

Ramblers' Association, Oxfordshire Area
Minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting
Longford Park Community Centre, Bodicote
13.30 hours
24th January 2026

The Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the guest speaker Ross Maloney, Ramblers Chief Executive Officer, who gave a short talk which was followed by a Q&A session.

Ross initially thanked all volunteers for their work with the Ramblers.

He then proceeded to give a list of the highlights of the Ramblers.

In the year 2025 the Ramblers have -

- Opened 233 miles of paths
- Path accessibility fund has financed 23 projects and 77 miles of footpaths
- Supported Legal Action via local Authorities
 - maintaining footpaths funding legal action against Landowners to open footpath closures from foot and mouth
 - Solar farm – access and walkers rights
- Walking first priority with 40,000 walks
- Membership is stable at 106K, with a 14% turnover every year

Campaigning and fundraising

- Fundraising is up 6% up in 2025 to £10m, which helps fund campaigning encouraging people to be interested in walking
- Donations from large organizations (ie Postcode Lottery) have helped fund
 - 335000 access training and Campaigns
 - 55 community programmes including
 - NWales female walkers from the Care System
 - Outdoor award for young walkers
 - A successful bid for the Julia Rausing trust has funded “Britain’s favorite path” campaign through posters placed in prominent places (ie Railway stations)
- The 2nd year of fundraising is progressing well
 - 1st Government Access to nature bill
 - 2nd increase footpath network
 - 3rd Plan for the future
 - We must KEEP CAMPAIGNING AND LOBBYING THE GOVERNMENT of the health benefits of the footpath network and we were successful in the repeal of (2031) PRoW act

Internally

- Ramblers have introduced Walk leader training to encourage safer walks – 14749 walk leaders have been certified
- Ramblers have 1/3 less volunteers than pre-Covid in 2019, because a large number of walk leaders were inactive

Looking forward

- The Governance review is to bring the Ramblers into the 21st Century
- We have introduced the King Charles III coastal footpath to enable walkers to navigate the UK coast path by foot.

Looking forward 21m people walk and we would like to know how many of the 21million think of Ramblers as a relevant Charity

The Q&A session covered the following topics:

Are Ramblers funding Health Walks – Ross explained the history of Health Walks, and clarified that most health walks are funded by local authorities.

First Aid for members as well as Walk Leaders – after a discussion it was suggested that walk leaders should have priority for training for First Aid courses. It was emphasized that all walkers should be responsible for their own safety.

Support for Solar Farms and NSIPs: Judith noted that the campaign concerning the proposed Botley West Solar Farm had proved extremely challenging, particularly due to the absence of assistance from Central Office. Ross expressed surprise at this, stating there was a dedicated team available to guide and support Ramblers members regarding such proposals. Richard explained he had contacted Central Office to ask for support but the response was that they did not have the capacity to support this work on a one-to-one basis.

Action: Richard will forward details of his correspondence with Central Office to Ross.

The Chair thanked Ross for his talk and welcomed everyone to the 48th Oxfordshire Ramblers AGM.

Attendance: Richard Birch (Chair & Walks Programme Coordinator), John Gordon (Vice Chair) Rosemary Williams (General Secretary), and 40 members of the Association.

1. Apologies for absence: Sir Muir Gray, President

2. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM

Proposed John Gordon, **Seconded** by Nicola Copeman The minutes were **APPROVED** nem con.

2.1 To consider matters arising from the minutes – A query was raised regarding the status of unallocated members (group 96). Ross Maloney explained that efforts are being made to address this issue, although some members have expressed a preference to remain unassigned to any specific group.

3. To receive the Annual Report:

The Chair noted that the full Annual Report, including reports from each of the Groups, was available on the Oxfordshire Ramblers website. The Chair gave a powerpoint presentation giving an overview of the work of Oxfordshire Ramblers over the past year.

4. To receive the Treasurer's Report:

The Chair presented the annual accounts for the year ending 30 September 2025. There were no questions. The Annual Report (including the Treasurer's Report)

Proposed by Richard Birch **Seconded** by Steve Walde was **APPROVED** nem con

5. To elect the officers of the Area Council:

5.1. President: Professor Sir Muir Gray: **Proposed** by Richard Birch **Seconded** by John Gordon **elected** nem con

5.2. Officers:

The Chair thanked members of Area Council during the past year..

The following officers were **Proposed** by Elaine Steane **Seconded** by Ali Hagedoorn and **elected** nem con:

Chair Richard Birch; **Vice Chair:** John Gordon; **General Secretary** Rosemary Williams; **Treasurer** Dawn Pezzella; **Website Officer** Pat Lonergan; **Walks Coordinator** Richard Birch; **Membership Secretary** Pat Lonergan; **Members' Representative (without portfolio)** Steve Walde.

David Tole, Parish Path Warden Network Co-ordinator, is co-opted to the Area Council.

It was noted that the positions of **Footpath Secretary**, **Publicity Officer**, **Walking Environment & Access Officer** and a second **Members' Representative** are vacant.

5.3. Delegates to General Council (2): Richard Birch (Chair), Pat Lonergan (Website:Membership) **Proposed** by Rosemary Williams **Seconded** by Steve Walde **Approved** nem com

5.4. Group Representatives on Area Council: These members have been nominated at their own AGMs and noted by Area Council

Banbury & North Oxfordshire, Steve Cox; **Bicester & Kidlington**, Tracey Timms; **Henley & Goring**, Alie Hagedoorn; **Hike Oxfordshire**, David Homer; **Oxford**, Jane Foster; **Oxon Weekend Walkers**, Jane Pearson; **Thame & Wheatley**, Ruth Cornish; **Vale of White Horse**, John Gordon; **West Oxfordshire**, Rosemary Clegg.

6. **To appoint an Independent Examiner:** Stuart Kenner **Proposed** by Richard Birch **Seconded** by Rosemary Williams **Approved** nem com
7. **To consider motions:** notice of which have been given in writing to the General Secretary in accordance with Rule 12vi of the Constitution. A motion amending the ratio of walk leaders:walkers as stated in the Walker Leaders' Handbook was proposed and, after discussion, the motion was agreed to be submitted to General Council **Proposed** Alie Hagedoorn **Seconded** Steve Walde . **Approved** nem com
8. **To consider proposals, which have been sent in advance of the meeting:** none were received.
9. **AOB:** There was no other business
10. **Closing Remarks:** Richard thanked Ross Maloney Ramblers Chief Executive Officer, Banbury and North Oxon Group for hosting the AGM, Steve for leading the walk in the morning; and all those present for attending.

The meeting closed at 15:15

Signed

Date.....