an obstacle.

Email addresses: The Area Secretary now had addresses for 43 members, in addition to 21 on the Area Council circulation list. This would significantly reduce printing and postage costs for the AGM.

Annual reports by the Chairman, Treasurer and Footpath Secretary

Chairman: Alan Austin drew attention to the following in his written report:

- Thanks went to the Area Council and its officers.
- Full walks programmes had been arranged by the three Powys Groups, and Rail Rambles went from strength to strength.
- Powys Area had hosted the 2014 Welsh Council in Newtown.
- Members had joined the Area President in a walk to the Shrewsbury Folk Festival. There was scope for developing links between walking and folk music, with PR opportunities.
- The Area Council had continued to press Powys County Council about its failure to make better use of volunteers. At a meeting with leading Council members and officers shortly before the AGM, progress had at last been made. The Council now accepted that volunteer groups should be able to work independently under a trained team leader, and on improvement as well as maintenance. A further meeting would be held in the New Year.

The Chairman also referred to recent consultations by Ramblers GB on vision and governance. The Area Council would seek the views of Groups before responding.

Renewable energy policy: Alan Rugman said that Ramblers Cymru policy tried to balance landscape conservation against energy benefits. Proposals were considered case-by-case. The public inquiry into five major wind farm schemes had closed in May, with decisions expected in early 2015. Another

large scheme on the eastern slopes of Plynlimon was before the UK Government under new 'fast track' procedures. Objections had been submitted by Powys Area Council and Aberystwyth Ramblers. Objections had also been made to several large single turbine proposals, especially in the vicinity of Offa's Dyke Path and Glyndwr's Way. The Area Council had yet to consider how central funding might be used to develop responses to such proposals.

Treasurer: The circulated accounts were approved. There was a surplus of receipts over income of £577, a little more than the surplus of £527 in the previous year. Assets at the bank were £3094, rising from £2761 in September 2013. Central funding of £1200 had been requested for Powys Area, Groups and Rail Rambles.

Footpath Secretary: Clive Payne highlighted key points in his written report:

- Cambrian Way: Tony Drake, who originated the high mountain route from Cardiff to Conwy, had left money in his will for its further development by Ramblers, YHA and the National Trust. A new trust was being formed, and Clive Payne and Richard Tyler were working on the Powys section of the route.
- Cross Britain Way: As a fund-raising initiative for Macmillan, a new designated path from Lincoln to Barmouth had been proposed. All local authorities crossed by the route had agreed waymarking to enable identification on OS maps; Powys was the exception. Peter Carr said that Shropshire Ramblers had not been consulted and the guidebook was amateurish and an embarrassment to Ramblers. The Area Council would consider the matter further.

Rail Rambles: The Chairman thanked Marion Law for her written report.

Address by Ramblers Cymru Development Manager: Arry Beresford-Webb made the following key points:

- The Development Manager (a new post) is expected to meet goals defined in the business plan, with an emphasis on young people and families. Ramblers Cymru had already made progress in that direction, eg through family walking packs.
- Growing awareness of the health benefits of walking was opening up new opportunities for Ramblers, which was managing the Lets Walk Cymru initiative with NHS support.
- The Big Welsh Walk in May had involved 300 walks and 3000 walkers. The 2015 event would cover the whole of May and involve YHA and the National Trust as well. It would also celebrate Ramblers' 80th birthday.
- A promising meeting had been held with new Welsh Government ministers. A green paper on outdoor recreation was being prepared, although it was unclear whether this would propose wider access to the countryside.
- There were now seven staff in the Cardiff office, including part-timers.

Motions

None were proposed. However, the Area Council would consider putting a motion to Welsh Council 2015 urging that specific Welsh Government funding for public rights of way should take account of mileage and not just population.

Election of Honorary Officers and Representatives

Prior nominations were received for East Radnor Group representatives. The following were proposed, seconded and unanimously elected:

President	John Jones
Chairman	Alan Austin

Vice Chairman	Harry Chandler
Secretary	Alan Rugman
Treasurer	Derek Cosslett
Footpath Secretary	Richard Tyler
Countryside Officer	Stephen Hughes
Access Officer	Michael Rolt
Membership Secretary	Alan Austin (temporary, until replacement found)
Communications Officer	Derek Cosslett
Auditor	Peter Loughran
Four Wells representative	Chris Jones
East Radnor representatives	Ron Ellwood and Nicky Colston
Welshpool representatives	Matthew Prosser, Vic Smith and Mel Lyons
British Horse Society	Michael Mosse
Individual member representatives	Geoff and Esta Beilby

Group Reports

Welshpool: Mel Lyons reported that 21 walks had been arranged over the last year, with average attendance of nearly nine members including others from Hafren Ramblers. There would be PR opportunities at the National Eisteddfod at Meifod.

East Radnor: Peter Cope said that the Group was flourishing, with walks every Wednesday and alternate Saturdays. Members from Herefordshire often attended. Courses on first aid and map-reading were being arranged.

Four Wells: Chris Jones reported that walks took place every other Saturday, alternating with East Radnor Group. There had been another successful exchange with walkers from Germany.

Any other business

Michael Mosse drew attention to the 2026 cut-off date for claiming lost ways as rights of way, and asked for assistance with research. Bob Seabrook pointed out that the Deregulation Bill, when enacted, would simplify rights of way procedures. The Area Council would consider this matter further.

Arry Beresford-Webb said that Ramblers GB were proposing a national survey of rights of way by grid square, badged as Path Watch.

In answer to a question, Bob Seabrook said that there was no substance to claims by landowners that they faced liability for the safety of people using access land, unless the landowner is proved to be negligent of his duty of reasonable care to those on that access land.

Peter Carr encouraged members to attend a public inquiry in December, involving rights of way mainly in Shropshire but also affecting Powys.

Date, time and venue of next AGM

To be decided by Area Council.