

TAKE A HIKE

AGM 26th November 2016

Location: Victoria Hotel, Leeds

Committee attendees:

General Secretary:	Andrew Sneddon
Walks Secretary:	Steve Noble
Footpath Secretary:	Steve Fleming
Membership Secretary:	Neil Chester
Social Secretary:	Andy Arbon

Apologies:

Sam Walker, Dave Catchpole and Neil Chester all gave their apologies as they were unable to attend.

Meeting opened at 14:00

Andrew Sneddon opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and setting out the agenda for the meeting. He noted that Steve Noble and Steve Fleming were intending to stand again for their respective committee positions.

Minutes of the Last meeting/matter arising.

It was agreed that the previous minutes were a fair and accurate record of last year's meeting. Martin Sutcliffe proposed the minutes and Steve Noble seconded them.

Updating the Website

SN explained that the subcommittee had formed to deal with the upgrade of the website. After exploring many options and obtaining various prices it was decided to go with a brand new website created by The Design Mechanics. The new site will be mobile responsive and the content will be entirely under the control of the group without the need of further work from the Design Mechanics. Take a Hike has obtained £908 of funding from the Ramblers Area Council and are paying £1000 out of existing funds to cover the costs of the new site. The Ramblers Association Walks and Events Manager is being used as the database with a direct feed to the new website. The site will have a new message board and calendar feature and is expected to go live within the next few weeks. Design Mechanics are also giving Take a Hike free web hosting up until 2026.

Meet-up Membership

SN informed the group that the next payment for annual meet-up membership was now due to go up to £140. Views were then sought on the membership was working well for the group. A lively debate then ensued where was suggested that we consider whether to charge for walks as many other Meet Up groups do. SN explained that it was very difficult to do this in practise we could not charge Ramblers Members or people who had come along based on information of the Take a Hike website to try out the group but would be charging people coming along from the Meetup site. It was also pointed out that The Ramblers are a registered charity and as such do not charge fees for walks.

Mike Ramplin suggested that we should give more information about The Ramblers charitable aims and objectives. It was also suggested that more information be given regarding the correct equipment and level of fitness required for the walks advertised. SN said that the content would be reviewed and that the Meetup website gave much more information about the group than the Meetup apps which was limited.

Martin Sutcliffe proposed that we continued with the Meetup membership taking on board the improvements that had been suggested. Andy Arbon seconded this and it was carried by a vote.

General Secretary/Treasurer Report

Andrew Sneddon explained that for the period 1st October 2015 to 30 September 2016 TAH sustained a healthy bank balance. The TAH bank balance started the financial year at £971.76 and the 2015 Christmas Bash made a profit of £254.70. The 2016 Summer Bash made a profit of £66.42, but this has been carried over as the balance for the 2016 Christmas Bash. Interest received on the count was £0.88.

A full breakdown of costs and income is as follows:

TAH account 2015-16

Bank balance at 1 October 2015		971.76
2015 Christmas Bash		
Ticket Sales	510.00	
Food deposit	- 50.00	
Food balance	- 156.82	
Decorations	- 15.48	
Laser light	- 20.00	
Ticket Printing	- 5.00	
Travel (AA bus tickets)	- 8.00	
Total Cost	- 255.30	254.70

2016 Summer Bash		
Ticket Sales	600.00	
Food deposit	- 50.00	
Food balance	- 468.00	
Disco lights (x2)	- 10.58	
Ticket Printing	- 5.00	
Total Cost	- 533.58	66.42

£66.42 profit held over as deposit for 2016 Christmas Bash.

Interest 0.98

Bank balance at 30 September 2016 1227.44

Additional activity since the 30th September has been the cost of website hosting (£42.00) and payment of the new Website Build:

<i>Website deposit</i>	<i>477.00</i>
<i>Website balance (Upgrade of website to responsive design)</i>	<i>1431.00</i>
<i>Additional development of events section</i>	<i>180.00</i>
<i>Total cost</i>	<i>2088.00</i>

AS has taken initial reimbursement of £1,220.00

Amount due for Website is £868.00

Current balance of the TAH is £7.44

AS also explained that the very recent major upgrade of the website was going to take up the vast bulk of the funds in the bank.

Mike Ramplin then stated that he thought that these figures were wrong and needed to be revised. After examination it was accepted that the figures were actually correct taking into account the winter bash deposit that was required. AS requested an apology from Mike Ramplin.

Membership Report

It was explained that numbers were slightly down from the same time last year which appeared to be largely due to some of the less active members not renewing their membership. There has been a Take a Hike wedding this year with Peter Horner and Helen Ford getting married and also expecting a baby which is due in the new year.

Susan Wilkinson asked if lower numbers would affect the size of claims we could make from the Ramblers area funds. SN explained that it does not affect the current funding that we are receiving but would in the future if more claims need to be made.

Walks Secretary Report

Steve Noble extended thanks to everyone who had taken the time to put on walks for the group this year. He explained that it had been a mixed year with some walk leaders lost to injuries whilst some new members had taken up the challenge of leading walks.

Steve explained that it had been a busy year dealing with the Take a Hike website upgrade and also the upgrade of the Ramblers West Riding website. In addition he is now the editor of the West Riding Walk Programme and has been asked to be the webmaster for the West Riding website.

Steve stated that during the course of the last year we have managed 146 walks covering 1223 miles which is down by 25% from the previous year. The average distance of walks was 8.38 miles versus 8.54 for the previous year which is down 1.89%.

During the last 12 months there were 88 weekend walks covering 923.5 miles which is down on the previous year when there were 119 walks covering 1258 miles. This is a drop of 31%. The average distance of weekend walks went down from 10.57 to 10.49 miles which is a drop of 0.7%.

Steve then went on to say that even though the numbers are down it is more about the quality of the walks and the people who take part. What is most important is getting out walking and with like-minded people and having fun.

It was suggested that experience walk leaders could offer to buddy up with less experienced ramblers to encourage them to lead their first walk. Also that resources could be made available to give suggested routes to prospective walk leaders.

Social Secretary Report

Andy Arbon explained that the last year's winter bash has made a very healthy profit mainly due to obtaining a good deal from the venue. The summer bash had also made a small profit and been well received by those who had attended. The winter bash was due to break even due to increasing prices for venue hire during the run up to Christmas. It was suggested that the incoming social secretary might want to consider a different format or a change of date for the winter bash. Next year will be the 15th anniversary of Take a Hike so a social or reunion of past members was also suggested.

Footpath Secretary Annual report for AGM 2016

SF explained that with contributions from over 3000 volunteers the results of last year's Big Pathwatch, have now been released. It is the biggest ever footpath survey undertaken in Britain and has revealed that 56% of the footpaths checked are in good condition and a further 35% are adequate but requiring some improvement. A further

9% were in a poor state. There were 59,000 problems shown up by the survey as well as lots of positive features.

The main problems were with missing or misleading signage, heavy undergrowth, ploughed or potholed paths, unsafe stiles, gates or bridges and overhanging vegetation. Surveyors (including a number of Take a Hike members) walked almost half the paths in England and Wales giving a good snapshot of the state of the paths and access to the countryside. Our local surveys show a very similar picture to the national one with some paths in very good condition whilst a significant number have problems with lack of signage and blockages due to undergrowth and lack of maintenance of styles and gates.

All councils in Yorkshire are continuing to cut back on their Rights of Way departments as their budgets come under further pressure. Kirklees has particularly acute problems with hardly any staff or resources. Calderdale has similar issues with the ROW having been incorporated into the Highways Department and struggling to cope with footpath issues. Last Decembers flooding also caused significant problems with paths in a number of areas and there is still a backlog of repair work in relation to this particularly in Calderdale. North Yorkshire are now working hard to try and make progress with the 9000 outstanding problems in their area despite issues with low staffing levels. Leeds and Bradford are doing a better job of maintaining their footpath network with improved signage and repair work.

The regional footpath committee continues its work to try and improve access to the countryside in our area and adding further routes to the definitive maps. Members have been involved in helping to resolve footpath problems in Otley, Wetherby and Tadcaster areas as well as raising money for the Burley Bridge Association which aims to build a new safe bridge across the Wharfe for the benefit of walkers. Work has also been done to identify and revive "lost paths" that were used in the past but have fallen into disuse mainly due to lack of maintenance.

The Footpath Secretary and other members have come across a number of footpaths issues whilst receiving walks this year. A significant number of signs were missing in the paths adjoining the Leeds Country Way around Bardsey and Scarcroft causing some walkers not familiar with the area to lose their way. These were all reported and new footpath signs have now been erected.

Other problems have included locked gates on paths in the Oxenhope area and issues with lack of styles in the area around North Deighton. Some impromptu footpath clearance had to be done whilst on an excursion to the Cartmel area in Cumbria with brambles and overhanging branches having to be cleared in order to continue.

SF stated that ramblers should be alert to and report issues with footpaths and know that problems they report will be followed up by footpath officers.

Election of Committee for 2017

The committee roles were duly elected as follows:

Role	Nominee	Proposer	Seconded	Elected
General Secretary	Susan Wilkinson	Steve Noble	Angela Bailey	Susan Wilkinson
Walks Secretary	Steve Noble	Steve Fleming	Susan Wilkinson	Steve Noble
Membership Secretary	Mike Ramplin	Deborah Sutcliffe	Martin Sutcliffe	Mike Ramplin
Social Secretary	David Catchpole	Andy Arbon	Sian Nisbet	David Catchpole
Footpath Secretary	Steve Fleming	Michael Best	Andy Arbon	Steve Fleming

In addition Angela Bailey put her name forward and was accepted as a Member Representative. It was also proposed that Dave Husband be approached to become the group's web secretary since he has the necessary skill set.

Any Other Business

AS thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed with no fighting having occurred and no resignations having taken place.