

Red Rope 2022 AGM via Zoom, 3.30 to 5.30 pm on Saturday, 2 April

2022: Minutes

Apologies Nick Kempe, Ann-Claire Fourcin, Janey Hewitt, Lawrence Brown, Isla Cameron, Pat Nicholl, Anne Maloney, Mark Alexander

David Symonds to chair up to item 7, followed by Humphrey Southall (& Steve Wright).

1. Introduction by the chair and naming of the person/s taking minutes - Heather Morris & Debbie Singer
2. Approval of the minutes from the 24 April, 2021 AGM - passed
(See www.redrope.org.uk > Quick Links > Committee Minutes)
3. Matters arising from the minutes – nothing raised.
4. Statement by the club's treasurer and questions. INSERT LINK TO OFFICERS' REPORTS HERE. Humphrey S- The accounts are fairly healthy with no need to raise membership fees at this time.
5. Statement by the club's national trips officer and questions. RB- Becky is pleased trips are back and plenty of bookings are coming in.
6. Comments or questions about other officers' reports - Phillipa offered thanks to the officers for their work.
7. Election of officers. (Janet Saunders is standing down as publicity officer. David Symonds is standing down as National Secretary. The Training Officer post is already vacant.) - applications were invited for these posts but none forthcoming. Janet S reiterated the importance of the role of national Secretary to the ongoing existence of the club. Steve W -he is happy to continue in the supporting role as deputy Nat Sec but thinks the main role needs a younger person. NB See AOB section.

Motions:

A., B. and C. need to be passed by two thirds of the attendees at a quorate

meeting. The other motions can be decided by a simple majority at a quorate meeting.

A. Acceptance of reworded constitution - Barbara Segal supported by the N.C.

This AGM notes that the wording of some parts of our existing constitution is unclear or does not accurately reflect its intention.

The AGM also accepts the need for some additional content to bring the club into line with the BMC Guidelines for affiliated clubs.

The meeting therefore resolves to accept the reworded constitution.

Gerry M – referred to her email sent an hour before the start of the meeting – she was unable to find the background to this motion in the NC meetings minutes, feels that this needs to be resolved by the forthcoming June meeting of the NC before discussing this motion. It was explained that the work which led to the revised wording of the constitution and policies, and the accompanying motions, was carried out by a sub-committee of 6 NC members with the agreement of the NC as a whole. The quorum for the NC to make decisions is 6 members, so this process was perfectly valid.

David S- thinks the intervention by Gerry M suggested in an email sent an hour before the meeting was outrageous, particularly as all the AGM documents had been publicised as being available on the RR website 28 days before, in keeping with the constitution. The work was done by a subcommittee and there was considerable support for it within the NC, so it is not justifiable to block the progress of the motion and the meeting.

Barbara S – 6 people were in the subcommittee so it was quorate although some did not agree – the NC were informed.

GM- does not think this answers the point. It has to be clear the alterations are from the NC with clear wording.

Janet S- The subcommittee was delegated by the NC to rewrite sections of the constitution. We were acting on behalf of the NC. The work went back to the NC and it was supported by the NC.

HS – It is not entirely clear that these are NC motions –however we may just need it to be proposed and seconded by somebody.

DS- an NC meeting is quorate if 6 people are there.

GM – insisted this did not override her point.

DS- This can be settled by a vote.

BS – Barbara said that the motions could still be discussed at the meeting if two people proposed and seconded them, people were free to vote against the motion if they were not happy– this was done so the meeting could move on.

Proposer-Barbara S

Secunder -Steve W

BS- Three parts to the constitutional motion: Barbara explained the first part of the motion involves a tidy-up of unclear wording in places in the constitution. Also some changes of wording from from 2015 had still not been incorporated. Some wording is included that was in the BMC guidelines which it was felt should be in the RR document, none controversial. In presenting the motion she explained that there was an error in the wording which reflected the term used to refer to the constituent groups of the club. Barbara had understood that the sub-group had agreed that this should be changed from 'region' to 'local group', so as to better reflect the areas referred to, which include cities, regions and a nation. However, this was not the case, so these references will be changed back. That is, 'local group' should be replaced by 'region'.

Barbara apologised for her error over this -effectively a clerical error and it shouldn't be there. There was discussion and whether an amendment was needed before we could proceed and clarification over the definition of 'region' and 'local group'. BS asked for her mistake to be accepted. J Cox suggested taking a vote to do that. To avoid the meeting being stalled by technicalities HS suggested taking a vote on accepting the need to accept the substitution of words needed as stated by BS as it is a constitutional change. There was a further discussion as whether it should be 'region' or 'Region'.

17 votes for accepting the amendment that 'local group' be replaced by 'region' throughout the document.

1 against PASSED

Barbara explained that the revision of the constitution was badly needed, although not perfect, and encouraged everyone to vote in favour of them.

Gerry M, speaking against the motion, appreciated the work that had gone into this and

that the NC was not trying to 'pull a fast one', but that failure to be clear in wording would cause problems in the future.

Hugh W- uncomfortable about going straight to a vote without more explanation of the changes especially regarding the change in beginning of the financial year. Also queried who had been involved with the redrafting.

HS said the financial year was not a change in constitution, it had been changed by the NC 18 months ago to align with the membership year.

Steve W- Supports the motion. Asked Gerry if there were any issues in the wording rather than in the process that she is unhappy with?

GM – I have raised points regarding the definition of unit of organisation and terms used. There is a requirement to look at the definition of 'NC', e.g. what is an NC decision? Many recent changes due to Zoom etc, has led to ways of working that are not incorporated within the constitution. Too much is not clear and this matters in the event of a dispute. More work needs to be done to clarify it.

Various members spoke in support of the revision: Jon M - we considered these changes very minor, clarification or deleting things that are no longer relevant etc. The idea of defining the role of the NC is in mind as a future project therefore today's motion is just a tidying-up. JS- The constitution is unusable as it is such a mess. Decisions from 2015 have not been properly written in and it has to be brought up to date. We need to accept the revision and move forward.

SW – Online meetings enabled us to meet more often, created a more dynamic conversation and took less time. This could be seen as a step towards a more perfect constitution unlike the current mess. The revisions are far better than the current document. He invites comment on further work needed.

GM asked if people were still working on the draft of the NC, was this ongoing?

HS - yes, and may lead to further changes. Need to move to a vote – 2/3 majority needed, we are quorate.

MOTION A: Vote on the redrafted constitution motion:

25 in favour

3 against

1 abstention

The motion was PASSED to accept the reworded constitution.

B. Dissolution of the Club - Barbara Segal supported by the National

Committee.

Barbara S presented this motion.

This AGM notes the current policy which states that in the case of dissolution of the club, our assets would currently be distributed equally amongst the members. The meeting accepts that this is not in the spirit of the club's commitment to the furthering of walking, climbing and mountaineering for all.

The meeting therefore resolves to amend the dissolution process to read as follows:

"The club can be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership, whereupon the NC will arrange for its assets to be donated to a suitable organisation, such as Mountain Rescue, as decided by a simple majority of the membership at the time. Any liabilities at the time of dissolution will be the joint responsibility of all the members."

Barbara S explained that 2/3 club members would need to agree to dissolve the club and the donation to a suitable organisation would need to be agreed by a simple majority.

Humphrey S clarified that if Red Rope continued to exist but a region wound up, it would decide for itself what to do with its assets. He said there was some ambiguity as to whether regional funds are part of national funds or belong to Red Rope regions.

Gerry M suggested it needed to be made clear that donating Red Rope's assets would only happen after all liabilities had been met.

Humphrey S proposed an amendment to cover this.

Amendment: to amend the wording to read "net" assets and "net" liabilities.

The amendment was carried.

MOTION B : vote on the amended motion:

23 for

0 against. **MOTION PASSED**

C. Term of Office of Club Officers - Barbara Segal, supported by some of the N.C.

Barbara S presented this motion.

Most of the current club officers have been in post for many years, remaining in roles by default rather than through election by the members. This is an unhealthy situation for a number of reasons:

- There's a danger of 'group think' in the management of the club, and of the officers being perceived as a 'clique' by other members;
- Some officers would like to stand down but continue in post due to loyalty to the club and a lack of members wishing to take over their role;
- The club is, in theory, run by collective responsibility. The absence of a broader involvement of members in its management and decision-making means that this is not happening in practice.

The meeting therefore resolves that no club officer may remain in the role for longer than 5 consecutive terms, followed by a two-year break. The meeting further resolves that, in order to avoid all club officers needing to be replaced in 2023, the implementation of this decision should be staggered, with a complete replacement of current officers having taken place following the 2024 AGM.

It is the responsibility of the serving NC to ensure that this transition takes place.

Barbara S also said that it would be best if regional reps were involved in decision making not just national officers. However in general regional reps were not attending online meetings. She pointed out that the club now has vacancies for a National Secretary, Training Officer and Publicity Officer. Barbara said she would be standing down as LMC rep next year.

Pete W suggested it was a utopian idea and instead there was a need to increase the active membership of the club in order to fill officer roles.

Joanna W said this is also an issue in the regions and questioned whether it would apply to regions too.

Nigel G said we need more younger members but as a walking and climbing club, rather than a political organisation, we do not need such rules.

Jon M thought National Council roles require depth of knowledge and experience and so need longer than 5 years. The proposed change would be relevant if the roles involved political power and influence but not for a social club.

David S thought a time limit of 5 years for the National Secretary might be useful to encourage people to come forward knowing they are not obliged to stay in that role forever.

Janet S agreed with the motion as it would encourage people to take on National Committee roles and show that the club revolves responsibilities.

Becky B reported that the national trips organisers are a job share and also have a trips subgroup. She suggested that setting up groups for other roles could be explored during the coming year and report back at the next AGM.

Humphrey S said there is also a membership subgroup of himself, Gill P and Janet S to manage WebCollect.

In her right to reply, Barbara S said letting officers stay on for years doesn't reflect our collective position. Subgroups were a good idea but we could do both. People could also switch roles after 5 years.

MOTION C Vote:

9 for

16 against. **MOTION NOT PASSED**

D. Reviewed Policies Document Grievance procedure- Steve Wright supported by the National Committee.

Steve W presented the motion:

This AGM agrees with the changes to the 2015 Red Rope Policies document as shown in the '2022 Draft Policies X' file. Appendix 6 is the proposed new Grievance Procedure. It is the last item in the document. It is quite different to the previous 'Complaints' procedure, so you may want to look at it carefully. (See the 2015 version via www.redrope.org.uk > Governance > Policies)

Steve summarised the key points in the updating and changes to Red Rope's policies. A core of six or more National Committee members discussed changes to policies first suggested in 2015 and 2017. The key points were:

Section D: safety

New wording to confirm there is shared responsibility for each other's safety to align this with the legal duty of care.

Section G: finance

Confirms the change to calendar year and use of direct debit

Failure to renew after 3months is regarded as having resigned

Multiday trip charges, car must be sanctioned by trip organiser

Trip organisers have no discretion to allow a car to just bring food or to have a lone driver by choice.

For national trips members will have to cover their own costs for public transport unless there is no car available

Non-members can come on two trips before they have to join Red Rope

H: publicity

Clarifies information-sharing in line with data protection.

Club hut:

section removed.

K: behaviour/code of conduct

section added.

Appendix 4: Guidance on conducting regionally based vote
moved to constitution

Appendix 5: privacy

Policy added; was online.

Appendix 6: grievance procedure

replaces complaints procedure.

David S explained a key difference was that the grievance procedure had time limits so that there grievances can be finalised.

Steve W said there is a three stage process. Within a region, there is an informal process, a formal process and finally a grievance would go to the National Committee. If regions could not solve a complaint involving members from different regions, the national procedure would apply.

Gill C questioned that 7 days for replying to a grievance was too short.

Jennifer thought 14 days would be better.

After some discussion it was agreed to vote on all the policies with the proviso that the deadlines of 7 days in the grievance procedure be amended to 14 days.

MOTION D Vote

For 30

MOTION PASSED

Against 0

E. Trip charges National Trips Secretaries, Becky and Sarah Bates

1. With hut costs and the general cost of living rising, sometimes additional charges for heating/hot water and the growing preference for smaller dorms and more comfort we are booking a wider range of accommodation which will be more costly to the club. During Covid additional costs have been covered by a subsidy from our Admin account but this will not be possible for future trips so to make trips sustainable our nightly charges will need to increase.

Motion 1: 10% increase in trip charges effective from 10/22

Proposed by Becky Bates, seconded by Sarah Bates

2. With National trips often filling up soon after being advertised we feel that the Early Booking Discount is no longer needed and that it is actually preventing many members from accessing trips as the regulars tend to take the places early.

Motion 2: Early Booking Discount to be removed from 10/22.

Proposed by Sarah Bates, seconded by Becky Bates

RB & SB: Early Booking Discount – we don't feel it's needed to attract early bookers as this is happening anyway. However more money is needed to go into each trip as hut charges continue to go up. There had been a choice between raising trip charges by 20% and keeping the early booking discount or losing the EBD and raising charges by 10%. Multipliers are becoming common for many trips and this was never the intention, it needs to be avoided. This year trips have been subsidised due to Covid – underfilled trips, more room allowed etc. Adding 10% but losing the EBD is a good step.

HS- We agreed to supplement the trips account from the admin account but this hasn't actually happened. Money is available.

Heather M asked for evidence that new members had indeed been unable to book trips owing to early bookers – none noted, unsure.

JM commented that lots of 'trip full' notices were being sent to the bulletin so more waiting lists are being established.

Hugh W felt that a 20% increase was unacceptable in view of the soaring cost of living. The EBD was useful in forcing trips to fill early to prove their viability.

Jon M commented that in view of the excess in the overall budget it might be better to keep the EBD and allow trips to make losses. This might encourage more trips to happen and support

people who were less well-off at the moment.

Janet S -Are people new to the club not getting on to trips? If so, reserve several places for them.

BS asked for rough figures on trip losses. We need accounts from the trip account.

RB – Loss on Feb trip was £270.

HS queried why the trip accounts were absent, as they were essential in discussing the motion.

Becky said they had been done and calculations were done on accommodation costs of £12 (but now they have mostly increased) and food costs of £3.50.

Nigel G- supports the motion on increasing charges as it is inevitable but thinks the case is less good for removing the EBD as that can be an incentive for new people to come on trips.

BS- Transport on trips is a money-loser so charges have to go up. Higher bands are now not subsidising transport as before due e.g. to people choosing to travel alone, this is a consequence of last year's decisions. There had been an agreement to review how it worked but that had not happened due to Covid. Also people increasingly travelled separately due to Covid.

RB- True that losses are often due to transport but people wanted more flexibility.

Voting results: Motion E

Motion E 1: 10% increase in trip charges effective from 10/22

20 for

4 against MOTION PASSED

Motion E 2: Early Booking Discount to be removed from 10/22.

7 for

11 against MOTION DEFEATED

9. AOB & provisional date for next meeting

Pete Watson thanked the officers for their service.

GM queried whether the election of officers had actually taken place. The selection of officers needed to be endorsed therefore a vote has to take place. (Item 7)

DS- deemed dealt with by default.

A discussion ensued regarding appropriate protocol under the circumstances and whether it was felt that re-election was in all cases desirable. JS – it should take place formally and be minuted. Due to late objections on this matter it was felt by JM and NG that officers should be re-elected en bloc rather than individually and

