



# **The Ramblers: a path to follow**

## **Our vision and strategic framework**

### **2015–2025**

Approved by General Council March 2015



## Our vision

**A country where everyone enjoys the outdoors on foot and benefits from the experience.**

## Who we are

The Ramblers helps everyone, everywhere, enjoy walking and protects the places we all love to walk. We are the only charity dedicated to looking after paths and green spaces, leading walks, opening up new places to explore and encouraging everyone to get outside and discover how walking boosts your health and your happiness.

## What we know

We love being in the great outdoors on foot and enjoying everything it has to offer.

We know there's something deeply special about walking outdoors in inspiring environments, which can't be equalled by walking on a treadmill.

We know most people benefit spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally once they start to regularly walk outdoors.

We know the Ramblers is there to support everyone so they can enjoy and benefit from walking together, regardless of their age, background, fitness or mobility.

We know the work of the Ramblers covers all forms of walking outdoors, from health walks to hillwalking, rambling to trekking, scrambling to mountaineering.

We know walking significantly benefits communities and society as a whole, including improving health, wellbeing and happiness and helping people discover more about their local area and beyond.

We know the Ramblers' role is to make the experience of walking outdoors as enjoyable as possible, helping to inspire more people to walk.

## Our mission

**The Ramblers' mission is to create a Britain where everyone has the freedom to enjoy the outdoors on foot and benefits from the experience.**

We will protect, improve and enhance the places that people enjoy to walk and open up new places for them to explore.

We will help people explore their local area and the beauty of the rest of Britain by making sure paths and green spaces are well maintained and the rights and freedoms of walkers upheld.

We will help create a world where society understands the benefits of walking for both recreation and shorter journeys, and where communities have easy access to high quality places to walk, from attractive urban areas to open spaces in the countryside.

We will support people of all ages and backgrounds so they can experience the great outdoors on foot, resulting in improvements in health, wellbeing and happiness.

## The next ten years

Over the next ten years, we will focus on three ambitions to help us fulfil our mission and make our vision a reality.

### A country designed for walking

We want everything to be in place in England, Scotland and Wales so we can all enjoy the outdoors on foot and benefit from the experience. This includes great places to walk; a true right to roam and path networks that connect people with communities, history, and nature; we want to ensure the right support from government, society, public and private organisations to help us achieve this. A walking country will enable and motivate more people to walk, as a means of transport, for their health and wellbeing, to help the environment or for the sheer joy of it!

### Helping everyone find their feet

Walking can take you anywhere. We want to provide the support and resources everyone needs, regardless of their age, background, fitness or mobility, to enjoy and benefit from walking outdoors. We want to help construct the national and local policies and programmes that give individuals and communities the opportunity to go out and walk, and we want to educate them about how walking can improve their health and wellbeing.

### Connecting people through the Ramblers

We want to improve the health and wellbeing of the public by providing our own communities of walkers with the best possible Ramblers experience. This includes leading high quality walks, facilitating outings and holidays that help people enjoy the best walking has to offer; producing expert resources so people can safely explore the outdoors themselves and connect with nature; and providing tailored support to individuals to help them progress from the sofa to the summits or the city street to the mountain peak.

## A country designed for walking

“Being able to easily access good areas to walk, whether you live in the heart of the countryside or in the middle of a large city, will benefit so many people, from all communities. I think it’s so important that we do everything we can to make a Britain a wonderful place to walk, because it has so much to offer.”

**Chris Greig, Ramblers supporter**

**Over the next ten years, our ambition is to make sure great places to walk are available, the right infrastructure is in place, and support and resources are provided so that everyone can enjoy the outdoors on foot in England, Scotland and Wales.**

**As guardians of the path network we will improve and protect our paths.** To achieve this we will expand the network by creating new paths and rediscovering those which have been forgotten. We will continue to monitor the state of our network, ensuring that proposed changes are in the best interests of all walkers and that paths are easy to use and open for everyone to enjoy. We will work with all local authorities so that they understand the importance of paths in their communities and the role they play in ensuring people are connected with each other and the landscapes they enjoy, as well as the other benefits they bring.

**Everyone will have more access to the open countryside.** To achieve this we want to ensure that, no matter where people live, they can enjoy the countryside by having a true right to roam. This expanded access will connect people, path networks and communities so that everyone can benefit from walking. We will help people understand that with this right comes the responsibility to abide by codes of practice.

**Everyone will have a green space close to their front door, and have safer, healthier and more attractive walking environments to enjoy.** To achieve this we will seek to increase the amount of urban green space and ensure that urban walking routes are well designed and planned, enabling people to go about their everyday life on foot and have a great experience doing so.

**Landscapes protected for all walkers to enjoy.** To achieve this we’ll play a leading role in protecting and enhancing these landscapes for all walkers to enjoy, by stopping the decline of

our wild lands, and increasing the amount of land protected by national parks and other designations. We'll also help communities to protect their landscapes from inappropriate development, whilst balancing this with other community needs, such as economic prosperity. These communities help to shape our landscapes and we'll promote walking to support local economies, connect people with nature and respond to the impacts of climate change.

**Walking is considered by national and local government, by society and professionals, as an answer to some of the biggest problems we face.** To achieve this, we will [seek to](#) ensure that planning, transport, energy and health strategies highlight walking as an important solution. We'll endeavour to advocate on behalf of walkers in every community and, where appropriate, build partnerships between our supporters and other organisations that share our ambitions.

## Helping everyone find their feet

“Walking and the Ramblers have given me so much. I feel far better physically and mentally; I’ve learnt so much more about my local area and experienced some of the most beautiful landscapes in Britain; and I’ve made lifelong friends who support me every step of the way.”

**Julia Simpson, Ramblers member**

**Over the next ten years, our ambition is to give people of all ages and from all backgrounds the opportunities to enjoy and benefit from walking outdoors.**

**Walking at the centre of action to help people get active.** To achieve this we’ll work with the government, public and private organisations, and society as a whole, to make sure that walking is at the centre of strategies to help people overcome physical inactivity. We will help to implement national walking strategies for England, Scotland and Wales and secure the investment needed to deliver programmes and social activities that help people to get active and stay active.

**Everyone who needs a hand to get started will have a free and friendly group close to where they live, which will organise short walks.** To achieve this, we will target our activities at people who are often inactive but would significantly benefit from walking, including black and minority ethnic people and those living with long-term health conditions. We will expand our activities in local communities through programmes such as Walking for Health and Let’s Walk Cymru.

**More young people will have adventures outdoors on foot.** To achieve this we will develop a programme of activities that inspire and motivate young people to walk in the outdoors, developing targeted communications that promote the fun and the adventure of walking.

**More people see the outdoors as a place for them.** To achieve this we will develop ways to get people walking with their friends and families. We will provide advice, good-quality walking information and inspiration so that even more people take up walking. We will establish ourselves as the first place people come to for support when they want to go walking on their own, or with their family and friends.

# Connecting people through the Ramblers

“The huge selection of Ramblers walks, support and social activities bring communities together and keep people connected to one another and the world around them – and most important of all, they make walking fun.” **Salle Dare, Ramblers member and volunteer**

**Over the next ten years, our ambition is to help improve the quality of life of our members and supporters by providing the resources, support and information for them to enjoy and explore the outdoors.**

**Provide member activities that enable them to walk in, enjoy, explore and understand the outdoors.** To achieve this we will provide the largest and most diverse organised social walking programme in Britain, increasing the number of volunteers who make this possible. We will work across the outdoors sector to achieve standards so that everyone enjoys a quality and safe experience.

**Expand and diversify our member programmes.** To achieve this we will welcome new groups of like-minded people and make full use of technological innovations to make it easier to go walking and have fun. We will explore new types of programmes that connect members and young walkers, and those ready to progress from health walks will be particularly welcomed. Through this we will diversify our membership to reflect society.

**Our members’ families and friends take part.** To achieve this we will provide advice, good-quality walking information and inspiration so that our members can in turn get their friends and families outdoors.

**Support our members and supporters to explore and enjoy Britain’s landscapes and nature, culture and heritage, or simply to relax and get away from it all.** To achieve this we will facilitate high-quality outings and holidays so that people can explore the rich tapestry that is on offer beyond their local community.

## Leading from the front

**In the last 80 years, we have achieved ambitious goals by leading from the front, providing our members and supporters with opportunities to make a difference and by working with a wide range of partners.**

Over the next ten years we will stand together with the outdoors community, inspire a new generation of walkers and continue to work in partnership to achieve our three ambitions.

### Standing together

**We will develop and support the next generation of leaders at the Ramblers, to ensure the walking community has the best possible experience outdoors.** Over the next ten years we will create strong volunteer leadership teams which will work in partnership with volunteers, members and supporters to implement all parts of our mission. We will support our local groups and areas so they can self-govern within national frameworks. We will enable volunteers to implement the ‘member-help-member’ ethos successfully.

**We will ensure we are recognised as a sector leader who can significantly benefit society through our expertise, passion and commitment.** Over the next ten years we will share our knowledge with the outdoors community, to help people influence local and national government.

**We will provide the support and resources to empower people to create the outdoor environment they want for themselves and future generations.** Over the next ten years we will maintain and expand Britain’s largest network of volunteers who monitor, protect and improve the path network. We will continue to support and deliver networks of volunteer advocates to promote our activities and run public campaigns.

### Inspiring people

**By becoming a member of the Ramblers, people will support our charitable work and play a vital role in helping us meet our mission.** Over the next ten years, our members will understand our mission and participate in a range of national and local activities that contribute

to it.

**We will provide our members with high-quality support, resources and walking experiences that help them to become happier and healthier.** Over the next ten years members will feel welcomed and inspired. Members will know how to access our programmes, for example group walks, and feel supported in their own walking activities.

**We will give our members and supporters a variety of flexible options to help them get involved with our work in a role best suited to them.** Members will understand our ‘member-help-member’ ethos and know how they can support our mission nationally and locally.

**We recognise people may want to support and benefit from the work of the Ramblers without becoming a member.** Over the next ten years more people will participate in our charitable work, and make a vital difference on a national and local level.

**We will make sure no one misses out on the benefits of walking.** Over the next ten years, we will diversify our supporter and membership base by making our activities and resources more relevant to a variety of communities.

**We will learn from the communities we work and walk with, so that they have the best outdoor experience possible.** Britain is hugely diverse geographically and culturally. Already the walking community reflects this diversity. We will ensure as many people as possible are supported to walk more, everyday.

**We will make sure our volunteers have the right skills and knowledge and ensure they are trained and supported, so they feel confident and competent.** Over the next ten years, every volunteer will have an experience which is rewarding, enjoyable and fun. We’ll ensure volunteers across Great Britain can access resources to deliver activities that enjoy widespread and deep-rooted support. Volunteers will understand their contribution, the expectations of the organisation and have confidence that the work they are doing is effectively managed.

**We will establish a credible and respected identity that’s consistently recognised.** Over the next ten years we will develop and implement a strong brand that will be understood on a local and national level. We will work with our members, supporters and the public to decide whether the name ‘the Ramblers’ helps or hinders our ability to reach all communities and whether we need to promote activities under different names to bridge any gaps.

## Working in partnership

**We will identify and work with an increasing number of partners who share our passion to deliver the benefits of the outdoors to everyone.** Partnering with a wide range of people and organisations has been the key to our success over the past 80 years and will continue to be over the next ten years. We will seek to enter into multi-year partnerships with defined benefits on both sides.

**We will ensure people have the best possible experience wherever they walk.** Over the next ten years we will work in partnership with other organisations in Europe and beyond to support the collective needs of walkers everywhere. We will fully participate in the European Ramblers Association, working for walkers across Europe.

## Our pledge to you

At the Ramblers, we love walking in the outdoors and enjoying all that this has to offer.

We will do everything we can so you can experience this as well, regardless of your age, background, fitness or mobility.

We will provide you with support, resources and experiences, defend your freedoms and rights as a walker and make sure you have access to great walking opportunities in your local area, wherever you are in England, Scotland or Wales.

We will **achieve** a Britain that is designed for walking – a place where you and everyone else can enjoy the outdoors on foot and benefit from the experience.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The case for walking

### **Walking is good for our physical health**

Physical inactivity is becoming a public health problem comparable to smoking, responsible for 17% of premature deaths in the UK. Four out of ten adults don't meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity and older people, those from poorer households and from certain ethnic groups are even less active than average. Walking is one of the best ways to tackle this: it is free and a form of exercise which almost anyone can do.

### **Walking is good for our mental health**

Regular walking improves mood, reduces anxiety, aids sleep and improves self-image. People that stay active have a 30% lower risk of getting depression and dementia. And evidence shows getting active outdoors, particularly in green environments, is even better for mental wellbeing.

### **Walking can help reduce healthcare costs**

Estimates of the cost of inactivity in Britain, in terms of demand on the NHS, sick days and early death, vary from £7.4-20 billion a year. Regular walking would help slash these costs as well as save lives: if everyone did the recommended amount of physical activity 37,000 deaths could be prevented each year.

### **Walking supports local economies**

Popular walking routes are major assets to the tourist industry. In 2012, 52% of overseas visitors to Scotland went for a walk in the countryside and walking now accounts for 16% of all tourism in Wales. 8.6 million people visited the South West Coast Path in 2012. A direct spend of £436 million was estimated to be attributable to these South West Coast Path users, which accounted for 4% of all direct tourism spend to the South West region, and supported over 9,771 jobs.

### **Walking is good for the environment**

Walking is the most sustainable form of transport. By walking rather than taking the car, people help reduce pollution, prevent traffic jams and tackle climate change.

### **Walking is a free and inclusive means of transport**

For short journeys walking is the most reliable and popular option. In 2013 across Britain, only 2% of trips were made by bicycle while 22% were on foot. Up to 20% of car trips in urban areas could practically be walked instead, yet walking trips overall have declined by a third over 25 years.

### **Walking is good for your neighbourhood**

Getting out on foot allows you to have more contact with your neighbours and your local area. Studies have shown this improves community cohesion and reduces crime and the fear of crime.

## Appendix 2: Charitable objects

The Ramblers has several [objects](#). We aim to promote, encourage or assist in:

- The provision and protection of foot paths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot, including the prevention of obstruction of public rights of way.
- The protection and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the beauty of the countryside and other areas by such lawful means as the trustees think fit, including by encouraging the provision, preservation and extension of public access to land on foot.
- The provision of facilities for the organising of open-air recreational activities and in particular rambling and mountaineering with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities are intended, namely the public at large, and in the interests of social welfare (including health).
- Advancing the education of the public in subjects relating to access to, and the preservation and conservation of, the countryside and of the health benefits of outdoor recreational pursuits.

The trustees may further the [objects](#) particularly by helping all persons to a greater love, knowledge and care of the countryside and urban open spaces, and by encouraging participation in walking for recreation and as a means of transport.

## Appendix 3: Values

In the work that we do, we will try to be:

- **Environmentally responsible** – promoting activities and behaviours which are sustainable and which benefit the environment
- **Empowering** – helping give people the confidence to help themselves
- **Ethical** – being respectful of others, honest in what we say and thinking through the consequences of what we do
- **Democratic** – remembering that our Board of Trustees is mostly selected by our membership
- **Inclusive** – welcoming people from diverse backgrounds and being sensitive to the concerns of different communities
- **Positive** – looking to have fun and create enjoyment
- **Welcoming** – to all, and particularly to newcomers.