

DONCASTER RAMBLERS

Minutes of committee meeting held on 20.07.2026 Village Hall Finningley.

Committee members present: Stephen Tomlinson, Ian Baltrop, Stuart Twell, Dianne Scolari, Peter Smith, Brian Unsworth and David Horne.

Angela Gibson chaired the meeting in the absence of David Gadd.

1. **Apologies.** Peter Rowsell and David Gadd
2. **Review of the minutes of the meeting on 27.04.26.** These were accepted as accurate.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes of 27.04.26.** None
4. **Financial report.** Presented by David Horne. Transactions etc. as follows

Bank Balance £2053.86

Income;

SYNED Area Funding	£125
2 x coach fares at £20 each	£40
Ramblers Walking Partnership	£60
Total Income	£225

Expenditure

27/02 /26 2 x Coach Fare Refunds @ £20	£40.00
Annual membership Peak and Northern Footpath Society	£30
Total expenditure	£70

We have also spent £29 on a new breaker bar for the maintenance team. Expenses for the purchase were forwarded at the meeting. Expenses have also been submitted for the coach trip pre walk.

David Horne advised that the SYNED Treasurer is stepping down and they are looking for a replacement

5. Walks programme.

- **Tuesday walks.** Programme healthy. Walks booked to 22.09.26 with only two dates free in this period.
- **Thursday walks.** Programme full to 20.08.26. Nothing on the programme after this date. David Gadd's comments follow. An almost complete programme, with grateful thanks to experienced members for putting on one or two walks through the summer. I'm not too bothered about the odd gap in the programme because it's a reminder to everyone that there really is a shortage of leaders for Thursdays.
- **Saturday walks.** Walks booked to 19.12.26 with only 6 dates available up to this date.
- **Carers walks.** They were unsuccessful in obtaining funding for 2026. As they have free access to Brodsworth and Cusworth Halls outings have been arranged for these

two venues. The one at Brodsworth has taken place and Neil T and SJT lead a 4 mile walk and Angela provided a garden tour. Cusworth walk is taking place on Friday 31.07.26

- **Coach trip.** The 2026 coach trip is fully booked with four on the reserve list. The pre walk for the long walk was carried out on 17.07.26. Thanks to Angela and Neil T for accompanying SJT on this walk and to Frank Bevan for driving us to Ravenscar and picking us up Scarbrough as well as doing some of the walk. Angela is leading the long walk with Neil as back up. Charlie is leading the medium walk and will organise a pre walk in the near future. SJT will lead the short walk if one is needed and the recce was done on Friday 24.07.26
 - **Xmas meal and walk.** The event will take place on Thursday 10 December 2026. Once we have menus from the Golf club details will be forwarded to members with booking from the start of October 2026 so monies do not impact on the 2025/2026 end of year accounts. It was suggested we look at a different walk before the meal this year and Peter Smith offered to look into this.
 - **Art Walk Thursday 03.09.26.** David Gadd will lead this walk and comments as follows. The walk on Thursday, 3 September is a request from ArtBomb, who have an office on Hallgate, for an urban-rural-urban walk. I quote: 'At a Crossroads is an Arts Council-supported research project looking at how different forms of control shape the ground we move through, from access rights, fencing, and rights of way in less urban areas through to road design, signage and pedestrian crossings in the town. The Doncaster walk is being developed in partnership with Mike Stubbs and ArtBomb, and ends therefor a debrief over food'. My plan at the moment is to leave Hallgate, cross the North Bridge, then along the Don and back via Hexthorpe.
6. **Membership.** Presented by S J Tomlinson. As 11.07.26 current membership is 247 a reduction of two from the last meeting. SJT confirms all new members have been sent welcome packs. A review of our members indicates the average age is 70. A review of our membership over the last 24 months shows our membership is stable between 245 and 255. With Peter Rowsell's approval he is no longer membership secretary. This came about as Central Office now require all those with access to the Insight Hub which contains members details to undertake Data Protection training annually. PR contacted SJT and advised he felt unable to do the training. SJT is the only committee member who has access to this sensitive data.
7. **Walk leader training.** Since the last meeting Hannah Young and Frank Bevan have completed the walk leader training. In addition, 3 walk leaders from other groups who walk with us have offered to lead walks and have been added to our walk leader list. A revised walk leader list has been sent to all three walk coordinators.
8. **Publicity.** Presented by Brian Unsworth. As Peter Rowsell is still suffering from ill health Brian is posting walk reports and photographs onto our website and Facebook page. David Gadd has forwarded the maintenance work report for July to the Free Press where it was published along with a photograph.
9. **Rights of Way Maintenance.** Report presented by Stuart Twell. The second maintenance session of 2026 was carried out 08.07.26 as the June session was cancelled on the advice of the City of Doncaster Council RoW Department because of the very hot weather. Eight volunteers attended and replaced two broken stiles with new metal kissing gates on a footpath near Askern. The next session is likely to be at Sykehouse to rectify a problem notified by a member of the public. Sturt and Peter Smith confirmed that we are complying with the new requirements placed on maintenance teams by central office and that the City of Doncaster

manage and supervise our works. They also confirmed we do not use bladed power tools as these require the user to be certificated. Peter Smith confirmed we have purchased a new breaker bar which has been used. Stuart Twell advised that Central Office once again want to visit one of our maintenance sessions for reporting nationwide. It was also reported that Stuart Horrocks of City of Doncaster has recently attended a meeting with North Yorkshire Council who were surprised at the level of cooperation between Doncaster Ramblers and CDC and the volume of works carried out by ourselves.

10. Rights of Way Monitoring. Presented by Dianne Scolari. The 2026 monitoring programme is ongoing and out of the 29 squares 14 are complete or almost complete. Brian Milne has for health reasons had to give up his role as a square monitor, David Nicholson has taken on the role and Dianne has moved volunteers allocated squares. Following the meeting SJT amended our Volunteer List with central office to reflect these changes.

11. Any Other Business.

- **Walk Grading.** The issue of Walk Grading was raised as the difference between moderate and strenuous on Walks Manager is substantial and this can lead to possible problems on some walks in areas like the Peak District where our members, visiting members or guests may not appreciate that though the grade of the whole walk may be moderate some small sections may be harder than they expect. It was agreed we cannot change the grading system by adding say a hard category between moderate and strenuous as this will not be recognised by Walks Manager. Various other options were discussed it was agreed that SJT would prepare a discussion document for committee members to consider before advising all walk leaders. The draft discussion document has been sent.
- **Walking in warm weather.** Peter Smith with his medical experience raised concerns about walking in the recent warm weather and the possibility of an incident occurring especially as we are likely to get more of these events. Concerns were raised that new or guest members may not fully understand the risks of walking in very hot weather. A discussion took place about cancelling walks, shortening walks and other precautions. It was agreed that SJT would try to summarise the Committee members' thoughts on this matter in a discussion document for review and agreement by the committee before issuing to walk leaders. It is hoped this will give walk leaders the support they need to make the difficult decision to cancel or shorten a walk. The draft discussion document has been sent.
- **Tuesday walk start time.** Two committee members raised the issue of 9.30 start on Tuesday walks. This has become more common during the summer months and it was explained that some members want walks to start at 10. A vigorous discussion took place and it is clear that this is a divisive issue amongst the committee and the general membership. We have attempted to address this issue over 12 months ago but it seems to have little effect on reducing the number of 9.30 starts. It was agreed that SJT would prepare a discussion document on this issue for the committee in the hope we can come to some common ground and advise walk leaders. This document is still in preparation. SJT also raised the issue of walk start times at the start of the walk on the following Tuesday and from the reaction it is very clear this is a divisive issue.
- **Ramblers Governance update.** SJT read a series of statements provided by David Gadd. Subsequent to the meeting DG asked for an update on this matter from central office to be circulated to the committee members, this was done.

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