



**Minutes of the UFRC Annual General Meeting held at Tollymore National Outdoor Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011.**

**Members present – see attached list.**

**Apologies:**

George Acheson – UFRC

Ronnie Carser – UFRC

Diane Patterson – CAAN

Mary Morrison – Down Danderers

Hazel Hunter – Fermanagh Ramblers

John Monaghan – Fermanagh Ramblers

Nigel Whiteside – Spartan Red Sox

May Walker – Dungannon and District RC

**Meeting Opened at 14.00pm**

The chairman Alan McFarland opened the meeting by welcoming all members for attending the AGM. He also thanked Northern Ireland Young Walkers for organising the two walks prior to the meeting and for hosting the AGM this year. Alan McFarland also welcomed the guest speakers; Andrew Branagh of the Northern Ireland Young Walkers (NIYW) and Paul Clements.

Andrew Branagh gave a presentation about the progression of the Northern Ireland Young Walkers highlighting some of the activities they had carried out throughout the year.

Paul Clements, author of 'The Burren' presented an informative and enjoyable slide show about the geology, the flora and fauna of 'The Burren' as illustrated in his book.

**Any other business before the minutes of the previous AGM are passed:**

The Honorary Secretary David Sloan informed the members that that the only matter arising from last year was that the subscription fees were to be raised to £3.00 per member in 2012.



The minutes of the General Meeting held at 'An Creagan' on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010 were passed.

### **Treasurer's Presentation of the UFRC Accounts**

Thomas McKenna (Treasurer) gave a breakdown of the financial report which was made available to all members in their information pack. He also informed the committee that the subscription fees would increase from £2.00 to £3.00 in the 2012 financial year. Thomas McKenna said that the UFRC financial accounts had been checked and audited by Irene Young and Sheila Hammond; he thanked them for their assistance and for their support over the years. Furthermore Thomas McKenna asked the members if they were satisfied; all were in agreement. He thanked everyone for their support and wished Jo O'Boyle every success in her new role of Treasurer of the UFRC.

Alan McFarland informed the members that Thomas McKenna was stepping down as Treasurer and thanked him for all the time, hard work and commitment over the years. He introduced Jo O'Boyle as the candidate for Treasurer to be voted in, later in the meeting. Voting would also take place of Executive Members. With this in mind, Alan McFarland asked if anyone else was interested in becoming an executive member, they could certainly put their name forward also. He explained that the executive committee were already stretched and any additional help or assistance would be most useful.

### **Secretary's Presentation of Annual Report**

David Sloan (Honorary Secretary) addressed the members and informed them that the UFRC will endeavour to continue to build relationships with Clubs; attending Club AGM's or indeed on Club organised walks. He also said that it was important that relationships with other governing bodies such as CAAN, MI etc, continue to prosper. He informed the members that Alan McFarland had attended a Mountaineering Ireland workshop and this clearly illustrated that the two organisations can co-exist and work together for the good of their members.

David Sloan highlighted that access issues continue to be frustrating however the UFRC are dedicated and determined to continue fighting for Rights of Way and lobbying.



## Access Issues

### Ballintoy:

The UFRC have been in contact with the Countryside Officer and have received good news; Moyle District Council has asserted a public right of way from Ballintoy Harbour to Whitepark Bay. Marconi Cottage remains an ongoing issue and the UFRC are still lobbying the District Council.

### King Johns Walk:

David Sloan invited Andrew Muir to address the members on this issue.

Andrew Muir thanked the UFRC for inviting him along and that it was good to see how the UFRC worked. He informed the members that he has been working closely with North Down Borough Council and lobbying them to take action. He assured the members that progress has been made albeit slowly. Andrew Muir said that a petition of approximately 200 signatures had helped speed things up a little and the landowner has been asked to remove obstruction and replace with turnstiles.

Alan McFarland thanked Andrew Muir for his enthusiasm and additional efforts regarding the King Johns Walk issue. He encouraged members to visit Andrew's website to discover how much work he is doing to help countryside recreation issues.

Alan McFarland said that the UFRC are sometimes criticized for talking of liability however we do live in a litigious society. David Flinn said that the UFRC have made submissions to the law commission and suggested that a change in the legislation could be a way forward with regards to liability.

Mike McClure of Sport Ni informed the executive committee and the members that they meet regularly with the Policy, Environment and Planning group and have been informed that they will not be pursuing any changes to the 1983 Access order or to the Occupiers' liability. He said that one of the reasons for this is that lobby is not strong; Sport NI cannot lobby because they are a government agency, however they can advocate on behalf of the UFRC, which they do.

Alan McFarland thanked Mike McClure for his input and said that walking is bigger than the UFRC, and by working closely with other governing bodies and agencies can only further enhance the continuing work of the UFRC.



Cooleys:

David Sloan attended a meeting with Mountaineering Ireland regarding dog issues and after some mediation; signs have been erected to discourage walking with dogs in the area.

David Sloan thanked Matthew Bushby from the Mourne Heritage Trust for attending an executive meeting where he presented a slideshow illustrating the work that had been carried out on Slieve Binnian Ridge.

He also said that the UFRC had recently provided navigation courses for their members; these courses were a huge success. David asked that if there were any courses that the members were particularly interested in, that they should forward any suggestions to Simon Reardon (Administration Assistant).

Finally David Sloan thanked Simon Reardon for all his hard work for the executive and in addition he thanked Alan McFarland, Thomas McKenna and the remainder of the executive.

### **Chairman's Presentation of the Year Ahead**

#### **Sport NI Grant**

Alan McFarland stressed that the UFRC website, needs attention and should be updated and this will cost a considerable amount of money. Consequently the UFRC are working towards a grant with Sport NI and are trying to convince them to assist us to update the website. Alan also asked all the members if they knew anyone with expertise knowledge in this field, to please get in touch with the executive.

#### **Charity Status & Gift Aid**

Alan McFarland asked the members to look at the literature in the information packs regarding Gift Aid. He said that he would like some feedback on this issue. Alan stressed that it had taken a lot of hard work to achieve Charity Status and that the UFRC should really be doing more with it.

He informed the members that there would be a certain amount of details required from members before returning the Gift Aid form; this is required by HM Revenue & Customs. Alan said that the UFRC needed to ascertain how many members might be interested in Gift



Aid but that nothing had to be decided today. He suggested that the form should be taken back to the clubs to get some feedback.

#### Training

Alan McFarland said that the training courses organised by UFRC are advertised on the website and usually achieve a good response rate. He asked the members to have a think about their training needs and to pass any suggestions back to Simon Reardon.

#### **Appointment of Auditors/Independent Examiners**

Alan McFarland proposed to retain the two officers for 2012:

Irene Young & Sheila Hammond

Seconded by Thomas McKenna

#### **Elections of Officers**

Chairman – Alan McFarland proposed by David Sloan and seconded by Thomas McKenna

Secretary – David Sloan proposed by Thomas McKenna and seconded by George Acheson

Treasurer – Jo O’Boyle proposed by Simon Reardon and seconded by Alan McFarland

Executives – Eileen Carson, Thomas McKenna, George Acheson, David Flinn, Derek Clements, Ronnie Irvine and Mark Williamson proposed and seconded

Non-executive officers –

President – Reg Magowan proposed by Alan McFarland and seconded by Thomas McKenna

#### **Closing Remarks**

Alan McFarland asked the members if there were any questions regarding any of the issues arising. He also thanked the Northern Ireland Young Walkers for hosting this year’s AGM and Paul Clements for an excellent presentation on the ‘Burren’.

Alan thanked all the members for attending the AGM.

**Meeting closed at 4.20pm**



**ATTENDANCE at UFRC AGM ---2011 at Tollymore National Outdoor Centre**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Name</b>
MID ULSTER WALKING CLUB	Ronnie Irvine
HF RAMBLING CLUB BELFAST	Irene Younge Jean Cunning Maud McKitterick Yvonne Robinson
DUNGANNON and DISTRICT RC	Frances Compton Betty Marshall Mary Lutton Maureen Clements Derek Clements G Hughes Margaret Steenson
BELFAST CHA RAMBLING CLUB	George McConkey Margaret Murray Jean Telford Eileen Dean Anne Gamble Arthur Rodgers
MAINE RAMBLING CLUB	Sandra Carroll Gerard McErlane
WEE BINNIANS	Thomas McKenna David Sloan Sally McKenna
U3A (NORTH DOWN & ARDS)	Ken Ogilvie M McManus Jean McIntyre R Hamilton Colin Nuttall
YHANI	Reg Magowan

DOWN DANDERERS

G Greenaway  
Anne Kelly  
Ruth Sloan

EAST ANTRIM RAMBLING CLUB

Eileen Carson

MOURNE RAMBLING CLUB

F Carragher  
Tom Hughes

SPARTAN RED SOX

David Flinn  
Simon Reardon  
Jo O'Boyle

GAP O' THE NORTH CLUB

Seamus Murphy

NORTHERN IRELAND YOUNG WALKERS

Mark Williamson  
Andrew Brannagh

BELFAST WALKING CLUB

Margaret Toal