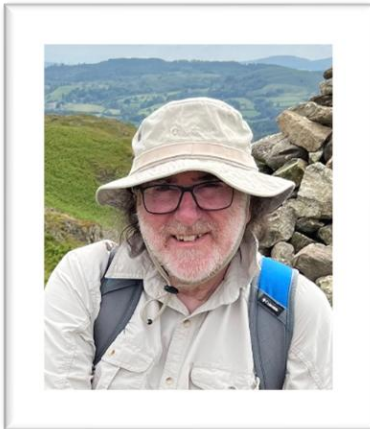


OXFORDSHIRE RAMBLER
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2025



CHAIR



: Oxfordshire Area is committed to ensuring that its volunteers are provided with the necessary training to carry out their tasks efficiently and safely. To achieve this Area has funded a number of training courses for our members during the past year:

- Three First Aid Courses (Tiddington, Chilton and Kidlington)
- A Parish Path Wardens Training Course (Tiddington)
- A Walk Leaders Training and Navigation Course (Abingdon)

One of Ramblers key aims is to improve access to the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. Oxfordshire Area contributes towards this aim by funding the replacement of stiles with gates. During the past year we have provided funds for four gates. Three gates were installed near Tiddington by the Thames

& Wheatley Path Maintenance Team and one gate was installed near Stoke Row by the Chiltern Society. We have also provided funds for a set of steps near Henley. In addition, all of our Path Maintenance Teams work hard at keeping the PRoW clear of vegetation.

We continue to provide an excellent walks programme with nearly 1200 led walks in 2025. In June 2025 Ramblers rolled out a new initiative for Walks Leaders in order to be able to demonstrate that our leaders are suitably trained or experienced. Over the last six months a further 60 of our leaders have completed the training modules, whilst 48 have confirmed that they have the required experience, giving a total of 153 certified walks leaders at the end of 2025. Of course, we always need more leaders so please consider whether you could volunteer for this very rewarding task.

In the reporting year up to 30 September 2025 membership has increased by 4.9% up to 2483 members, a new record!

All of these successes would not happen without the hard work of all of our volunteers. Firstly I would like to give a massive “thank you” all the Officers of the Area Council for their hard work and support during the past year. Secondly, I would like to thank all of the volunteers on the Group Committees, the Path Maintenance Teams, the Walks Leaders and the Parish Path Wardens. These hundreds of volunteers give up their time to ensure that we have a wonderful footpath network in Oxfordshire for all of our members to enjoy. Finally, I would like to thank all of you as members. Without your support we would not be able to carry out many of these tasks.

As well as these successes there are of course many challenges which have taken up a considerable amount of time and effort:

- The Botley West Solar Farm planning application. This would be the largest solar farm in Europe and have a major impact on the enjoyment of walking the footpaths in the West Oxfordshire area;
- The large reservoir near to Abingdon, proposed by Thames Water which, if approved, would have a 10-year construction period with completion in 2043.
- Oxfordshire Ramblers has contributed to the Ramblers review of Governance.

Come and join us to continue our excellent work in maintaining and enjoying our PRoW, and ensuring that we obtain the best possible outcomes from the major planning applications in Oxfordshire.

Richard Birch

SECRETARY



This year, I participated in several Central Office cluster groups focused on addressing challenges related to walk leader registration and evaluating the Ramblers' updated safeguarding protocols. Additional groups examined the proposed governance reforms, under the leadership of Ross Maloney, and deliberated on subsequent steps for the project. These proposals are scheduled for further discussion at this year's General Council, following an Extraordinary General Meeting held in December of last year.

. Rosemary Williams

TREASURER

The Ramblers Association Oxfordshire Area Income & Expenditure for the year ended 30 September 2025

	2025	2024
INCOME	£	£
Funding from Ramblers	5350	7000
Funding from Ramblers - Gates (Restricted)	900	0
Other	100	502
TOTAL INCOME	6350	7502
EXPENDITURE	£	£
Group Funding	2946	2745
Walks leader training	650	282
Newsletters/publicity – South East Walker / Shows	849	1818
Campaigns/casework – PPW Workshop / Co-ordination	321	170
Practical work – Path maintenance Gates / Steps / Tools / Repairs	1426	1831
Practical work - Gates (Restricted)	900	0
Admin / Meetings / Other – ZOOM / Hall hire / Expenses	500	1012
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7592	7857
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-1242	-355
Opening bank balance	7894	8249
Closing bank balance	6651	7894
Designated funds	0	1000
Reserves (excluding designated)	6651	6894

The Area's income was from the allocation of funds from the Ramblers Association and the refund of £100 hall deposit. In the agreed budget we requested £2046 less funding than our planned expenditure in order to reduce our reserves to within the Ramblers Guidelines.

The Area's expenditure included funding for four gates to replace stiles, installing steps on a steep slope near Henley, three First Aid courses, an 'Introduction to Leading Walks' course, and a Parish Path Warden Workshop. The South East Walker (SEW) costs were significantly lower than in previous years due to:

1. Reduced cost in December 2024 due to the creation of a pdf digital version of SEW;
2. The invoice for September 2025 was received after the end of the financial year (usually received in September).

Our Reserves at the end of the financial year were £6,651.

The Independent Examiner for Oxfordshire Ramblers Accounts for the 2024 – 2025 financial year was Mr S A Kenner.

Dawn Pezzella

FOOTPATH SECRETARY

Oxfordshire Ramblers does not currently have an Area Footpath Secretary. However, we have put a system in place to ensure that Oxfordshire Groups and Parish Path Wardens are aware of proposed changes to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in Oxfordshire. All informal and public consultations on proposed changes to PRoW, issued by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), are forwarded to the appropriate Group Footpath Officer/Chair and Parish Path Warden. In addition, an index, giving the status of all the live OCC Notices, is maintained on the Oxfordshire Ramblers website. Group Footpath Secretaries and Parish Path Wardens can easily see the status of the OCC Notices for their area and feed back any concerns. The Index of OCC PRoW Notices can be found on the Oxfordshire Ramblers website under 'footpath protection' ([OCC-PRoW-Notices](#)).

Informal Consultations

Oxfordshire Ramblers is registered as an interested party and receives informal consultations on proposed changes to PRoW from OCC. There have been 27 Informal Consultations during 2025.

Oxfordshire Ramblers has objected to the following informal consultations:

- ABS/03739 - Wainhill Farm – Chinnor Footpaths 23, 24 and 40 – Order Made
- ABS/03837 - to divert the Ridgeway at Nuffield - ongoing
- ABS/03867 - Stratton Audley Footpath No. 7 - ongoing

Made Orders – Public Consultations

If no objections are received by OCC, or if the objections have been resolved through negotiation, then an Order is made and published for public consultation. There have been 59 Made Orders during 2025.

Oxfordshire Ramblers has objected to the following public consultations:

ABS/03739 - Wainhill Farm – Chinnor Footpaths 23, 24 and 40 - ongoing

Confirmed Orders

If no objections are received by OCC, or if the objections have been resolved through negotiation, then the Order is confirmed. There have been 54 Orders confirmed during 2025.

Orders Referred to Planning Inspectorate

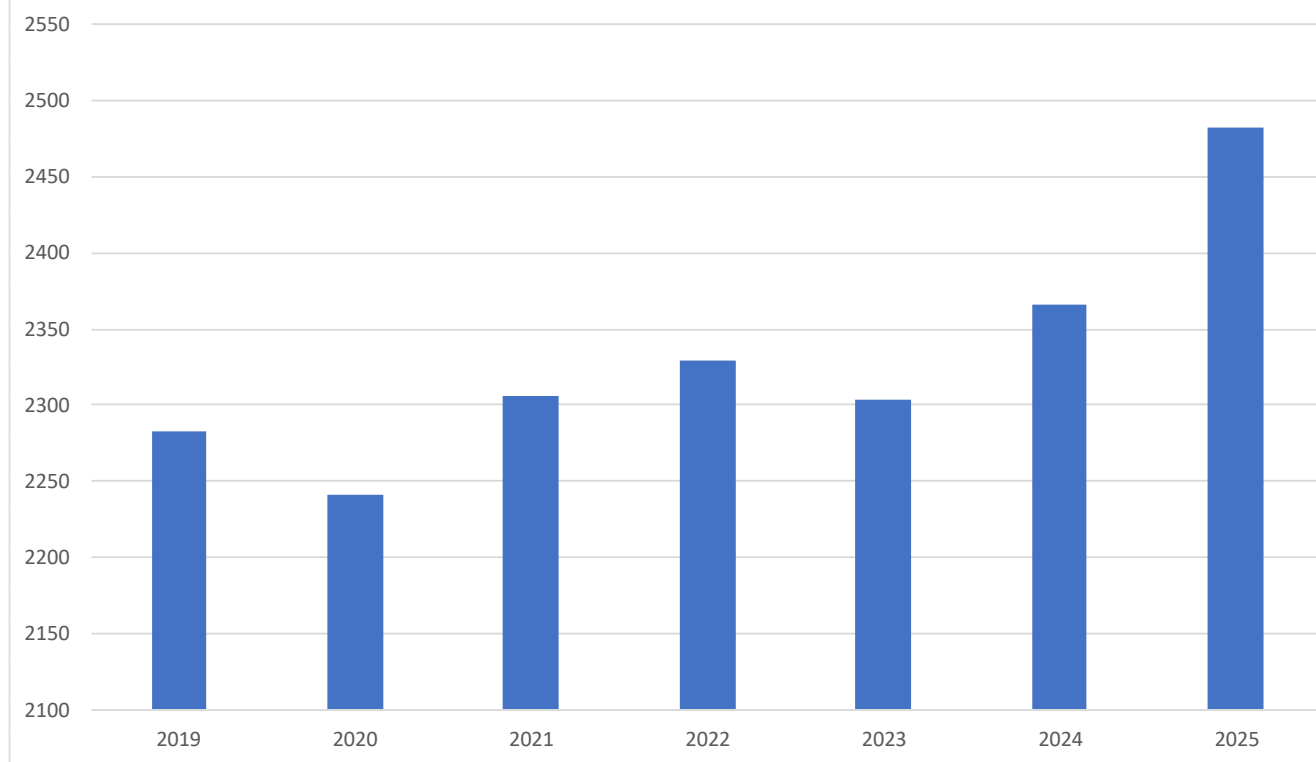
If OCC has received objections during the public consultation that could not be resolved by negotiation then the Order is referred to the Planning Inspectorate for resolution. 8 Orders have been referred during 2025.

One Order has been resolved - on 27 March 2025 Planning Inspector rejected Order to add Sutton Courtenay FP33 (Ref: 01886, 2021).

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Report 30 September 2025

Members on 30 September



	Previous Years (on 30 September)						Current Year (ending 30 September 2025)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Joiners	Leavers	Members	Growth	Retention
B&NO	299	298	296	284	280	290	58	-56	292	0.7%	84%
B&K	183	192	189	204	199	208	45	-32	221	6.3%	85%
D&W	164	166	177	168	168	154	40	-29	165	7.1%	82%
H&G	353	336	363	367	390	413	82	-62	433	4.8%	86%
HO	61	57	53	62	53	72	31	-25	78	8.3%	76%
Ox	290	279	286	283	273	267	34	-46	255	-4.5%	85%
OWW	136	139	147	151	147	147	25	-14	158	7.5%	93%
TW	181	183	192	199	196	197	46	-30	213	8.1%	87%
VoWH	317	308	317	321	301	278	36	-40	274	-1.4%	86%
WO	177	174	190	190	190	194	46	-30	210	8.2%	87%
Blitz & Klean	1	1	3	3	3	4	0	-1	3		
Ox Strollers	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	-1	5		
Unallocated	121	108	93	97	104	140	111	-75	176	25.7%	74%
Internal Transfers							-60	60			
Oxfordshire	2283	2241	2306	2329	2304	2367	497	-381	2483	4.9%	84.9%

Observations:

- Group numbers include internal transfers between Oxfordshire Groups;
- Steady increase in members with an increase of 4.9% in the year (compared to National increase of 2.1%);
- Unallocated members show largest rise and poorest retention rate;
- Membership retention was 84.9% (compared to a National rate of 81.3%).

Pat Lonergan

PARISH PATH WARDEN NETWORK

The Parish Path Warden scheme has continued to play its part in helping to keep the Rights of Way network in Oxfordshire largely open for all to use.

In May we held another successful training day in Tiddington with a range of speakers from OCC as well as Ramblers volunteers. One unusual outcome of the day was that, following a number of the presentations, it was clear that the Thame & Wheatley Ramblers Footpath Maintenance team had the capability and desire to install gates in place of stiles, Oxfordshire Ramblers had funds available for a number of such gates, and OCC were working on agreements with local landowners to install gates at several locations along the Oxfordshire Way in the Tiddington area. Less than three months later three locations were completed!

During 2025 we have lost some Wardens as people age or are no longer with us, but we have welcomed new PPWs in 15 parishes, broadly similar to 2024, which means that the overall situation remains much as it was when I took over the role of Network Coordinator in late 2022, with just under 50 parishes in Oxfordshire (out of 322) not having a PPW in place.

.David Tole

PUBLICITY – we currently have no publicity officer

WALKS CO-ORDINATOR

During 2025 there have been 1191 led walks covering a total distance of 8262 miles. Distances varied from 2 miles up to 16 miles.

Grade	BNO	BK	DW	HG	HO	Ox	OS	OWW	TW	V	WO	Total
Easy	2	17		12	1	1		1	1			35
Leisurely	94	153	39	64	3	7	37	6	18	52	11	484
Moderate	57	26	48	197	28	6		48	72	93	39	614
Strenuous	5			50	2			1				58
Total	158	196	87	323	34	14	37	56	91	145	50	1191
Walk Leaders 2025	20	10	8	38	4	6	4	23	26	21	6	166
Certified Walk Leaders 2026	22	11	8	38	4	6	4	23	35	18	8	177

In addition, there were 28 walks that had to be cancelled due to inclement weather and Leader unavailability:

Reason for cancellation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Ice/Snow/Cold	4				4
Thunderstorms/rain/wind		1	2	1	4
Hot		2	2		4
Flooding	1				1
Leader unavailable	6	4	3	2	15
Total	11	7	7	3	28

The walks in 2025 have been provided by 166 Walk Leaders, each leading between 1 and 87 (impressive!!) walks. In July 2025 Ramblers introduced a new requirement for Walk Leaders to be 'certified'. To be certified the leader must have led 12 or more walks in the last three years or completed the training modules. All leaders were required to read the Walk Leaders Handbook. Leaders were given until the end of the year to update their training record otherwise they would be removed from the role.

At the start of this new initiative Oxfordshire had 300 registered Walk Leaders. However, as mentioned previously, only 166 leaders have led at least one walk in 2025. We therefore had a large number of leaders registered who would probably not lead any walks in the future.

Before July 2025 we had 46 walk leaders that had completed the training modules. Since then a further 80 Walk Leaders have completed the training, and 51 Leaders have confirmed that they have led 12 or more walks in the last three years, giving a total of 177 certified Walk Leaders at the end of the year. We are therefore in a strong position for 2026.

A huge thank you to the Group Walks Organisers and the Walk Leaders for putting on an excellent walks programme, and doing what was required to ensure that we have an appropriate number of leaders to maintain the programme in 2026.

Richard Birch

WALKING ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS OFFICER –

There are two large-scale projects proposed for Oxfordshire – Botley West Solar Farm and the South East Reservoir Option (Abingdon Reservoir). Both are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) which are treated separately from normal local authority planning because of their size and importance to wider communities. NSIPs are approved by the appropriate Government Minister. Both projects would have a significant impact on our Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

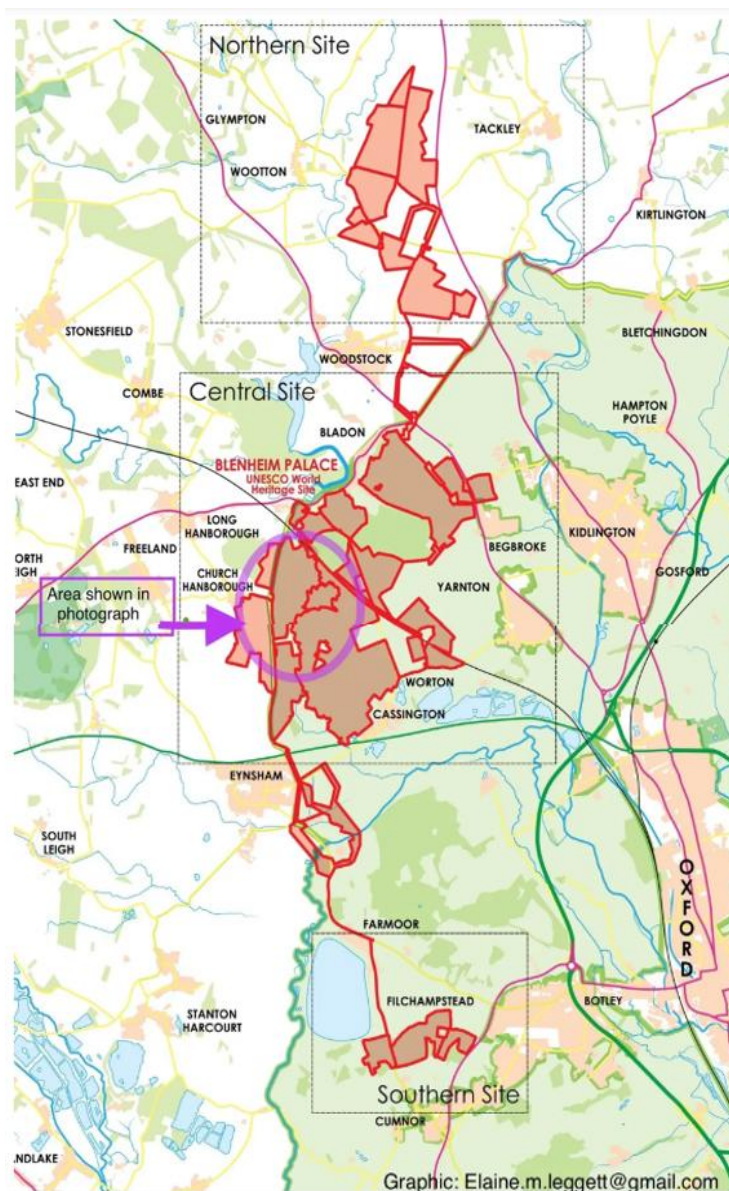
Abingdon Reservoir Thames Water is proposing to build a new reservoir on farmland approximately 5km south-west of Abingdon, between the villages of Steventon, East Hanney, and Drayton. The reservoir would take water from the River Thames during winter months, store it until it was needed during the summer, then pump it back into the Thames for use mainly in the South East. The construction would take ten years to complete with the current timescale aiming to start construction in 2030 with completion in 2043. The final few years of this 10-year period involves filling the reservoir and completing the landscaping. Thames Water says that the reservoir would be open to the public. The facilities would include: car parking; water sports centre with sailing, kayaking, angling etc on the main reservoir; café; benches and toilets around the reservoir; wetlands; bird hides; public education facilities; a network of paths for walking /cycling/ wheeling/ horse-riding; floating islands for nesting birds.

The statutory public consultation was held from 28 October 2025 to 13 January 2026 along with a number of information events in local villages/towns. After considering the feedback Thames Water intend to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) during 2026.

Botley West Solar Farm There is an application from Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) to build Europe's largest solar farm on land mainly in West Oxfordshire. It would cover an area of 11 miles long by 4 miles wide with over 2 million solar panels. Oxfordshire Ramblers is very concerned that due to the size of the proposed solar farm there will be major adverse visual impact to users of some of the PRoWs throughout the period of the project ie for decades to come. We estimate that around sixty PRoWs cross the proposed solar farm with a total length of 17 miles. We therefore object to the application because we consider that the negative visual impact and associated adverse health effects outweigh the benefits of the project.

The Examination stage opened on 13 May 2025 and closed on 13 November 2025. The decision by the Secretary of State for Energy, Ed Miliband, will be made no later than 13 May 2026.

Oxfordshire Ramblers submitted an initial application to be an 'interested party' which allowed us to participate in the Examination. We also submitted a closing statement at the end of the Examination. Judith Wardle, Chair of West Oxfordshire Group, is our expert on the solar farm and is actively involved with Stop Botley West the campaign group that is leading opposition to it.



Map showing the extent of the Proposed Solar Farm

Illegal Waste Dumping near Kidlington

There has been a lot in the press recently about the appalling case of waste being dumped on land between the A34 and the River Cherwell, near to Kidlington. There is a Public Right of Way that runs along the field where the rubbish has been tipped. However, this is a PRoW that is very rarely walked so our regular walking routes are not affected. Investigations continue on who is responsible for tipping the waste and discussions about when it can be removed.

WEBSITE

The website continues to be functioning well and there are no significant changes to report

Pat Lonergan

OXFORDSHIRE GROUP REPORTS

BANBURY & NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

There were 173 group walks led by 26 leaders. Established walks continued: leisurely Wednesday afternoons, Thursday evenings in the summer months, Friday morning monthly, Strenuous Saturday mornings (currently suspended) and moderate Sunday afternoons. In February we added a leisurely walk on the 2nd Saturday afternoon of the month; we are monitoring attendance and feedback. Three new leaders completed the online training and led their first walk. Existing leaders were guided to the training and/or qualification by previous experience in order to lead in 2026.

We benefitted significantly from social media advertising by Di Todd, which has resulted in a healthy level of new members and an exceptionally high number of attendees on many walks. Di's initial mentor, legendary Publicity Officer Roy Clements, stepped down after the year end.

Our Path Maintenance Team held 5 events, clearing over 2,000 yards of footpath. Total volunteer time was 88 hours. We are continuing to find new paths to improve, and we are compiling a list of paths with seasonal problems, which we hope to visit annually. Events tend to be between September and March, because of the nesting season; jobs outside of those months are done with due diligence and consideration.

We recruited two PPWs, however very sadly we lost Mike Ream, who passed away. Out of 35 parishes, we had 30 PPWs potentially active. We had a training day in May.

We supported a Ramblers objective of making footpaths more accessible by funding a pedestrian gate for £417, which was the largest factor in a fall in bank balance to £449. Two gates purchased last year were installed at Hook Norton and Tadmarton.

We began the year with 288 members and ended with 293.

We modified our presentation of walks on the Ramblers App to assist members with Android phones, who were suffering from missing and corrupted information nationally. Since a Ramblers web site replacement in 2023, the workload of publishing walks is higher, while the text published is necessarily much less informative.

Other voluntary activity has included: reviewing planning applications where there may be an impact on footpaths within our boundary; feedback on Ramblers proposed national restructuring; and organising, making and providing refreshments at the end of walks, especially every Wednesday.

All activities lead to us being able to provide a comprehensive, varied and hopefully enjoyable walks programme, plus other activities. As ever, we welcome new volunteers for various roles.

Stuart Dyer

BICESTER & KIDLINGTON

The number of members in our group continues to rise. We believe that the information about our walks together with photographs that we share on our Facebook page is important for our ongoing recruitment campaign. We have also been putting our monthly walks on various local FB pages. We repeated the stall at Bicester Market and at our annual Tesco Awareness Event. It is always good to chat to passersby and explain about the Ramblers and tell them what we do locally.

We emailed all members with a group survey in Feb 2025 and had twenty-one response (about 10%). There were no problems to address and a couple of promising ideas were put forward. The social side of our group had a positive mention as did the events we organise around our walks.

We had the usual Easter Bonnets Walk and Coffee and Cakes Taster walks. Playful fun as usual. In addition, and new for this year, was the Pancake Day race event, an enormous success and one to repeat!

The Summer Picnic was replaced by a triple octogenarian birthday celebration for three of our members. Fifty friends and members joined in the fun. The London Christmas Lights walk, and the Mince Pie walk were well attended as was the Christmas lunch in December.

Our publicity officer went to the Healthy Bicester/Volunteer Day, there was incredibly positive feedback.

We had 'New to Bicester' posters/leaflets printed to distribute around the new housing developments in our catchment area. We will also deliver them to public buildings in Bicester and Kidlington.

All our walks' leaders are now fully qualified and we will continue to recruit more in the coming year.

We look forward to another successful year in 2026.

Russell Thompson

BLITZ AND KLEAN (flexigroup)

During **December/January** we undertook work on fp 379/18/10 near Tackley and then on fp 404/1/10 at Weston on the Green cutting back fallen branches and trailing brambles. We also undertook some clearance work along the Oxford canal between Lower and Upper Heyford.

In **March** I met with O.C.C. who agreed to issue me with an I.D. card and laminated card to put in the car window when on site clearance. I also agreed to assist with Accessibility routes although to date I have not been given any tasks for this.

April we cleared a flight of footsteps on fp 404/6/10 mainly brambles. We also met with O.C.C. along with residents from Stratton Audley and the Foot paths Association to look at fp 371/7/21. This is on land owned by O.C.C. and Bicester motion and the intention is to re-route the path to assist with development on the site. This is on going.

June/July we returned to Oxford canal clearing foliage from pigeon Lock towpath heading towards Lower Heyford. We also worked with the 3rd Bicester Scout group on fp 398/2/20 in Wendlebury where one of the Scouts was able to amass enough hours to gain his Gold Award so a very successful session.

August we cleared fp 416/21/10 at Wooton near Woodstock mainly brambles and bushes. In Noke near Islip fp 309/13/50 a fallen branch was cleared plus overhanging foliage.

September cleared fp 351/10/10 at Lower Souldern and reported to O.C.C. that it is in a poor state due to rabbit and Badger holes.

October I was asked by O.C.C if we could carry out a survey along footpaths between the end of 309/10/10 at Lower Souldern leading to Somerton fp 349/2/10 & fp 349/1/10. These were very difficult to follow. Although the crops had been cut there was no trace of the footpath across the fields and I can only assume that during the crop growing season walkers would have to go round the edges of the fields. I took photographs along the way and sent them to O.C.C. with my thoughts.

November I attend the Countryside Access Team-Northeast and West Forum at Sutton Farm and attended the Countryside Access Team-Northeast and West Forum at Sutton Farm on 26th November 2025.

Ian Baldwin

DIDCOT & WALLINGFORD (flexigroup)



Our team of eight enthusiastic Walk Leaders have led 87 walks during the year (39 Leisurely, 48 Moderate) of distances between 4 and 12 miles.

In the summer we held an enjoyable evening BBQ in a member's garden.

The group received a generous bequest of £500 from a previous long-time member (Mary Broster). The committee decided to use this money to replace a challenging stile with a kissing gate. The gate is mid-way between Nuffield and Stoke Row (near Oakingham House) and was kindly installed by The Chiltern Society, along with a small plaque stating 'In memory of Mary Broster, a member of Didcot & Wallingford Ramblers'.

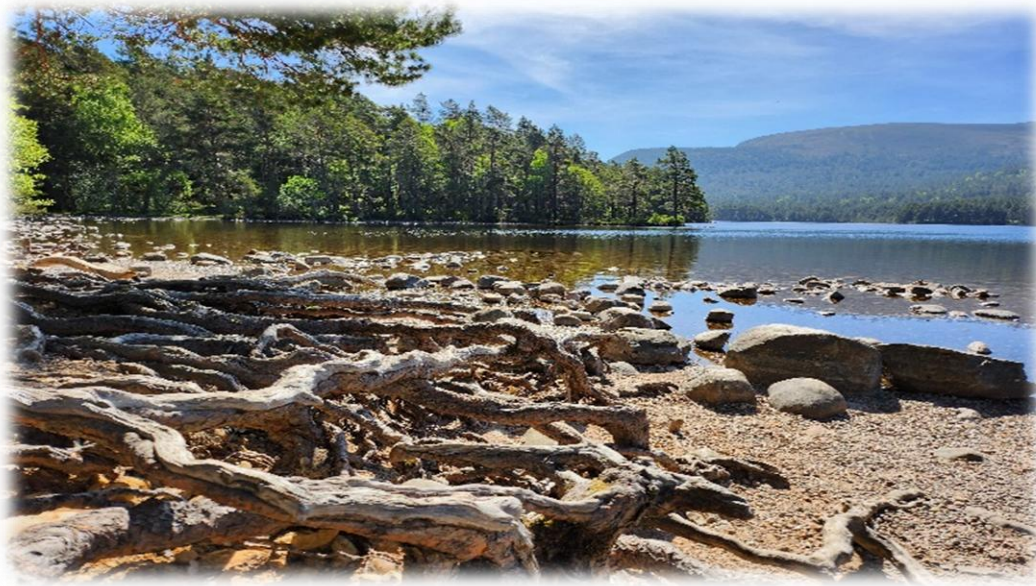
At our AGM on 29 November 2025 it was reported that we had 165 members, an increase of 11 over the year. Our Chair/Treasurer (David Baker) and our Footpath Secretary (Brian Bolton) stood down and we were unable to form a Committee. With the prior agreement of Oxfordshire Area, and the unanimous approval from members at the AGM, it was agreed that the Group would transition to form a Flexi-Group named 'Didcot & Wallingford Ramblers'. All members will transfer to the Flexi-Group and the remaining Group funds have now been transferred to Oxfordshire Area.

A Flexi-Group operates without a Committee, does not have any funds, and reports into Area. Richard Birch volunteered to be the named contact and will coordinate the team of Walk Leaders to continue to provide a varied walks programme. The expectation is that members will not notice any difference due to the change.

David Baker

HENLEY AND GORING

A photo competition was held throughout the year with a gift card for the winner



Winning photo by Inge Mikkelsen from our holiday in Kingussie

Our group is well known as being very active and popular. We recently heard we are known for this as far as Northumberland!

- We offer many walks on all days; number of organised walks was 296 throughout the year, with normally 5 to 16 walkers on a walk.
- Walks had a good choice of distance from 2.9 to 15 miles. Thursdays are very popular with long strenuous walks. Walks up to 5.5 miles are slightly more popular than longer walks. There is no favourite day, all days seem to be popular.
- Provided “summer” evening pub walks from April to September
- The total distance walked by all participants was 28011 miles, slightly higher than last year, and higher than the earth circumference (24900 miles)
- Walked long distance paths, like the Jubilee Greenway, Pilgrims way and Church2Church.
- We provided 8 social activities: the most popular ones being our annual AGM dinner and the BBQ (80 people). And our May Get walking day, Chantry House Lecture, Christmas Carol walk and Games evening. In addition, a special outing was arranged to Oaken Grove Vineyard, also well attended.
- 8 well appreciated walking holidays, some self-catering, some hotels, some abroad. We went to Emsworth, The Camino-Inglese, Brittany, Ireland, Scotland, Portugal, Llanwrtyd-Wells and Bury-St-Edmunds- We had 161 bookings in total.
- Produced short walk leaflets quarterly. We published our walks in Henley Standard and Round&About. We handed out 500+ leaflets at the Henley Show and April Henley stand.
- Every month we produce interesting newsletters informing our members about both upcoming activities and reporting back on what we did. We also post regularly on Facebook.
- Finances are in good order.
- Our path network keeps being well maintained by our group working together with Chiltern Society. We completed our first steps project in Swyncombe and a next project in Henley is in progress.
- We currently have 420 members, 40 affiliated.
- Our number of walk leaders has grown to 42, of which most are certified leaders

Alie Hagedoorn

HIKE OXFORDSHIRE

The group continues to obtain members with 80 paying members (up from 75 in 2024). We are encouraging members to set their primary group – many are unsure how to do this so a blog post has been written <https://david-homer.blogspot.com/2025/02/solved-how-to-change-your-ramblers.html>

Despite the group is struggling to get new walk leaders David Homer and Oliver Bentley are now exclusively leading all walks. We will continue to encourage new walk leaders and are asking people to join a “Try Leading” walk where they can be a co-leader on a pre-arranged route.

The group continues to perform well on Meetup with a 4.8* (out of 5) rating with 390 reviews (up from 179 in 2024).

We are looking at more promotion of the group with the possibility of cross posting between popular Meetup groups in the area and a member has suggested that he investigate the possibility of radio based publicity.

The group needs to work on branding before we are able to do more printed or digital content marketing.

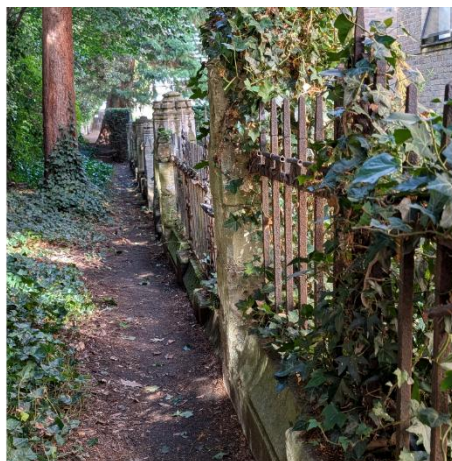
Treasurer's Report: The role of treasurer has now been handed over to Gary Chappell by David North with Gary now having full access to the bank account. This process has taken nearly a year. The accounts are currently in credit £398.47. The accounts for the year have now been completed. We are now refunding the OS maps app subscription costs for walk leaders who complete a certain number of walks per year.

David Horner

OXFORD CITY

The membership of the Oxford Group has remained stable, and all walk leaders wishing to continue have successfully completed their registration.

Walks have been organized in most months, facilitated by either external groups or the Oxford Group, both of which have contributed positively. In August, a well-attended picnic was held at Jarn Mound to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the inception of the Jubilee Way walk, attracting over forty participants from the Vale, Oxford and Weekend Walkers Ramblers Groups.



In September, following negotiations with Oxford Colleges, Tony Dale, who is the Lost Paths coordinator successfully arranged for Love Lane—a previously inaccessible path—to be opened to the public for one day as part of the Oxford Open Doors event.

This proved to be so successful that the OPT would like this to be an annual event. We would like to give our thanks and congratulations to Tony for this epic project.

In November, for our AGM over 20 Oxford Ramblers walked around the recently excavated Slade Park followed by an extremely interesting talk about the history of the site.

Rosemary Williams

OXFORD STROLLERS (flexigroup)

The Strollers are maintaining a number of walks in their programme; however, the sustainability of this schedule is uncertain due to a shortage of walk leaders—currently, there are only four. Additionally, some members have been discouraged from leading walks as a result of the requirement for “walk leaders”.

Brenda Parsons

THAME AND WHEATLEY



Thame and Wheatley continue to be a thriving and enthusiastic group. Of our roughly 200 members, we know that at least half of them have walked with us over the last year. Our most popular walks are the leisurely, short, social walks held once a month that involve a café or a pub, but we're aiming for 2 walks a week of varying lengths and on different days.

We have been very pleased at our walk leaders' response to the new training requirements and are in a good position for the future. We have been concentrating on recruiting and supporting new leaders. This has been going well and we are very grateful to all our members who volunteer to lead walks

Our holiday this year saw 33 of us on the Isle of Portland where we managed 3 different walks each day, so we had a total of 9 different walk leaders. We also enjoyed an away day to the Uffington White Horse, a social event in the summer and our Christmas lunch.

Bob Merry continues to do a brilliant job leading our footpath maintenance team who are gaining experience in sorting out wonky stiles and installing gates. Bob is also finding fame in developing footpaths with accessible surfaces

All of this is managed by our committee who continue to do a great job

Linda King

VALE OF WHITE HORSE



Led Walks Programme: Peter Skuse organized another two good six month programmes this year. Many thanks to all our volunteers who planned and led the walks. We had at least three walks per week most weeks, generally in the Vale but elsewhere too, particularly our joint walks with West Oxfordshire Group. In case you haven't noticed we now have two walks on the second Thursday of the month: a leisurely sub-five mile walk and a longer circa 7 mile alternative. We also are experimenting with a 6 to 8 mile walk on the first Sunday of each month in addition to our longer Saturday walks.

This year was the 10th anniversary of The Vale Way, our very own long distance trail from Abingdon to Longcot. To mark the anniversary we walked the trail from west to east over three Saturdays and also included multiple sections in circular walks. We also walked the Lambourn Valley Way and our Awayday was to Milk Hill and the Kennet & Avon Canal in Wiltshire. We organised the Area Picnic and its six walks and ran three walks for a local Beer Festival and Artisan Market event at the LoveBeer brewery in Milton.

Path Maintenance Team; During the first ten months of 2025 the VPV cleared 9,060m of footpaths and other public rights of way, spending 450 person work hours doing it.

This included three sessions assisted the Historic Ridgeway Volunteers for the National Trail, Working for the Ridgeway Partnership. This involved clearing work at the historical site of Scutchamer Knob on the Ridgeway, South of East Hendred.

On 15 October 2025, VPV marked its 200th path clearance at Mill Road, Abingdon—significantly, the same site as one of the first paths cleared on 13 March 2012 and the 100th cleared again on 2 June 2021,

Volunteering: Three committee members: Jane and Andy Glenday and Chris Nelson stood down this year. Many thanks to them for their work. In fact, I'd like to thank all our volunteers: committee, walks leaders, VPV, PPWs and those researching lost paths. You are the backbone of the group but we appreciate the rest of you too. You make the Vale Ramblers a friendly sociable walking group. If anyone else would consider volunteering in any way, please get in touch

John Gordon

WEEKEND WALKERS



Our first task of 2025 was to host the AREA AGM which was on Saturday 25th January 2025. We had a crisp frosty morning for the walk which went over to South Leigh. There was a good attendance and the cakes were enjoyed by all. Thanks to the volunteers who helped from OWW.

In May, 28 members of the group went to Dunster for a long weekend staying at The Yarn Market Hotel. We had glorious weather and the Hotel delivered extremely comfortable rooms and delicious meals. We managed to fit in four walks exploring the area including Selworthy, Bossington Hill, and Dunkery Hill. Lots more to explore so we have booked a return visit to The Yarn Market Hotel for another long weekend from May 15th to 18th. We currently have 24 people who have signed up.

On June 29th we joined the AREA Picnic event this year organised by Vale of White Horse Group. Many of us picked the longest walk starting from Blewbury and then joined the picnic at Chilton Village Hall. Others chose a shorter walk but met up at lunchtime. Lots of cake was consumed and carried home for later consumption !

At the end of August, we were invited to join the Oxford & Vale Group in their celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Jubilee Walk. Sheila and Kevin very kindly led a walk which coordinated sharing our lunch break at Jarn Mound where we were treated to cakes courtesy of the Oxford and Vale Group.

In November, ten of our walk leaders attended a First Aid Training course run by St. John's Ambulance in Kidlington. Those attending felt it was a very worthwhile experience and feel better prepared to deal with incidents. Thanks to Steve Walde and Carl for organising and running the course respectively.

We have a new adventure planned for December 2025 when 12 of the group have booked to stay at Holme Lacy House, Herefordshire, for a pre Christmas long weekend. Again, four walks have been planned and recced and, weather permitting, we will explore the beautiful Herefordshire countryside.

We held our AGM on Sunday 23rd November at The Red Lion Eynsham after an 11m walk from Eynsham. The new committee was elected with changes to membership secretary and additional members without portfolio.

Nicola Copeman

WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The West Oxfordshire group continues to provide a good mix of walks of different lengths – and the collaboration with The Vale is still appreciated. At the AGM on 1 November, there was a discussion about the new “hoops” that walks leaders are having imposed on them by head office – a general feeling that the requirements were over-bureaucratic, especially for people who have been leading walks for several decades. There was also a fear that this extra bureaucracy could discourage new people from offering to be leaders. However, arrangements were made to ensure that all of the people who were known to wish to continue to lead would complete the appropriate form: records later showed that all of them had done so.

The finances of WO remain stable, helped by contributions received as a result of members going on Ramblers’ holidays. Membership is also stable, currently 204 members.

There was a discussion at the AGM about the best venue for the **Annual Picnic**, which WO will be hosting in June 2026. It was agreed that the most suitable venue was the one where WO holds its AGM: the Reading Room at Combe. Alan Cobb made the booking immediately after the AGM, and will, as appropriate for our group’s walks organiser, liaise with other Ramblers’ Groups to ensure co-ordination between those groups that wish to provide a walk for the event.

Since the deadline was approaching for last submissions by “interested parties” to the Examiners for the **“Botley West” Solar Farm**, Judith Wardle, as Chair, had circulated to WO members a draft submission for discussion. The text was agreed with some minor revisions – particularly endorsing the Examiners’ complaint that the “Applicant” (i.e. Solar Five on behalf of Photovolt Development Partners) had too often ignored statements by local experts – attendees recognised that we have such an expert on our own committee: Alan Cobb being a geological engineer as well as being familiar with almost every Public Right of Way in West Oxfordshire that could be damaged if the development went ahead.

There have been discussions between WO members during the last year about the possibility of the group expanding its activities into “events”. At the AGM, Janet Wood’s role was changed from being just a committee member with no designation to that of **Events lead** – people at the AGM were a little uncertain what her correct title should be. A number of WO members held an online meeting later in November and suggestions were made for 4 walks that would include a stop for food, either at lunch time or at the end of the walk – plus assistance with food at the Annual Picnic. Janet will produce a Newsletter for circulation to WO members early in the new year.

Judith Wardle

