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## **Appendix 1 Chair Report prepared by Maggie Swindells**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

My thanks, as always, to the committee, for all you do in your voluntary capacity to keep on top of the issues raised by Ramblers and to keep ECR running so smoothly. It's much appreciated.

#### **1. GENERAL COUNCIL 2024**

##### **CESHIRE EAST PUT THE FOLLOWING MOTION TO GENERAL COUNCIL IN APRIL 2024:**

**UPDATING ARTICLES AND STANDING ORDERS TO INCLUDE ALL MEMBERS** This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to update the Articles and Standing Orders of Ramblers so that all terms include every member, irrespective of gender. Submitted by Cheshire East

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

The following amendment was proposed by Surry Area and was passed.

##### **AMENDMENT SUBMITTED BY SURREY AREA**

Replace “update the Articles and” by “prepare and propose to a future meeting of General Council a resolution to amend the”. After “Standing Orders” insert “ (specifically the model Area and Group constitutions)”

##### **Background notes**

The Board of Trustees is not empowered to update our Articles and Standing Orders: that is a matter for General Council. The last major constitutional revision, in April 2016, had as one of its aims the use of gender inclusive language. However the model constitutions were not revised at that time. It should, however, be noted that this will be a purely cosmetic exercise: actual constitutions are required to be “substantially similar to” (as opposed to identical with) the models.

##### **MOTION SHOWING AMENDMENT**

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to update the Articles and prepare and propose to a future meeting of General Council a resolution to amend the Standing Orders (specifically the model Area and Group constitutions) of Ramblers so that all terms include every member, irrespective of gender.

**This motion will go to General Council in 2025.**

The chair of the Trustees, who is the chair of the General Council, accepted that Areas and Groups can modify their constitutions before next year's General Council without any detriment. However, Simon Kellas (governance manager) asked that proposed changes to constitutions be sent to him first for his agreement before they are adopted by Group and Area Committees. He advised that we start this process early and don't leave it to the time of meetings.

## **2. FIRST AID TRAINING**

First Aid Training was completed by twelve members on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Ramblers intend to produce an online training module as part of the package available to Walk Leaders.

## **3. ACCESS TO ASSEMBLE**

Assemble can now be accessed from the Ramblers home page. I believe there are major changes ahead for Assemble but until then this is the easiest way to visit the volunteers' site:

**Follow the instructions below:**

1. Go to ramblers UK <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>
2. Sign in using your username and password – this take you to YOUR ACCOUNT
3. Scroll down the page to 'Your Volunteering'
4. Click Walks Manager
5. Click Assemble – right hand side
6. Sign in again

## **4. NEW WALK LEADER GUIDE**

**The new Walk Leader information has been published and can now be accessed through the following route:**

1. Go to Ramblers UK <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

2. Sign in using your 'username and password'
3. Click – Support Us
4. Click – Volunteering
5. Click - Walk leadership
6. Click 'Getting started as a Walk Leader'
7. On this page you will find the link to the Walk Leader Handbook and online training

Walk Leadership videos | How to find training & resources (Ramblers Newsletter)

As we mentioned in the last update, our walk leadership training and resources are all live on our website. And to help you get up to speed with this change, we've produced a series of short guidance videos that walk you through how to find our online training and the resources, as well as how to add any new walk leaders joining your group. You can view all of the videos through the links below:

- [How to add a new volunteer, or a new role to a current volunteer record](#)
- [How to access the document library](#)
- [How to access your online training](#)

**On this part of the Ramblers site you will find further links to the following resources:**

- Resources for Walk Leaders (e.g. Risk Assessments and Walk Leader Check List)
- Essential Kit for Leading Group Walks
- Writing a Walk Listing
- First Aid on Group Walks
- Beginners Guide to Navigation
- What to Expect When You Join a Group Walk
- Managing Group Size
- Where you can walk in England and Wales
- Countryside Code
- Plus two links related to walking in Scotland

The Walk Leader Handbook can be accessed here [Walk Leader Handbook](#)

The new guidance sets out the following '**Musts**' for NEW walk leaders.

*"What training do I need to do to be a walk leader with the Ramblers?"*

**All new walk leaders must do three things:**

1. *Read the Walk Leader Handbook to Leading Group Walks PDF guidance document*
2. *Complete the Walk Leader Foundations e-learning (approx. 60 minutes)*



### 3. Complete the Preventing & Managing Incidents e-learning (approx. 60 minutes)

The training modules are not available until the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

The group leading the ECR Walk Leader Training are meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May to discuss the above requirements in relation to the proposed training day which was due to take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> June. Verbal feedback will be provided at the meeting.

## 6. PROPOSED TRAINING 2024

Leadership Training	TBC 2024
Apps Training	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
First Aid Training	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024

## 7. JUNE MABON

June Mabon, a very long standing and active member of Cheshire East Ramblers, sadly passed away on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May, just short of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

As a very active member of East Cheshire Ramblers, June was Chair of the group in the 1990s. In addition, she was very involved with the Peak & Northern Footpath Society and Trafford Ramblers. In 2015 June applied to have a 500 meter footpath in Timperley added to the Definitive Map. She secured a successful application and ensured an attractive off-road path in a busy area was preserved forever.

June led walks across all distances and I'm sure many of us had the privilege of walking with her and appreciated the fact that she took her responsibilities as a walk leader extremely seriously. Walkers always felt extremely safe under her excellent leadership. June was very clear that we all had to walk according to Ramblers rules and if a walker decided to walk in front of the leader then they were "deemed to have left the walk"! Fellow walkers have spoken about her kindness and how she helped and encouraged walkers who were new to the pace and demands of long walks, ensuring they returned to enjoy many more.

## 8. 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FINGER POST

Bollington Town Council raised an objection to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative finger post erected on the PRow on White Nancy. All the necessary legal permissions were complied with. The matter was referred to Genni Butler and we have received an email from her to say the matter has been resolved.

## 9. PARTNERSHIPS - BOUNDLESS JOINS FORCES WITH THE RAMBLERS

You may have read this article in the May Volunteers Email? I have received the following email from Dave Barraclough:

### ISSUES OVER FREE RAMBLERS MEMBERSHIP TO 'BOUNDLESS' MEMBERSHIP

One of the regular e mails from 'Ramblers Volunteering' Dept on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 had an article titled

*"Partnerships | Boundless joins forces with the Ramblers"*

*"We're delighted to share some exciting news announcing a new partnership with Boundless. A membership club for working and retired public sector and civil service workers, Boundless provide a range of club benefits and deals to help members make the most of their free time.*

*Boundless have launched a new tier of membership called Boundless Plus, and we are partnering with them to offer free Ramblers membership as a new Boundless Plus member benefit. In return, Boundless are making a financial contribution to the Ramblers to help protect the places we all love to walk and to help even more people enjoy them.*

*As volunteers, you may soon welcome new members into our walking community. We will share Boundless Plus members with you in the same way as normal members through your Membership Secretary dashboard."*

For your information, Boundless is an organisation with about 165,000 members open to a wide range of employees and retired employees who have worked in the civil service, local authorities (including teachers) and nationalised industries. See their website

[Boundless | Civil Servants & Public Sector Employee Deals](#)

[Join us | Boundless by CSMA](#)

It is therefore about two thirds bigger than Ramblers, which has about 100,000 members. Boundless annual membership fee is £40 but they have just launched a new category called "Boundless Plus" for £68/year that has several interesting extra benefits. These include

1. Royal Palaces( membership normally £65),
2. National Trust (membership normally £91),
3. Roadside Recovery (membership normally £33 upwards)
4. **Critically - full Ramblers membership for the member and a guest to join all walks.**  
This can be compared with Ramblers membership currently £41/year or £55/year for 2.

Looking at these benefits, it is easy to conclude that any ECR member who is eligible would be financially much better off to resign from Ramblers and join Boundless Plus! They would have all the benefits of ECR membership for two people without any of the expectation to participate in its organisation.

It would be interesting to know the level of “financial contribution” being made by Boundless in the Ramblers article.

However, of greater concern is the potential impact of this new arrangement on Ramblers local Areas and Groups, such as East Cheshire Ramblers and the amazing fact that it has been introduced without any discussion and consultation with Ramblers Group Committees. If we assume that about 100,000 (= about two thirds) of current Boundless members take up the revised Boundless Plus membership, then it would roughly double the Ramblers membership (or triple if the Boundless ‘extra guest’ membership is included).

We should also remember that the latest guidelines for Walk Leaders are recommending (requiring?) new rules which considerably limit the numbers on walks. Any massive increase in membership would cause additional problems over limiting walk numbers.

Within the Boundless Plus website information about the free Ramblers membership are statements:-

1. Free membership to the Ramblers is available to Boundless Plus members and one named adult living at their home address.
2. You can also invite another adult guest up to three times a year for free.
3. Children under the age of 18 are also welcome along
4. The Ramblers encourage their walking groups to welcome dogs.

It is these details of this new arrangement which give me great cause for concern!!!

**Based on these concerns, I would ask the ECR Committee to consider:-**

1. How has such a massive change in Ramblers organisation been introduced by the Volunteers Department without consultation with Areas and Groups? Have the Trustees been fully consulted and approved the details?
2. What is the level of financial contribution being made by Boundless to Ramblers and how does this compare with the loss of membership fees of a similar number of new Ramblers members.
3. In financial terms, existing Ramblers members are being considerably ‘short changed’ by this selective arrangement. How can this be justified by Central Office?
4. It would appear that these new members have full membership rights. Does this include attendance at meetings, eligibility for Committee membership, eligibility to become Trustees etc.?

5. Does East Cheshire Ramblers actually wish to organise a programme for a revised membership that is potentially two to three times bigger than its present membership?

**I think these matters should also be raised at Area level and Trustees.**

**Dave Barraclough**

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

I propose we discuss the questions Dave has raised and agree a response.

#### **10. REPORTING A FOOTPATH PROBLEM**

Ramblers reported that the link on the ECR website which allows members to report a footpath problem failed this month. Roger Fielding proposes that rather than create a link to the electronic form we install a link to the Cheshire East PROW site. He suggests this link is 'less likely to change'.

#### **11. SAFEGUARDING ISSUE**

South Cheshire reported a safeguarding issue which involved a single lady walker and a gentleman walker. The matter has been reported to the Ramblers Safeguarding team who will issue recommendations for all groups. As soon as we have receive them the Chairs of the CE three groups, plus Steve Butterfield the Cheshire East Area Secretary, will meet to agree advice to members.



## REGISTERING VOLUNTEERS

1. The Membership secretary registers potential walk leaders as volunteers. Central Office (CO) sends the volunteer a 'welcome to volunteering' email.

2. The volunteer then completes the 3 training sections either:

Completes them online by themselves, in which case their training record is automatically updated when they complete the modules. (Individuals can see their own training record but at present this isn't accessible to team leaders; CO are trying to rectify this)

OR

They complete them offline in a group as part of our leadership workshop. In this case, the Membership secretary notifies CO when the volunteer's training has been completed.

3. CO then adds the volunteer to the Directory, currently on Assemble, showing them as a walk leader. (CO says they will do this every Thursday, so there may be a week's delay).
4. The new walk leader can now lead walks and can also be added to Walks Manager, so that their walks can appear on the main Ramblers website as well as the ECR website.



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

**Apologies :**

I am unable to attend the above meeting

**Bank Balance :**

As at 16th May 2024 our bank balance stood at £7590.15

**RWH Commission :**

ECR have received a commission payment of £ 270.00 from the above holiday company.

**Budget 2024/25 :**

We should be receiving our annual budget application papers sometime around mid June for submission of our budget circa mid July.

The Footpath committee and Projects team have already been invited to identify any prospective projects for the forthcoming year and I would ask the ECR committee to also identify any potential budget activities that we should consider for inclusion in next years budget application.

**AOB:**

Item 5.2 at ECR 2nd February meeting .

I have now spoken with Linda Catherall and she has asked that the £186.23 that remained from members donations be used for future footpath projects.

Report ends

**ACF**



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

#### Footpath Secretary's Report to Main Committee [February 2024 to May 2024]

<b>New Member</b>	Gillian Kay has joined the ECR FP Committee & attended her first meeting in April.
<b>Meeting with PROW</b>	Met with Genni Butler [PROW] at the Municipal Offices in Crewe in March 24. Louise; Neil, and Gillian attended from ECR/FP.
<b>PROW Changes</b>	PROW & Countryside Ranger Service have been amalgamated under Richard Doran as the Green Infrastructure Team. A new staff member [Nicola Lewis-Smith] from Canal & Rivers Trust is now the head of PROW. Genni Butler is now the Countryside Access Development Manager.
<b>Inspections Launched</b>	2024 Footpath survey has launched – thanks to efforts of Tony Battilana. All areas covered; 3 new inspectors have joined the team who enjoyed 'in situ' induction training with Neil Collie.
<b>Bridges</b>	Bridges are a key contributor to long term path closures. CEC await outcome of a business case covering 25 bridges across the borough. Reparation work to be phased over 4 years.
<b>Funding a Diversion</b>	North Rode FP2 – in 2023 Brian & team upgraded the waymarking on an existing permissive footpath to provide a route around a very boggy area on North Rode FP2. ECR would like to divert FP2 and incorporate part of the permissive route into a PROW. The current landowner is in agreement. CEC have suggested that ECR provided funds to help take this forward. Path is part of Dane Valley Way. Footpath Committee is canvassing PNFS; ECR Main Committee and the Parish Council to secure funding pledges [up to £2,000]. We strongly feel any funding should be ring fenced to advertising costs and not be spent on CEC staff time.
<b>Footpath Closure</b>	Kettlehulme FP 23/Rainow 15 has been a problem path for 20 plus years due to thick mud along Cow Lane & absence of footbridge across Todd Brook. CEC have taken the decision to place a Temporary Closure Order on this route. We hope this brings more focus on restoration of this path going forward.
<b>E-Working Space</b>	Discussions & exploration of options on-going.

LW 24th May 2024

## **Appendix 4 Membership Report prepared by Anne Ball**

### **Membership Numbers**

At 15<sup>th</sup> May there are 586 members, compared with 588 in mid-January. Twelve new members have joined us, and 4 people have re-joined. Resignations and lapsing memberships account for the decrease in the total. We also now have 10 affiliate members bringing the total number on the database assigned to ECR to 596.

We may find that we have an increase in number of members in the near future. On 24<sup>th</sup> April Ramblers announced that they had secured a new partnership with Boundless, a membership club for working and retired public sector and civil service workers providing a range of club benefits and deals to help member make the most of their free time. Boundless are launching a new tier of membership called Boundless Plus to include free Ramblers membership. (Boundless are making a financial contribution to Ramblers)

### **Affiliate Members**

We have recently had an increase in the number of walkers from other Ramblers groups joining us on our walks, and of course they are very welcome. Some of those coming to the long walks say they are coming to us because there are fewer long walks being offered in their home groups. Some have offered and led walks for us. If they wish to retain their home group but would like to receive ECR emails, Central Office have been contacted to affiliate these members to ECR, while still retaining their original home group. This means they will appear on the list of ECR members in the database and we will be able to see their email consent status. There are also a few other members who have moved area but wish to continue to receive our emails. These members have also been affiliated to ECR. The status of individual affiliates is similar to members with ECR as their home group, but they cannot vote in our elections. An affiliated member is different from being part of an affiliated group, members of the latter cannot go on Ramblers-led walks without joining Ramblers.

### **Membership Support Role**

Steve Hull has kindly been responsible for sending out email communications to ECR members for the past five years. The Membership Secretary has periodically forwarded to Steve the full list of ECR members, as the Membership Secretary was the only person with access to the Ramblers database. In order to streamline this process, it was arranged with Central Office for Steve to be registered as 'Membership Support' to allow him to have direct access to the database and so update the emailing list directly. This is now working well.

### **Members Unsubscribing**

In the first part of the year there were several people unsubscribing from either Ramblers general emails or ECR emails without understanding the implications for the other. Emails were sent out to the individuals concerned to explain the system and give instructions about how to re-subscribe if members realised that is what they wished. Also, a general email was sent from the Chair to all members to explain the issues around subscribing/unsubscribing. Steve continues to check for members who have unsubscribed and this quarter there are no new cases of unsubscribing.



### **Database Errors**

The previously ongoing problem with database errors in members' email consent status, about which we have had frequent contact with Central Office, seemed to have been fixed. However recently another error where a committee member was erroneously recorded as 'lapsed' and removed from the database was discovered, thanks to the checks Steve regularly carries out. This is being corrected but it is concerning that these errors occur, and it highlights the value of carrying out the checks.

### **Updates to Personal Data on the Database**

Up until March this year, the Membership Secretary had access to an Updater list where some changes e.g. corrections to email address or other individual data could be made by the Membership Secretary. This facility has now been withdrawn. Members can access their own data and make changes to personal information, or they can contact Head Office by phone or email to have it done for them.

### **Information for Potential Members**

The welcome letter we send out by email to new members has been updated. The bulk of the letter gives information about our walks, how they are classified, starting times and so on. However, this information would frequently be more useful when people first start walking with us, before they actually join the Rambler; so if contact details can be obtained, a letter appropriately altered for a potential rather than actual member is sent.



## **Appendix 5 Social Secretary Report prepared by Gina Thompson**

As usual I will start with a resumé of the year since our last meeting on 2nd February:

AVRO TOURS with optional short walk and lunch: My original idea was to organise 1 of these in February and hope that I could get the minimum number of people needed (12) for AVRO to give us a private guided tour. Happily how wrong was I as I was sold out within a week of this being advertised and so ended up with 2 tours of 20 people on each on 27th February and 12th March.

MACCLESFIELD HISTORY TOUR 15th & 22nd March, again overwhelmed by people wanting to learn more about local history. Dorothy Bentley Smith our leader turned out to be a very knowledgeable and engaging character, who led 32 of us over the combined tours.

CANTERBURY TALES (KIM LETSON EVENING). Many thanks to Melanie Davy for organising this event which proved to be very successful with an audience of 42, Kim entertained everyone with her travellers' tales. Thanks also to Kathryn Carty who not only contributed in the baking department but helped greatly with the catering on the night.

CHURCH STRETTON COACH TRIP. Many thanks to Steve Hull for organising the trip and leading the medium walk, Anne Ball for leading the long walk, with me leading the short walk. The weather on the day could have been better but I think everyone enjoyed the day. We didn't quite fill the coach, but overall I think we have broken even on this event

COMING UP: HISTORY STROLLER THE MILLS OF NEW MILLS on 22nd May, Mike Daniels the local historian leading us is not charging so I have advertised this in the Walks Programme as yet I only have 4 people signed up! I am wondering whether I should. Have advertised it.

FIRST AID TRAINING 23rd May At Macclesfield Tennis Club Thanks to Maggie Swindells for organising this and Staffordshire First Aid Training for delivery.

DOLGELLAU WEEKEND AWAY 14-16th June. Many thanks to Melanie Davy for organising this. The Walks will be led by Steve Rawlings and Ann Thompson (Long Walks) Ann Thompson and Sue Munslow (medium walks) Jane & Frank Gay, and Jane Rawlings (short Walks)

Organising a weekend away takes quite a lot of time, with planning preparation and recess so very many thanks to all involved.

APPS TRAINING 17th July Macclesfield Tennis Club. Organised by Maggie Swindells and Jane Gay.

BORROWDALE MIDWEEK AWAY 7-10th October Many thanks to Ann Thompson for organising this.

QUIZ NIGHT 18th October Macclesfield Tennis Club Thanks to Steve Hull our Quiz Master.

AGM 23rd November Macclesfield Tennis Club. AREA AGM 25th November

WEEKEND CHRISTMAS LUNCH 7th December at Davenport Golf Club Organised by Gina Thompson

MIDWEEK CHRISTMAS LUNCH 19th December Toby Carvery Adlington Organised by Melanie Davy.



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

No report submitted.

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

Post reach (number of people viewing the page) and post engagement (number of actions e.g. liking/reacting, commenting, sharing have increased significantly over the past few months.










As well as adding walks to Walks Manager on the Ramblers website, a weekly post on <https://macclesfield.nub.news/> gives an overview of upcoming walks and leads viewers to the ECR website.

Photographs of our walks added to Facebook are becoming more popular and some reports are also posted on <https://www.ilovemacc.com/>

“Reels” (photographs made into a short video with music) have been very popular – some receiving over 300 views.

The locations of “followers/likers” is showing a wider geographical spread.

**ACTIVITY OVER THE LAST 28 DAYS TO 12 TH MAY 2024**

<b>Discovery</b>	
 Post reach	654
 Post engagement	712
 New Page likes	4
 New Page followers	12
<b>Interactions</b>	
 Reactions	236
 Comments	10
 Shares	4
 Photo views	261
 Link clicks	43



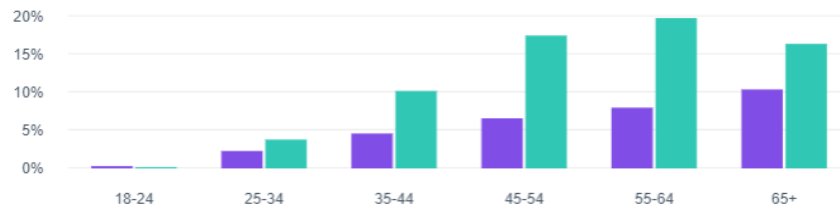
## Audience

These values are based on total followers of your Page or profile.

[Create a post](#)

### Age and gender

■ Men 32.20%  
■ Women 67.80%



## Location

Towns/cities

Countries

Macclesfield	161
Stockport	57
Wilmslow	45
Crewe	39
Manchester	39
Congleton	23
Knutsford	17
Stoke-on-Trent	16
Nantwich	15
Northwich	15



**Further Information**

See continuation