

RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

Mid Lancashire Area

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Zoom on Saturday 23rd January 2021 at 1:00 pm.

PRESENT Eric Crichton (Vice Chairman)
 David Kelly (Secretary)
 Hilary Kane (Treasurer)
 Paul Coupland (Finance Support)
 plus 17 members were present and two members of Central Office staff

APOLOGIES Apologies were received from one member.

1. Eric Crichton welcomed all those present to the meeting and then spoke about the disruption being caused by Covid-19 since March.

2. **Minutes of the 2020 AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 25th Jan 2020 had been made available on the Area's web site. The members present accepted the minutes as a correct record.

3. **Matters arising**

An update about Coastal Access was included with the Agenda. No further matters were raised.

4. **Annual Report & Statement of Accounts**

Copies of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ending 30th Sep 2020 were available on the Area's web site.

These were accepted by the members present.

5. **Election of Honorary Officers**

The following Officers were re-elected -

President	No nominations made
Chairman	No nominations made
Vice Presidents	No nominations made
Vice Chairman	Eric Crichton
Secretary	David Kelly
Footpaths	Joe Howard
Membership Secretary	Joy Taylor
Publicity	Kevin Matthews

It was proposed that the post holders should be elected on-block, which was accepted by the meeting

It was also agreed that the Area Committee would be allowed to recruit an Area Chairman if a suitable person came forward.

The meeting was reminded that David Kelly who has been the Area Secretary for over 25 years, had stated last year that he was aware that he had aged and had given notice that he intended not to seek re-election in early 2022

6. **Appointment of Honorary Auditor**

Alison Hunt should have audited the accounts this year but because of other commitments was unable to do so, so Paul Coupland was asked to audit the accounts for last year. It was accepted by the meeting that Alison should be requested to audit the accounts for the present year.

7. **Consideration of Motions given in writing**

None

8. **Motion for Submission to General Council (National AGM)**

None

9. **Any Other Business**

Eric Crichton spoke about the groups' walks programmes, which are presently suspended because of the restrictions caused by Covid-19. When in between the lockdowns group walking was allowed albeit with some restrictions, only about half of walk leaders who led walks before Covid-19 started, had led walks during the short periods in late 2020 when group walking was permitted. We are grateful to those who were able to lead walks during this period.

Eric continued that pre Covid-19 that the Area had produced a walks programme every four months. When walking was possible between the lockdowns no printed walks programme had been produced, but details had been circulated by email and details were displayed on web sites. However, the RA has only email addresses for about two thirds of the members. It does prompt the question of how the RA should correspond with other members ? It could be that the RA needs to keep a separate listing of those members who wish to receive a paper copy of the programme and probably every couple of months or so, sending them a paper listing of walks for the next two months.

Ian Wardle stated that when Fylde Group went paperless that members were informed that if they still wanted to receive a paper copy it is up to the member to request it. Only about 20 such requests were made and every 4 months a special mailing is done to these months. The Area now needs to do something similar.

Brian Dearnaley stated that the membership records were transferred to the Insight system in Oct and that since then Preston Group has not received any membership updates. Kath Finlayson spoke to confirm that she had not been able to access Insight for over 3 months. The Central Office staff present agreed to forward the details of this issue to others within Central Office.

10. **Address by Mark Crosby (member of staff at Central Office)**

Mark stated that he had intended to speak to a set of slides but due to the limitations of Zoom or our limited understanding of Zoom this was not possible. Instead, Mark will supply Eric with the slides he intended to use so that these can be circulated.

Membership of the RA was down to 98,000 soon after the start of Covid-19 but is now showing signs of recovering. A need also exists to refresh the brand and the website so that the RA can grow. The RA also needs to engage with others more and to make ourselves more relevant.

Mark also mentioned the following –

Don't Lose Your Way – the 2026 the cut-off date for claiming footpath based on historical evidence

Slow Ways – routes between town and villages

<https://slowways.uk/>

The Agricultural and Environmental Bills going through Parliament

The restrictions concerning Covid-19 has encouraged more people to go out walking

However, the increasing numbers in the countryside has been blamed for increased litter at some beauty spots.

It is intended to move to make more material available online, with details about walk leading expected to appear in Feb.

11. **The AGM was then closed at 2:00pm.**