



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Saturday 20 April 2024, 10.30pm – 5pm

At: Concourse Suite, NEC Birmingham, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1NT

The annual general meeting (AGM) of the General Council of the Ramblers will take place on Saturday 20 April 2024 at the NEC Birmingham from 10.30pm to 5pm.

The agenda is appended as part of this notice, along with the AGM papers which are also included with this notice. The AGM papers are also available to download from our General Council webpage at www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/general-council

All Council members have the right to appoint a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on their behalf. Proxy forms may be completed and submitted by email or by post to the registered office using the enclosed form. The deadline for the delivery of proxy forms is 5pm on Wednesday 17 April 2024.

Agenda

<i>Tea / coffee on arrival</i>		<i>From 9.45am</i>
AGM part 1		10.30am – 1pm
1	Welcome and introduction	
2	Review of the year, including financial report	
3	2023 AGM minutes & 2023 EGM minutes	Pages 2 - 25
4	Appointment of auditor	Page 16
5	Appointment of president and vice presidents	Page 17
6	Delivering our strategy: successes and learnings so far	
<i>Lunch</i>		<i>1pm – 2pm</i>
AGM part 2		2pm – 3.15pm
7	Open motions: report on actions	Pages 18 - 24
8	2024 motions	Pages 25 - 28
<i>Tea / coffee break</i>		<i>3.15pm – 3.45pm</i>
AGM part 3		3.45pm – 5pm
8	2024 motions (continued)	Pages 25 - 28
9	Election of trustees and motions review committee	Pages 29 - 42
10	Closing remarks and election results	
<i>Venue closes at 6pm</i>		<i>5pm – 6pm</i>



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT THE CONCOURSE SUITE, NEC BIRMINGHAM ON 1 APRIL 2023

1 Welcome and introduction

Rebecca Dawson, chair of the board of trustees, welcomed members of General Council to the NEC and thanked everyone for making the journey to Birmingham for what would be a busy day. She then introduced the staff team to the meeting: the new chief executive, Ross Maloney, and the executive leadership team (ELT), Tom Platt, Glen Walker, Suzy Russell, and Clive Sanders; Simon Kellas, head of governance; Richard Sharp and the regional engagement team: Nicky Wilson, Diane Simcoe, Claire Watkins and Vanessa Slawson. Also present were guests Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, Ramblers Scotland convener, trustee candidates Peter Adkins, John Arnoldi and Ian Cable, and volunteer Janet Davis who would be taking the minutes.

Apologies for absence had been received from Stuart Maconie, Malcolm Petyt, Paddy Tipping, Ronnie Forbes and Jan Wardell.

Before inviting the chief executive and the ELT to present the annual review, Rebecca took a moment to remind council of the Ramblers' core values. As an organisation we seek to be inclusive, inspiring, empowering and responsible. Inclusivity was a golden thread, running through everything the Ramblers undertakes.

2 Annual review

Ross Maloney, chief executive, said that it was a pleasure to be at general council at a time when the Ramblers had a lot to be proud of. He had joined the organisation in July 2022 and had found it a hugely welcoming experience. He had met many members and volunteers since that time across the country. Passion and enthusiasm abounded and there was an exciting journey ahead as we worked towards creating a country fit for walkers during a period of great social change and its associated challenges.

Tom Platt, director of operations and advocacy, described some of the major campaign initiatives of the past year. There had been diligent work under the *Don't Lose Your Way* (DLYW) project, with 750 new DLYW volunteers recruited. Rights of way training had increased, with over 1,000 people participating in two online sessions. Legal action to safeguard the rights of the public to use the network continued with a number of successes. The Freedom to Roam campaign had been relaunched. This was a subject close to the hearts of many ramblers. The Labour Party had indicated publicly that, in government, it would work towards extending existing rights of access. In London, under the banner of the Green Routes campaign, Inner London volunteers were successfully pushing for a network of high-quality routes in the capital. It was hoped this work could be extended to other cities. Work prior to the last mayoral elections in London

had led to the production of Transport for London's *Leisure Walking Strategy*, the first of its kind in England. Across the organisation, volunteer path maintenance teams now numbered 150 and continued to maintain and improve the network.

In Scotland, the Scottish Paths Map had been launched. This was an online resource which had been strongly supported through social media and, in Wales, the *Paths to Wellbeing* project, funded by the Welsh government had been well received.

There had been thousands of led walks, involving over 20,000 walk leaders and there had been 30,000 Ramblers wellbeing walks. Walk leaders were the biggest group of volunteers and almost 1,300 walk leaders had completed the online Walk Leadership Foundations e-learning training. New content was being developed to help walk leaders prevent and manage incidents on walks.

Following the debates at General Council in 2022, the board had re-examined the approach to risk management. The journey had not been easy but it was essential to avoid confusion and to present walk leaders with a workable solution. A working group had been established which had benchmarked procedures across the sector. A survey of Ramblers walk leaders had been undertaken and 1,700 leaders had responded. The refreshed approach focussed on standards not standardisation. The new resources were being developed to give walk leaders the skills and confidence they need to manage risk in a way that is proportionate to that walk. The hope is to have the new system being launched from October. Until this is in place, we are asking all walk leaders to continue to follow existing arrangements. There would be further conversations and opportunities to comment on this over the summer.

Clive Sanders, director of income and marketing, spoke about efforts to grow the membership and support income. Membership is now over 102,000 and has recovered to pre-covid levels. 15,500 new members had been recruited but the challenge lay in retaining members and evolving the supporter base. However, growth in non-member supporters continued. A new initiative *Let's walk together* had been fronted by the TV celebrity, Jimmy Doherty and reached 12 million people. This had been externally funded and took a different approach to walking, seeking to change perceptions of the Ramblers. The range of partners with whom Ramblers was working had expanded: corporations were keen to work with charities. Of note was direct funding from Sport England to support work on equality, inclusion and diversity.

Suzy Russell, director of finance, performance and impact, acknowledged that Ramblers digital projects had not had a smooth passage. An external review had been commissioned to learn lessons and the ELT would be ensuring that those would be implemented in future projects of this nature and scale. The new website and Walks Manager would be launched shortly. Tests and pilots had been undertaken on Walks Manager and she thanked everyone for their patience while this work had been undertaken. Development of the new facilities would be ongoing and staff would be available to help volunteers as the work continued.

Glen Walker, director of people and organisational development, said that Ramblers had 25,000 volunteers delivering on a huge range of initiatives ranging from walks with refugees, campaigns against unsuitable countryside developments, installing gates in place of stiles, and producing podcasts. He acknowledged that there had been problems with Assemble as a means of providing information and guidance to volunteers but said that it would be reviewed over the next year and that volunteers would be engaged in

this process. In particular, the board had asked about the possibility of moving some information from Assemble to the website.

On behalf of the board and the ELT, Ross thanked everyone for their contribution to the successes and ongoing work of the Ramblers.

3 Financial report

Michael Penny, honorary treasurer, introduced the financial review and annual accounts which had been examined and been given a clean audit opinion by the auditor. Accounting for charities was complicated but the key figures spoke for themselves. Total income in the last financial year had increased from £9.7m at the end of September 2021 to £11.7m at the end of September 2022. Expenditure was £10.2m in 2020/21 compared to £12.8m in 2021/22. Broadly speaking, spending was matching income.

Sources of income were varied. Although membership income had dipped it had now bounced back to pre-covid levels and stood at £3.6m. Subscription rates had been frozen in October 2021 but the board had decided to increase rates by 5.5% in October 2022, half the rate of inflation at the time. Legacies were an important source of income and, in 2022, 55 legacies had been received, the largest of which was over £200,000. Such generous donations enabled Ramblers to continue its work. The People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) was also a very important source of income with over £3.1m in the last year.

Area and Group activity generated £1.9m but it was notable that this activity hadn't returned to pre-covid levels.

In summary, Michael said that the Ramblers was in a healthy financial position in cash terms but the board needed to keep the reserves under review to ensure they were compliant with Charity Commission guidance. Total general reserves at 30 September 2022 stood at £3.8m which was sufficient to cover between three and nine months establishment and core staff costs.

Michael said that it had been a successful year and he thanked the board, the ELT, staff and all Area and Group treasurers for their contribution to that success.

4 Questions on the annual report and accounts

Charlie Bigley (Staffordshire area) asked whether the Walks Manager had been an expensive mistake. Ross Maloney said that in retrospect it had been a difficult journey and as alluded to there had been many lessons learned from the experience.

John Ireland (Greater Manchester and High Peak area) asked if the review of the IT issues would be made public. Ross Maloney said that would not be possible because it was commercially sensitive, but that the board would maintain oversight of the implementation of lessons learned for projects of this nature and scale in the future.

John Esslemont (Motions review committee) said he was concerned that compulsory training for walk leaders would lead to a decline in the number of walk leaders. Tom Platt said that as a charity, the

Ramblers had to show that it was taking action to minimise risks as far as is reasonable and practicable. The organisation needed to have tools and resources which provided suitable cover for all walk leaders. Walk leaders wanted clear guidance and the new package which would comprise online training and a handbook was proportionate and would ensure that all leaders knew what was expected of them.

Cath MacKay (vice president) asked how this training would be implemented at group level. Tom Platt said that detailed conversations on this would take place between now and September. The online training already existed but input from existing volunteers was needed. Ross said that this was the first stage in the journey and that the need to work in partnership with volunteers was acknowledged.

5. Approval of the minutes of General Council 2023

Council approved the minutes of General Council 2023.

6. Appointment of auditor

The appointment of the firm of Crowe UK LLP was proposed by Michael Penny (honorary treasurer), seconded by Malcolm McDonnell (board of trustees), and approved by council.

7. Appointment of president and vice presidents

Stuart Maconie, the current president, stood down as president after six years. A video prepared by Stuart was played to General Council. He had been honoured and flattered to be president and was happy to continue to support the Ramblers as a vice president. The chair thanked Stuart for his contributions to flagship initiatives on which his media experience and influence has been invaluable.

It was proposed by the chair, and seconded by Lucy Armitage (board of trustees) that Amar Latif be elected as the next president. A video prepared by Amar was played to General Council. He was honoured to be considered for such a prestigious position and looked forward to playing his part in the Ramblers mission to inspire people, regardless of their mobility and ability to enjoy the outdoors. Amar was elected *nem con*.

No new nominations for the position of vice president had been received. The following current elected vice presidents were proposed for re-election *en bloc* by Mark Chung (board of trustees) and Helen Tranter (board of trustees): Sir Richard Lloyd Jones, Jonathan Kipling, Cath MacKay, Alan Mattingly, Dave Morris, Malcolm Petyt, Brian Reader, Paddy Tipping and Keith Wadd. All vice presidents were elected *nem con*.

The following past presidents automatically remained as vice presidents: Kate Ashbrook, Andrew Bennett, Julia Bradbury, Chris Hall, Mike Harding, Chris Smith, and Janet Street-Porter. Stuart Maconie was added to the list as the most recently retired president.

8. Election of trustees

There were fourteen candidates for three vacancies (each for a three-year term). These were Peter Adkins, John Arnoldi, Gavin Baker, Ian Cable, Mark Chung, John Dixon, Martin Finland (withdrew before the ballot), Azeem Gopalani, Ian Hudson, Simon Kearey, Lida Naraghi-Shah, Stefan O'Connor, Richard Powell and

Rowan Williams. The election result was independently scrutinised by Cath MacKay (vice president) and Janet Davis (volunteer). The results were: Peter Adkins (17), John Arnoldi (13), Gavin Baker (24), Ian Cable (14), Mark Chung (70), John Dixon (7), Azeem Gopalani (14) Ian Hudson (15), Simon Kearey (14), Lida Naraghi-Shah (21), Stefan O'Connor (23), Richard Powell (17) and Rowan Williams (28). Gavin Baker, Mark Chung and Rowan Williams were therefore elected.

The Chair thanked the retiring members of the board, Richard May, Helen Tranter and Alison Mitchell, retiring convenor of Ramblers Scotland, for their work. The new convenor, Malcolm Dingwall-Smith was welcomed to the board. The two co-opted members of the board, Dan Firmager and Gulshun Rehman would continue to serve.

9. Election of motions review committee members

There were seven candidates for five vacancies. These were Kate Ashbrook, Sophie Clissold-Lesser, John Esslemont, Des Garrahan, John Ireland, Richard May and John Wainwright. The election result was independently scrutinised by Cath MacKay (vice president) and Janet Davis (volunteer). The results were: Kate Ashbrook (78), Sophie Clissold-Lesser (73), John Esslemont (62), Des Garrahan (46), John Ireland (69), Richard May (64) and John Wainwright (63). Kate Ashbrook, Sophie Clissold-Lesser, John Ireland, Richard May and John Wainwright were therefore elected.

10. Open motions: review of actions from previous years

Council noted the report of this review.

Questions and comments on other open motions

With reference to motion 2022 [1] (Simplification of risk assessments), John Baker (Merseyside and West Cheshire Area) said that the Ramblers insurance document referred to 'events' (i.e. non-walking activities), and asked how these would be covered in the context of risk assessment. Tom Platt said that conversations needed to take place on how these were dealt with. Published documentation did require risk assessments for organising events such as AGMs and none of that had changed.

With reference to motion 2022[4] (Strengthening Ramblers' role in protecting paths), Keith Wadd (vice president) said that he did not consider the board's response to be adequate and called upon the board to produce the report requested in the motion. Tom Platt said that a large proportion of the work undertaken by Ramblers was path work and that proportionate resources were being put into that work.

With reference to motion 2018 [4] (Roadside signage of public rights of way), Alan Austin (Powys area) asked if the motion could be reconsidered and not closed. Roadside signage was the most important thing for encouraging novice walkers to use the network. Tom Platt said that this work was a mainstream issue, one of a range of issues on which Ramblers worked with local authorities. Having a separate motion on this initiative was felt unnecessary.

With reference to motion 2022[6] (General Council meeting format), Barry Pottle (North Strathclyde area), asked why the board referred to General Council as a “relatively small group of members”. He considered this to be a dismissive description.

Charlie Bigley (Staffordshire Area) suggested that, in future, council members be invited to send questions about open motions in advance of the General Council meeting.

11. Report of the motions review committee (MRC)

Council noted the report of the motions review committee on 2023 motions. The committee was thanked for its work. The chair said that the increased number of motions and amendments this year had meant a lot of work for the committee and she urged areas to give careful consideration to the wording of both motions and amendments and to seek advice from staff when appropriate.

12. Appeal against a decision of the motions review committee

Inner London Area had submitted an appeal against the MRC decision to delete the opening paragraph of motion 2023 [6] which the committee said would be better placed at the start of the background notes. The appeal was proposed by Des Garrahan on behalf of the area. John Esslemont responded on behalf of the committee.

The appeal was declined by council. The wording of the motion therefore stood as set out below.

13. Motions submitted to General Council 2023

2023 [1] ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTIONS

The following motion was proposed by John Ireland (Manchester and High Peak area), and seconded by Oliver Cosgrove-Fearn (Manchester and High Peak area).

This General Council considers that the Ramblers should move towards implementing a system of one member one vote for future elections to the Board of Trustees.

Council therefore asks the Board to bring proposals for implementation of such a voting system for consideration by the 2025 Annual General Meeting of General Council.

The following amendment was proposed by Lucy Robinson on behalf of the Board of Trustees

In the first sentence, insert “democratic voting” before “system” and delete “of one member one vote”.

In the second sentence, insert “review alternative approaches, including one member one vote, and” before “bring proposals” and delete “for implementation of such a voting system”.

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by council.

The substantive motion then read:

This General Council considers that the Ramblers should move towards implementing a democratic voting system - for future elections to the Board of Trustees. Council therefore asks the Board to review alternative approaches, including one member one vote, and bring proposals for consideration by the 2025 Annual General Meeting of General Council.

The substantive motion was carried.

2023 [2] ELECTING TRUSTEES AND VOTING ON MOTIONS

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to investigate and propose to General Council a more democratic way of electing trustees and of voting on motions.

Charlie Shepherd (Lake District area) said that he longer wished to propose this motion. No other member of Council wished to propose it. The motion therefore fell.

2023 [3] GENERAL COUNCIL FORMAT

The following motion was proposed by Des Garrahan (Inner London area), and seconded by Peter James (Norfolk area).

This General Council accepts the necessity of the changes to the format of the Annual General Meeting of General Council caused by the Covid pandemic, but urges the Board of Trustees to change the format back to the two-day format that was previously normal now that it is safe and legal to do so.

The following amendment was proposed by Dorset Area:

Insert “(including provision for visitors)” after “two day format”

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by council.

The substantive motion then read:

This General Council accepts the necessity of the changes to the format of the Annual General Meeting of General Council caused by the Covid pandemic, but urges the Board of Trustees to change the format back to the two day format (including provision for visitors) that was previously normal now that it is safe and legal to do so.

The substantive motion was carried.

2023 [4] CAMPAIGN TO LOBBY ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO HONOUR THEIR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS WITH RESPECT OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

The following motion was proposed by Malcolm Dixon (South Yorkshire and NE Derbyshire area) and seconded by Alan Pestell (South Yorkshire and NE Derbyshire area).

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to lobby the governments in England and Wales to ensure that highway authorities honour their legal obligations with respect to the preservation and protection of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. Specifically the emphasis should be on:

- ensuring PRoWs are kept clear and safe to walk at all times, unless subject to any legal restriction;

- to ensure landowners and tenants honour their specific obligations relating to those aspects of PRow under their control with particular emphasis on ploughing and cropping;
- to ensure safety aspects of PRow preservation are enforced with particular emphasis on the use of barbed wire and electric fences;
- to promote the use of guidance given in BS5709 Gaps Gates and Stiles wherever appropriate.

The following amendment was proposed by Dorset Area:

Amend the start of the motion to read: 'This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to lobby the governments in England and Wales to provide adequate financial and technical support to local authorities to enable them to honour their legal obligations in respect of.....(continues)

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by council.

The substantive motion then read:

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to lobby the governments in England and Wales to provide adequate financial and technical support to local authorities to enable them to honour their legal obligations in respect of the preservation and protection of the Public Rights of Way (Prow) network. Specifically the emphasis should be on:

- ensuring PRowS are kept clear and safe to walk at all times, unless subject to any legal restriction;
- to ensure landowners and tenants honour their specific obligations relating to those aspects of PRow under their control with particular emphasis on ploughing and cropping;
- to ensure safety aspects of PRow preservation are enforced with particular emphasis on the use of barbed wire and electric fences;
- to promote the use of guidance given in BS5709 Gaps Gates and Stiles wherever appropriate.

The substantive motion was carried overwhelmingly.

2023 [5] WILD CAMPING ON DARTMOOR AND THE NEED TO EXPAND RIGHT TO ROAM AND TO IMPROVE ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES TO OPEN AND GREEN SPACES FOR EVERYONE

The following motion was proposed by Tim Spray (Devon Area) and seconded by George Coles (Devon Area):

This General Council deplores the outcome of the recent high court case which is that there is no right to wild camping on common land in the Dartmoor National Park. Council fears that this decision will be a deterrent to wild camping across England and Wales.

Council calls on the Board of Trustees to support the campaign to restore the right to wild camping on Dartmoor, and to make it a right on access land throughout England and Wales, as part of our effort to expand the right to roam, and to improve the opportunities for public access to open and green spaces for everyone.

The following amendment was proposed by the Motions Review Committee as a combination of three amendments submitted by Wiltshire and Swindon area, Dave Morris (vice president) and John Esslemont MRC):

In the second paragraph delete all words after “to restore the right to wild camping on Dartmoor, and to” and replace with “explore how the same right might best be extended to other suitable areas in England and Wales to improve the opportunities for public access to nature and green spaces for everyone.”

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by council.

A further amendment had been submitted by Dorset Area:

To delete the text after ‘Dartmoor’ in the second paragraph of the motion, so that it reads: “Council calls on the Board of Trustees to support the campaign to restore the right to wild camping on Dartmoor.”

Dorset Area declined to propose this amendment but it was proposed by Dave Morris (vice president), and seconded by Charlie Morriss (Gloucestershire area).

After debate, the amendment was defeated (41 for, 56 against and 7 abstentions).

The substantive motion then read:

This General Council deplores the outcome of the recent high court case which is that there is no right to wild camping on common land in the Dartmoor National Park. Council fears that this decision will be a deterrent to wild camping across England and Wales. Council calls on the Board of Trustees to support the campaign to restore the right to wild camping on Dartmoor, and to explore how the same right might best be extended to other suitable areas in England and Wales to improve the opportunities for public access to nature and green spaces for everyone.

The substantive motion was carried.

2023 [6] LEISURE WALKING IN LONDON AND OTHER URBAN AREAS

The following motion was proposed by Des Garrahan (Inner London area), and seconded by Dick Dunmore (Inner London area);

This General Council welcomes the publication of the London Leisure Walking Plan and notes that the large proportion of the general population, and of Ramblers’ members, lives and walks in urban areas. To build upon the string of successes in London, Manchester and other urban areas, Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to invest a higher proportion of its focus and resources in urban walking than it is currently committing.

Council further calls upon the Board to ensure resources are invested at the highest level of the organisation:

- in the implementation of the London Leisure Walking Plan through the London Leisure Walking Forum;
- in ensuring that the strategy is emulated in towns and cities across Great Britain;
- in seeking all possible fundraising opportunities for urban walking in the future;
- in publicising these projects, locally and, if necessary, nationally, as well as across various social media platforms where appropriate;
- in reporting back, next year and in future years, to Council, on the progress on these initiatives.

The following amendment was proposed by Bekah Cork on behalf of the board of trustees:

In the second sentence, replace ‘a higher proportion of its’ with ‘the necessary’ and replace ‘than it is currently committing’ with ‘in line with the organisational strategy’.

In the second paragraph, delete ‘at the highest level of the organisation’.

In the third bullet point, delete ‘all possible’.

In the final bullet point, delete ‘and in future years’.

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by council.

The substantive motion then read:

This General Council welcomes the publication of the London Leisure Walking Plan and notes that the large proportion of the general population, and of Ramblers’ members, lives and walks in urban areas. To build upon the string of successes in London, Manchester and other urban areas, Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to invest the necessary focus and resources in urban walking in line with the organisational strategy. Council further calls upon the Board to ensure resources are invested:

- in the implementation of the London Leisure Walking Plan through the London Leisure Walking Forum;
- in ensuring that the strategy is emulated in towns and cities across Great Britain;
- in seeking fundraising opportunities for urban walking in the future;
- in publicising these projects, locally and, if necessary, nationally, as well as across various social media platforms where appropriate;
- in reporting back, next year, to Council, on the progress on these initiatives

The motion was carried overwhelmingly.

2023 [7] ENSURING THAT AREA AND GROUP ACTIVITIES ARE BETTER UNDERSTOOD BY RAMBLERS’ STAFF

The following motion was proposed by Colin Sefton (Kent area) and seconded by Robert Peel (Kent area)

This General Council is concerned that Areas and Groups do not always receive the quality of support they need and expect from members of staff. Council believes that this may be because staff:

- do not always have a good understanding of what volunteers in Areas and Groups do;
- do not fully appreciate how work is organised within Areas and Groups;
- underestimate the impact centrally proposed changes may have on efficient performance of Area and Group activities.

Council also considers that Area and Group Officer workloads are often already high, and in many cases excessive, and that additional requirements, especially those that use their time wastefully, may reduce Officers’ willingness to continue in their roles.

Council therefore calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that, when members of staff take on roles that impact in any way on the work of Areas or Groups, they undertake an induction process which should:

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- ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the work and processes in Areas and Groups that might be impacted;
- include a period spent shadowing or assisting with the work of relevant Area or Group Officers.

The following amendment was proposed by the motions review committee

In the first paragraph, delete the second sentence and the three bullet points from “Council believes...” to “efficient performance of Area and Group activities.”

The following amendment was proposed by Ronnie Forbes on behalf of the board of trustees

In the second paragraph delete “in many cases excessive, and that additional requirements, especially those that use their time wastefully,”.

In the third paragraph, after “ensure that”, delete “, when”.

In the third paragraph, after “members of staff“, delete “take on roles that impact in any way on the work of Areas or Groups, they”.

In the third paragraph, delete the colon and first bullet point symbol between “which should” and “ensure that”.

In the third paragraph, delete all text from “that might be impacted” to the end including the second bullet point.

The following motion was proposed by Surrey area:

In 2nd paragraph, 2nd line, delete “, especially those that use their time wastefully,”.

All three amendments were accepted by the proposers and by council.

The substantive motion read:

This General Council is concerned that Areas and Groups do not always receive the quality of support they need and expect from members of staff.

Council also considers that Area and Group Officer workloads are often already high, and that additional requirements may reduce Officers’ willingness to continue in their roles.

Council therefore calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that members of staff undertake an induction process which should ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the work and processes in Areas and Groups.

The motion was carried.

2023 [8] URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE SIGN ON

The following motion was proposed by Charlie Bigley (Staffordshire area) and seconded by Des Garrahan (Inner London area).

This General Council notes that many local Group and Area websites have developed password protected Members’ areas to provide special functionality which require the members to sign in.

Their inability to use their national sign in details is frustrating, demotivating and could readily be resolved by sharing of the existing software.

Council calls for urgent action on this matter, and recommends that the Board of Trustees establishes a small working party of technically skilled members to draw up concrete plans and costs for a national implementation of single sign on, and submit these to the Board for urgent consideration.

The motion was defeated.

The following motion which had not been put to the vote by the time specified on the agenda was, in accordance with Standing Order A12, remitted to the board of trustees for consideration.

2023 [9] TO RETURN TO MEMBER ACTIVITIES ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES (submitted by Gloucestershire area)

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to:

- return to Member activities alongside Volunteer activities so that Members do not need to register as Volunteers;
- make information for both accessible on the website;
- remove 'Volunteer' from Member role descriptions where it is not required.

14. Closing remarks

The chair brought proceedings to a close by thanking the retiring members of the board of trustees, Alison Mitchell, Helen Tranter and Richard May for all their work. They were each presented with personalised Ordnance Survey maps. She thanked all members of council for their wholehearted engagement with the motions. She said that, as an organisation, the Ramblers had many opportunities and she asked for patience as the board considered its response to the motions and the future strategy. She looked forward to a further engagement with council later in the year at which that strategy would be discussed.

Finally, she thanked the board, guests and staff for their contribution to the day, in particular Simon Kellas, the head of governance for his organisation. She wished everyone a safe journey home.

Kate Ashbrook, vice president, thanked Rebecca for her excellent chairing of the meeting.

The meeting was formally closed at 5.30pm.



**MINUTES OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL
HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2023 AT THE SMITHFIELD SUITE, CROWNE PLAZA
MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE, 70 SHUDEHILL, MANCHESTER AT 2PM**

Introduction

Rebecca Dawson, chair of the board of trustees, welcomed members of General Council to the Crowne Plaza Hotel and thanked everyone for making the journey to Manchester for the extraordinary general meeting (EGM). The meeting had been called by the board of trustees to ask General Council to endorse the draft strategic plan which sets out the refreshed ambitions of the Ramblers as a charity over the next decade.

Rebecca thanked Greater Manchester and High Peak Area for moving their Area AGM to the morning to allow their Council members to attend the EGM.

Presentation

Rebecca Dawson and Ross Maloney, chief executive officer, gave a presentation to the meeting on the background, development and purpose of the refreshed strategic plan.

Discussion, comments and questions

Following the presentation, the floor was opened for further discussion, comments and questions, with members expressing a variety of views, both for and against elements of the strategic plan. These centred around several themes:

- Building on our unique history of campaigning for access to the outdoors for all ensures we can remain relevant.
- An inclusive culture and becoming an explicitly anti-racist charity are essential to address the barriers to participation which may not always be obvious.
- The importance of considering the potential impact of new programmes of work on volunteers, many of whom are already working at full capacity to deliver our existing activities.
- The need to find new and alternative ways for people to support us, but increasing our supporter base should not be to the detriment of our current membership activities.

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- A large and active membership gives us the authority and status we need to continue to engage with external partners and influence at all levels of local and national government.
- The lack of specific reference to climate change is a conspicuous absence even noting that we are not an organisation focused on this area.
- Although the strategic plan is aimed at an external as well as internal audience, some of language could be perceived as being “management speak” and would benefit from a review and rewording in plainer English.

At the end of the discussion session, Ross thanked members for their contributions and summarised what he had heard as the main themes that had emerged in the discussion.

Ross said that that the strategic plan, if endorsed by the General Council, will be properly designed to produce a more visually appealing, public-facing version which will incorporate pictures, photographs, and graphics. The language in the plan will be reviewed as suggested to ensure it is appropriate for both internal and external audiences. Recognising the strength of feeling in the room, reference to climate change and our environmental policy will be added.

Decision

Rebecca reminded members that Approval of the refreshed strategic plan requires a simple majority (i.e. over 50%) of members present at the EGM in person or by proxy. Twenty-seven Council members had appointed a proxy.

Although a decision could be taken by a show of hands, Rebecca, as chair of the meeting, called a poll to ensure that an accurate tally of votes could be recorded.

The poll was held with Council members invited to vote on the board’s recommendation to endorse the strategic plan and its ambitions, with 79.8% of votes in favour.

The votes cast were:

For	79
Against	11
Abstain	9
Total	99

Closing remarks

Ross thanked Council for endorsing the strategic plan and its ambitions for the next ten years.

Rebecca brought proceedings to a close by thanking members and wished everyone a safe journey home.

The meeting ended at 4.55pm.



APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Ordinary resolution to reappoint Crowe UK LLP for the next year and to authorise the board of trustees to fix the remuneration.

Crowe has continued to provide a high quality and responsive level of service and support during their audit of the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023.

As required by our Articles of Association the auditor is re-appointed annually by members at the annual meeting of General Council and the board proposes their re-appointment to audit the accounts for the year ending 30 September 2024.



APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENTS

PRESIDENT

- Amar Latif

We are delighted that Amar has agreed to serve another year as president. Over the last year he promoted the Ramblers via national television, radio, press and online interviews. Amar used his lived experience to highlight the importance of the Ramblers work to inspire and enable people, irrespective of background or ability level, to embrace walking.

VICE PRESIDENTS

The following current elected vice presidents are proposed for re-election en bloc at the meeting:

- Sir Richard Lloyd Jones
- Jonathan Kipling
- Cath MacKay
- Alan Mattingly
- Dave Morris
- Malcolm Petyt
- Brian Reader
- Paddy Tipping
- Keith Wadd

NB Those vice presidents who hold that office by virtue of being past presidents automatically remain vice presidents without the need for formal re-election. They are:

- Kate Ashbrook
- Andrew Bennett
- Julia Bradbury
- Chris Hall
- Mike Harding
- Stuart Maconie
- The Rt. Hon. the Lord (Chris) Smith PC
- Janet Street-Porter



OPEN MOTIONS: REPORT ON ACTIONS

2022 [1]	Board of trustees elections
2022 [3]	General Council format
2022 [4]	Campaign with respect of the Public Rights of Way network
2022 [5]	Wild camping and opportunities for public access to nature and green spaces for everyone
2022 [6]	Leisure walking in London and other urban areas
2022 [7]	Staff understanding of Area and Group activities
2022 [9]	Return to member activities alongside volunteer activities (<i>remitted to the board</i>)
2022 [1]	Simplification of risk assessments
2022 [2]	Walk leadership requirements
2021 [4]	Prioritise IT development for supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers

2023 [1]

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTIONS

This General Council considers that the Ramblers should move towards implementing a democratic voting system for future elections to the board of trustees. Council therefore asks the board to review alternative approaches, including one member one vote, and bring proposals for consideration by the 2025 Annual General Meeting of General Council.

Update

In the October 2023 mid-year motions update to Council, the board confirmed its support for this motion, but also stated that it believed there is an opportunity to look beyond this specific issue. To ensure the success of the strategic plan, and to make sure that we are fit and able to deliver on our ambitions, the board of trustees believes that a wider review of our current governance will be essential to identify the issues and challenges which may need to be addressed. In January 2024, a short assessment process was started to investigate the potential scope of a governance review and to set out, for discussion by the board in April, a proposed approach. An update on this work will be given to General Council on 20 April.

This motion remains open.

2023 [3]

GENERAL COUNCIL FORMAT

This General Council accepts the necessity of the changes to the format of the Annual General Meeting of General Council caused by the pandemic, but urges the board of trustees to change the format back to the two day format (including provision for visitors) that was previously normal now that it is safe and legal to do so.

Update

In coming to the decision about the 2024 General Council AGM, the board of trustees discussed the motion passed at the 2023 AGM. The board agreed to retain a similar one-day format for 2024 and to hold the meeting at Birmingham NEC. The elements which the motion calls for – a longer residential weekend with additional events and activities – are not part of the formal AGM. The board does not believe that the financial cost of delivering the additional conference and fringe elements around the AGM to a relatively small audience is the best use of resources.

While the board recognises the value of members from across the organisation being able to meet each other and share best practice, and will continue to develop opportunities for this, it does not believe that a weekend conference around the AGM is the best way to achieve this.

The board considers this motion closed as it has considered the request, noted the issue raised, and made a decision.

2023 [4]

CAMPAIGN WITH RESPECT OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

This General Council calls upon the board of trustees to lobby the governments in England and Wales to provide adequate financial and technical support to local authorities to enable them to honour their legal obligations in respect of the preservation and protection of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. Specifically the emphasis should be on:

- ensuring PRoWs are kept clear and safe to walk at all times, unless subject to any legal restriction;
- to ensure landowners and tenants honour their specific obligations relating to those aspects of PRoW under their control with particular emphasis on ploughing and cropping;
- to ensure safety aspects of PRoW preservation are enforced with particular emphasis on the use of barbed wire and electric fences;
- to promote the use of guidance given in BS5709 Gaps Gates and Stiles wherever appropriate.

Update

The protection, improvement and expansion of our public rights of way network is vital part of the Ramblers' mission. In autumn 2023, we published extensive research, commissioned from the New Economics Foundation, on the provision of public rights of way and barriers to use of the network. The research finds that our path network in England and Wales adds over 3,000 healthy years of life to the nation, worth an estimated wellbeing value of £2billion, over £33 per person in England and Wales.

The findings in this research, alongside polling from YouGov and research commissioned on the economic value of the network, will enable us to make the case for greater attention and resources to support the path network. This research will support our advocacy to central, devolved and regional government. Our national campaigning focuses this year on urging the political parties to commit to new legislation which will protect and improve our path network, public rights of way and wider access network in the run up to the UK general election, and we continue to press for additional resource and support for local authorities to undertake their statutory functions in respect to public rights of way.

Our policy advocacy is underpinned by the work of our 4,500 path volunteers on the ground. We have a renewed support approach for these volunteers including regular ‘Footpath Forums’ and a suite of new guidance and training (including new guidance on recording paths based on user and historical evidence; responding to application for new solar farms; and both basic and intermediate rights of way training sessions). We are also in the process of commissioning the new, 5th edition, of “Rights Of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice” (the Blue Book).

The Ramblers undertakes regular legal action to ensure that local authorities are taking their duties to assert and protect the rights of the public seriously and that landowners and tenants are honouring their obligations with respects to public rights of way.

The board considers this motion closed as this work will continue to be core to the delivery of our strategic plan.

2023 [5]

WILD CAMPING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO NATURE AND GREEN SPACES FOR EVERYONE

This General Council deplores the outcome of the recent high court case which is that there is no right to wild camping on common land in the Dartmoor National Park. Council fears that this decision will be a deterrent to wild camping across England and Wales. Council calls on the board of trustees to support the campaign to restore the right to wild camping on Dartmoor, and to explore how the same right might best be extended to other suitable areas in England and Wales to improve the opportunities for public access to nature and green spaces for everyone.

Update

We have been supportive of the campaign to restore the right to wild camp on Dartmoor and publicly celebrated the successful legal appeal in July. Recently the Labour party has committed to legislate so that people visiting national parks have the right to wild camp, as well as expanding public access to woodlands and waterways. We continue to advocate for extending the right to roam, and this will remain a public affairs priority up until the next general election.

Subject to the outcome of a possible appeal to the Supreme Court, the board considers this motion can be closed as the Dartmoor National Park won its appeal, overturning the High Court ruling – and extending the freedom to roam is established as a priority for our advocacy campaigning.

2023 [6]

LEISURE WALKING IN LONDON AND OTHER URBAN AREAS

This General Council welcomes the publication of the London Leisure Walking Plan and notes that the large proportion of the general population, and of Ramblers' members, lives and walks in urban areas. To build upon the string of successes in London, Manchester and other urban areas, Council calls upon the board of trustees to invest the necessary focus and resources in urban walking in line with the organisational strategy. Council further calls upon the board to ensure resources are invested:

- in the implementation of the London Leisure Walking Plan through the London Leisure Walking Forum;
- in ensuring that the strategy is emulated in towns and cities across Great Britain;
- in seeking fundraising opportunities for urban walking in the future;
- in publicising these projects, locally and, if necessary, nationally, as well as across various social media platforms where appropriate;
- in reporting back, next year, to Council, on the progress on these initiatives

Update

In November 2022, London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner and Transport for London published the first ever Leisure Walking Plan. The plan sets out how they will improve, expand and promote the city's network of leisure walking routes (e.g. the London Loop) so that more people can experience the joys of walking on their doorstep.

Ramblers' volunteers and staff campaigned successfully for this strategy over several years. We are supporting the plan's implementation, including the designation of a new long distance leisure route that links up green spaces and quieter streets in an area of 'green deprivation'. The route is being enhanced with green/natural features, signage and safer crossings, funded by a grant from London's 'green new deal' programme.

Staff and volunteers in London and Greater Manchester are working together to develop campaigns for the 2024 Metro Mayor elections, including to develop manifestos and other campaign materials. We continue to explore fundraising opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, in line with our strategy.

The board considers this motion closed as Ramblers has implemented a campaign strategy to promote urban green routes.

2023 [7]

STAFF UNDERSTANDING OF AREA AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

This General Council is concerned that Areas and Groups do not always receive the quality of support they need and expect from members of staff. Council also considers that Area and Group officer workloads are often already high, and may reduce officers' willingness to continue in their roles. Council therefore calls upon the board of trustees to ensure that members of staff undertake an induction process which should ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the work and processes in Areas and Groups that might be impacted.

Update

There has been a renewed effort in recent years to engage with our Area and Groups through a variety of formats, including Area clusters, user groups, webinars, visits and case studies. These forums provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to better understand and work together. While many staff do join a walk or volunteer activity during their induction, this is optional and will become mandatory as part of our review of induction and onboarding for staff. Opportunities throughout the year will also be shaped to ensure that colleagues appreciate and understand the work of Areas and Groups.

The board considers this motion closed.

2023 [9]

RETURN TO MEMBER ACTIVITIES ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

This General Council calls upon the board of trustees to:

- return to member activities alongside volunteer activities so that members do not need to register as volunteers;
- make information for both accessible on the website;
- remove 'volunteer' from member role descriptions where it is not required.

This motion was remitted to the board of trustees.

Update

We have over 100,000 members, as well as many thousands of donors and supporters. Some supporters donate to us financially, some campaign for us, and some give their time to support our cause and purpose.

There are several roles classified as volunteers. We classify a volunteer as someone who acts 'on behalf of the Ramblers' in a specific role. For example, this could be a group chair, secretary or walk leader. When someone acts 'on behalf of' the Ramblers they fall under certain insurances and our duty of care. This is a legal responsibility for the Ramblers.

Someone, who acts 'in aid of us' – for example, they sign a petition or organise some fundraising and the proceeds are donated to the Ramblers - doesn't fall under the same legal requirements. In this instance, we would give them all the support and encouragement they need to help our cause. Some members may volunteer for us, but not all volunteers have to be members.

In total, we have over 25,000 volunteers. The majority of these are walk leaders who enable many members and wellbeing walkers to experience the joy of walking regularly throughout Great Britain, but also include area or group administrative roles, rights of way experts and path maintenance volunteers.

Without our network of local volunteers, we would not be able to have the impact we do. We support volunteers with training, guidance and importantly, insurance, to carry out their specific roles. We continually review how members or volunteers can easily access the necessary guidance and support relevant to them.

We continue to value and support the contribution made by members and volunteers. We understand our work would not be possible without them. Now the new website has been launched we will seek to make relevant information accessible to all. However, there are some activities that volunteers will, for the time being, still need to access via Assemble, such as e-learning and volunteer recruitment.

The board considers the 2023 motion closed, noting that it has been resubmitted in similar form for debate at the 2024 General Council AGM.

2022 [1]

SIMPLIFICATION OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

This General Council believes that the imposed requirement for written risk assessments in the format prescribed is unnecessary, serves no useful purpose and notes it has led to walk leaders standing down. Council urges the Board of Trustees to identify and implement a simpler and less burdensome approach to documented risk assessments for organised walks as a matter of priority.

2022 [2]

WALK LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

This General Council is gravely concerned that perceptions of bureaucracy are deterring leaders and potential leaders of group walks from offering their services. Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that, except as required by any current legislation or in the event of an incident that seems likely to lead to an insurance claim, leaders are placed under no obligation to make or keep any written or electronic records relating to their walk, either before, during or after the event. Council therefore calls upon the board to remove the requirement for written risk assessments of group walks and, in doing so, to ensure that the absence of such records will not adversely affect the insurance cover provided for walk leaders.

Update

We have reviewed how we manage safety on group walks, to develop a more flexible and proportionate approach, that emphasises local and dynamic planning. In February 2023, the board of trustees decided to develop and implement a “consistent core approach” to manage risk on group walks – encompassing best practice guidance, and induction training for new walk leaders. The new guidance will include:

- Walk leader handbook: The Ramblers' best practice to leading group walks, which will be a helpful reminder for existing walk leaders and a useful starting point for new walk leaders.
- Pocket-sized guide: A helpful reminder of the guidance for when you're on the go
- Resource pack: including useful templates such as generic risk assessments and route cards.
- Updated e-learning: Walk Leadership Foundations and Preventing and Managing Incidents.

This work has been supported by a volunteer working group – and in November 2023, all volunteers were invited to consult on the guidance. Over 900 responses were received from groups, areas and Ramblers Wellbeing Walks partners – and this was followed by an additional 39 online discussion sessions in January/February 2024.

Following further revisions, the new guidance and walk leader journey has been finalised, to share in spring 2024. Staff and volunteers are working together to implement the new approach, so that all walk leaders have access to guidance, training and support that is relevant and proportionate to the types of walk they lead.

The board considers these motions closed as the Ramblers' new approach to managing safety on group walks will be implemented from spring 2024.

2021 [4]

PRIORITISE IT DEVELOPMENT FOR SUPPORTING, ENCOURAGING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

This General Council acknowledges the difficulty that Areas and Groups have in supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers. To help address this, Council urges the Board of Trustees to prioritise those IT developments that directly assist the Areas and Groups. These will include help in

- managing their email distribution lists
- improving the information for membership secretaries
- logging into and running their own websites
- providing a programme of walks and coach rambles.

Update

The board acknowledges the ongoing challenges of effectively engaging and supporting volunteers across Areas and Groups, as well as the critical role of Ramblers' software in addressing these challenges.

In line with this recognition, and to enhance our understanding of volunteer needs, the staff digital team has begun regularly convening with technically proficient volunteers to explore challenges encountered across different functions. These discussions aim to foster a deeper understanding of community needs, leading to more tailored and effective solutions.

In response to recent deliberations, the digital team has intensified its efforts to explore how we can facilitate more efficient self-service options for volunteers in the digital realm, particularly in streamlining reporting processes and integrating walks manager functions with external platforms.

Regular assessments and prioritisation of requirements related to the website, Walks Manager, the app, and the Insight Hub are also conducted to ensure alignment with organisational goals. It is hoped that this process will become more transparent with volunteers over the coming months.

Furthermore, the ongoing development of the digital strategy will intricately incorporate the needs of Areas and Groups, with a focus on greater flexibility and control for Areas and Groups in how they manage their functions and data.

This motion remains open.



2024 MOTIONS

Motion		Submitted by
1	Support for bus services	Wiltshire & Swindon Area
2	Updating Articles and Standing Orders for gender neutrality	Cheshire East Area
3	To return to member activities alongside volunteer activities	Gloucestershire Area
4	Review of Walk Attendance Register on the Ramblers App	Greater Manchester & High Peak Area
5	Balance of representation on the Board of Trustees	North Strathclyde Area
6	Contacting Area members	Leicestershire & Rutland Area

2024 [1]

SUPPORT FOR BUS SERVICES

This General Council is concerned that bus companies are continuing to withdraw or reduce the frequency of many services, particularly those serving rural areas, thereby further limiting the opportunities for households that do not have access to a car to walk in the countryside.

Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to prioritise a campaign for increased government financial support for bus services, channelled through local authorities or directly elected mayors, to enable the continued provision of services which best meet the needs of local communities.

Submitted by Wiltshire & Swindon Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

While the cap on bus fares has been a welcome move to encourage the use of buses, it has not halted the trend of reduction of services by operators which has continued for a number of years. Apart from the need to increase the use of public transport in place of private cars in response to the climate emergency, for Ramblers to campaign for better funding for rural bus services is entirely consistent with our strategy of enabling more individuals from disadvantaged communities to improve their health through access to the countryside, since such individuals are much less likely to have their own transport.

2024 [2]

UPDATING ARTICLES AND STANDING ORDERS FOR GENDER NEUTRALITY

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 Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

The current Standing Orders 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.

2024 [3]

TO RETURN TO MEMBER ACTIVITIES ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to:

- return to members organising activities without the requirement to register as volunteers
- make all relevant information and news available to the whole membership not just in the volunteer portal Assemble; *and*
- remove 'volunteer' from member role descriptions where it is not required.

Submitted by Gloucestershire Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

Constitutionally Ramblers is all about members (even though members may, at times, be referred to as volunteers). Members elect officers to Area and Group Councils and may, in time, be elected themselves. In May 2021, post covid, members expected to be able to return to near normal activities. However it became apparent that Ramblers' operations had changed late 2019. Member activities accessed via the website had become volunteer activities only accessible through Assemble. For example if a member wants to find out about walk leading, they have to first register as a volunteer to gain access. Previously, activities of members included walk leading, whereas activities of volunteers, typically for path maintenance, required registration and a risk assessment.

Volunteers need not be members, and members need not be volunteers. Although volunteering can be defined as an activity that involves spending time, unpaid to help benefit others, the activities of members can also involve time, unpaid to help benefit others. Ramblers, as Britain's walking charity, has benefited from both members and volunteers. In the 2021 Ramblers volunteer survey, only 48% (less than half) of the volunteers who took part felt volunteers and staff shared the same vision, (members weren't asked). Throughout 2022 and 2023 the trustees considered the remitted motions including this topic. This Area Council updated the motion to include suggestions made by other Areas. It is hoped that this motion will bring people together by recognising the efforts of members as well as volunteers and staff.

2024 [4]

REVIEW OF WALK ATTENDANCE REGISTER ON THE RAMBLERS APP

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to review how the Walk Attendance Register in the Ramblers Mobile App is used and how it can be developed to be of further use to Groups.

Submitted by Greater Manchester & High Peak Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

It is noted that whilst a potentially useful feature, usage of the Walk Attendance Register functionality on the Ramblers Mobile App is uneven, with not all groups using it. Given this, we would like the Board to review the use of this functionality, considering the following:

- The degree of current usage of the feature.
- How the information collected is currently used.
- Whether it should be used on all Ramblers walks.
- Ways in which it could be improved, including, for example, easier recording of members attending a walk not in the group they are assigned to.
- How it might be used to better capture information on prospective members when they have completed their three "trial" walks, to follow up their interest in joining.

We suggest that a consultation paper on the above be produced and made available outlining options for the development of this functionality.

2024 [5]

BALANCE OF REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

This General Council recalls that, in terms of a motion passed at its Annual General Meeting in 2023, the Board of Trustees was asked to review alternative approaches for future elections to the Board, and to bring proposals for consideration by the 2025 Annual General Meeting of General Council.

Council urges the Board to ensure that, in any proposed alternative approaches, care is taken to ensure balance of representation throughout Great Britain. In particular, it should not be possible for the results of such election to be skewed by turnout in some parts of Great Britain being significantly higher than in other parts.

Submitted by North Strathclyde Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

All Areas are currently entitled to General Council representatives. Most Areas get two, although larger Areas get more. There is fair representation throughout Britain, for election of Trustees. Any alternative approach should ensure that the result could not be skewed by varying turnout in different parts of Britain.

In the debate on the 2023 motion it was claimed that the existing system was biased towards SE England. No explanation was given as to why this might be. Since General Council contains fair representation geographically, how can the election be biased towards any particular part? Indeed, in the 2023 election for the Board, the candidate who gained the highest vote was from the North of England. Under one member one vote, a candidate, able to muster local supporters to turn out, could gain unfair advantage against a candidate with broader support throughout the organisation.

The 2023 motion's background notes claimed that the National Trust had been "galvanised" by introducing one member one vote for their elections. No supporting evidence was provided. Information available online indicates approximately 127,000 voted in the NT election. As NT's membership is over 3,000,000, the turnout was around 4%. That was hailed as being "high": many organisations, using one member one vote, struggle to get 1% participation. Low turnout, under one member one vote, increases the likelihood of a skewed result, if there is higher turnout in one part of Britain, or even in one Area.

2024 [6]

CONTACTING AREA MEMBERS

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to clarify that, in joining a campaigning organisation, members should expect to be contacted by their Area when assistance with campaigning is sought, and that this is an implied contract outside the restrictions imposed by GDPR, especially as not all Area members are members of Groups.

Submitted by Leicestershire & Rutland Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

This motion has been prompted by the need for Area Executive Committees to have some means of contacting members in their Area when assistance with campaigning is sought, especially those Area members who are not members of Groups. Whereas Group members can often be contacted via Group secretaries, there appears to be no means of contacting those Area members who are not in Groups, nor any means of contacting Group members directly.



ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Vacancies

The Ramblers is governed by a board of trustees, which comprises a chair and honorary treasurer (elected by General Council for three-year terms); nine “ordinary” members (elected by General Council for three year-terms; an appointee of Ramblers Cymru and an appointee of Ramblers Scotland; and up to two members co-opted by the board itself (up to three consecutive one-year terms, reappointed annually). Further details about the board of trustees is available at:

www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/board-trustees-and-sub-committees

This year there are vacancies for both the **chair** and **honorary treasurer**. Rebecca Dawson retires as chair (after four years as an ordinary member trustee and a three-year term as chair) and Michael Penny retires as honorary treasurer (after two three-year terms). As usual, there are also **three ordinary member vacancies** on the board of trustees, each beginning on 20 April 2024. Malcolm MacDonnell (after two three-year terms), Ronnie Forbes (after two three-year terms) and Lucy Robinson (after one three-year term) all retire as ordinary members.

The call for nominations

The Ramblers is committed to developing and maintaining a board of trustees that is truly representative of its GB-wide reach. We welcome applications from any eligible person regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, socio-economic background, and other differences. The Ramblers is committed to ensuring its board membership includes the depth and breadth of professional skills and personal lived experience required to make sound decisions on the charity’s strategic direction, and provide effective scrutiny of the delivery of our charitable objects.

The trustees have identified that people with proven skills or experience in the following areas at a professional or executive level (currently, or in the past), or extensive lived experience. These skills would complement and improve the diversity of the board.

- Fundraising and income and marketing
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and culture change
- Access and countryside access
- Experience of sponsorship of major transformation projects at senior leadership or board level experience

While the board wishes to maintain its current gender balance and continue to broaden the spectrum of ages and other protected characteristics represented, there is no barrier to participation. We welcome trustees regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality or socio-economic background.

Candidates

Chair

There is one candidate for the chair vacancy, so no ballot will be required at the AGM on 20 April.

- Lucy Robinson

Honorary treasurer

There is one candidate for the honorary treasurer vacancy, so no ballot will be required at the AGM on 20 April.

- Kelly Evans

Ordinary member

There are three candidates (shown in alphabetical order) for the three vacancies, so no ballot will be required at the AGM on 20 April.

- Oli Fearn
- Chris Hodgson
- Joerg Kasprowski

As well as written election statements, all candidates were given the additional opportunity to record a short video. To view the video election statements please visit the Ramblers General Council webpage (www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/general-council).

LUCY ROBINSON (CHAIR)

What governance and charity knowledge and experience will you bring to the Ramblers?

I have been a member of the Ramblers Board for three years, vice-chair since April 2023 and chair of the Strategy Committee since June 2023. I have enjoyed working with Rebecca Dawson and Ross Maloney and have learnt from both. In many walks and discussions with members and Area and Group officers over this time, I have gained a deeper understanding of the work of the Ramblers and what motivates and drives the huge number of volunteers who, week in week out, deliver walk leadership and improvements to paths and access across the country.

I am a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee of the Howard League for Penal Reform and for seven years was a Trustee of Tendring Council for Voluntary Services.

I worked for 40 years in the public sector, both in central and local government, specialising in environmental and transport policy and delivery. From 2003 to 2014 I was Director of Environment and Transport at Suffolk County Council, directly responsible for a staff of 850, a capital budget of £70m and revenue budget of £67m. I was interim Chief Executive for 8 months and Deputy Chief Executive for a further two years, and led a number of major capital projects and transformation programmes.

I have found that the disciplines of good governance, accountability and strong resource management, and the values consistent with working for the public good, are common to both public and voluntary sectors, making this valuable experience for leading a major national charity.

Please explain your approach to leadership, and how you would apply that to the role of chair of a board of trustees.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees I believe my prime leadership role is to maintain a strategic view of what we The Ramblers are about, and what we should be delivering now and over the medium to longer term. I am delighted that we have been able to agree a refreshed Strategic Plan setting out our vision and purpose, and the impact and outcomes that we want to achieve.

My job as chair will be to work with the Board, with Ross and his staff and with the wider membership to ensure that we deliver against the objectives that we have set out in the Strategy. That means not just making best use of the resources that we have available, but also seeking out new resources, and new partnerships, to increase our influence and effectiveness.

I will also want to ensure that I and the Board keep in touch with the membership and our volunteers, joining walks and conversations wherever we can, listening to members and ensuring that we remain a cohesive organisation. Therein lies our strength.

Finally I am keen that the Ramblers voice is heard more in public debate and decision making. Where it is appropriate for the Chair to represent The Ramblers in public I will be ready to do so. I will stand up for what we at The Ramblers want to achieve: "A future where anyone can enjoy walking outdoors".

Please explain how you would approach differences of opinion on the board when it comes to collective decision making.

Differences of opinion among Trustees are a good thing. They provoke debate and enable multiple sides of an issue to be surfaced and discussed. Where there is disagreement, it will rarely be appropriate to take a vote and simply go with the majority. A Board is a collective and is collectively responsible for the organisation, so needs to operate by consensus.

To enable a Board to work well together, it is important that Board Members respect each other's views. It is the Chair's responsibility to establish a climate of respect and a willingness to listen to others' views. It is also the Chair's responsibility to ensure that a Board is properly prepared for discussions and for the decisions it needs to make.

The existence of sub-committees, which can discuss issues in depth before they come to the Board, is often a very helpful part of this process. But sometimes the Chair may take the view in a meeting that the Board is not ready to make a decision and will decide to adjourn debate, so that further work can be undertaken. This might mean seeking further information or analysis, or carrying out further consultations before the issue is brought back to the Board. In my experience, if discussions are well managed and prepared in this way, it is rare not to be able to achieve consensus at the end of the day.

KELLY EVANS (HONORARY TREASURER)

What financial and strategic planning experience will you bring to support the trustees and executive leadership team at the Ramblers?

I am a qualified accountant having worked in the charity sector in senior finance roles for 20 years with a strong technical grounding in the Charities SORP.

My experience includes:

- a) Working with boards, external stakeholders such as investment companies, auditors, banks, high profile donors
- b) Short and long term financial planning to support and drive the organisational strategy
- c) Leading major efficiency and value for money programmes
- d) Developing risk management frameworks and assessing financial, governance and operational risk strategies
- e) Working with boards to ensure shared understanding and ownership of financial information and decisions ensuring the context in which the numbers are being presented is clear

Along with executive and non executive colleagues I have led the development and regular review of organisational strategy, ensuring the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries, members and stakeholders are properly understood and represented.

I have undertaken numerous financial planning exercises, including going concern assessments, cashflow forecasting and 5 year financial plans supported by sensitivity analysis / stress testing of income and expenditure assumptions.

I have worked with colleagues in all my roles to ensure the alignment of strategic, operational and financial planning processes to ensure as robust a process as possible.

What governance and charity knowledge and experience will you bring to the Ramblers?

Having worked in the charity sector for so many years, I understand what constitutes good governance and having worked in both exec and non exec roles, I recognise the difference between the two perspectives.

I have particular experience in ensuring organisations have robust decision making, risk management and controls in place. I have led various aspects of this from the development of policies, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements to the implementation of assurance frameworks covering clear risk management strategies an assessment of the effectiveness of controls.

I have acted on behalf of trustees and supported the executive team during my time as treasurer at Contact with a number of specialist advisory groups including

- Detailed cashflow and going concern assessments
- The sale of their London head office, working with agents and legal advisors to ensure compliance with the Charities Act
- An investment group to appoint an investment company and manage sale proceeds

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As treasurer, I chaired the charity's Business Affairs Committee (Finance Committee), leading the relationship with the external auditors on behalf of the trustees.

I have also had the responsibility for internal audit, governance and company secretary activities.

Being in both executive and non-executive director roles has provided me with the opportunity to work with trustees and senior management to develop financial and business information to support decision making at all levels.

Why are you interested in becoming the honorary treasurer and a trustee of the Ramblers?

I am excited to have the opportunity to apply to be a trustee and honorary treasurer at the Ramblers' Association, and to use the skills and experience I have honed over my career in a cause led organisation to support your ambitions to create a country where everyone has the freedom to enjoy the outdoors on foot and to benefit from the experience.

I am a keen walker both with my dog and with family and friends and love nothing more than finding new walks where we can enjoy the British countryside. There is nothing more relaxing and stimulating than spending time outside and the part your organisation plays in making sure this can be enjoyed by many generations to come is very important to me and my family.

The role of Trustee as custodian of the Charity's resources is one I hold especially dear as it is so important to the sustainability and reputation of the Charity. The Charity Commission and the Charities Act is very clear in its expectations of how a charity should operate and the role Trustees have in ensuring compliance with its high standards. I have always worked in my exec and non exec roles to hold myself and others to the high standard necessary.

OLI FEARN (ORDINARY MEMBER)

Thinking about your professional or learned skills, how would you use these to support the board's strategic decision making?

As someone working in financial services and regularly engaging with stakeholders at all levels, including as a Trade Union representative for CWU, I bring a valuable skill set to support the Ramblers Board of Trustees' strategic decision-making process.

Firstly, my experience in financial services equips me with the ability to assess financial data and contribute to a discussion on potential impacts of strategic decisions on the organization's fiscal health. I can provide insightful feedback to ensure that the board makes informed decisions aligned with the organization's financial goals and objectives.

Moreover, my role as a trade union representative has honed my interpersonal and negotiation skills, enabling me to effectively communicate with diverse stakeholders and advocate for the interests of the workforce. This perspective is crucial in strategic decision-making as it ensures that the board considers the implications of their actions on volunteers' well-being and engagement, fostering a positive and collaborative environment.

Furthermore, my experience as 6 years on the committee of Manchester and District Walkers has given me a first hand insight into the practicalities of running an incredibly successful group. Young walkers are the future of the organisation and I would seek to replicate the success of MAD Walkers across the country.

In summary, my combination of financial expertise, engagement skills, and experience as a trade union representative positions me well to support the Ramblers Board of Trustees in making strategic decisions that are both financially sound and socially responsible.

What personal insight and understanding about walking and the walking environment will you bring to the board?

As someone passionate about walking and the walking environment, I bring a wealth of personal insight and understanding to the Ramblers Board of Trustees.

Through several media appearances on BBC and Channel 4, I have been able to amplify the importance of walking, not just as a physical activity but as a means of fostering mental well-being and community cohesion. This exposure provided me with first-hand insights into the public's perception of walking and the various challenges and opportunities present in promoting it.

Furthermore, efforts to increase social media presence and create a recognizable brand for our group through badges, revised web design, and t-shirts have given me valuable experience in understanding the needs and preferences of walking enthusiasts. By engaging in these ways, I have gained insights into their motivations, interests, and concerns regarding group walking.

Additionally, discussions with organizations such as MIND, where we hope to partner and serve as local champions of walking for mental health, deepened my understanding of the therapeutic benefits of walking and the importance of access to green spaces for overall well-being. Similarly, our group's

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involvement in walks with a refugee charity, provided our group with unique perspectives on the social and cultural aspects of walking and its role in fostering inclusivity and integration.

In summary, my experiences and engagements within the walking community have equipped me with a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding walking and the walking environment, making me an ideal addition to the Ramblers Board of Trustees.

Why are you interested in becoming a trustee of the Ramblers?

As someone deeply passionate about walking and its environment, I bring a wealth of personal insight and understanding to the Board of Trustees.

Through media appearances on BBC and Channel 4, I have been able to amplify the importance of walking, not just as a physical activity but as a means of fostering mental well-being and community cohesion. This exposure has provided me with insights into the public's perception of walking and the various challenges and opportunities present in promoting it.

Furthermore, my efforts to increase social media presence and create a recognizable brand for our group through badges, web design, and t-shirts have given me experience in understanding the preferences of walking enthusiasts. By engaging with our audience through these channels, I have gained insights into their motivations, interests, and concerns regarding walking and the walking environment.

My engagements within the walking community have equipped me with a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding walking which will, make me a valuable asset to the Ramblers Board of Trustees.

CHRIS HODGSON (ORDINARY MEMBER)

Thinking about your professional or learned skills, how would you use these to support the board's strategic decision making?

My career has been working in Finance. I currently work full time for a prestigious Welsh Charity limited by guarantee and report to the Chair of Finance on the Board of Trustees. My responsibilities include producing monthly Management Accounts, Budgets and Finance reports. I have extensive knowledge and experience in Charity Finance. In my spare time I also work as a relief Duty Manager in Aberystwyth Arts Centre with responsibilities for Health and Safety and making sure that all visitors have a positive and enjoyable experience. We have great diversity in the Arts Centre and I have been appreciated for my social skills and problem solving. I am Chair of town twinning between Aberystwyth and Kronberg im Taunus on the outskirts of Frankfurt in Germany, which leads me to working in an ambassadorial role in Germany, France and Italy as part of twinning exchange visits. In the Ramblers I have been Chair of Ramblers Wales for four years where I have had responsibility for leading on the Strategic priorities and direction for our devolved Nation. I am currently the appointee for Wales on the Ramblers Board of Trustees and taking part in the Board's strategic decision making.

What personal insight and understanding about walking and the walking environment will you bring to the board?

I have a personal passion for walking and have a great interest and knowledge of our Rights of way network and access land throughout Wales and England. I have led many walks including over all of the one hundred and eighty nine two thousand foot mountains in Wales and a large part of the Wales Coast Path. However, we don't just lead walks, we are the guardians of our public rights of way network. There is no other organization in Britain who does the extent of campaigning and fighting the legal battles to keep the rights of way open that we do. I believe the protection of our Rights of Way and Access should be at the forefront of what we do as an organization and we need to increase the work we do on this. I joined the Ramblers on the 1st September 2002 and have been eight years as Treasurer and five years as Chair of Ceredigion Area as well as the current Membership Secretary. Also I have been Chair of Aberystwyth Group for four years and its Membership Secretary for twelve years. I have been involved in many campaigns to protect our precious landscape and also the environment. I am a member of the Cambrian Mountains Society which works to protect this large area from all possible threats. The connection with nature through walking is very important to me.

Why are you interested in becoming a trustee of the Ramblers?

Over the last two years, and a previous period before, I have had the privilege of serving on the Ramblers Board of Trustees as the appointee for Wales. This has led me to wish to continue my membership, this time as an elected member, so as to build on my previous Trustee membership experience and to contribute further on matters which are concurrent or yet to arise.

I am particularly interested in looking at strategies and tactics to increase our membership. We need to convince more of the public as to why joining us is the best way of protecting our walking assets used by so many people.

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From my activities, in Wales, in the broader UK and in my own Group and Area I feel I have built up a rapport with members which assists me in developing practicable strategic objectives which meet the interests of members, of our Charitable objectives, and of walking generally.

I really care about people and want everyone to be appreciated for what they do. It is important that we all do a little bit to make this a great modern, confident, welcoming and outward facing organization that all those nine million walkers who have not engaged with us yet are encouraged to join, even if they don't walk with us. We need a Group of Trustees that represent all parts of Britain and we should be naturally diverse and inclusive without over thinking this goal.

JOERG KASPROWSKI (ORDINARY MEMBER)

Thinking about your professional or learned skills, how would you use these to support the board's strategic decision making?

In September 2021 I took early retirement from Ford Motor Company after 33 years of service, including some 20 years at Director-level positions. During that time I made significant contributions in a wide range of positions within the Finance area, including Business Strategy and Internal Audit. As Director Material Cost Finance for the EMEA region (2014-2020) I led teams of up to 150 people across three continents and managed a budget of some USD 20 billion. As a Non-Executive Director at MXR Ltd. I helped to facilitate the roll-out of DAB digital radio in the UK.

During my career I acquired and demonstrated leadership skills at a senior level which will be of benefit to the Ramblers' management team when executing major transformation projects. In particular, I led the development and implementation of several major IT systems. In addition, I led or co-led several significant restructuring projects to improve organizational efficiency without loss of service quality. As a former Audit Director I am well versed with corporate governance and effective risk management. Other core skills include business planning, budgeting, and cost control, all of which are essential skills to run an effective and efficient organization.

Success required effective business partnering with executives and staff at all levels across functions. This particular skill will assist the Ramblers Trustees in operating as an effective, coherent team as well as in maintaining a collaborative relationship with the Executive Team and in representing the Ramblers to third parties.

What personal insight and understanding about walking and the walking environment will you bring to the board?

While I have been an occasional walker all my life, my walking activity was turbo-charged when I joined my local group, the Uttlesford Ramblers in North Essex, in November 2022, following early retirement. Soon I volunteered to become a Walk Leader and led my first Ramblers walk in December 2022. In March 2023 I also volunteered to join my local committee to take on the then vacant position of Walks Coordinator. In February 2024 I represented my group at the Essex Ramblers AGM. I usually participate in two walks per week, time permitting.

The benefits of walking to physical and mental health have been well documented and are easily experienced by everybody who takes up walking. Unfortunately, many parts of society are under-represented when it comes to walking in the countryside.

Having grown up in Germany, I know that the British institution of Public Rights of Way is something to cherish and it should not be taken for granted. Since joining the Ramblers I have learnt that it takes a lot of work, diligence, and persistence to keep and to re-establish PRowS where land-owners and developers may have other ideas. Footpath maintenance is a never ending chore and needs ongoing co-operation with local councils to achieve the best outcome. It is particularly important to make PRowS accessible to a wider range of the population in a considered and prioritized way that is sympathetic to the landscape and containable within stretched council budgets.

Why are you interested in becoming a trustee of the Ramblers?

Joining the Ramblers has given me so much, including a purpose to go for walks regularly and frequently with all the health benefits that it brings, a new social life meeting wonderful people, and discovery of the history, geography, flora, fauna, pubs and cafes in my local region and beyond.

In turn, I feel it's only fair to offer the leadership and financial skills and experience I have acquired in over 30 years of my work life for the advancement of the Ramblers' strategic plan. Those skills will be particularly useful to assist with the successful implementation of the Ramblers' major transformation projects. Similarly, these skills would be useful as a member of the Finance, Risk, and Audit Committee if and when a vacancy arises. In addition, having worked closely with people from many different countries and cultures throughout my working life and being an immigrant to the U.K. myself has provided me with a level of cultural awareness that will be beneficial to advancing the Ramblers' objective to extend its reach and make walking more inclusive.



ELECTION OF MOTIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The motions review committee consists of five members elected every year from recent Council members, plus two members of the board of trustees. Committee members hold office for one year at a time but there is no limit to the number of years they can serve on the committee. The committee decides the order of debate, clarifies poorly worded motions, may rule out of order motions similar to those debated at either of the two previous AGMs unless the subject is topical, and composites similar motions.

This year there are four candidates for five vacancies, so no ballot is required.

Following the AGM, the committee will use its powers under Standing Order A17 (where there have been insufficient nominations) to co-opt an additional member.

KATE ASHBROOK

I have been a member of the Ramblers' board for 36 years between 1982 and 2022, with an intervening four years as president. I am vice-president of Ramblers GB, Cymru, and Scotland. I chair the south-east cluster. As GB chair for three periods, I have chaired nine General Council AGMs at which motions have been debated. I am now chair of the motions review committee. I am familiar with the articles and standing orders, and I am particular about grammar. While the General Council AGM continues in its current form, the wording and ordering of motions are important. We must make the best use of our limited time together by ensuring that we discuss those motions which assist in the achievement of our charitable aims, and address strategic issues of concern to members. I am a long-serving Area footpath secretary. All the Ramblers' campaigns are dear to my heart. General Council should debate these issues on the basis of sound and sensibly-worded motions (and by other means) and eschew operational detail. If elected, I shall help to make that happen.

JOHN IRELAND

I've been a member of the Ramblers since 2005, taking a full role in the organization at Area Level for the Greater Manchester and High Peak Area, serving in both Group and Area roles including Area Chair and currently Area General Secretary. I've also regularly represented my area as a General Council Delegate over the last ten years, proposing motions on several occasions that have been adopted by General Council. I feel I can again put this experience to good use on the Motions Review Committee, ensuring that motions presented to General Council are clear, succinct, and unambiguous in their wording and purpose. Also, I believe that the committee should work to avoid contradictory motions on the same Council agenda and when this happens be able to mediate to allow a composite motion satisfying all parties to be put forward. Finally, I attach great importance to the mechanism of motions to General Council as the key means of giving direction to the Board of Trustees, and also holding the Board to account, and if again elected to the Motions Review Committee I'll continue to ensure the committee works to help General Council achieve these aims.

MALCOLM MCDONNELL

I am already a member of this year's Motions Review Committee, and as I have fulfilled my time as a trustee I would like to offer Ramblers further use of my experience.

- I have been a Ramblers member for about 40 years.
- I was an Area Footpath Secretary for Sussex Area for 15 years, until 2016.
- I have been a trustee of the Ramblers for almost 2 full terms (6 years)
- During my time as AFPS I helped author 2 motions that I then proposed at General Council, and I have also advised on the preparation of others.

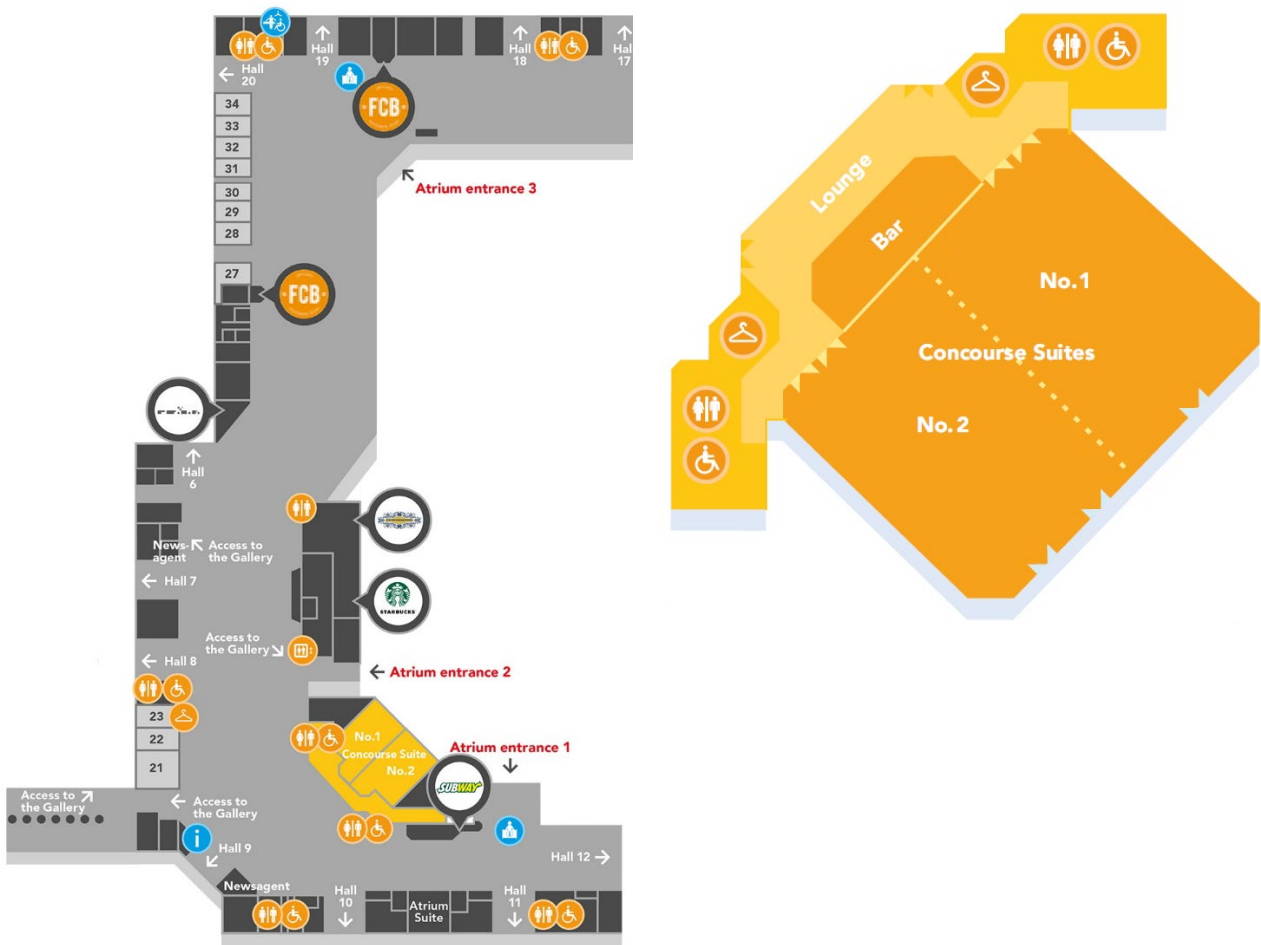
JOHN WAINWRIGHT

I joined one of the first Ramblers young persons' groups 23 years ago. I have been an active member of the Ramblers since then. I lead walks and weekends away. I have held a number of group committee roles. I am currently an Area Membership Secretary, a role I have held for over 10 years, and a footpath checker. I am a Civil Servant, working in government finance, so have an eye for detail and experience in ensuring compliance with rules and procedures. I have a good understanding of the procedures of General Council, as I have attended most of the General Councils since I joined the Ramblers. I have served on the Motions Review Committee and the preceding Agenda Committee for 7 years. I appreciate the value of the motions from all parts of the Ramblers and wish to continue to be involved with ensuring that they are presented in the most effective way.



VENUE INFORMATION

- The AGM will take place in the Concourse Suite which is in the Atrium (east) side of the NEC, next to halls 8, 9 and 10.
- The Concourse Suite is a 10 minute walk from Birmingham International station through the NEC via the Skywalk.
- Free car parking will be provided. The NEC will confirm the exact location closer to the day of the meeting and this will be shared at www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/general-council.
- Detailed venue maps can be downloaded from <https://thenec.co.uk/downloads>
- Accommodation, for those who requested it, is in the [ibis Styles Birmingham NEC](#), which is a five minute walk from Birmingham International station and the NEC itself (but at the other end from our meeting venue). If you have not received confirmation of accommodation, please contact simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk



Information about the AGM will be shared at www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/general-council or contact Simon Kellas at simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk.