

Countryside Management Association
Annual General Meeting 2017
5pm Wednesday 22nd November 2017
Conwy YHA, Conwy, Wales



Minutes

Present:

Board Members: Linda Nunn (Chair), Mark Baker (Vice Chair)

National Committee: Ian Brooker (International Rep), Toby Edwards (Northern Ireland), Tim Russell (South West), Ted Talbot (NT Corp Rep).

Gordon Miller (Hon President), Roger Cole (Hon Vice President)

CMA Members present: (see attached Delegate List, appendix 1)

Also: Rachel Limb (CMA Admin Support)

Apologies: Alan Preece, Dave Solly, Steve Scoffin, Sarah Gibbs, Richard Westwood, Tom Heenan, Clair Payne, Kevin Vigars, Howard Sutcliffe

1. Welcome

Linda Nunn (LN) welcomed members to the AGM and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Annual Report/Review (attached as Appendix 2)

A copy of the Chairman's Report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. LN was delighted with how the year has progressed, with a lot of work going on. She reported on some of the key points:

- Membership now at 459
- Delighted to welcome Denbighshire County Council as corporate members
- Thanks offered to the new Admin Support, Rachel Limb for her work
- LN also thanked CJS for their ongoing support, the CMA is pleased to include an advert for CJS in each Ranger Magazine, this should also be included in all Regional Newsletters (a copy of the advert will be circulated to ensure the latest version is used)
- Following an article sent out by CJS on volunteering six photographers have been in touch to offer photographic images which CMA may use free of charge/copyright. Ranger Editor Liz Bourne is in touch with them so that a photo library can be set up
- A gentleman has also contacted CMA to offer to make a short promotional video promoting the CMA - further discussions on this are to take place
- Ranger Magazine has a new Editor, Liz Bourne
- The European Ranger Federation was 'born' in May (a presentation on the ERF and World Ranger Day followed the AGM)
- The Board has agreed that once CMA finances are secure the Association will make available a bursary to assist with costs of members attending overseas events
- Study / Training Days have been going well and members were urged to support these, particularly those in their regions, with new ones coming up in 2018. If anyone has

particular feedback on an event, or if they would like to discuss organising an event they should get in touch with Training Co-ordinator Janice Burley (JB). JB also asked those organising Study Days to avoid school holiday dates.

LN particularly wished to thank the CMA Board for all their support over the last year.

3. Treasurer's Report (attached as Appendix 3)

The Treasurer's Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Speaking to Conference the previous evening Treasurer Alan Preece had been pleased to report that the Association's finances are now in a better position than in previous years and that the problems regarding submission of accounts to HMRC have now been resolved. LN thanked AP and his volunteer friend for their hard work.

4. Regional Updates

SW - Tim Russell (TR)

- SW Committee Meeting held the previous week, four meetings have taken place in 2017
- SW continues to be committed and is going from strength to strength
- The region has put on a number of study days and held a brilliant and very useful AGM hosted by the National Trust at Tyntesfield
- TR was delighted to learn that numbers are also up nationally as well as regionally
- The SW are still seeking at County Rep for Dorset, all other counties in the region are represented
- An early study day in 2018 is to be held in Dorset

SE - Phil Bolton (on behalf of Richard Westwood)

- Membership has remained steady over the past 12 months, currently 78 which is an increase by 6 from last year;
- We have had two study days, and one training day this year;
- Sadly the study day at Horsell Common was cancelled due to a lack of interest. The other two days had two attendees each; need more people to get involved
- One of the corporate members, Bracknell Forest, held a GCN Ecology and Surveying training day and has kindly offered to host this on an annual basis for the region;
- Richard Westwood has been trying to form a South East & Greater London Committee. Sadly interest is limited, however Phil Bolton has offered his time to regional committee and Mark Jacobs (a new member) offered to sit on regional committee also. Only two counties are currently represented;
- The purpose of trying to raise interest was to feed in information about study/training days and feeding these into the new newsletter, regional AGM planned for early next year;
- Chloe Bradbrooke NT Ranger champion and CMA member is organising their London & South East Ranger conference on the 25th and 26th January 2018. Richard Westwood and Phil Bolton are going along to support Chloe from the Region.
- New newsletter launched; the Beautiful South is back edited by Phil Bolton, a second edition will go out in December 2017

- Tom Heenan has suggested that his members would like some training days with us in the SE.

EE - Roger Cole (on behalf of Tom Heenan)

- Have had a couple of study days on the London fringes, with more planned
- One on Broads and Essex Grazing
- Also discussing with Derek Evans an event at Walthamstow Wetlands Centre
- Have started to build a list of all potential organisations that employ rangers with a view to inviting them to something like the planned event at the Walthamstow Wetlands Centre, a free event to start talking with them

WM - Linda Nunn (on behalf of Alan Preece)

- Regional group has met three times
- Three events held, a fourth one cancelled due to a problem with the contractor
- Not yet produced a newsletter
- Sincere thanks to Helen Edwards of Dudley Metropolitan Council for organising and running the study days

NT - Ted Talbot

- The Trust is planning to host a Ranger Gathering in September 2018
- Delighted to report that the NT now have a head of discipline representing the Rangers, so there is now someone at head office to liaise with and speak on behalf of Rangers. Person appointed is Rob Rhodes - LN confirmed he has already been in touch with CMA and she has a meeting arranged with him in the New Year

NW - update on behalf of Clair Payne

- Strong year for CMA in NW with lots of study days, mostly very well attended, not all organised by NT, also worked with RSPB and United Utilities
- Couple of articles contributed to Ranger Magazine
- World Ranger Day held a good event with practical tasks, food and water sports, supported by the Lake District NP. Management were supportive of the day and of CMA
- Hosted visit from US Rangers (Lake & Peak District joint venture) - got good publicity
- More training days planned for 2018, spread across the year
- Looking for volunteer(s) to help Jess Darwin with Ranger articles and study day organisation

NI - Toby Edwards (TE)

- TE is currently only individual member in N Ireland, he is also the NT rep
- Put on 3 training events in cooperation with Red Squirrels NI, which included a qualification
- TE is going to talk to Belfast rangers who do a lot of work with scythes rather than brushcutters to see if some training/study events can be organised with them
- Things are bad for the countryside in NI in terms of support
- TE issued an invitation for people to visit NI, he would be pleased to show people round
- TE also runs the CMA's Twitter account

International - Ian Brooker

- There is going to be a visit by Urs Wegmann, a Chief Ranger for a number of nature reserves near Zurich, in May-June 2018, visiting Dartmoor, the Lake District and possibly Snowdonia (tbc)
- Would be good to host other rangers in future
- An invitation has been sent out for a CMA member Ranger to attend the Swiss Forum anniversary event

LN thanked all those from National Committee for their reports and input.

5. News Update

Prospectus

LN was delighted to circulate the new CMA prospectus; copies were available for members to take away with them to help promote the Association and membership. The publication can go to colleagues, partner organisations, colleges and any other relevant outlets. Members were invited to send any feedback on the prospectus to LN.

Roger Cole noted that few colleges now run countryside courses - it would be useful to know what courses are run and where in the country. Michelle Tyrantia suggested asking the regional co-ordinators to feedback lists of colleges in their region.

Work Plan

LN showed members an updated version of the Work Plan and assured members that this is an active document. One of the actions is to collaborate with other organisations and a key priority is to contact them in regard to partnership working.

Other actions included an online membership system and a review of the accreditation scheme the first of which is now live and the latter is currently being considered.

Training

LN reiterated JB's request for members to support study days, to avoid school holidays when arranging them and to give feedback on them.

Board and Committee Vacancies

There are currently spaces on both the CMA Board and National Committee. In asking members to get involved LN reminded the meeting that people get out of the Association what they put in. Current Board and Committee members can only take on so much work, so the more people who are involved the lighter the individual load.

The Board urgently needs to find a Secretary, this position is a requirement in law; at present the role is being undertaken by several of the Board members. A role description can be circulated or sent to any interested parties. In essence the Secretary needs to know the CMA's constitution and input ideas/comments to the Board.

Dave Solly (DS) has been the Membership Affairs Rep on the Board for a number of years and given great guidance, but now needs to step down. He has notified the Board that he will need to retire from the role within the year. One of the main tasks of this role is to

help with the review the accreditation scheme (with the working group/Dave will continue with this) and head up the Review Panel. Aside from this the role is being reassessed but DS is happy to discuss it with anyone who may be interested in taking over from him and to work alongside them until he steps down.

The CMA would also benefit from someone who can do promotional work, in particular press releases - this does not necessarily have to be a Board position but just ad-hoc assistance.

Similarly anyone with experience of fundraising would be welcome. In particular researching potential advertisers for the Ranger so that the Editor can approach them, or perhaps identifying sponsors for the annual conference.

In terms of the regions, the Yorkshire and Humberside role is vacant as Chris Woods has had to resign. Sarah Gibbs also wishes to step down so East Midlands will also be vacant. Greater London is currently incorporated with SE, but it would be beneficial to have a separate GL rep.

Anyone interested in a Board or Committee position, or willing to assist with ad-hoc projects should get in touch with the Chair.

WebCollect

Mark Baker (MB) gave some background on the decision to move to an online membership system, in particular to improve and speed up the application process, to make administration more efficient and to enable online payment.

Following research into appropriate systems, four companies were shortlisted and WebCollect was chosen as they offered the most flexible system. Payments can still be taken offline by cheque (this may cease in the future) or invoice if required. Of the payment options Direct Debit has the least transaction costs so offers the best deal for the CMA.

MB and LN were delighted that the new system is now live and were pleased to officially launch it. Rachel Limb and Mark Baker have been instrumental in getting the new system up and running; a big thank you to them both.

Following the close of the meeting Rachel Limb gave a quick presentation of the system to members.

Accreditation Review

A working group - Matt Axford, Clair Payne, Toby Edwards, Tom Heenan, Linda Nunn and Dave Solly (Matt and Dave devised and set up the original scheme) - has been set up to review the accreditation scheme. Two surveys have been sent out, one to accredited members and one to other members that asks some broader questions on membership.

The review group will look at the survey results in the New Year and the revised scheme will reflect members' responses and what they have indicated they want/need.

Q - Chris Harris (CH) asked what the changes or concerns are with the current scheme?

A - The current competencies do not cover all the skills/knowledge required by rangers today as jobs have evolved. The revised scheme should include all areas and skills that are expected of a ranger. The review also provides an opportunity to look at the competencies required by other organisations, not to copy these but to judge needs and ensure gaps are filled. There is also a need to look at the application process to ensure it does not deter people from applying.

It was suggested involving CJS as they may be of assistance in identifying core and additional or supplementary skills (such as IT).

Members were encouraged to complete the surveys (link sent out on email) - if they feel there is insufficient room on the form please put comments and suggestions in writing to Admin Support.

Advocacy

Professor Lynn Crowe of Sheffield Hallam University agreed, at the last conference, to be the CMA's Academic Advocacy Adviser, helping the Association pro-bono a couple of times a year with areas/items the organisation wishes to respond to, such as government consultations, new legislation, etc.

There are currently several areas to look at and help with these would be welcome, these include;

Landscape Institute - consulting with like-minded organisations to form a practitioner's forum, involving a much broader range of fields related to landscape. DS has been to one meeting and will continue discussions with the Landscape Institute on CMAs behalf.

Parks Enquiry - MB and Lynn Crowe will be attending Westminster Briefing at the end of November.

Brexit Legislation (as it affects the countryside/greenspace sector)

The CMA Board will be meeting on 14th December to discuss all of these areas in more depth. IF the CMA decides to comment on anything it must be sure that it has a good evidence base on which to make comment - it is vital the organisation retains its credibility.

MB stressed the need to be realistic about where the CMA spends time and influence.

CH felt it was important for the Association to get involved in Brexit.

The Board will feedback to members after the meeting on 14th December.

Social Media

The meeting discussed the need to expand the CMA's social media, involve other, like-minded organisations (eg RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, National Parks) to encourage greater membership of CMA.

Summary

LN thanked Greenspace Designs Ltd for their sponsorship of the CMA Conference and thanked members for coming along.

Gordon Miller was delighted to see the progress made by the CMA over the last year and thanked LN and the team for all their hard work in setting the Association up for the future.

A Life Membership was presented to Nick Stanley by Roger Cole (RC) in recognition of his contribution to the CMA and to countryside management. RC praised NS for always making himself available, supporting colleagues, mentoring young rangers and for his dedication to his work.

NS was also presented with a certificate and Swiss pocket knife by the International Ranger Federation in recognition of, and thanks for, his fundraising work for World Ranger Day over many years.

Meeting closed at 6.11pm

Appendix 1: Conference Delegate List

(Please note that not all conference delegates were present at the AGM)

Baker	Mark	Devon County Council
Bartlett	Ed	National Trust
Bolton	Phil	Wildthing
Bourne	Liz	Natures Front Line
Brooker	Ian	Dartmoor NPA
Burley	Janice	Down 2 Earth Training
Carroll	Steve	Greenspace
Clift	Martin	RSPB
Cole	Roger	CMA Vice President
Cunningham	Mark	National Trust
Dafforn	Tim	East Devon District Council
Edwards	Toby	National Trust
Ellacott	Dave	Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust
Elliot	Kate	SCRA
Evans	Derek	Lee Valley RPA
Farquhar	Richard	Brecon Beacons NPA
Farrington	Paul	National Trust
Goddard	Rhona	Butterfly Conservation
Green	Tim	Gwent Wildlife Trust
Grutz	Frank	International Ranger Federation
Harris	Chris	Coed Y Bont
Hiles	Tom	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Jones	Rhun	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Jones	Rachel	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Knight	Vicky	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Lawson	Lesley	Conwy County Borough Council
Limb	Rachel	Countryside Management Association
Lockyer	Chris	National Trust
Madden	Daniel	National Trust
Miller	Gordon	CMA President
ap Myrddin	Carwyn	Snowdonia NP
Nunn	Linda	Cranborne Chase AONB
Pais	Barbara	EUROPARC
Potts	George	Chair, Scottish Countryside Rangers Assoc
Reid	Bob	Scottish Countryside Rangers Association
Robinson	Nathan	East Devon District Council
Rogers	Simon	National Trust
Russell	Tim	Plymouth City Council
Scott	Lorcan	District Conservation Officer, Kildare
Stanley	Nick	Thurrock Council
Stewart	William	Norwich City Council
Stockdale	Ros	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Talbot	Ted	National Trust
Thomas	Rhys	National Trust
Tyrtania	Michelle	Coventry City Council
Weatherhead	Gail	National Trust



Countryside Management Association

Annual General Meeting 2017

Wednesday 22nd November 2017 – 4.30pm

CMA Annual Review 2017

1. Since the 50th CMA Anniversary Conference last November held in the Peak District, I can genuinely say that the CMA has had a very busy and fruitful year; with a growing membership, increasing number of study days and almost all the voluntary National Committee roles filled. More of that in a moment.
2. Looking wider afield, 2017 continues to be a year of uncertainties and unknowns with Brexit negotiations continuing, although the rangers of Europe have bucked that trend by now working more closely together than ever. However, there are always uncertainties and unknowns in life; that's the nature of it, so as 2018 approaches I might suggest CMA needs to continue to forge forwards, doing what it knows and does best and partnering with colleagues across the planet, whilst keeping a watchful, keen eye on how changing circumstances may affect us all in the future.
3. As mentioned above, membership now stands at 459, an increase of 130 in just a year. Some of our new members have been from the National Trust; now a valued corporate member of CMA. Denbighshire County Council, just down the road from the 2017 Conference venue, has just joined as the latest corporate member, so a big thank for their support. The annual backing from all our corporate members is much valued by CMA and I hope we can continue to attract more employers to CMA. To break the membership down, there are 36 Accredited Members, 335 Members, 49 Affiliates, 13 Honorary / Life Members and 16 Corporate Members.
4. A huge factor in the very effective running of the CMA during 2017 has been the arrival of Rachel Limb as our Support Officer. Rachel is incredible efficient, very adept at turning her hand to any task asked of her and has a great sense of humour to boot. I hope all members will join me in offering her a massive thank you for 2017 and I know Rachel will continue to be a boon to CMA during 2018.
5. I would also like to thank Countryside Jobs service (CJS) with which the CMA has a mutually supportive relationship. A new sponsorship/support package between the two organisations has been signed covering the next two years.
6. Your new Ranger magazine editor, Liz Bourne, is keen to take the Ranger forward with new content including new features and specialist articles. The CMA Facebook Group also continues to grow in members and it's really gratifying to see members asking queries and receiving numerous responses. Let's keep up the great work in print and online.

7. May 2017 saw the formation and official launch of the European Ranger Federation (ERF), under the umbrella of the International Ranger Federation. Ian Brooker, our International Representative signed the General Declaration co-operation agreement on behalf of CMA whilst coverage of this 4th European Congress and 'birth' of ERF was reported in the Ranger and on the CMA web site. CMAs Vice President Roger Cole was elected as Vice President of the ERF. Congratulations to all concerned.
8. CMAs support of the International Ranger Federation continues as always. The awful news of the loss of Wayne Lotter this year shocked many to the core. Equally upsetting is the annual 'Roll of Honour' of rangers throughout the world who have lost their lives in the line of duty. It's an astonishing number that never gets any easier to read. To that end, CMA members continue to raise funds, especially on World Ranger Day (WRD), to assist the families of the fallen. Long may that continue, as will CMA attendance at International and European meetings or events, with a commitment from the Board to provide financial assistance as and when it can.
9. Study / training days numbered 29 during 2017, of which 27 ran; a slight rise from 2016. There was also the SW Rangers' Forum that was well attended. Of these combined, a total of 331 people attended. On any one study day numbers varied between 2 and 38.
10. Mark Baker, Vice Chairman, has done sterling work alongside Rachel Limb in ensuring the online subscription system (WebCollect) can be launched at the 2017 Conference! This will enable new members to join up easily and readily through spending just a few minutes online and the payment of subscriptions will be so much simpler. Well done both and more detail to follow in the next Ranger.
11. An Accreditation Review Group has also been beavering away, looking at the current accreditation content and process. After surveying all members for suggestions and opinions, the CMA aims to have a revised system operational as soon as feasible in 2018. Many thanks to that group of members.
12. The CMA has had almost a full set of Regional Co-ordinators throughout 2017, although two are now becoming open for new volunteers; Yorkshire and Humberside and East Midlands. National Committee teleconferences have been busy affairs and I'd like to thank all involved for their consistent input. 2017 also saw CMA welcome Professor Lynn Crowe as our academic Advocacy Advisor. As we move into 2018, I feel sure we will be calling on Lynn for advice on various issues of concern or interest to CMA members.
13. My final thanks for this year must go to Mark Baker, Alan Preece, Sarah Gibbs and Dave Solly for their unwavering support as Board members. They have all guided and supported CMA work and initiatives throughout the year and helped me, in this second year as Chairman, beyond my hopes. CMA is growing in numbers, and activities on a wide range of fronts. Without an active, responsible, committed Board, this would never happen.

To conclude, the CMA has had a memorable and exciting 2017 with several new and/or revitalised services now available for members. There is much still to do but I'm confident that with the membership steadily growing and the enthusiasm and dedication of members across the land, the CMA will only go from strength to strength. The future bodes well for CMA into 2018.

Linda Nunn
CMA Chairman

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report



CMA Treasurer/Secretary Report to the AGM November 22nd 2017

This year has seen a much more settled financial position than the last few years. Our new business address has eliminated the issue with lost membership renewal cheques. Therefore many more renewals have come in and on time. Also a huge thank you to Rachel Limb, admin support, who has been very efficient and speedy at paying these cheques in.

Last year we made a pre-tax surplus of £5,296.43. Our likely tax bill (theoretically £1,006.32 at 19%) should be £0, as it should be offset by the losses made 2014/15 of £4,132.22.

Balances	1 st April 2016	31 st March 2017
Current	£2,188.95	£10,229.35
Reserve	£4,450.87	£1,706.90
Total	£6,639.82	£11,936.25
		+£5,296.43

This obviously puts us in a much safer position with regards to cash flow, which has become of significant concern at times in recent years.

Our current balances in comparison to this time last year are also up by £5,438.51, however this should not be taken at face value as significant expenditure will not necessarily fall at the same time each year.

	13 th Nov 2016	13 th Nov 2017
Current	£6,193.10	£8,338.51
Reserve	£1,706.90	£5,000
Total	£7,900	£13,338.51
		+£5,438.51

We are still struggling with HMRC however our accountant looks to have resolved this impasse. Our issue has been that the online tax return form that HMRC directs us to has an error, that prevents us from successfully submitting the return. After numerous phone conversations, emails etc the online software conflict has still not been identified. However we now have permission to file them in paper format. We have documented all our attempts to submit our tax return and plan to appeal all the fines that have resulted from this. We expect this to be successful.

Therefore things currently are much more stable and comfortable for CMA. This allows us to once again begin planning how best to increase our service to members, with the confidence that our cash flow will not be in jeopardy.

Alan Preece, 16th November 2017