**Minutes of AGM of St Andrews & North-East Fife Ramblers**

**held on Monday 6 November 2023**

**at 7.00pm, at Cupar Community Fire Station meeting room**

**1. Welcome:** Jane Houston (Convenor) welcomed 13 members.

**2. Apologies:** Apologies were received from: Fiona Barr, Jim Coates, Stewart & Linda Collier, Joan Crichton, Jim McLay, Ian Mitchison, Janet Moffett, Moraig Orton, Robert Stirrat.

**3. Adoption of Minutes of last AGM:** Proposed by Christine Arnold, seconded by Jim Forret.

**4. Matters arising:** No matters were raised.

**5. Annual Reports by office-bearers:**

**(a) Convenor’s report:**  Jane Houston highlighted various events and topics from the preceding year. The 2022 Christmas lunch had been enjoyed by 30 members and friends, after a gap of two years. Only 3 new members had joined the Group on the basis of the introductory walk(s) offered, but there had been other newcomers in the course of the year. As ever, volunteers are sought to lead both weekend and mid-week walks. Regarding the Committee, both Yvonne Stevenson and Bob Stirrat are standing down as committee members, and Jim Forret is also standing down as Secretary to the Area committee. Colin Brown was thanked for taking on Secretary duties (from Jim Coates) in addition to his Walks Co-ordinator responsibilities. Nicky Haxell has volunteered to serve as a minute-taker for AGM and committee meetings.

**(b) Acting secretary’s report:** Colin Brown reported membership stable at 105, as of 5/11/23. Eleven new members have joined in the course of the year, with 7 resigning, 2 moving to other groups and 2 whose membership has lapsed. There is a core of regular walkers, and also of leaders.

**(c) Press secretary’s report:** Jane confirmed that reports of the Group’s activities were published regularly in the local press, and also on the Group’s own website, together with Colin’s photos. There is encouragement from Ramblers Scotland to promote Groups through social media, but no-one in the Group currently would wish/be able to take on this activity.

**(d) Treasurer’s report:** Will Aitken circulated copies of the 2022-2023 accounts, which have a closing balance of £478 (Ramblers Scotland wish groups to hold no more than £500 in their account.). No expenses had been paid out this year either for training or for attendance at Council meetings. £100 had been set aside as a contribution by the Group towards reprint costs of the St Andrews and the Cupar walks leaflets (see AOB for further discussion on this topic.) The Group’s budget has now been accepted by Ramblers Scotland and the first quarterly payment has been received; this will work out at only £4/member for the year, which will inevitably lead to some constraints. This current level of support for Groups (and for the Area) is to be discussed at the forthcoming Area AGM.

To cover the potential difficulty of only the Treasurer having administrator access to the online bank account (although Carol and Colin both have access to co-authorise online payments), it was mooted to appoint a Deputy Treasurer who would also be able to administer the account. Jim Forret volunteered for this role, and he will be nominated to the bank. Will will draw up a set of Standard Operating Procedures to assist in this process. Jim requested a copy of the Ramblers Scotland accounts, and this will be investigated at the Area AGM.The Independent Examiner (Nicky Haxell) was pleased to confirm the accounts were in good order and to sign them off on that basis.

**(e) Walks Co-ordinator’s report:** Colin Brown reported on a full programme of walks for the year: 35 having taken place and only 1 cancelled because of bad weather, with some substitutions having taken place because of unavailability of the walk leader or problems with the proposed route. There had been a rise in attendance at midweek walks. Colin has a full breakdown of walks by attendance. There was discussion of the usefulness both of the printed programme and of the information available on the website.

**(f)**  **Webmaster’s report:** Michael Hammond confirmed the re-launch of the Group’s web-site a year ago, and its smooth running since that date. Members expressed their appreciation of its clear format and the timely update of information.

**6. Appointment of office-bearers:** The following nominations were proposed by the committee, and elected to acclamation by the members present:

Convenor: Jane Houston (also Press Secretary);

Secretary: Colin Brown;

Treasurer: Will Aitken;

Walks Co-ordinator: Colin Brown;

Webmaster: Michael Hammond

**7. Appointment of committee members:** The following nominations to the committee were elected by acclamation of the members present: Christine Arnold (re-election), Jim Forret (standing down as Area Secretary, standing for election as committee member), Carol Philp (re-election).Robert Stirrat and Yvonne Stevenson were not standing for re-election, and were thanked for their time on the committee.

The pattern of meetings for 2023/24 was confirmed: Committee meetings in April and October to be conducted via Zoom; AGM and two walks planning meetings to be face-to-face, at Cupar Community Fire-station.

**8. Appointment of Independent examiner of the accounts:** Nicky Haxell was nominated by the committee, proposed by Alison Forret and seconded by Colin Brown.

**9. Area Report (Jim Forret):** The three Area Council meetings in the course of the year had been well-attended (on Zoom). The shortage of walk leaders is a problem across the area. Ramblers is offering walk leader courses for new and prospective leaders, at various times in the year. Two first-aid courses were held in the Burnside Hall, Scone, were well-attended, and with positive feedback. The Area AGM is on Saturday 18 November 2023, in the Burnside Hall, Scone.

Jim also reminded group members to carry their ICE card with them on all walks: information on the card should include any medical issues, medicines being taken and emergency contact numbers (landline and mobile, where applicable).

**10. Group representation at:**

**(a) Area AGM (18/11/23, Perth):** Jane Houston, Dorothy Cameron, Will Aitken and Jim Forret to attend.

**(b) Scottish Council (16/3/24), Cumbernauld:** Jim Forret to attend.

**(c) General Council (20/4/24), Birmingham NEC:** names can be proposed to the Convenor.

**11. Adoption of motions to Scottish Council: N**o proposals or motions forthcoming.

**12. Any Other Business:**

**(a) St Andrews & Cupar Walks Leaflets:** Will Aitken reported that £2,500 was needed to re-print both leaflets, with St Andrews stocks running out in 2024. The walks are currently being re-assessed by Carol Philp and Christine Arnold. To date, three of Will’s applications for funding have been successful: Rotary (£150), Kinburn Trust (£900), St Andrews University Community Fund (£1,100 – £1,250), and this should cover costs of both print runs (if the Cupar reprinting does not go ahead in 2024, then Will would offer to reimburse the relevant grants). It is proposed to use Westport Print & Design again, as they hold the templates. Will was thanked for all his work in securing the necessary funding for this project.

**(b) Christmas lunch:** To be held this year at Monturpie on Saturday 9 December. There would be no walk this year. Gluten-free options are available (details on website). 24 are currently attending.

**(c) Donation to Fire Service for use of meeting-room**: It was agreed to donate £25 to the Fire Service for use of the meeting-room. Will Aitken will arrange.

**(d) Jim Coates:** It was unanimously agreed to make a gift to Jim Coates in recognition of his years of service as Convenor, Holiday organiser and Secretary to the Group. The option of presenting a Ramblers Certificate to him would be checked out by Will Aitken.

**13. Date of next AGM: Monday 4 November 2024**

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm Nicky Haxell, Minute-taker