



Yorkshire Ramblers' Club 132nd Annual General Meeting

16th November 2024

Held at Settle Social Club

MINUTES

The President, Becca Humphreys, was unfortunately unavailable at the last minute due to having been bitten by a dog and was attending A&E for treatment.

The AGM started at 4:00pm with the Vice-President, Conrad Tetley in the Chair. 34 Members were in attendance and the meeting was thus quorate.

The AGM meeting papers, the available Officer's Reports and the audited Accounts had been circulated to the membership in advance and in accordance with the Club Rules.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Imogen Campion, Peter Chadwick, Alan Clare, Roy Denney, Andy Eavis, Richard Gowing, Christine Harrison, Jim Harrison, Jeff Hooper, Becca Humphreys, Richard Josephy, Alan Kay, Ian Laing, Anne Lofthouse, Trevor Salmon, Peter Selby, Rod Smith, Yayoi Smith, Tom Spencer, Arthur Tallon, Kjetil Tveranger.

2. To confirm the minutes of the previous AGM in November 2023

The draft minutes were accepted as a true and correct record. There were no matters arising.

The motion to accept the amended AGM minutes was proposed by Jason Humphreys, seconded by Steve Richards and was carried nem. con.

3. President's Report

The President's address was read out to the meeting by Jason Humphreys on Becca Humphreys behalf:

Thank you for your attendance at the AGM and I look forward to our Annual Dinner this evening.

And hard on the heels of that, thank you - a huge and heartfelt thank you to the officers of the Club and to the members of the Committee for their unstinting contribution to the continued operation of the Club. In any group of human beings there are those that stand and stare and then those that get up and get on with it. We have a good number of the latter currently running the Club but it is unfair to expect them to do so *ad infinitum*. If you want to see the Club continue its programme of meets at home and expeditions further afield, not to omit the operation of our two properties, please consider what contribution you can make. Our existing team has a wealth of knowledge to share which is best learned by doing. So, if you might be an apprentice Meets, Huts Booking, Membership secretary, or Secretary please have a chat with the current incumbent to find out more.

The Club committee has introduced the Special Development Fund this year and our first applications for loans (for training courses) and grants (for expedition activities) are being received. We look forward to seeing the results come through to Club and individual endeavours in due course.

This year has seen a considerable improvement in the facilities at Low Hall Garth. The barn now has a fully functioning log burner, the bench under the window outside has been refurbished. Several meets this year have benefited from both, will meets for years to come.

The meet calendar this year has seen a wonderful variety of locations and activities. Of course, the two overseas meets succeeded in completing what we started in 2020 in Morocco, and in re-establishing our missions even further afield with the success of the Bolivia expedition. Looking forward to 2025 we have a similarly varied programme including the reintroduction of an Alpine Meet to the programme. It is also reassuring to see some new names on the Meet Leaders list for 2025 – thank you for stepping up.

And with that look into the future, I will sign off. But not without a word about an issue raised at an AGM a couple of years back. Diversity of membership is still a problem for many clubs and this one is no exception. As with many institutions of a certain vintage, seeing this as a matter of labelling and quotas will only continue the issue. This Club's existence relates to caving, climbing and mountaineering. Not, as was mentioned at one meet this year, "a gentlemen's club". Not, as was mentioned at one meet this year, "a gentlemen's club". Until we recognise and remember that the only criteria we are interested in are those stated in our rule book, we will we will struggle to recruit people who enjoy the wild and mountainous places we find so inspiring, regardless of any other label.

There were no questions on the report.

The motion to accept the President's Report was proposed by Richard Dover, seconded by John Sutcliffe and was carried nem. con.

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2022-23

Martyn Trasler presented a review of the Club's finances for the twelve months to 31st August 2024.

Club Huts Account There was a small increase in LHG hut fee income to just under £7000. Costs have increased around 13.5% during the year, including repairs to the wood burner in the barn, which was about £2000, and increased electricity costs. The result is a negative effect on cash flow of just over £5600 before applying depreciation. Lowstern saw a drop in income of around 15%, which is about £2800, so coming in just under £15,000 for the year. Costs have been managed through spreading the cost of items like the new boiler over the next three years, so it wasn't a big hit in in one year. Also the fact that we're owed a significant rebate, so we've offset about £3000 against the electricity cost at Lowstern, which is why it shows £60. Through some inaccurate meter readings at various stages, we've basically paid for last year's electricity in previous years.

Income and Expenditure Income is mainly from member subscriptions, so is similar to the previous years. Applying the deficit from LHG, the surplus from Lowstern, a small loss on meets and the deposit interest gives a net income of about £6500. Shifting down to the costs, club administration costs reduced due to a one-off cost in the previous year. And obviously, the dinner subsidy increased with additional costs of flights, etc for the Chief Guest and increased costs of room hire. BMC subscriptions rise in line with inflation in this year's accounts. Next year's subs will increase in line with inflation, but with an additional insurance levy cost being applied as well. Our Editor has produced this year's Journal with a different layout and reduced the cost significantly in the process. Other costs remain fairly similar to previous years, so we end the year with a net deficit after applying depreciation from the huts of £3857. So approximately £1000 more than the previous year. We're hopeful that the adjustments to subscriptions will help address that to a degree.

Balance Sheet Fixed assets reduce by the effect of the value of depreciation. Current assets include items such as the gas stock and prepaid electricity at Lowstern and the two years' boiler cost that is yet to be written off. Also in there are advanced meet deposits and the deposit for the dinner. And there's also the remaining three years of the external painting that we do at LHG, which we have to outsource these days. So cash balances have decreased with the deficit on club activities and the prepayments that were mentioned previously. Merchandise stocks have reduced. We've had a few sales of bags and Club ties.

Liabilities include a small electricity charge at LHG, advanced dinner payments and some dinner monies that have come in ahead of this year's event. As a club net value, you'll see this is £132,549. This is made up of accumulated surpluses £107,613 and the Legacies and Gifts Reserve at £24,936 which includes the Special Development Fund at £10,223.

In summary, we remain in a solvent position to meet our liabilities and should be able to cover the costs of impending improvements at Lowstern.

There was no proposal to change the Club annual subscriptions for 2024-25.

Q1. [Duncan Mackay] If we've got a cash balance of £91,000 we could put it in government bonds or something like that and get a much higher interest rate than we are at the moment. You could be very flexible and it's tax free as well.

A1. We'd anticipated having spent much of it now on the improvements to Lowstern. We expected it to have been done some time ago. So yes, if funds are not tied up, then I can talk to you about it.

Q2. [David Large] requested a more rigorous analysis of what might be done with the huts, particularly their usage. They are under-used. If usage increased, what difference would it make, what rates should be set, what would be the balance of different users? Would it, for example, be worthwhile exploring local clubs in the Yorkshire area to set up as Kindred deals? Could that help achieve a more equitable financial position re the huts? Could we identify clubs that might be willing to use them midweek? How much are we willing to extend the Kindred concept for the benefit of getting more users in our huts? I don't know what the answer is, but I feel that as members our use of the huts is quite low. Promoting the use of our huts to other bodies at relatively favourable rates might increase usage. If we take that risk of potential increased problems arising from new groups of users, then we might keep them viable. Maybe the Committee could consider that moving forward.

A2. We will look into this further.

Q3. [Arthur Salmon] I'd like to ask about the Library and which cost £800 this year. What is the insurance level and will it be changing?

A3. The insurance cost was about £700, then there was some binding at about £120 and some books. The insurance level going to decrease as I've restructured things and this will come into next year's report where we paid it.

The motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and Accounts was proposed by Alan Linford, seconded by David Large and was carried nem. con.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

Helen Smith presented her report that during the last twelve months. We have welcomed eight new Members. With four resignations, and sadly five deaths, we end the year with 157 Members and Honorary Members. In addition, we have ten new Prospective Members making an overall total of twelve Prospective Members.

New Members: Debby Kulmann, Toby Dickinson, John Thurston, Andrew Jarman, Solvig Choi, Lizzie Trasler, Dan Curtis and Kim Randall.

New Life Members (35 years in the club): David Hall and Rory Newman.

Died: Derek Smithson, Frank Walker, Tony Penny, John Colton and Simon Stembridge.

Resigned: Michael Gregg, John Brown, Roger Ellis and Bill Hawkins.

New Prospective Members since the last AGM: Andrew Barton, Ignacio Corradini, Judith Toland-Brown, Robert Parker, Matthew Trasler, Lewis Preston, Peter Baker, Carol Baker, Mark Longmore and James Spreadbury.

Moving forward: Once again the recruitment of new members and PMs has been encouraging but with our ageing member profile it is still important that we continue to welcome those who show interest in the club. Please keep spreading the word - there is nothing better than a personal introduction - and do make use of the YRC business cards when you are out on the hill. Extra copies are available from the Membership Secretary.

Please inform the Membership Secretary of any change in your personal details and whether you only require a digital copy of the Journal and/or Handbook.

There were no questions.

The motion to accept the Membership Secretary's Report was proposed by Michael Smith, seconded by Harvey Lomas and was carried nem. con.

6. Huts Booking Secretary's Report

Richard Josephy could not be present but his written report had been circulated.

There were no questions. It was noted that some of the data and the results of the BMC Hut Survey would inform a review of how to drive further use of our huts by other clubs.

The motion to accept the Huts Booking Secretary's Report was proposed by Robert Crowther and seconded by Ged Campion and was carried nem. con.

7. Meet Secretary's Report

Tim Josephy had submitted his written report and noted that it has been a successful year. The finalised 2025 Meets List had also been circulated previously. It was noted that the Meets Committee would be meeting in December so members should submit their ideas for new meets in 2026 as soon as possible.

There were no questions.

The motion to accept the Meet Secretary's Report was proposed by Conrad Tetley, seconded by Richard Dover and was carried nem. con.

8. Editor's Report

Michael Smith had prepared a report which had been circulated previously.

There were no questions.

The motion to accept the Editors' Report was proposed by Toby Dickinson, seconded by David Large and was carried nem. con.

9. Election of the Club's Officers, Committee Members and Officials for 2024-25

[* Nominated by the Committee for re-election]

9.1 Nominations for the election of Officers

President	Ged Campion
Past-President	Becca Humphreys
Vice-President	Conrad Tetley*
Hon. Treasurer	Martyn Trasler*
Hon. Secretary	Mick Borroff*
Huts Booking Secretary	Richard Josephy*
Joint-Wardens Low Hall Garth	Alister Renton* and Ged Campion*
Warden Lowstern	Richard Sealey*

The motion to elect the Clubs Officers was proposed by Fiona Smith, seconded by Arthur Salmon and was carried nem. con.

9.2 Nominations for election to the Committee

(up to five members allowed under Rule 5.1 (viii):

Robert Crowther*	Harvey Lomas*	Rory Newman*
Steve Richards	Helen Smith*	

The motion to elect Committee members was proposed by Tim Josephy, seconded by Duncan Mackay and was carried nem. con.

9.3 Nominations for election of Other Officials

Membership Secretary	Helen Smith*
Meets Secretary	Tim Josephy*
Editor	Michael Smith*
Librarian	Arthur Salmon*
Archivist	Alan Linford*
Hon. Auditor	Richard Taylor*
Tacklemaster	Ged Campion*
Webmaster	Mick Borroff

The motion to elect the Club's Other Officials was proposed by Jason Humphreys and seconded by Paul Dover and was carried nem. con.

10. Honorary Membership

The Committee nominated Tim Josephy and eminent Norwegian mountaineers Knut Tønberg and Nils Hagen for election to Honorary Membership. Tim, a past President and Secretary has made a huge contribution to the Club over more than 60 years and needed no introduction. Knut and Nils were previous Chief Guests at YRC Dinners and Michael Smith read some brief notes about their achievements for those who did not attend these dinners to hear their talks.

The motion to elect the three Honorary Members was proposed by David Hick, seconded by Malcolm Lynch and was carried nem. con.

Tim sincerely thanked the Club for nominating and electing him.

11. Any Other Business

No formal motions had been received by the Secretary and so the meeting was opened to the floor but no issues were raised for discussion.

The incoming President Ged Campion addressed the meeting to introduce himself to some of the newer members and set out some of the issues he intends to tackle during his term in office:

- Seeking clarification on where we go on LHG as we are only seven years away from the current lease coming to an end. This may require a well-timed, informal approach to the NT in the first instance.
- Getting the work started on the alterations and building work planned at Lowstern.
- Encourage more use of our huts by members outside of Club meets. Whilst we acknowledge that the demographics of our membership can be a barrier, we need to explore ways of increasing use.
- Trying to get more younger members to join the YRC. This is already evolving, some of our existing young members have already encouraged their friends to apply for PM.
- Re-invigorate caving in the club with our rich history of exploration, this may not be through meets but exploration projects.
- Consider issues of diversity and inclusivity to help expand the membership.
- Encouraging more members to lead meets and step up the committee as part of our succession planning to develop new officers to help run the Club.

Close

The Vice-President thanked everyone for coming and the AGM was formally closed at 4:46pm.

The meeting then stood for a minute's silence in memory of Derek Smithson, Frank Walker, Tony Penny, John Colton and Simon Stembridge who had died since the last AGM.