

Title: How to change your constitution



Reference: GOV003

## Constitutions

Every Area or Group has a constitution. The constitution needs to be broadly in line with our model constitutions approved by General Council.

We hold a copy of each Area constitution at central office. Each Area will in turn hold a copy of the constitutions for their Groups.

Changed your constitution and not sure who to send it to?

- ✓ Areas should send their constitutions to [Jo.smith@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:Jo.smith@ramblers.org.uk)
- ✓ Groups should send their constitution to their Area Secretary.

## Further information on constitutions

Every Area and Group must have a constitution which outlines the procedures and structure of the Area or Group. A Group is theoretically free to determine its own constitution, subject to the approval of the Area. Areas, in turn, are free to determine their own constitution, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. In practice, however, most Areas and Groups choose to follow the model constitution which already has the approval of the Ramblers.

The constitution outlines the basic procedures for running the Area or Group. Among other things, it cements both Areas and Groups as an integral part of the Ramblers, it outlines how the committee will be elected and which officers will form part of it, and it commits the Area or Group to remain accountable through its AGM and its annual report.

Once a constitution is agreed, it is not something that exercises much concern in the majority of well-run Areas or Groups. In some respects it is similar to a piece of anti-virus software on a computer in that it keeps operating in the background, but is only activated in the rare cases of disputes or difficulties. As a result of this, constitutions are very rarely altered.

If an Area or Group wishes to make a change to its constitution, it must adhere to the following procedure:

- The revised constitution must be put before a general meeting open to all members
- All members must have been informed that the constitution will be discussed at the meeting and must be given at least 14 days notice of the meeting
- The proposed changes must win the support of at least 2/3 of members present at the meeting
- Once approved, Group constitutions must be sent to the Area for approval and Area constitutions sent to the Board of Trustees



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In practice, given this last requirement, Groups wishing to amend their constitution are advised to consult first with their Area to ensure that the proposed amendments are likely to meet with their approval.

The procedure for amending Group constitutions is such that, where Group constitutions are revised, the discussion and debate tends to happen at the AGM to which all members have to be given advance notice.

