

Ramblers Volunteer Section Round-Up

5 May 2010 - 9 June 2010



This round-up contains the text of all items posted on the Ramblers Web site Volunteer Section since the 5th June. Some of the items had deadlines which have now passed. These are included for interest only.

In some items as originally posted, web site hyperlinks gave access to more information. Where possible, we have included the full linked text. Where this is not possible we have provided the full link location.

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General

Tom's Blog June 2010

Thoughts and reflections from the Chief Executive (News - posted 2nd June 2010)

Dear volunteer,

Celebrating volunteers, inspiring others

This week (1st to 7th June) is [National Volunteers Week](#), “an annual celebration of the fantastic contribution that millions of volunteers make across the UK”. It is therefore fitting that, this week, we are launching the [Ramblers 75th Anniversary Volunteers Awards](#). The Ramblers wouldn't be the Ramblers without volunteers. Whether it is organising led walks, campaigning to protect public paths or extend access, recruiting members, or organising social events – the contribution made by Ramblers volunteers is immense.

There are eight categories in the Volunteer Awards, closing date in September. Please think about nominating those volunteers who have made a really special contribution to your Group, Area, or the Ramblers as a whole.

Recruiting new volunteers, and keeping existing ones, is a constant challenge, and many Groups tell me that they could do with more people to share the work between. Yesterday, I attended an event organised by the [Network of National Volunteer-Involving Agencies](#) (which includes charities like Age Concern, RSPB, NSPCC, as well as ourselves), and heard some inspiring stories about how groups recruited different types of volunteers – for example, people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health problems, or refugees and asylum seekers. As with people who are retired, these groups of people may very well have more time for volunteering, and they will have many hidden skills.

I think that some Ramblers groups might benefit from recruiting different types of volunteers to help with the work....something for us all to think about.

Keep in touch by email

This time last year, we stopped sending out the 'monthly mailing' by post to volunteers - and switched to communicating electronically instead. Not only has this saved quite a few trees, it has also saved the charity more than £100,000 in printing and postal costs. More importantly, it means that all volunteers have access to information on the website, whenever they want.

But I still hear from volunteers who say that they miss out on vital pieces of news. The easiest way to make sure that **you** know what is going on is to read the monthly volunteer e-newsletter

which is emailed to more than 3,000 volunteers around the 8th of each month. It is a short bulletin, which you can read in about five minutes.

Do you receive it? If you don't, it's probably because we don't have your email address. Registering is easy at <http://mailing.ramblers.org.uk/rp/143/form.clsp?FormId=479>, fill in the details, and make sure you tick the third box down, 'News for Ramblers Volunteers'. We can then add you to the mailing list. If you hear other volunteers saying they aren't getting the information they need, please encourage them to register too (there's a link to it from the top of the Volunteer News page).

Special walks

Thanks to everyone who put on special Get Walking Day walks this year – 156 groups took part in total, putting on over 200 walks – that's about half as many again as last year! We've so far received about 300 '£1 offer' membership applications, but they're still coming in so that isn't the final total. We'll need to monitor how many of them renew their membership at full rate, after the first year. On a similar theme, 180 75th anniversary 'baton' walks have so far been organised, a fantastic achievement (and they've received a lot of publicity, too). After 13 walks in Scotland during May, the walks have now moved to the east side of Britain – currently in the North East of England during June and then heading down to the South East. This picture shows the baton being passed from the Dalgety Bay group to the Dunfermline and West Fife group, at what we believe to be the highest 'handover' - 1038 metres, at the top of Munro number 59!

People's Collection Wales

Well done to Ramblers Cymru being part of the [People's Collection Wales](#) project. This is a scheme to put on-line the contents of all the major museums in Wales – but it is much more besides. It allows anyone to upload photos or videos, or add their memories through recording or writing, to create a truly national on-line People's Museum for Wales. What's more, you can create online walking routes for others to follow – and Ramblers Cymru is involved, through its e-Trails project, in creating high-quality walking routes which people can follow. It isn't easy to explain – so give the 'test site' a go by clicking the link above (Username: casgliad Password: stakeholder). I predict this is going to be a big success - and that the idea will spread to other countries (including England and Scotland!).

That's all from me for this month - thank you for all that you do, for the Ramblers.

Tom

Get Walking Day 2010

(Get Walking Day 2010. News - posted 21 May 2010)

As you may already have heard Get Walking Day is taking place this weekend on the 22nd and 23rd May.

This year over 200 walks are taking place all over the country. To celebrate our 75th anniversary we are offering £1 Ramblers memberships for the first 30 non-members on each Get Walking Day event who join by direct debit. Information and the special £1 joining forms have already been sent to walk leaders.

We hope this offer will encourage new members to join the Ramblers and hopefully renew their membership in future years. We will keep you updated on how successful the event has been and how many new members have joined as a result of the initiative.

Walk4Life / Active Nation Partnership and Group Walks Finder changes

From 1 August 2010 all Ramblers walks of 5 miles/8km or less listed on the Group Walks Finder will be branded with the Walk4Life brand in England and Wales and the Active Nation brand in Scotland. We are also asking Areas and Groups to support the Walk4Life ITV campaign in September. (News and action request - posted 8 June 2010)

For information and action: Group Secretaries, Membership Secretaries, Led Walks Programme Coordinators, Group Walks Finder editors

In a greater effort to support Change4Life and other government-backed campaigns to encourage healthier lifestyles, from 1 August 2010 all Ramblers walks of 5 miles/8km or less listed on the Group Walks Finder will be branded with the Walk4Life brand in England and Wales and the Active Nation brand in Scotland. At the same time a number of other changes to the Walks Finder system will be introduced, including amendments to the list of themed walks.

We are asking Areas and Groups to support, if they are able, the Walk4Life ITV campaign in September by arranging short, easy walks. This will be widely promoted through a partnership with ITV similar to the Britain on the Move campaign in 2005. A related project shortly to launch is Get Walking for the Games, offering short, easy walks related to the Olympic and Paralympic Games which will run until the end of 2012.

Change4Life and Active Nation partnerships

As you may be aware, the Ramblers supports the various government-backed national campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles. We are a national supporter of Change4Life, the Department of Health's campaign in England (www.nhs.uk/change4life), which promotes both increased physical activity and healthy eating as part of the fight against obesity. We will be supporting this campaign in Wales too when it is extended there later this year with the backing of the Welsh Assembly Government. We are also supporters of a similar campaign backed by the Scottish Government, Active Nation, promoting physical activity for health in connection with the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (www.ouractivenation.co.uk).

As well as the obvious shared objectives between these campaigns and the Ramblers' aims to make walking more accessible to all, including promoting the health benefits, these are extremely positive and successful brands, and our partnerships give us many opportunities to promote the Ramblers more widely, also helping us build our membership. Change4Life has achieved impressive figures in terms of recognition: in its first year, among its initial target audience of mothers of children under 11, 88% recognized the Change4Life logo and 87% recalled seeing advertising for the campaign. This year the campaign is targeting not just families with children but all adults.

We have agreed to strengthen our partnerships by promoting short walks already run by Ramblers Areas and Groups using the Change4Life and Active Nation brands, and by supporting the Walk4Life day of walking in September.

For more information about the Ramblers' partnership with Change4Life, see www.ramblers.org.uk/walk4life.

Local branding

Areas and Groups running appropriate activities such as shorter walks (5 miles or less) for people new to walking or for a family audience may also wish to use appropriate branding on their own locally produced materials. In England you can access numerous resources by registering

as a local supporter of Change4Life at <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/PartnerRegisterLocal.aspx>. Alternatively please contact us for more details.

Group Walks Finder changes

Branding on shorter walks

From 1 August 2010, **all** Ramblers walks of 5 miles (8km) or less listed on Ramblers Group Walks Finder (www.ramblers.org.uk/walksfinder) will be branded automatically with the appropriate logos:

- The Walk4Life logo in England.
- The Welsh language Walk4Life logo in Wales (this is currently under development and if not available in time the English logo will be used in the meantime).
- The Active Nation logo in Scotland.

Pages will be created that automatically display all Walk4Life/Active Nation walks together.

The “banding” of walk distances on the Walks Finder search page will be changed to bring it into line: the new bands will be 0-3 miles, 4-5 miles, 6-10 miles and over 10 miles.

Walks Finder editors do not have to take any further action on this as the logos will be added automatically and they should continue to provide specific lengths for each walk as before. Note that for simplicity’s sake we are basing the choice of logo on the organising Area or Group, not on where the walk itself takes place. We regret that it has proved too difficult to provide a way of opting out of the automatic branding.

Changes to themes and special walk types

In connection with the Walk4Life changes we have reviewed the current list of theme/festival codes enabling editors to identify specific walks, and will be removing some of the less well-supported themes. The following themes will be retained:

Type	Theme	Code
National events and projects	75 th Anniversary Baton Walks	R75
Get Walking Day 2011		GWD11
Rail Rambles / Trenau Trên 2010		RR10
Rail Rambles / Trenau Trên 2011		RR11
Get Walking for the Games		2012
Promotional themes	Bluebell walks	BL
Autumn colours		AUT
Valentine walks		VAL

Local festivals and events As requested

At the same time the “Walking for Health” option “built in” to the system will be removed, as it has proved a source of confusion to editors and is largely superseded by the introduction of Walk4Life branding. The remaining “built in” options for car-free, family, dog-friendly and pushchair/wheelchair-friendly walks will be unchanged.

We will shortly publish updated guidance on how to use these various themes and options.

We will do our best to contact all editors who have already listed walks using the themes and options due for withdrawal with suggestions for reclassifying their walks.

Other changes

We are currently in the process of updating all the guidance for Walks Finder editors and moving it from the password protected area of the system to the volunteer section of the Ramblers website as a series of new factsheets. See www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/factsheets.

We will also be taking the opportunity to make a number of improvements and fix some long-standing bugs on the Walks Finder system.

Using the Group Walks Finder

If your Area or Group doesn't already list its walks on the Walks Finder, now is a great time to start. Most Ramblers walks are now listed, and for Groups that do use the system, the Walks Finder has rapidly become the biggest source of new walkers and new members. If you list your walks on your own website but not on the Walks Finder, note that the Ramblers main website is very well indexed by search engines and even local people are more likely to find the main website than a local one. It's easy to list walks on the Walks Finder and then include the information in your own website without retyping all the details. For a password and more information please contact volunteer@ramblers.org.uk.

Forthcoming projects and events

Walk4Life Day

Change4Life are working with ITV on a high profile TV campaign promoting walking in September, including a focused Walk4Life day on Sunday 26 September. The final details regarding how Ramblers activities will be promoted are yet to be finalized, but where possible it would be helpful if as many Areas and Groups as possible offered short (less than 5 miles/8km), easy, welcoming walks during September, and ensured these walks were listed on the Group Walks Finder where they will be highlighted automatically with the appropriate branding. We regret that it has not been possible to provide more notice. This is due to the collaborative nature of the partnership. TV campaigns are extremely effective at raising awareness – the Britain on the Move campaign in 2005 prompted 150,000 requests for Ramblers materials following just one broadcast! More details on the event will follow as they are confirmed.

Get Walking for the Games

This new project aimed at promoting walking in connection with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be launching over the next few months and will run until the end of 2012. We will be asking Areas and Groups to include in their programmes short, easy, welcoming walks connected in some way to the event, whether it's visiting Games or training venues (located in many places besides London), using paths and routes improved as a result of the event, linking with "Cultural Olympiad" events or visiting other sites connected with Olympic sports and athletes (for example the birthplace of a famous Olympian).

These walks will be listed on the Group Walks Finder using a special theme code and they will be branded with the 2012 "Inspire" mark, clearly linking them to this once-in-a-lifetime event, and jointly promoted through the 2012 website as part of the Games' Active Travel Programme.

In Scotland the project may take a different form with a clearer link to Active Nation and the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Further details will follow shortly.

Festival of Winter Walks

This is Ramblers' longest running festival of walks designed to take full advantage of the delights of winter walking and make regular walking a New Year's resolution. It always attracts ex-

cellent publicity. This year the festival will run from 25 December – 2 January. As previously, all Ramblers walks listed on the Group Walks Finder during these dates will be branded as part of the Festival. Further details will follow shortly.

Get Walking Day 2011

This year's Get Walking Day on Sunday 23 May saw over 4,000 people enjoying excellent weather on 200 short, easy walks across England, Scotland and Wales. Thanks are due to all volunteers who participated, putting on 50 more walks than in 2009. Around 1,000 people are expected to take advantage of the special introductory £1 membership offer. We are currently compiling a more detailed report as information is returned, but in the meantime please note the date for next year's Get Walking Day is **Sunday 15 May**. As with this year, walks held on Saturday 14 will also qualify as Get Walking Day walks. We aim to make the 2011 event bigger and better still.

If you have any questions or comments on anything in this document, please contact Des de Moor, Senior Everyday Walking Officer, des.demoor@ramblers.org.uk.

Volunteering

75th Anniversary Volunteer Awards

To celebrate our 75th Anniversary a special award is being run for volunteers who have gone that bit further to help the organisation achieve its aims (request for action -posted 1 June 2010).

Every year Ramblers Volunteers give thousands of hours to the organisation using a myriad of different skills. This ranges from leading walks to clearing footpaths and from campaigning to raising the the organisations profile in the local media or creating newsletters and webpages.

To recognise this the Ramblers are running a 75th Anniversary Award Ceremony. Any volunteer can be nominated for an award in the following categories:

- 1. Membership Award** – This award would go to somebody who has worked on making sure that the process of joining a Group or Area is as welcoming, easy and simple as possible.
- 2. Led Walks** – This award would go to somebody who has not only grown the number of people attending Ramblers Led Walks but also made them as interesting as possible.
- 3. Growing the organization** – This would go to somebody who has grown their Group or Area membership and/or put an induction process in place that makes new volunteers feel welcome.
- 4. Campaigner Award** – This would go to somebody who has had a major campaign success at either Local, Group, Area or Country Level. The campaign should have had a positive impact on and involved members of the community.
- 5. Introducing people to walking** – This Award is aimed at volunteers who have successfully managed to introduce a section of the community to walking.
- 6. Successful Committee Member** – This would go to a member of the Group or Area Committee who has worked to make sure the organisation can function.
- 7. Partnership Award** – This would go to somebody who has worked successfully with a local council or other organisation to ensure a positive outcome for walkers in the local area.
- 8. Media Award** – This award would go to a volunteer who has successfully worked to get their Group or Area in the local media on a regular basis to help create a positive image in the local community.

Nominations for the Awards are open until the 1st October 2010 and the winners will be picked by a panel of judges from across the organisation. You will also be able to request certificates for volunteers at Group and Area level.

You can find out more about the scheme at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/NR/exeres/938C7710-73EA-445C-B6B9-E460CABC2FDA,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published> .

Area and Group budgeting packs for 2010-11

Information about Area and Group budgeting packs for 2010/11 (Action request - posted 2nd June 2010)

These have been sent to Area Treasurers by email, who will forward Group packs on to Group Treasurers soon. Where requested, hard copy packs are in the post today. If you require a hard copy pack please contact us.

Budgeting timetable for 2010/11:

16th July 2010: Deadline for Group budgets to Area

27th Aug 2010: Deadline for Area (and Group) budgets to central office

Late Aug to early Oct 2010: Central office review of Area and Group budgets and discussions with Area Treasurers

By mid Oct 2010: Feedback to Areas

Oct to Nov 2010: Area appeals process (where necessary)

Oct, Jan, April & July: Payments made to Areas

Group and Area committees are invited to discuss their funding needs for the coming financial year and follow the instructions in the budgeting pack in order to make a funding request to Area and central office respectively.

Areas and Groups not meeting the above deadlines are likely to have their funding request reduced. If you foresee any problems in meeting the deadline, please let your Area (for Groups) or central office (for Areas) know at the earliest opportunity.

Contact:

Kevin Edwards (Finance Officer – Areas and Groups)

Email: areagroupfinance@ramblers.org.uk

Publication of a new Campaigns factsheet

New factsheet published by the Walking Environment team on 'How to talk to a Public Meeting' is now available (New Resource - posted 24 May 2010).

The latest in a series of factsheets, produced by the Walking Environment team, can now be downloaded. The factsheet, based around talking to a public meeting, can be found on the [Factsheet Catalogue](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/NR/exeres/557E3AA8-CBC5-4E21-922B-) at <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/NR/exeres/557E3AA8-CBC5-4E21-922B->

[FA0256DC6844,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/FA0256DC6844,frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published). There will be another 3 factsheets produced by the Walking Environment team by the middle of autumn 2010.

Ongoing Success for Chesterfield Ramblers

John Newrick, Countryside Officer, from the Chesterfield Ramblers explains some of the successes they have had in creating greater access to our countryside (Volunteer Feature - Posted 12 April 2010.)

The Chesterfield Ramblers have been working under the guidance of the Derbyshire Countryside Rangers. The work undertaken shows how important practical path work is to keeping the Footpath Network open especially in the current economic climate of local authority spending cuts. Countryside Officer, John Newrick, from the Chesterfield Ramblers explains some of the successes they have recently achieved.

'The Group has undertaken important tasks such as path clearing, instillation of signs and of gates. However, our biggest project so far is the construction of a 5m long bridge across a small brook in the Moss Valley, in North East Derbyshire.'

The story doesn't end there as the Group is already committed to undertaking training on hand power tools, for which they will be certificated, meaning that they will be able to undertake work without the Derbyshire Rangers being present. John points out that this allows the council to commission work without having to spend money on it. More importantly it allows greater access to our Countryside.

To tell us about your footpath successes and share your experiences fill in the online footpath successes form at http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/successes.htm.

Amendment to Ramblers Publication

There is an amendment to the Ramblers Publication 'Walk Britain' Published in April 2009 (Resources Update - Updated 24 May 2010.)

There is a slight amendment to Walk number 48 - Buachaille Etive Mor on page 357 of the 'Walk Britain' Publication published in April 2009. The walk states that the best start place is the Altnafeadh car park on the A86. This should say the Altnafeadh car park on the A82.

Latest Updates

Walking Environment Update - June 10

News from the Walking Environment team. (News & action request - posted 8 June 2010)

Dead End campaign

The rights of way network is facing the biggest threat for many years, as highway authorities cut staff and maintenance budgets, and prepare for larger cuts to come. The Ramblers must act decisively to ensure that the impact of these cuts is minimised.

We have launched the 'Dead End' campaign, which initially aims to raise the profile of the issue, and illustrate the threat. In phase two, we intend to highlight how the Ramblers can work with local authorities, wherever possible, to address the issues that arise from reduced council action on paths. This could be through joint working, both practical and technical, and through offering our services for tasks such as path surveys. By working with national bodies such as the LGA and IPRoW, we can also help to spread best practice and press for innovative solutions to problems. Where councils are unwilling or unable to take action, we will also be in a position to tackle problem landowners and seek the resolution of path issues directly.

For this campaign to be a success we need the full support of Ramblers members and volunteers. Staff will endeavour to work with Areas and Groups to tailor the campaign to local circumstances, but some of our campaign messages will inevitably have to be national and of a general nature. We ask that volunteers support this initiative – without it, the condition of our rights of way could be set back decades.

If you have any comments or suggestions on this campaign, please contact Adrian Morris, Head of Walking Environment – 020 7339 8524, adrian.morris@ramblers.org.uk

General Election campaign

Many thanks to everyone who contacted Parliamentary candidates in the run-up to the General Election. Our co-ordinated approach has resulted in a staggering 115 MPs in the new Parliament having signed up to our Walkers' Manifesto. Staff are now working with Areas and Groups to set up walks and meetings with these MPs, to ensure they understand the issues affecting walkers locally, and to establish good relationships with the Ramblers.

If you would like to know more, or have already arranged a meeting or walk with your MP, please contact Rachel Alcock, Campaigns Officer – 020 7339 8586, rachel.alcock@ramblers.org.uk

Footpath Worker mailing

We will soon be sending out the latest edition of Footpath Worker (26/3), as paper copies, to all Area, Group, and local footpath volunteers, and Path Order Recipients. New guidance on seeking central support for casework will also be enclosed with this edition.

If any Area Footpath Secretaries have not recently informed us of updates to their local footpath volunteers (i.e. anyone not already recorded as a Group Footpath Secretary or Path Order Recipient) please let us have these details as soon as possible, to Anastasia French, Campaigns Administrator – 020 7339 8584, walking.environment@ramblers.org.uk. Many thanks.

Help us show our organisation matters – report a footpath success!

In the current economic and political climate, it's important for charities to be able to show that they are making a real difference. Without information on our core activity of footpath work it's very difficult for us to meet this test.

Please help us gather the information needed, by reporting all footpath successes to central office. We want to hear about every success that the Ramblers have had a hand in achieving – e.g. a report to a council which results in a problem being resolved, practical path work improvements delivered directly by Ramblers work teams, or paths added to the map or saved from diversion or extinguishment thanks to the Ramblers. More information, and a form, can be found here: http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/successes.htm

Summary of the Board of Trustees meeting 22nd May 2010

Read a summary of the decisions taken at the Board of Trustees meeting in May (News - posted 2nd June 2010)

The Board of Trustees met for the first time since General Council on Saturday 22nd May at Central Office. The four new members of the board were welcomed. On the Friday evening, trustees and managers heard two presentations: one from Jonathan Kipling, Honorary Treasurer, setting out the financial responsibilities of trustees; the other from Katherine Hudson, from

the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, updating us on a collaborative project which we are involved with, looking at the future of membership organisations.

Announcements

The Board noted with sadness the death of Jim Kerr, a long-standing volunteer with Hampshire Area. It also noted with pleasure the birth of Danny Montgomery to trustee, Eleanor Harris. He is believed to be the first baby born to a Ramblers trustee in many years. The Board sent parents and baby good wishes.

Board membership

The Board elected Harry Mycock as Vice Chair for the forthcoming year. It also co-opted Susan Carter and Naseem Akhtar onto the Board for the year. Susan was previously a senior civil servant at the Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs, and will increase the Board's depth of knowledge of campaigning and lobbying (critical at this time of governmental change). Naseem has been involved with encouraging newcomers – especially Asian women – to take up walking in Birmingham, and has much experience of grassroots voluntary sector organisations. She will increase the Board's understanding of how to reach out to new communities. The Board also co-opted Andy Rogers, from the Notts and Derby 20s-30s Group, to the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee. He is a chartered management accountant with an MBA, with experience of both pensions and CRM systems.

Chief Executive's report

Walking environment: the Chief Executive reported that a successful training event on coastal access had been held for 40 volunteers, and that useful discussions have already been held with volunteers in Dorset, Cumbria, Kent and Somerset – areas which will be the first to benefit from the coastal access legislation. He had written to Richard Benyon MP, the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries, seeking confirmation that implementation of the coastal route will continue as planned. He reported that two more induction training sessions had taken place for new walking environment volunteers. Our General Election manifesto, *Breaking Down the Barriers to Walking*, had been signed by many candidates, including 115 who were subsequently elected to Parliament (including the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg). We're now encouraging Areas and Groups to build relationships with these and other MPs, by inviting them on walks. He also reported that our new public path computer system (called 'CAMS') is now being used, for the first time, to record public path problems – this will mean we can identify problem 'hotspots' to help with campaigning. However we're still having problems with encouraging Areas to report path successes, which is making it harder to show the value of Ramblers public path work.

Promoting walking: the Chief Executive reported that 156 Groups were hosting walks for Get Walking Day (202 walks in total – between two and six miles). This is a 50% increase on last year. We have sent out 6,210 £1 membership forms – and we wait to see how many are returned. He also reported that, from this summer, Walks Finder walks of five miles or less (about 100 a week) would be co-branded with Walk 4 Life (the healthy living campaign). This will help to promote these walks to more people. He also reported that the Get Walking, Keep Walking project had achieved its participant targets in the first quarter of the year. He reported that in Scotland, three temporary members of staff are being recruited as part of our successful application to the Future Jobs Fund, partly to help with walking promotion work linked to the Commonwealth Games. He said that the 75th anniversary baton walks were going well, with 80% of Groups in Wales taking part. Although not as many Groups in Scotland had taken part, he said the country had won the award for the highest 'baton exchange', from Dalgety Bay to Dunfermline and West Fife Groups, at the summit of Schiehallion, Munro No. 59, at a height of 1038 metres!

Volunteers: the Chief Executive said that the special 75th anniversary volunteer awards would be launched on 1st June, with eight categories covering membership, led walks, growing the

organisation, campaigning, introducing people to walking, successful committee membership, partnership, and media. The closing date was 30th September.

Financial accounts and Key Performance Indicators

The Board received a financial forecast to the end of the financial year (September 30th), suggesting a likely year-end surplus of £325k (against a budgeted deficit of £41k). However, almost all of this is 'one-off' rather than recurring income – for example, legacies, and the claiming of gift aid stretching back over many years (made possible by improved gift aid efficiency and the CRM system).

The Board also received the dashboard of Key Performance Indicators up to the end of April 2010. These are 16 indicators which help the Board to assess whether we are 'on track' for the year - they are a mixture of financial, development, and business targets. All are on track apart from two - the target of 500 footpaths unblocked, opened, or recorded on definitive maps as a result of Ramblers efforts this year (where we are experiencing difficulty in persuading volunteers to share their successes); and progress on coastal access implementation (where we are awaiting news on the intentions of the new government). The Board was pleased to note that the 10-working day turnaround for membership applications and renewals (and related correspondence) is now being achieved and, indeed, bettered. The Board received membership figures up to the end of April. These show active membership at 123,037 (a slight dip on the previous month), with 1,365 new members during April.

Business Plan and Budget 2010/11

The Board received a report on progress in setting the business plan and budget for 2010/11, including feedback from Areas, and agreed to finalise these at its meeting in July. It agreed that the budget would balance, with this year's surplus then being used to fund additional activities for next year (with a final decision being taken in July on the likely size of the surplus for re-investment). Such initiatives and activities were designed to either improve efficiency, generate additional income and/or members (partially in 2011/11 and fully in 2011/12), or continue existing led walks/public paths work. The financial commitment could be ended after a year if the desired outcome was not achieved. This approach is consistent with the recommendations contained in the Kipling Report into financial management.

In particular, the Board agreed to:

- Set up a designated public path/access legal action fund, from which national casework on public paths can be funded;
- Continue support for led walks training and safety work;
- Provide more support for helping to set up new groups or sub-groups, and to help groups put on a greater variety of walks, to help attract more members;
- Provide support for members of affiliated clubs to join the Ramblers as individual members;
- Support work to expand partnerships with the private sector, and encourage more individual giving through top-up donations on subscription fees;
- Continue to resource membership services, to make sure that the improvements we've seen recently are maintained;
- Invest in the design and content of the Ramblers website, to drive up the numbers visiting and joining online;
- Investigate letting out more office space at Central Office, to further reduce rent costs.

Following consultation with Areas, it was agreed that for the coming year, the focus of campaigning work would be the protection of public paths, and working to increase political support for them within a climate of government cutbacks, and to begin work on scoping a campaign around access to rivers and woodland (following the decision at General Council).

Motions from General Council

The Board noted that it would receive an update on progress with motions from General Council (GC) in September. Motions remitted from GC would be discussed by sub-committees in July, before coming to the Board for approval in September.

Kipling Report and CRM review

The Board received an update on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Kipling Report, 'An Inquiry into the Financial Affairs of the Ramblers'. This is very broadly on-track, and there will be a further report at the Board meeting in September. It also agreed the Terms of Reference for the review into the CRM (Contact Relationship Management system) problems, which would be undertaken by Andy Rogers (newly co-opted to the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee) who has previously undertaken an evaluation of a CRM system in a work environment.

Devolution working party

The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Devolution Working Party. It will contain two volunteers from Scotland, two from England, and two from Wales, together with the Ramblers Chair and Hon Treasurer, and will report in February 2011.

Board Sub-Committees

The Board agreed the Terms of Reference for the three Board Sub-Committees, and also the membership for each. These usually meet in the month before the Board, to consider issues in more depth, and to make any recommendations to the Board.

Board skills, diversity and experience

The Board reviewed the results of its self-audit, and noted the following relative weaknesses in the Board from 2011 onwards. It agreed to publicise these amongst potential Board candidates and GC delegates:

- Women
- People from black and ethnic minorities
- Younger people
- Experience in central and local government
- Experience in fundraising
- Experience in urban walking
- Experience in the voluntary sector
- Experience in constitutional matters
- Experience in property matters
- Good geographic spread of trustees

CRM System Update

After many months of frustration with our CRM system, it is now working much better. The timetable for CRM development and improvements can now be seen in this article (News Posted - 24 May 2010.)

We know there are still problems and issues to sort out. With our limited resources, our technical staff are working to a strict priority order for this work. Below, we provide a list of what has been achieved over the past few months, and what is planned in the next few months. We hope this will help volunteers with knowing what issues will be addressed, and when. We have prioritised three types of issues:

- Improvements that will maximise income to the Ramblers
- Improvements that will help our volunteers
- Improvements that will provide greater efficiency

The work of our technical staff is closely tied in with the Ramblers Business Plan for 2009/10. There is still much development work to do but we have made very significant progress of late.

To timetable for developments and and improvements are available on the [Area and Group Resources Pages](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Resources/CRM+System.htm) at
<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/Volunteer/AreaGroup/Resources/CRM+System.htm>.

