



East Cheshire Ramblers’ Committee Meeting

2nd February 2024

10.00 am

Meeting called by Maggie Swindells

Location 16 Castle Hill Court, Prestbury, Macclesfield, SK10 4UT

10:00 am

Committee	Maggie Swindells	MS	Chair
	Colin Finlayson	CF	Treasurer
	Louise Whittaker	LW	Footpath Secretary
	Gina Thompson	GT	Social Secretary
	Melanie Davy	MD	Committee Member
	Jane Gay	JG	Committee Member
	Sue Munslow	SM	Committee Member
	Keith Anderson	KA	Lost Ways

Apologies	Nigel Hersee	NH	Secretary
	Jennefer Mellor	JM	Social Media
	Anne Ball	AB	Membership Secretary

1.	Apologies	
	Nigel Hersee, Jennefer Mellor and Anne Ball	
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting - approved	
2.1	No comments received	
3.	Matters arising from last meeting	
3.1	None received	
4.	Reports from Officers	

4.1	Chair – Refer report	
4.1.1	<p>Safety on Group Walks Project: Ramblers’ meeting attended by MS and Dave Barraclough. Walk leader guidance will be reduced from 36 to 8 pages. Feedback received by Ramblers on Walk Leader Training Document: Positive : Clear, needed, expected, what we do already, useful for new leaders Negative: Too long, repetitive, patronising and too onerous Result: Ramblers will produce examples of good practice, case studies and pocket size guide. It appears that groups will be able to decide how to implement guidance. ECR will examine guidance when produced and decide which elements to adopt.</p>	Note
4.1.2	<p>Written Risk Assessments: New approach. Ramblers will produce generic risk assessments/checklists to share with walk leaders. It will not be mandatory to do a written risk assessment (no date given for when this will start). Insurance would cover volunteers as long as reasonable, measured and proportional risk assessments had been considered for the walks. Will have a meeting to discuss with the walk coordinators once new approach introduced.</p>	Note
4.1.3	<p>Wellbeing walks: MS will put a link on stroller walks advertising Cheshire East Wellbeing walks.</p>	MS
4.1.4	<p>Vulnerable Walkers’ Protocol: Wording has been tweaked.</p>	Note
4.1.5	<p>First Aid Training: Proposed to do 2 courses (£450 each) for 12 people run by Staffordshire First Aid Training on a Friday and Saturday. Ramblers may consider contributing to cost of First Aid courses in the future. There will also be a Ramblers online first aid course accessible to people registered on Assemble.</p>	GT
4.1.6	<p>Walk Training Courses: See Link on Chair’s report</p>	Note
4.1.7	<p>Leadership/Apps Training: There was a discussion on dates. GT to organise date and book venue. Once date agreed, registrations will be made through trainers and not Social Secretary.</p>	GT
4.1.8	<p>Incident Report form: New version can be completed online. NH can send out online form link as requested. All incidents should be reported to Chair (MS) and Secretary (NH).</p>	Note

4.1.9	Constitution: Change wording in ECR Constitution for Chairman etc to Chair at ECR AGM. John Peck (Congleton) to put in a motion to Ramblers' CO to change the Ramblers' articles and standing orders accordingly.	NH
4.2	Treasurer's Report	
4.2.1	Refer Report.	Note
4.3	Footpath Secretary's Report – Refer report	
4.3.1	Gillian Kay has joined the footpath committee	Note
4.3.2	Appeal for footpath inspectors. Louise to create a short description of what is required.	LW
4.3.3	Discussion on appeal by Footpath Committee for cost of storing Footpath data in the Cloud (£80/year). MS suggested that we explored the storage that Roger Fielding uses on the website first. Suggest meeting between MS, JM, Roger Fielding and Footpath representative. Would need consistent format for documents in date order with year at the beginning.	MS
4.3.4	Brian Richardson will be retiring this year. The committee thanks him for his sterling work over many years. LW to put Brian's role on their next meeting agenda. Brian will be a very hard act to follow. We would still be able to identify footpath priorities to PROW so work would be covered, even if more slowly. The question of what age Ramblers' insurance stops arose. Investigation showed that Ramblers insurance covers volunteers up to the age of 90.	MS LW
4.4	Membership Secretary's Report – Refer report	
4.4.1	MS to meet AB on 5 th February, and follow up points.	MS/AB
4.5	Social Secretary's Report – Refer Report	
4.5.1	Kim Letson's Book Talk: £8 fee agreed to cover venue, food and surplus to footpath projects.	Note
4.5.2	LW to speak to Neil Collie on suggestion of talk by Dave Gosling, Peak and Northern Footpaths Association.	LW

4.5.4	Sue M prepared to do a geology walk at Teggs Nose or Alderley Edge. July/August is free.	SM
4.5.5	Suggestion of trip to Castlefield Viaduct run by NT and/or John Rylands tour.	MS/GT
4.5.6	Weekend Christmas Meal booked for 7 th December Davenport Golf Club. Andy will provide date for Midweek meal later in year (probably Legh Arms/Toby Carvery Adlington again, as very popular).	Note
4.6	Lost Ways Report – Refer report	
4.6.1	KT to contact people who expressed interest in Nab Head/Shrigley Hall path.	KT
4.7.	Social Media Report – Refer report	
4.7.1	Good interim system for posting walks on Walks Manager using RF's quarterly walk leaders' list as a starting point and populating as details available.	Note
4.7.2	Walk leaders have to be registered on Assemble before they can be put on Walks Manager.	Note
5.	Any Other Business	
5.1	Savio House are trying to raise money for a defibrillator to go on Gritstone Trail. It's part of Tesco blue disc scheme in Bollington & Macclesfield Tesco Stores. Members asked to bear this in mind when shopping there.	Note
5.2	Still have £186 left from money collected for Alan Catherall. CF to contact Linda Catherall to ask if she has anything in mind. If not, will put towards future footpath projects.	CF
6.	Future Planned Meeting Dates	
6.1	Committee meeting Friday 7 th June 2024 at 10.00 am at MS's house.	All

Meeting Ended: 12.15



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Appendix 1 Chair Report prepared by Maggie Swindells

Happy New Year

I hope you all had a very enjoyable Christmas I wish you all have a very healthy and happy 2024. My thanks as always for all you do to keep ECR running as smoothly as it does for members.

Constitution

The only copy of East Cheshire's Constitution I was able to find was a scanned copy kindly provided by Neil Collie. Melanie has typed up the Constitution and we now have an electronic copy.

However, the Constitution refers to 'Chairman' throughout. This is also the case with the Ramblers 'model documents and Cheshire East Area's Constitution. At the Cheshire East Area AGM Lucy Armitage, Trustee, agreed to look into what the legal requirements are for changing the wording to group and area constitutions.

"The brilliant Simon Kellas has come straight back to me. with regard to the constitutional wording. I'm attaching his response below. Simon has a deep-rooted understanding of the way formal documents are worded - and as a result, he can also suggest the best way to amend them. Here is Simon Kellas response.

"Hello Lucy, It is odd as the Articles were updated to change that language, but not the Standing Orders, where the model constitutions sit. That was before my time, so not sure why one was changed and not the other. We certainly always use the word chair. Unfortunately, any changes to the constitutional documents require approval at a meeting of General Council – they are not in the power of staff or trustees to change, even a word or two.

However, Areas and Groups are welcome to adapt the language in their own constitution as there is reasonable flexibility. The main thing is to have someone carrying out the chair role – the can be referred to as the chair, convener (as in Scotland) or any other sensible word, if their members agree.

The language in the Ramblers Standing Orders could be addressed at General Council in April with a motion from Cheshire East, or any other Area/Group."

I propose that the wording in our constitution should reflect all members who wish to play an active part in their local group and area, regardless of their gender. In order to change the wording in ECR's Constitution I propose we put a motion forward at our next AGM to replace 'Chairman' and replace it with 'Chair'.

In addition, Lucy Armitage has suggested that Cheshire East takes a motion to General Council in April to change the wording in the Standing Orders and as a result make the necessary changes in the 'model constitutions.

Proposed Motion.

UPDATING ARTICLES AND STANDING ORDERS TO INCLUDE ALL MEMBERS

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to update the Articles and Standing Orders of Ramblers so that all terms include every member, irrespective of gender. Submitted by Cheshire East

Background Notes

The current standing orders for Ramblers England use the term Chairman, rather than Chair or Convener. We would like to encourage and support all volunteers and members in playing an active part in their local group and area, regardless of their gender. This is a simple step towards ensuring that we are a welcoming, inclusive and diverse organisation.

Walk Leaders

Anne, Melanie and I looked at all the available information we currently have to ensure that all ECRs Walk Leaders are registered as volunteers on Assemble. An initial list was produced and shared with Walk Coordinators. This was then crossed checked against membership data and data on Assemble. The information gathered threw up some anomalies, far fewer than I anticipated, and these will be followed up over the next month or so. An annual check at the Walk Coordinator's meeting should ensure we maintain an up-to-date list.

First Aid Training

I contacted St Johns Ambulance for a quote for First Aid Training to cover basic first aid in an outdoor setting with a view to holding it at Macclesfield Tennis Club in 2024.

We will need a minimum of eight participants. The quote from St John Ambulance is £2,178 is attached. John Peck from South Cheshire organised a First Aid Training course with Staffordshire First Aid Training and the cost was £450 for twelve delegates. I've emailed them for a quote.

Access to online Training

Online training is available for all volunteers. To access the training members must be registered as a volunteer. They can do this themselves or the Chair of ECR can do it for them.

Follow the instructions below:

1. GO TO RAMBLERS UK <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>
2. SIGN IN USING YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD

3. SCROLL DOWN THE PAGE TO 'YOUR VOLUNTERING'
4. CLICK 'WALKS MANAGER'
5. CLICK ON ASSEMBLE - YOU WILL BE PROMPTED TO SIGN IN AGAIN
6. FIND YOUR INITIALS (IN A CIRCLE TOP RIGHT)
7. CLICK THE CIRCLE AND CLICK VIEW PROFILE DETAILS
8. YOUR PROFILE DETAILS WILL OPEN
9. CLICK ON 'TRAINING'.
10. CLICK ON 'WALK LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS'
11. CLICK ON 'GO TO COURSE'
12. YOU CAN FOLLOW THIS PROCESS FOR ALL THE TRAINING MODULES

Proposed Training 2024

Leadership Training May 2024

Apps Training July 2024

First Aid Training TBC

Incident Report Form

While rare, incidents can sometimes take place during group walks, paths and access work, or at social events. If an incident takes place that involves injury, property damage or a near miss, this needs to be reported to the Chair and Secretary of ECR and the Ramblers. The Walk Leader, or member of the group if the Walk Leader is unable to complete it, must complete an Incident Report Form. The form is interactive and can be filled in online. A copy is attached and is also available on the Ramblers website or via the ECR committee secretary. Once the form has been completed it has to be sent to incidents@ramblers.org.uk.

Gifts Protocol

Colin and I have had a brief discussion regarding gifts for long standing members and we would like to suggest that we adopt a short protocol for future use.

The RA Treasurer guidelines say the following regarding 'Gifts':

"When long standing committee members resign some Groups buy a small token gift as thank you etc. etc..... please ensure that the value is not excessive.

If you wish to buy a more substantial gift you could have a collection. Gifts should be infrequent, clearly warranted and there should be no degree of regularity or expectation of it being granted."

If anyone would like to work on this, please let me know.

Walk Leader Guide

I submitted the following response, which was supported by members of the committee, in response to the request for feedback. I was grateful that other members of ECR Group also submitted feedback.

In principle a Walk Leaders Guide is a good idea. We all want to ensure that Walk Leaders are supported and have the tools they need to carry out their role effectively and safely. However, walk leaders are volunteers. Leading walks is not their 'day job' nor should it require them to complete an in-depth assessment of their fitness to carry out the role.

As a group we were very pleased to read the report produced by Martin Chester which suggested a return to 'common sense' approach to safety on group walks. The report clearly demonstrates that Ramblers walks are safe and that there are very low percentages of accidents and or incidents. This outcome is surely due to the volunteers who have led or currently lead walks, often without accessing any training or guidance from Ramblers Head Office, and certainly without completing an in-depth self-assessment of their ability to do the job. This begs the question as to why Ramblers now feel potential walk leaders need such detailed and potentially 'off putting' guidance.

How has a two-sided A4 Walk Leader Guidance document morphed into a 36 pages long document full of petty and trivial information? Any experienced walk leader will quickly discard the document and anyone beginning their journey as a walk leader will find it hard to 'see the wood for the trees' when they're asked to read it. It's too detailed, suggests overly complex self-assessment formats, and I believe it will put off potential walk leaders rather than attract them. In an association which nationally struggles to find enough walk leaders this is surely self-defeating? The document should be heavily edited with core information set out clearly and succinctly.

I would also ask where the introduction (P16) of walk ratios came from? The concept is not only without justification indeed the recommended ratios would cause havoc with our walk planning. It wasn't a recommendation made in Martin's report. I would suggest that Walk Leaders already take the necessary steps they need to support the size of the group which turn up on the day?

In my opinion a huge weakness of Ramblers Central Office approach is the belief that online training and a 'Handbook' is enough to develop and train potential walk leaders. There is a total lack of face to face walk leader training and first aid training. If more training materials really are necessary, then my recommendation would be to turn the bulk of the Handbook into concise training materials which could then be used at a local level at the discretion of experienced members. Or if Ramblers Central Office wishes to maintain a consistent approach the association should create a national face to face training programme which every group member can access.



I would also welcome a clear statement as to whether every walk leader will be required, or encouraged, to complete a written risk assessment which nobody asks for and nobody checks.

Finally, I would suggest that any form of training material that is finally issued after it has the formal agreement of the majority of Area and Group Committees. A lot of the discontent over the last two years has been caused by a lack of proper consultation. with the Committees who run the detailed walk programmes which are the bedrock of the organisation.

21 st November 2023

Ramblers have taken on board all the feedback they have received and revised guidance will be issued in the spring.

CONSTITUTION

1. Name and Definition

The organisation is a local Group of the South and East Cheshire Area of the Ramblers' Association, and its name is the Ramblers' Association East Cheshire Group. The above bodies are hereafter referred to as 'the Area', 'The Association' and 'the Group'.

*2. Objects

The objects of the Group are to further within the territory specified in the succeeding clause the objects of the Association in such ways as the Area governing body may from time to time decide and subject to the overriding control of the General Council of the Association.

3. Territory

The Group shall function in the eastern sector of Macclesfield Borough Council and in surrounding areas, or such other territory as may be agreed with the governing body of the Area from time to time.

*4. Membership

Membership of the Group shall consist of all individual members of the Area as are allocated to the group by the Executive Committee in accordance with the RA's Memorandum and Articles of Association and Standing orders.

*5. Relations with the Area and the Association

The Group shall act in agreement with the Area governing body and the Executive Committee of the Association, as laid down in Clause 5 of the RA's Articles of Association.

6. Management

- (i) Subject to the directions of any Annual or Special General Meeting as to the exercise of its powers, the management and control of the Group shall be vested in a Committee which shall consist of the Honorary Officers and as many members of the Group as the Annual Meeting shall from time to time decide with a minimum of three. All members shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.
- (ii) The Committee shall decide when and where it shall meet.
- (iii) Five members shall form a quorum.
- (iv) It shall have power to co-opt four additional members.
- (v) It shall have power to fill casual vacancies.
- (vi) It shall report regularly to the governing body of the Area.

- (vii) A special meeting of the Committee shall be called by the Secretary as soon as may be on the request of the Chairman or of not less than five members of the Committee.

7. Officers

- (i) The Honorary Officers of the Group shall be a Chairman, a Treasurer, a Secretary and such other officers as the Group in General Meeting may determine, to be elected at the Annual Meeting.
- (ii) They shall retire at the Annual Meeting following their election but shall be eligible for re-election.
- (iii) The Committee shall have power to fill vacancies.

8. Sub-Committees

The Committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees and to determine their powers and terms of reference.

9. Resignation or Retirement

Any member of a Committee shall vacate his office if:

- (i) He (she) gives notice of his intention to resign and his (at the time when his) resignation is accepted.
- (ii) He (she) fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee as may be convened unless the failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the Committee.

10. Annual General Meeting

In the first quarter of each financial year the committee shall convene an Annual General Meeting of the Group, of which not less than fourteen days' notice shall be given to members, and to which all members of the Group shall be entitled to attend, to:

- (i) Consider the Annual Report of the Committee and the Group income and expenditure accounts for the preceding financial year, a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities at the end of that year and the auditor's certificate.
- (ii) Appoint the Honorary Officers.
- (iii) Elect the Committee.
- (iv) Appoint an auditor or auditors.
- (v) Discuss and consider motions, notice of which shall have been given in writing to the Secretary.
- (vi) Vote on any proposals to amend this constitution in accordance with clause 14 hereof.
- (vii) Appoint representatives to the governing body of the Area.

11. Special General Meeting

The Chairman or the Secretary may at any time, and shall within 21 days of receiving a request to do so, signed by not less than one twentieth of the members of the Group with a minimum of ten members, and giving reasons for the request, call a Special General Meeting, of which fourteen days' notice shall be given. The notice of the meeting shall contain notice of the matters to be discussed and the terms of any motions which it is intended to move.

12. Finance

The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper financial records, shall report regularly to the Committee and shall be responsible for the preparation annually of Group income and expenditure accounts for the preceding financial year, a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities at the end of that year, and for their submission to the Group's auditor.

***13. Dissolution**

If, in the event of the dissolution of the Group, confirmed by a majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting of the Group, there remains after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities any property whatever, it shall be transferred to the Area.

***14. Alterations to the Constitution**

- (i) Insofar as any alteration or amendment is not inconsistent with the RA's Memorandum and Articles of Association and standing orders, this Constitution may be amended subject to approval by the Area governing body at any General Meeting, in accordance with the approval of a two-thirds majority of members present and voting, but those clauses marked with an asterisk may not be altered without the permission of the Executive Committee of the Association.
- (ii) Any proposal for such alteration must be delivered in writing to the Secretary of the Group not less than twenty-eight days before the meeting of the Group at which it is to be discussed and not less than fourteen days' notice of this meeting, giving the terms of the proposed alteration, shall be given to the members of the Group.

15. Notice

The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting or the non-receipt of a notice of meeting by any member shall not invalidate any proceedings or resolutions at any meeting of the Group or any committee.

EAST CHESHIRE RAMBLERS PROTOCOL FOR VULNERABLE WALKERS

PRINCIPLES

1. A group walk needs to be safe, enjoyable, and inclusive for everyone.
2. Walks are planned and led by volunteers.
3. We need to understand the individual needs of a walker to plan for a good walking experience for all.
4. East Cheshire Ramblers will do its best to support full participation of everyone. However, there may be circumstances when walkers with disabilities/specific needs may not be accommodated due to the type of walk or a lack of appropriate and reasonable support available. Sometimes we have to say a walk is not suitable, but this does not necessarily mean every walk is unsuitable.
5. The key is for both sides to consider what can be reasonably expected.

PROTOCOLS

In order to secure these principles East Cheshire Ramblers has agreed a set of protocols to secure both inclusion and enjoyment for ALL walkers.

1. East Cheshire Ramblers has a bank of experienced Walk Leaders and a varied walk programme. The walker or carer will need to contact the relevant Walk Coordinator to establish the suitability of each walk.
2. Disabled/vulnerable walkers can bring someone along to support them on the walk, when it's appropriate and safe to do so. Please note that ECR may not be able to provide support on every walk.
3. It is reasonable for ECR not to offer additional support if they choose not to do so. However, if walks can accommodate a person with specific needs, then this is also great!
4. Local Wellbeing Walks, where such walks are available, might be more suitable. Again, this needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

If additional support is required, the disabled/vulnerable person/carers should be able to identify this from other sources e.g. a social worker or specific charities.



THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT/CARER/PARTNER MUST:

1. Provide a contact phone number and the name and phone number of person who can act as an emergency contact.
2. Provide confirmation that the vulnerable person is capable of coping with the normal conditions of a walk with a Walking Buddy for additional support.
3. Ensure that any prescription medication is taken before and after the walk.
4. Ensure the vulnerable person has sufficient food, drinks and clothing for the length of walk and weather conditions.
5. Ensure they are contactable during the day if the Walk Leader has to contact them for any reason.
6. Arrive on time to collect the vulnerable person at the end of the walk.
7. If a friend or adult accompanies the vulnerable person, they must ensure they comply with the above and walk under the direction of the Walk Leader at all times.
8. Be aware that if the vulnerable person needs somebody to be responsible for them, then they must provide a Carer to walk with them.

BEFORE THE WALK

1. Walks are posted on the East Cheshire Website at least four days before the walk date.
2. The responsible adult/carer/partner identifies a walk on ECR website.
3. The responsible adult/carer/partner contacts the Walk Coordinator **at least 4 days** before the walk and explains what kind of individual support is required. Ideally, they have already identified a ‘Buddy’ to walk with the vulnerable person.

Long Walks Weekend	John Galligan	john.galligan@btinternet.com	phone
Long Walks Midweek	Anne Ball	anne.e.ball@googlemail.com	01625 520030
Medium Walks Weekend	Paul Higinbotham	paulhiginbotham@yahoo.com	
Medium Walks Midweek	Andy Davies	Maggie Swindells Chair maggieswindells@gmail.com	07729327940
Short Walks Weekend	Jane Gay		
Short Walks Midweek	Dave Collorick		

4. The Walk Coordinator/Chair contacts the relevant walk leader and explains that the vulnerable adult wishes to join their walk. It is the Walk Leader’s right, as a volunteer, to have the final decision as to who can attend their walks. The Walk Leader’s responsibilities remain the same and are clearly defined in the Ramblers Walk Leaders’ Checklist. The Walk Leader is covered by Ramblers Insurance, as long as a risk assessment has been undertaken.
5. If the carer/partner has done their utmost, but been unable to provide a buddy, the Walk Leader and Walk Coordinator will do their best to seek a member of the group



who is prepared to act as the vulnerable walker’s buddy. **This might not always be possible.** The buddy must not be the Walk Leader or Back Marker. The Walking Buddy’s role is to supplement the role of the Back Marker, to ensure that the vulnerable person doesn’t become detached from the group, and to provide additional oversight to monitor whether the vulnerable person needs help, for example guiding over a difficult section of terrain.

6. After the walk, the Walk Leader provides a short feedback email/phone call to the Walk Coordinator to report any issues.



**Appendix 2 Treasurers Report
prepared by Colin Finlayson**

Bank Balance:

On 1st January 2024 our balance stood at £7012.84

Accounts 2022/23:

As reported to the November AGM the ECR accounts annual return was produced, independently reviewed and submitted to RA Finance on 16th October 2023.

Report Ends

**Appendix 3 Footpath Secretaries Report
prepared by Louise Whittaker**

Appeal for Help!	Six Footpath Inspectors have retired – support in sourcing replacements welcome. [Great Warford; Little Warford; Snelson; Wildboarclough West; Mottram St Andrew South & West; Higher Hurdsfield; Rainow East).
Request for Funding	Footpath Committee is looking to adopt digital storage of its records. This may incur a monthly subscription fee (e.g. Microsoft/One Drive). We invite the main committee to give this consideration.
Much to do!	Analysis of 2023 footpath inspections show slight increase paths in Class C & D fault classification. These are being followed up as well as on-going work with already known issues.
Good News	Two new PROW Maintenance Officers have joined PROW: Peter Atkinson (backfilled a vacancy). Very experienced and enthusiastic. He's already familiar with the ECR footpath database. Introductory meeting enjoyed in Cafe Nero/Wilmslow Nov 2023. Matthew Chapman (increasing team from 3 to 4). Introductory meeting pending.
Lobbying	Wilmslow FP 133 & 76 have been closed since 2021. Bridge over the River Dean is unsafe – erosion of an abutment. The TCO (Temporary Closure Order) expires in Feb 2024. CEC are applying to the Secretary of State/Transport Office for an extension. ECR have submitted a letter to be included with the application requesting that a temporary quick fix be made to the current bridge pending the longer term & complex solution of relocating it to a new position.
Passing the Ball	Chorley FP 6A & 6B alongside the Alderley Edge Bypass belong to Highways who have failed to maintain them & vegetation growth renders impassable. Mike Harding (FP Inspector) chased up and an on-site meeting was held with Highways. This has provoked a discussion between Highways & PROW as to where on-going maintenance should sit. Final outcome awaited. (may help with getting support for trimming back vegetation on A54 verge of Gritstone Trail and Nick Brearley can put his secateurs away!).
Publicity	Plastic waymarker trial (David Barraclough). David & Neil are working up a Press Release for Ramblers Magazine.
Widening Horizons	Neil Collie is organising a meeting bringing together footpath secretaries from ECR, Congleton Ramblers & South Cheshire Ramblers together covering Cheshire East Area.



Appendix 4 Membership Report prepared by Anne Ball

At mid-January 2024 there are 588 members, down from the 596 members we had three months ago. In that period, we have gained 15 new members, roughly in line with the average of 4 new members a month seen in 2023. Resignations and lapsing memberships account for the decrease in the total.

We are seeing continuing issues with errors in the Ramblers database in members' recorded permissions for receipt of emails: there is a significant number of members who have not altered their consent preference themselves, yet a change removing consent has somehow occurred. There has been more than a dozen of these instances (that have been reported to us) in the last 3 months. This needs to be taken up with Rambler's head office once again to see if they can stop these errors from happening.

There are also issues when members change their permissions themselves, either by clicking 'unsubscribe' or 'update your mailing preferences on our website' in emails from The Ramblers. Members often do this thinking that they can avoid getting a lot of emails from national Ramblers, not realising that this will also cut them off from East Cheshire Group emails. When this is pointed out members often want to reinstate their email consent.

Some members click on the 'unsubscribe' button on ECR emails, which unsubscribes them from ECR emails through the Mailchimp distribution system. Again, this is sometimes not the desired result as this stops ECR emails but not emails from national Ramblers.

This situation needs frequent monitoring by both me and Steve Hull, who distributes our emails and maintains the circulation list, to ensure that members are receiving the emails they want. A note about unsubscribing added to the welcome letter sent to new members will hopefully help to gradually reduce the number of people unwittingly cutting themselves off from ECR emails.

I took over as membership secretary of East Cheshire Group at the end of November. There was a short hiatus as a glitch in the system prevented me from accessing our membership data in the national database (Ramblers Insight Hub). Since then, I have been familiarizing myself with the database and the membership secretary's role and I hope to add some new ideas about how we reach out to prospective and new members.



Appendix 5 Social Secretary Report prepared by Gina Thompson

First report of the year, January almost gone, I am sad to say I have not ventured out on any Rambles as I have had the dreaded cough. However, I am reliably informed that the Sherry Walk on 1st January was blessed with sunshine and that 34 ECR members toasted in the New Year at The Cage. Many thanks to Melanie and Lorraine for leading this walk again.

Plans for the rest of the year are coming together well.

In February Andy Davies is hosting a Vietnamese night all welcome. As my AVRO museum tour has proved so popular, I have arranged an additional date it will now take place in February and March.

March see's our first History walk in Macclesfield with another in New Mills in May.

Stroller walks also start in March on their new day of every other Wednesday.

April, we have a talk at the Tennis Club by Kim Letson a keen walker and adventurer who is promoting her latest book Canterbury and Other Tales, thanks to Melanie Davy for arranging this.

Later in April Steve Hull has organised a Coach Trip to Church Stretton.

In June we have a trip to The Old Medicine House, a Ramble with a Ranger, and the first weekend away to Dolgellau North Wales organised by Melanie Davy.

October, we have our very popular Quiz Night with Steve Hull as Quiz Master, and the second weekend away to Borrowdale organised by Ann Thompson

Our AGM is November, as is the area AGM.

Then in December Christmas lunch at Davenport Golf Club.

I am aware that July to September presents me with lots of possible opportunities for events... Any suggestions would be warmly welcomed, my contact details are below.

As ever I thank all who are involved in organising and helping with this calendar.

Gina Thompson gtompemail.com



**Appendix 6 Lost Ways Report
prepared by Keith Anderson**

1. No new volunteers have come forward since the October meeting even though a mailshot was (I think) sent out to all members.
2. Josie Mizen, the main DLYW's manager at Ramblers HO is leaving at the end of January having only been in post for 18months. She has advised that DLYW development etc will be slowed down until she is replaced, with zoom meetings only every 2 months.
3. The main things discussed at the zoom meetings are technical issues and developments relating to Assemble and researchers in other parts of the country speaking about their successes or otherwise.
4. There are now some useful guides on how to go about lost way recovery on Assemble.

Keith Anderson 19/1/24

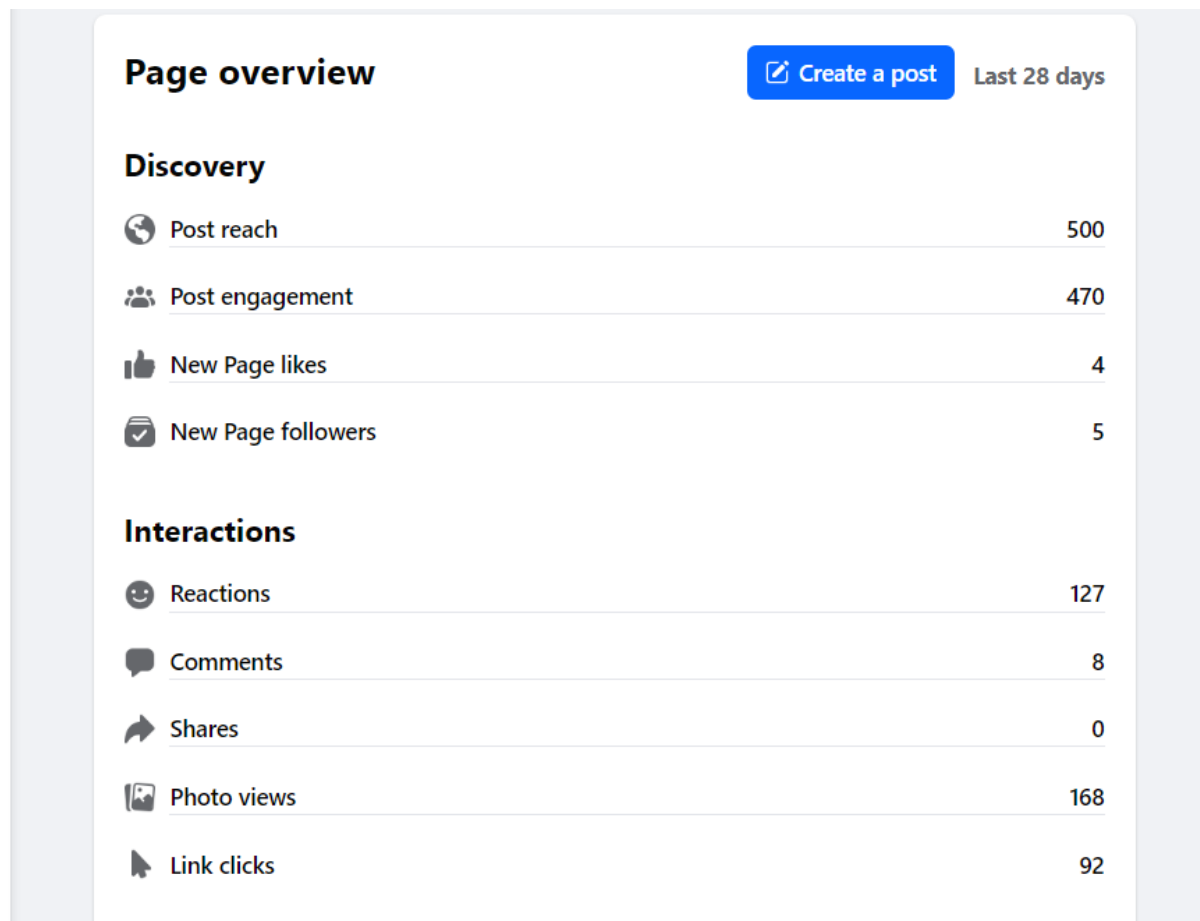
**Appendix 7 Social Media Report
prepared by Jennie Mellor**

Post reach (number of people viewing the page) and post engagement (number of actions e.g. liking/reacting, commenting, sharing have dropped again.

Reports on our walks with photographs do attract more traffic than those posts with links to our walks on the Ramblers website – should we consider reducing the number of walks posted?

ACTIVITY OVER THE LAST 28 DAYS TO 9TH JANUARY 2024

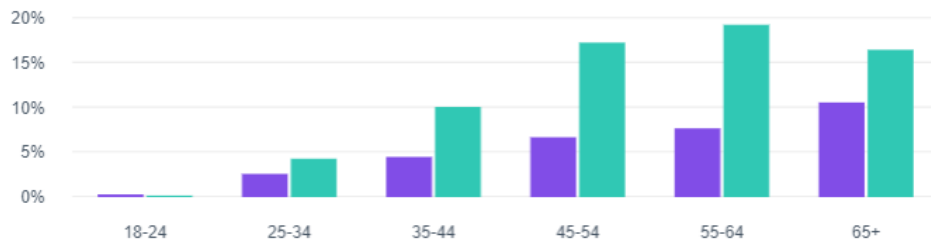
Professional Dashboard



BREAKDOWN OF AUDIENCE BY AGE AND GENDER AND LOCATION

Age and gender

■ Men 32.50%
■ Women 67.50%



Location

Towns/cities

Countries

Macclesfield	151
Stockport	49
Wilmslow	43
Manchester	35
Crewe	31

WALKS MANAGER UPDATE

Back in October Kate Davis from head office was helping me to try and resolve the issues with bulk upload system.

The last I heard from her was that she was going to contact the developers and ask them if they could work with me to discuss the problems – needless to say I haven't heard anything since.

I have a very simple process in place that seems to be working for now as follows:

Every Monday I check for new walks added to the ECR website – I also check our website for additions and changes 2 or 3 times each week.

New walks are added to Walks Manager about 4 – 6 weeks before the date of the walk.

When the walk details have been added, they are also scheduled to appear on Facebook 5 – 7 days before the walk.

To make the process easier for me it would be really helpful if walk leaders could remember to:

- Add their walks at least 10 – 14 days before the actual walk – I understand this is not always feasible, however if walks are added at short notice, they may not be added to Walks Manager.
- Specify Easy, Moderate or Strenuous
- Enter their names in full - I can't always identify them from their first name only.
- Check postcode / grid reference.
- Check that they are registered on Walks Manager – there are a few who are not yet registered and therefore their walk cannot be added to Walks Manager.

The following names are not registered on Walks Manager:

Barbara Hare, Martin Dunkley, Richard Higham, Martin Cave, Malcom Combey, Maureen Walker

I'm not sure when the quarterly Walks Programmes are normally sent out, but if I could have a copy as soon as it is available that would be a great help.

Regarding walk leaders adding to Walks Manager – I think that until all the “glitches” are sorted it would be simpler for me to continue to manage it. That way there would be no need for them to contact me unless they cancel the walk OR make significant changes – apparently Roger isn't able to let me have this information.