



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL

Dear friends,

Here is your pack of information for the forthcoming AGM on Saturday 9 April 2022.

It has been a long time since many of us were together in the same room, so I am delighted that this year we are able to hold our meeting in person.

I look forward to us coming together to celebrate all that has been achieved despite the challenges of the past few years, to elect new trustees to the board, and to discuss and debate how our charity can best pursue its aims and objectives for the benefit of all walkers across Great Britain.

If this is your first time attending the Ramblers' AGM, you will receive a warm welcome, and I encourage you to engage fully in the debates so that we all hear a variety of voices during the day.

I look forward to seeing you in Birmingham and wish you a safe journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Dawson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Dawson
Chair, board of trustees

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Saturday 9 April 2022, 12pm – 5pm

At: Concorde Suite, NEC Birmingham, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1NT

The annual general meeting of the General Council of the Ramblers will take place on Saturday 9 April 2022 at the NEC Birmingham from 12pm to 5pm.

The agenda is appended as part of this notice, along with the AGM papers which are also included with this notice. The AGM papers are also available to download from our GC webpage at www.ramblers.org.uk/gc.

All Council members have the right to appoint a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on their behalf. Proxy forms may be completed and submitted by post to the registered office using the enclosed form. The deadline for the delivery of proxy forms is 5pm on Wednesday 6 April 2022.

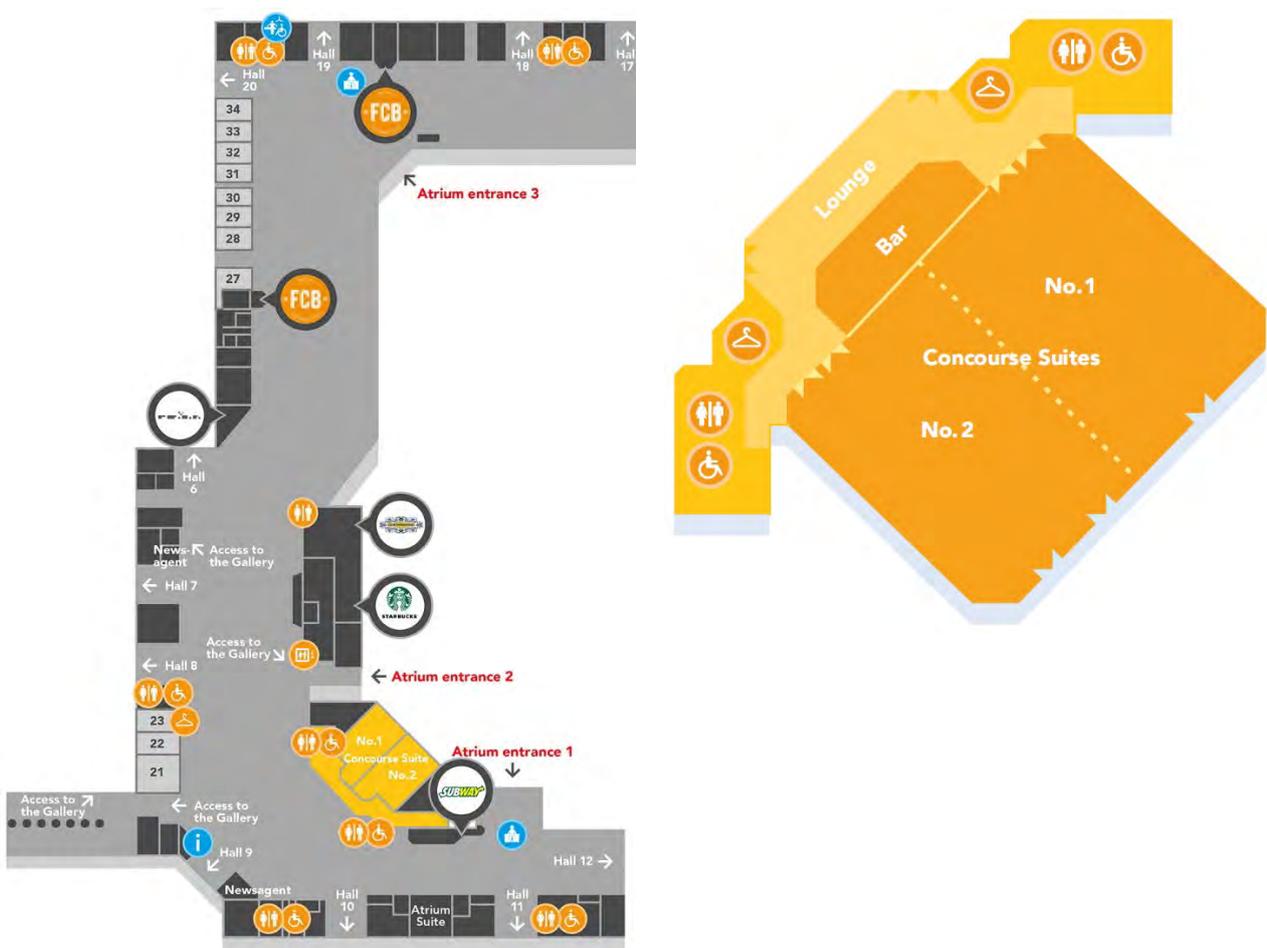
Agenda

Tea / coffee on arrival		11am – 12pm
1	Welcome and introduction	12pm
2	Review of the year, including financial report	12.15pm
3	2021 AGM minutes	12.55pm
4	Appointment of auditor	1pm
5	Appointment of president and vice presidents	1.05pm
6	Election of trustees and motions review committee members	1.10pm
Sandwich lunch and voting break		1.15pm – 2pm
7	Motions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open motions report • 2022 motions 	2pm
Tea / coffee break		3.30pm – 3.45pm (approx.)
7	2022 motions (continued)	3.45pm (approx.)
8	Closing remarks and election results	4.45pm (15)
Venue available until 6pm for member use		5pm – 6pm



VENUE INFORMATION

- The AGM will take place in the Concourse Suite which is in the Atrium (east) side of the NEC, next to halls 8, 9 and 10.
- The Concourse Suite is a 10 minute walk from Birmingham International station through the NEC via the Skywalk.
- Free car parking will be provided. Details are still to be confirmed by the NEC – we will share this at www.ramblers.org.uk/gc as soon as we have the information.
- The Concourse Suite is self-contained and we have our own toilets and cloakroom.
- Doors open at 11am and we must vacate the venue by 6pm.
- The meeting itself will be in suite 1, catering in suite 2, and registration in the lounge.
- Detailed venue maps can be downloaded from <https://thenec.co.uk/downloads>



Council members who have any general queries about the meeting should visit our dedicated webpage at www.ramblers.org.uk/gc or contact Simon Kellas at simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk.



2021 MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL HELD AT 1 CLINK STREET, LONDON ON 17 APRIL 2021

The AGM was held as a limited physical meeting with Kate Ashbrook (chair) and Michael Penny (honorary treasurer) in the Ramblers' office at Clink Street. Council members were invited to attend the meeting by Zoom videoconference.

1 Welcome and introduction

Kate Ashbrook, chair of the board of trustees, welcomed members of General Council to the videoconference meeting. She said that it was not the meeting which had been hoped for and she was sad not to be meeting Council members in Birmingham as had been planned. She and Michael Penny were in the Ramblers new office in Clink Street where they were being supported by staff members Cheryl Lamb and Simon Kellas. She thanked in particular Simon for all his work in the lead-up to the meeting and today at the meeting. She also welcomed Julie Cribb of the LDWA, Rob Owen, the new chair of Ramblers Cymru, Janet Davis, who would be taking the minutes, and candidates for the trustee elections.

Kate explained how voting would be conducted during the meeting. Each Council member had been assigned a unique voting code which would be used for confidential voting via a voting website managed by Mi-Voice, a third-party, independent company that specialised in managing electoral processes. This would provide the necessary guarantee of confidentiality and impartiality. A member of Mi-Voice staff would support this process during the meeting and the results would be sent directly to Simon Kellas (member of staff), Michael Penny (honorary treasurer) and Janet Davis (independent volunteer). For motions and other general business Zoom polling would be used as a quick and anonymous way of managing those votes normally decided by a show of hands in the room.

Kate said that 2021 was an important year for Ramblers since it was the 70th anniversary of the creation of the first national park in England, the Peak District in 1951. Ramblers had been very much involved in the campaign to create national parks, and that campaigning spirit was still at the heart of the organisation.

She welcomed Ramblers president, Stuart Maconie, to the meeting and thanked him for the tremendous work he had been doing on behalf of the organisation, particularly through the publicity which he had attracted on TV, radio and social media. Stuart said he hoped that this was the last time Council would have to meet remotely but he thought that the experience of the last year was an important moment for the Ramblers. The pandemic had taken a terrible toll, but many people had realised the benefits of walking. People who wouldn't normally consider themselves to be walkers had been making use of urban green spaces and towpaths, acknowledging the social and therapeutic value of those places: Ramblers would be able to reach out to those people. He thanked everyone for their support and urged them to keep up the good work.

2 Approval of the minutes of General Council 2020

Council approved the minutes of General Council 2020.

3 Election of president and vice presidents

Stuart Maconie, the current president, has been nominated for a fifth annual term. No other nominations were received. Mr Maconie was elected *nem con*.

No new nominations for the position of vice president were received. The following current elected vice presidents were proposed for re-election *en bloc* at the meeting: Sir Richard Lloyd Jones, Jonathan Kipling, Cath MacKay, Alan Mattingly, Dave Morris, Malcolm Petyt, Brian Reader, Paddy Tipping, Keith Wadd. All vice presidents were elected *nem con*.

The following past presidents automatically remain vice presidents: Kate Ashbrook, Andrew Bennett, Julia Bradbury, Chris Hall, Mike Harding, Chris Smith, Janet Street-Porter.

4 Annual report and accounts

The chair invited the chief executive and senior leadership team to address council. In doing so she thanked all members of staff for their hard work and dedication during the past year.

The chief executive, Tanya Curry, spoke to the annual report. She said that it had been a year like no other, and that she had no idea of what was to come when she had been appointed as interim chief executive at the beginning of 2020. The organisation had sought to work together across all three nations in a very different world. They had needed to be agile and responsive to external circumstances, seeking efficiencies and making the organisation relevant. The need to work from home meant new ways of working were essential and other changes included the move to new, smaller offices. However, everyone had pulled together to help fulfil the Ramblers mission which was to create a country where everyone had freedom to enjoy the outdoors on foot and to benefit from the experience.

The priorities to take this forward were:

- Growing awareness and engagement with Ramblers and what we do.
- Growing our membership and income.
- Commencing the culture change required to make the charity an inclusive, engaging and diverse organisation.

Tom Platt, director of advocacy and engagement, outlined the work of his team on the first priority. Walking was more popular than ever and there was a need to capitalise on this by raising awareness and shifting perceptions of the Ramblers. It was time therefore to refresh how the organisation presented itself to make the Ramblers feel more contemporary, relevant and distinctive. To this end, later in the year there would be a new website and the branding of the organisation would be refreshed. *Don't Lose Your Way* had been the flagship campaign of the last year; thousands of volunteers, many of whom were not members, had taken part in the mapping exercise which had identified over 49,000 possible unrecorded rights of way and this had attracted much media interest with articles in The Times, The Guardian and an item on the One Show. The report *The grass isn't greener for everyone*, which showed the inequality of access, had also received good coverage in The Telegraph, The Guardian and The New Statesman, as part of the campaign to influence the content of the Environment Bill. In Scotland, we had celebrated the *Out There* awards which had been important in attracting the interest of 18-to 26-year-olds, encouraging young people to explore the great outdoors for the first time. Tom thanked both staff and volunteer teams for their hard work on these and other projects during the year.

Sarah Marfleet, director of membership and fundraising, said that Ramblers had weathered the pandemic storm in membership terms. Although membership had dropped to 97,314 in May and June 2020, it had grown again to 99,408 by the end of the year and although there had been a further drop with the January lock-down there would be new opportunities for recruitment in the spring and summer. To support this, there would be several innovations and invitations. Membership products would be enhanced to appeal to more people, both through the led-walks programme and self-guided walks, with Apps to help in talking to the outside world. We would be inviting more people to join us, through sales and marketing and enhancing the local welcome. Alongside growing the community of supporters, united by our cause, there was also a need to diversify and grow other income sources e.g., new and existing financial supporters, crowd-funding opportunities, and a strong portfolio of corporate partners, trusts and foundations. A further three-year commitment from the Peoples Postcode Lottery (PPL) meant there was much to be hopeful about.

Rachael Bayley, director of operations and volunteering, reported that Ramblers had 22,000 volunteers providing support for members and the walking public, including the 90,000 *Wellbeing Walks* participants (the new name for *Ramblers Walking for Health*). In the first three months of 2020, much new training had been supplied e.g. first aid training and walks leadership. Throughout the pandemic, communication and support for volunteers had been crucial, with a 400% increase in emails to the volunteer support team, as they disseminated information about the lockdown regulations. To be able to supply that information, there had been much behind-the-scenes liaison with all three governments, outdoor organisations and sports bodies. A survey of volunteers in July had revealed that 84% of respondents considered the Ramblers to be a good place to volunteer and work was being undertaken to improve the training and support for all volunteers. *Assemble*, the new volunteer website, continued to evolve, providing news and advice, with all volunteer resources, including toolkits, being available on the document hub. New GB-wide training materials, including on walk leadership, are being made available on-line. 1,057 volunteers had already joined virtual training sessions and a new *Walks Manager* was being developed with a walking group of volunteers. Clusters were being developed as a means for Areas to network together and with staff to exchange information via virtual meetings. There was a great strength in the collaboration between staff, volunteers and external partners.

Michael Penny, honorary treasurer, introduced the financial report and accounts, which had been approved by the board of trustees, the auditor having declared a clean audit opinion. Surplus funds had increased because expenditure had dropped and income had increased over the last year. The increase in funds had resulted from PPL funding and from legacies, the decrease in expenditure level had arisen because of reduced activity at Area and Group during the pandemic, although clearly a reduction in activity was disappointing in terms of the charity's work. Membership income, including gift aid, had increased, despite fluctuating numbers, because of increases in gift aid. Legacy income was also good, rising to almost £1.8m, from 52 legacies, with a single legacy amounting to £400,000. Many thanks were due to those who had remembered the Ramblers in their wills. PPL funding was also steady, with between £2.6m and £2.9m being awarded in each of the last four years. In difficult circumstances savings had been achieved by making use of the government's furlough scheme, and by moving to smaller offices. The latter would result in a £160,000 pa savings in operating costs. Unrestricted reserves of £1.9m (three to four months of expenditure) meant that it had been possible to increase spending on rights of way and countryside protection work. It had been a strange year but overall, the organisation was in good financial shape. However, he remained mindful of the need to grow income. He thanked the finance team and Area and Group treasurers for their support throughout the year.

Questions on the annual report and accounts

The chair said that several questions had been received in advance of the meeting and were available, with answers, on the website. She invited further questions from the floor.

Charlie Bigley (Staffordshire Area) asked for a breakdown of the relative costs of the various IT systems, in particular *Assemble* and the Insight hub. Michael Penny said that he would review the question and answer initially given on the website.

Zac Kipling (Berkshire Area) asked about the *Walks Manager*. Rachael Bayley explained that this was the replacement for the Group Walks and Event Manager (GWEM).

5 Award of honorary life membership to Max Grant

Kate Ashbrook announced the award of honorary life membership to Max Grant in recognition of his long and dedicated service to the organisation since the 1970s. He had been active in Surrey and West Riding Areas and had spearheaded a campaign in the latter which had resulted in North Yorkshire County Council increasing its rights of way budget by £900,000. He had also served on the board of trustees before moving to Wales where he was now a vice president. Chris Hodgson, board of trustees and recently retired Welsh Council chair, said that Max's work in Wales had made a real impact on the ground. On Welsh Council Executive Committee, he had worked for devolution and on the development of the Ramblers Cymru constitution. He was also on the Cambrian Way Committee which had overseen the publication of a new book promoting the route and secured its waymarking. He had also been on

the Rights of Way and Access Group and had been involved in developing policy on re-wilding and on renewable energy. He fought tirelessly for rights of way and access and made things happen on the ground. Max was a great walker himself, being a Munro bagger.

Margaret Thomas thanked Council, on behalf of Max, for this recognition and for these kind words, saying that Max's efforts had been to ensure that everyone could enjoy the countryside as he had done (he had tackled not only the Scottish peaks but also those in England, Wales and Ireland) and that he had been helped in his work by the cooperation of so many other like-minded staff and volunteers. Kate Ashbrook thanked Max for all his work, describing him as one of our heroes.

6 Appointment of auditor

The firm of Crowe UK LLP was proposed by Chris Hodgson (board of trustees), seconded by Brian Reader (vice president), and approved by Council.

7 Election of the chair of the board of trustees

There were two candidates for this position. Rebecca Dawson and Peter Rookes. As a result of the ballot Rebecca Dawson was elected.

Result

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----|
| 1. | Rebecca Dawson | 94 |
| 2. | Peter Rookes | 25 |

8 Election of the honorary treasurer

There was only one candidate, Michael Penny, so he was re-elected for a second three-year term. The chair thanked Michael for his work and support during the last three years.

9 Election of members of the board of trustees

There were eight candidates for three vacancies (each for a three-year term). These were Mark Chung, Ronnie Forbes, Kamaljit Healy, Anne Jones, Rajan Madhok, Malcolm McDonnell, Audrey Osler and Lucy Robinson. As a result of the ballot the following were elected: Malcolm McDonnell, Lucy Robinson and Ronnie Forbes.

Result

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|
| 1. | Malcolm McDonnell | 53 |
| 2. | Lucy Robinson | 52 |
| 3. | Ronnie Forbes | 49 |
| 4. | Mark Chung | 48 |
| 5. | Kamaljit Healy | 48 |
| 6. | Rajan Madhok | 39 |
| 7. | Audrey Osler | 30 |
| 8. | Anne Jones | 24 |

The election of Rebecca Dawson as chair resulted in a vacancy for a two-year term on the Board. Ordinary member candidates who were unsuccessful in the 3-year ballot (who had indicated they were happy to do so) moved forward to a ballot for that place, along with Peter Rookes, who was eligible to stand for this vacancy. The candidates were Mark Chung, Kamaljit Healy, Peter Rookes, Anne Jones, Audrey Osler and Rajan Madhok. As a result of the ballot Mark Chung was elected.

Result

1.	Mark Chung	28
2.	Kamaljit Healy	25
3.	Peter Rookes	18
4.	Anne Jones	17
5.	Audrey Osler	15
6.	Rajan Madhok	12

Finally, because of the early retirement of an existing trustee, there was a vacancy for a one-year term on the board. Ordinary member candidates who were not successful in the 2-year ballot (who had indicated they were happy to do so), along with Kate Ashbrook, who was eligible to stand for the vacancy, moved forward to a ballot for that place. The candidates were Kate Ashbrook, Kamaljit Healy, Rajan Madhok, Peter Rookes, Anne Jones and Audrey Osler. As a result of the ballot, Kate Ashbrook was elected.

Result

1.	Kate Ashbrook	66
2.	Kamaljit Healy	11
3.	Rajan Madhok	11
4.	Peter Rookes	10
5.	Anne Jones	7
6.	Audrey Osler	5

10 Election of motions review committee members

There were six candidates for the five places on the motions review committee. These were John Esslemont, Elizabeth Lawie, Gwyn Lewis, Holly Matthews, Sylvia Popham and John Wainwright. As a result of the ballot the following were elected: John Esslemont, Gwyn Lewis, Holly Matthews, Sylvia Popham and John Wainwright.

Result

1.	Holly Matthews	89
2.	Gwyn Lewis	82
3.	John Wainwright	80
4.	Sylvia Popham	78
5.	John Esslemont	77
6.	Elizabeth Lawie	60

Elizabeth Lawie was thanked for her long years of service on the committee.

11 Report of the motions review committee

Council noted the report of the Motions Review Committee on 2021 motions. The Committee was thanked for its work.

12 Open motions: review on actions from previous years

Council noted the report of this review and the following points were raised.

The chair said that motion [2018 \[4\]](#) (Roadside signage of Public Rights of Way) was being left open because the situation needed to be monitored.

Brian Reader (Vice President) said that Surrey Area had been surprised to find that motion [2017 \[6\]](#) (Funding for restoring Lost Ways) was being recommended for closure. Surrey Area had applied for funding and it had been

refused. Tom Platt asked Brian Reader to send details of this refusal, saying that the *Don't Lose Your Way* was a priority and more announcements would be coming. The chair agreed that this motion should be kept open.

Des Garrahan (Inner London area) congratulated the board on having closed so many motions but expressed disappointment that little action appeared to have been taken on motion 2019 [7] (Diverse and representative General Council). He felt that Inner London Area had been disenfranchised in 2020 because the virtual GC meeting had been held during the working week and it did not appear that diversity data was being collected when Council members were appointed by Areas. He asked therefore what diversity data was being collected and when collection began. The chair said that the board was very aware of the need to improve diversity within the organisation and that information on gender balance and area turnover was being collected. Rachael Bayley said that work had begun to establish a baseline of diversity across the organisation (members, volunteers and staff). Improving diversity was one of the top three priorities for Ramblers.

Bernard Gill (Gloucestershire Area) asked about motion 2020 [6] (Minimum Width for Fenced Footpaths). He wanted to know if this was still being monitored and said he would like a progress report on both this and motion 2019 [5] (Erosion of riverbank paths).

Terry Pollard (Oxfordshire Area) reported that in respect of motion 2020 [3] (Opposition to the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway), the government had cancelled the road but it appeared that associated developments were still going ahead.

The chair reminded Council that just because a motion had been closed did not mean that work on the issue had ceased.

13 Motions submitted to General Council 2021

[1] REMOVAL OF PROCEDURES FOR TEMPORARY SUSPENSION FROM THE ARTICLES [Special resolution to amend the Articles; for a special resolution to be passed, 75% of those Council members voting must be in favour]

The following motion was proposed by Rebecca Dawson (board of trustees), and seconded by Malcolm McDonnell (board of trustees).

It is resolved by way of a special resolution that Article 15 of the Articles of Association be amended as follows.

Delete Article 15.4 and renumber the existing Article 15.3 as 15.4.

Insert the following as a new Article 15.3:

15.3 The *Board of Trustees* may determine policies and procedures to permit the temporary suspension of some or all of the rights and privileges, as defined in Article 17.1, of a *member* or *members*, when such temporary suspension is considered necessary to protect the lawful interests of *Ramblers*.

Insert the following additional paragraph at the end of the (new) Article 15.4:

The *Board of Trustees*, in its sole discretion, may specify a period of time during which an application for readmission by a *member* that has been expelled in accordance with this Article will not be considered for approval in accordance with Article 15.1.

In Article 15.5(e) replace “15.3” by “15.4”.

Delete Article 15.7.

92% of Council voted in favour of the motion and 8% abstained. The motion was carried.

[2] ACTION NEEDED TO INCREASE THE RAMBLERS MEMBERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

The following motion was proposed by Allen Pestell (South Yorkshire & North East Derbyshire Area) and seconded by Jeremy Kenyon (South Yorkshire & North East Derbyshire Area).

This General Council urges the Board of Trustees to increase its efforts to retain our current membership and recruit new members to the Ramblers. In recent years we have seen a loss of over 10,000 members. This loss cannot be overlooked if we wish to renew and sustain the organisation and ensure that the Ramblers is seen as relevant to current and future generations.

84% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 6% voted against, and 10% abstained. The motion was carried.

[3] CLUSTERS, COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The following motion was proposed by Alan Goffee (Essex Area) and seconded by Charles Shepherd (Lake District Area).

This General Council applauds the establishment of clusters, communities of practice and Special Interest Groups. As well as congratulating the Board of Trustees, the Senior Leadership Team and staff for this initiative and their continued commitment to change, Council urges the Board to evaluate the effectiveness of these new initiatives, consult with membership, extend their remit, resource them adequately and report back to General Council 2022.

Particularly in the case of the Special Interest Group concerned with directly elected Mayors, Council requests the Board to ensure that this group continues to meet following elections and expands its membership to include more Ramblers members from relevant Areas.

91% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 3% voted against and 6% abstained. The motion was carried.

[4] PRIORITISE IT DEVELOPMENT FOR SUPPORTING, ENCOURAGING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

The following motion was proposed by Charlie Bigley (Staffordshire Area) and seconded by Geoff Mullett (Lincolnshire Area)

This General Council acknowledges the difficulty that Groups have in supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers. To help address this, Council urges the Board of Trustees to prioritise those IT developments that directly assist the Groups. These will include help in

- managing their email distribution lists
- improving the information for membership secretaries
- logging into and running their own websites
- providing a programme of walks and coach rambles.

The following amendment was proposed by the motions review committee:

Insert "Areas and" before both occurrences of the word "Groups".

The amendment was accepted by both the proposers and by Council.

The following amendment was proposed by Richard May (board of trustees) and seconded by Helen Tranter (board of trustees)

In the second sentence replace the words "prioritise those" with "consider."
In the third sentence replace the word "will" with "may"

The amendment was not accepted by the proposers. After debate, 45% of Council voted for the amendment, 47% voted against the amendment and 8% abstained. The amendment was lost.

The substantive motion reads:

This General Council acknowledges the difficulty that Areas and Groups have in supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers. To help address this, Council urges the Board of Trustees to prioritise those IT developments that directly assist the Areas and Groups. These will include help in

- managing their email distribution lists
- improving the information for membership secretaries
- logging into and running their own websites
- providing a programme of walks and coach rambles.

71% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 21% against and 8% abstained. The motion, as amended, was carried.

[5] APPROVAL OF NEW FOOTPATH APPLICATIONS BY LOCAL COMMITTEES

The following motion was proposed by Dave Barraclough (Cheshire East Area) and seconded by Stephen Butterfield (Cheshire East Area):

This General Council is concerned about the administrative cost to Highway Authorities in England and Wales of processing applications for new rights of way, or amendments to existing rights of way. This will have the effect of reducing funding available for footpath maintenance work. Council therefore asks the Board of Trustees to clarify that such applications should only be made in the name of Ramblers, or have any support from Ramblers, if approved in advance by the relevant Area or Group committee. Council further urges Areas and Groups to consider, before approving an application, whether there will be significant and sufficient benefits to the local footpath network.

The following amendment was proposed by Brian Reader (vice president) and seconded by Elliot Cairnes (Surrey Area):

Delete the first two sentences.

In the third sentence delete “Council therefore” and insert in its place “This General Council”.

In the third sentence also delete “such applications” and insert in its place “applications for unrecorded rights of way, or amendments to existing rights of way, in England and Wales”.

The amendment was not accepted by the proposers. After debate, 44% of Council voted in favour of the amendment, 40% against and 16% abstained. The amendment was carried.

The following amendment was proposed by Brian Reader (vice president) and seconded by Elliot Cairnes (Surrey Area):

Delete any reference to “footpath” and insert in its place “rights of way”

In the final sentence delete “will be” and insert in its place “are likely to be”

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by Council.

The substantive motion reads:

This General Council asks the Board of Trustees to clarify that applications for unrecorded rights of way, or amendments to existing rights of way, in England and Wales should only be made in the name of Ramblers,

or have any support from Ramblers, if approved in advance by the relevant Area or Group committee. Council further urges Areas and Groups to consider, before approving an application, whether there are likely to be significant and sufficient benefits to the local rights of way network.

47% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 47% against the motion and 6% abstained. In accordance with paragraph 22.1 of the Articles of Association, if the votes are level the chair does not have a casting vote, and as there was no simple majority (as required by Article 21.1) the *status quo* prevailed and this motion fell.

[6] POLICY ON RIGHT TO ROAM

The following motion was proposed by Keith Wadd (Vice President) and seconded by Mike Church (West Riding Area):

With a view to adopting a Right to Roam policy for England that is achievable and commands widespread support from members and the wider walking community, this General Council calls on the Board of Trustees to undertake a full review of the Ramblers' present position, including its response to the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act, and the appropriateness of seeking to campaign for "off-path" walking in open countryside not covered by the Act.

21.5% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 75% against and 3.5% abstained. The motion was lost.

[7] DAMAGE TO RESTRICTED BYWAYS

The following motion was proposed by Peter James (Norfolk Area) and seconded by Julian White (Norfolk Area):

This General Council is concerned by the damage caused to restricted byways in England and Wales by the passage of motorised vehicles and calls upon the Board of Trustees to conduct a countrywide survey of the problem and make recommendations for action.

The following amendment was proposed by Edward Lifton (Avon Area) and seconded by Keith Weller (Avon Area):

Replace "and make recommendations for action" with "and consider making recommendations for action"

The amendment was accepted by the proposers and by Council.

The substantive motion reads:

This General Council is concerned by the damage caused to restricted byways in England and Wales by the passage of motorised vehicles and calls upon the Board of Trustees to conduct a countrywide survey of the problem and consider making recommendations for action.

24% of Council voted in favour of the motion, 65% against and 11% abstained. The motion was lost.

11 Closing remarks

The outgoing Chair, Kate Ashbrook, thanked all Council members for their cooperation in meeting in difficult circumstances, noting that some of the important issues aired that day might have been better dealt with as matters for discussion rather than as motions with the accompanying restrictions on debate. She also thanked Ramblers staff and her fellow Board members for their support both during the meeting and throughout the year and said that it was sad to be losing Peter Rookes and Chris Hodgson from the board. She had reached the end of her three years as Chair and believed that the organisation had come a long way over that time, making particular progress with the development of new IT systems and the *Don't Lose Your Way* campaign. She reminded Council that there were only 1,719 days left until the definitive-map cut-off date on 1 January 2026, although efforts were being made to get that provision amended. Other campaigning opportunities included seeking the inclusion of paths and access in the new

2021 minutes

agricultural subsidy regime and the local elections which provided the opportunity to lobby for paths and green spaces. There was much to be done to make Ramblers relevant to all walkers but we would walk forward together.

Kate said that the Ramblers had elected its first woman chair in 1995, and she was very pleased to be handing over to another woman chair, Rebecca Dawson, who was a great communicator and enthusiast for the Ramblers and who would be able to extend its reach and relevance. Kate would support her and do everything she could to make sure the Ramblers remained a fighting organisation.

The incoming chair, Rebecca Dawson, thanked Kate for her kind and inspiring words and thanked her trustees the significant amount time which they gave up for their board work. She thanked Kate for her leadership and said that she had left large walking boots to fill.

This was a time of significant challenges, not just those presented by the pandemic, but the pandemic had shown the need to adapt and to rise to opportunities. She also thanked those who had put themselves forward as candidates for the board, a diverse range of people with excellent skills, who would reach out to those who have discovered walking in the last 12 months. There was much to be done, but the Ramblers was moving in the right direction and the board was behind the proposed priorities.

Rebecca finished by thanking everyone for their patience during the videoconference and for their contributions. She offered particular thanks to Simon Kellas and the staff team for the organisation of the event. She hoped everyone would be able to meet in person for General Council 2022.



APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Ordinary resolution to reappoint Crowe UK LLP for the next year and to authorise the board of trustees to fix the remuneration.

Crowe UK LLP has been our auditor since 2010. During that time there have been changes in the staff finance team and a change of partner and different managers at Crowe working on the annual audit which the board believes helps ensure appropriate rigour and independence of Crowe's work.

Crowe has continued to provide a high quality and responsive level of service and support during their audit of the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2021.

As required by our Articles of Association the auditor is re-appointed annually by members at the annual meeting of General Council and the board proposes their re-appointment to audit the accounts for the year ending 30 September 2022.



APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENTS

President

Stuart Maconie, our current president, has been nominated for a sixth annual term. No other nominations were received.

We are delighted that Stuart has agreed to serve another year as president. Over the last year he has continued to provide invaluable support for the Ramblers and promoted our activities with appearances on national television, radio, press and online.

Vice presidents

No new nominations for the position of vice president were received.

The following current elected vice presidents are proposed for re-election en bloc at the meeting:

- Sir Richard Lloyd Jones
- Jonathan Kipling
- Cath MacKay
- Alan Mattingly
- Dave Morris
- Malcolm Petyt
- Brian Reader
- Paddy Tipping
- Keith Wadd

NB Those vice presidents who hold that office by virtue of being past presidents automatically remain vice presidents without the need for formal re-election. They are:

- Kate Ashbrook
- Andrew Bennett
- Julia Bradbury
- Chris Hall
- Mike Harding
- The Rt. Hon. the Lord (Chris) Smith PC
- Janet Street-Porter



ELECTION OF MOTIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

The motions review committee consists of five members elected every year from recent Council members, plus two members of the board of trustees. Committee members hold office for one year at a time but there is no limit to the number of years they can serve on the committee.

The committee decides in a fair and unbiased way the order in which the motions will be debated to ensure that, in the event of there being insufficient time to debate all the motions that have been submitted, those motions which the committee believes will be of greatest importance to council members will be considered. Another role of the committee is to clarify poorly worded motions, to help to ensure better informed debate. Other powers are ruling out of order motions similar to those debated at either of the two previous AGMs unless the subject is topical, and compositing similar motions to make best use of the limited time available for debate.

This year there are five candidates for five vacancies so no ballot is required.

- Sophie Clissold-Lesser
- John Esslemont
- Gwyn Lewis
- Holly Matthews
- John Wainwright

SOPHIE CLISSOLD-LESSER

I have just completed 5 years on the Ramblers Board of Trustees and have also sat as a trustee representative on the Motions Review Committee for several years. For more than 20 years I've held governance roles in various charities from the new to the long-established, local to national, across many different sectors. As a passionate believer in the Ramblers, and its purpose, I want to continue to support the organisation with the learning I have from both my charity work and my day job (as a project and change manager). The Ramblers has had a challenging period progressing on a transformation journey to ensure, as an organisation, it can continue to serve its charitable objects and to deliver for its members whilst responding to changes in society, technology, legislation, economy and a pandemic! Part of that journey needs to include reviewing and evolving governance within the Ramblers - for example, the Motions Review Committee was until recently the Agenda Committee. I am enthusiastic to continue supporting the Ramblers to ensure that, as well as being there for our current members, it continues to grow and attract new walkers and will be there for generations of future walkers.

JOHN ESSELMONT

I have been a Council Member for many years and have a good understanding of Ramblers' democracy and governing documents. My help in constitutional revisions has been valued both by Ramblers and by other organisations. I served on the Agenda Committee for eleven years before it became the Motions Review Committee. I am currently Treasurer and Acting Secretary of my Area and have held various other Area or

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Group offices since 1985; in addition, I am an experienced walk leader, with an intimate knowledge of my local rights of way network and its problems. Such varied experience means that I appreciate both the concerns of ordinary members and the implications of our status as a charitable company. Though I am now retired, my working life began as a technical author, and in my subsequent career correct use of English remained important. I believe in the importance for our democracy of Council's discussion of motions and consider that debate is more effective if motions are clearly and concisely worded. If re-elected to the Motions Review Committee, I shall try to ensure that next year's motions accurately reflect the intentions of those submitting them.

GWYN LEWIS

Sad thought it may sound, I continue to find the work of the Motions Review Committee both interesting and worthwhile. I'm seeking re-election so that I can continue to give the Committee a Wales perspective to the submitted motions (necessary as the Welsh Government's and UK Government's approaches to countryside and environmental matters increasingly diverge), in addition to knowledge/experience gained from being very much a hands-on Ramblers Volunteer. Since joining the Ramblers in 2004 I've been active in my Group (inc. Footpath Officer, Walk Leader, Rambles Officer), Area (inc. Footpath Secretary, General Secretary, Membership Secretary), and Welsh Council Executive (inc. Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee Member, Welsh Council member of the Board of Trustees). I joined Ramblers after taking early retirement from working 27 year with the Nationwide Building Society, initially in the branch network and the final 16 years as a Retail Auditor. The need to both follow and review regulation compliance has honed my attention to detail and the importance of clarity. Away from rambling I'm a Cardiff City FC season ticket holder (too near the drop for comfort); read Crime/Thrillers (rarely guess the ending); watch TV (films and current affairs mainly).

HOLLY MATTHEWS

I wish to apply to join the motions review committee for a second year as I have the required qualifications, experience, skills, enthusiasm and abilities to fulfil this role. I feel like I have only just got started. I joined the Ramblers in 2008 and have been an active member for 14 years. My journey in the Ramblers started with me leading walks that year to joining Surrey Young Walkers committee the following year. I have been the chair of Surrey Young Walkers since 2011, so that's 10 years now. Having been given an insight into Surrey Area and wanting to make a difference I became chair in 2019. I currently in my 4th year. I really enjoy being a member of the Ramblers and have gained so much from joining these committee. I would be lying if I said that becoming a member of The Ramblers hasn't changed my life and I wouldn't be where I am today without having joined Surrey Young Walkers. Without even knowing it, I have managed gain a really good group of friends, have met my life partner, have discovered and explored most of the countryside within Surrey and beyond.

JOHN WAINWRIGHT

I joined one of the first Ramblers young persons' groups 21 years ago. I have been an active member of the Ramblers since then. I lead walks and weekends away. I have held a number of group committee roles. I am currently an Area Membership Secretary, a role I have held for over 10 years, and a footpath checker. I am a Civil Servant, working in government finance, so have an eye for detail and experience in ensuring compliance with rules and procedures. I have a good understanding of the procedures of General Council, as I have attended most of the General Councils since I joined the Ramblers. I have served on the Motions Review Committee and the preceding Agenda Committee for 5 years. I appreciate the value of the motions from all parts of the Ramblers and wish to continue to be involved with ensuring that they are presented in the most effective way.



ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The Ramblers is governed by a board of trustees, which comprises a chair and honorary treasurer (elected by General Council for three-year terms); nine “ordinary” members (elected by General Council for three year-terms; an appointee of Ramblers Cymru and an appointee of Ramblers Scotland; and up to two members co-opted by the board itself.

This year there are three “ordinary member” vacancies on the board of trustees, each beginning on 9 April 2022. The three new trustees will replace Kate Ashbrook and Sophie Clissold-Lesser, who retire from the board in April, and Jonathan Bergwerk, who resigned in December last year. **There are seven candidates (shown in alphabetical order) for the three vacancies, so a ballot is required.**

- Bola Anike
- Lucy Armitage
- Bekah Cork
- Clive Hilton
- Peter Rookes
- Sara Whitby
- Anne Whitehead

As well as written election statements (see pages 19 – 32), each candidate has recorded a short video in support of their candidature. **A link to the videos can be found at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/gc>.**

The call for nominations

The Ramblers welcomes all sections of the community to join with us to achieve our vision and we welcomed applications from all parts of the membership.

However, the board of trustees recognises that its membership does not currently represent the diversity of people in the walking community or wider society. Black, Asian, ethnic minority, and younger people are currently under-represented on the board, and our call for trustee nominations this year highlighted that we want to change this.

We actively encouraged applications from people from these under-represented communities and age groups, to diversify our board membership and benefit from different voices and experiences in our decision making. We wish to maintain what is currently a good gender balance.

People with proven knowledge or experience in one or more of the following areas would also bring useful skills to the board: Fundraising and income generation; charity legal and governance; charity finance; people and organisational development; diversity, inclusion and belonging; campaigns; and strategic communications and marketing.

Further details about the board of trustees is available at:

www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/how-we-are-run/about-the-board-of-trustees

BOLA ANIKE

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

I have been self employed running my own small business for many years. This has enabled me to develop ways to market and create awareness of myself as a brand in order to grow my business. I have experience of interacting and engaging with different types of people. I am an effective communicator, able to adapt to different situations and people. I enjoy the outdoors and love walking, especially either alone or in a group. As a single parent and a business owner, financial management was a priority to make sure that the books are balanced, so to say, at the end of every month. I understand the importance of due diligence in all that I do and how lack of this can impact on me and the people around me. I am a mortgage broker so, understand my fiduciary responsibilities to my clients and the organisation that I represent.

Whilst I have never been a trustee before, I am willing and able to learn quickly to contribute to the Ramblers and to be a positive trustee. I am passionate about creating improving opportunities for everyone to enjoy the great outdoors. I am good at networking and creating and maintaining relationships understanding that everyone can be met at their level. I find that going out and enjoying the green spaces around me clears my head, refocuses my mind and I want to be able to share this with everyone.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

I am a member of a local group of people who get together socially every month to discuss various topics to cover everything about being human. The topics range from politics and religion from one end to food and relationships. The group is diverse in age, beliefs, culture etc but it works. Each person comes with their own beliefs, interpretations and understanding. I don't always agree with some of their positions on certain topics but I can accommodate every one. I believe in 'live and let live'. The most important thing for me is to see the whole person.

Every Sunday, I walk with different groups of people and have the opportunity to discuss various topics with different people over a 5-7 hour walk. I need to be accommodating and accepting of the people who may not always share my views in all things.

I hosted foreign students in my home in the past. Some have come from countries where women are expected to do everything at home. I have gently but firmly pointed out to my students that in England, this is not so but have also understood their own position which is culturally different to mine. One of them stayed with me for 4 months even though he was originally supposed to change host family after 2 weeks!

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

I am a woman, African and middle aged. I challenge peoples' stereotype everyday. Diversity for me is about accepting, recognising, respecting and valuing and appreciating differences based on gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual and orientation. I believe that since the planet is made of 7 billion people, then there are 7 billion differences, each person unique and beautiful in their own way and should be celebrated and appreciated. Each person has value and should be seen as a person and an individual

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I was at a party last week and there was a group call to take photographs. The photographer called out that all the short people should stand in front of the tall people. He didn't mean to be rude, but I don't think he realised that one of the people there was quite short. The lady got really upset and walked away. I went over to her and she told me what was said. I comforted her and called the photographer to the side to explain what happened. He was apologetic and rephrased his call out..

LUCY ARMITAGE

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

Walking and running have seen me through 3 years of care for my fantastic Mum, along with my Dad's gradual journey through Alzheimer's.

The solace and therapy of nature during such a vulnerable period have left me determined to play my part in the preservation of the outside world; ensuring the right to roam for everyone. The Ramblers have consistently reminded me that there is strength in a tolerant and compassionate community. It would be a privilege to play a more active role here.

I'd bring my experience as a communicator and catalyst (producing radio and TV – where teams of people come together to make extraordinary things happen) and as a carer, focussing on the power of quiet connection.

I regularly manage budgets on a large and small scale.

After 25 years in London, I moved first to Kent (in 2017), and then to East Sussex. I'm regularly struck by how different life is in a coastal town, compared to life as a commuter on the Northern Line.

I walk with the East Kent, West Kent, Beachy Head and Brighton groups. I'm a cyclist and long distance runner.

The baton for protecting nature has been passed on to our generation, and it's our collective responsibility to engage in conversations with incoming supporters and protectors, listening to their needs and ideas. Together, we can ensure that the Ramblers protect, improve and enhance the outdoor world, along with the physical and mental health of local communities, for decades to come.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

As the producer of a mainstream TV series, filming abroad for four months of the year, I managed the welfare and safety of seventy people from the UK and Spain. Whilst the priority for the production company was the delivery of an award-winning series - both on time and on budget - this was balanced against the varying perspectives of the cast and crew; whether that was the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of working abroad in a sunny country, moving up the career ladder, learning Spanish/learning English, exploring the local area, burning the candle at both ends or playing away from home.

My job was to provide a pastoral and managerial presence, troubleshooting where necessary on a day-to-day basis and reporting back to our London base. I learnt a huge amount in this role; providing approachable, compassionate and firm leadership, not being afraid to ask questions, knowing when to delegate and deciding when to turn to other experts for support. I was the first point of contact for influential and inspiring visitors arriving from the UK, acting as an ambassador for the production company and providing a warm welcome.

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As a team, we all got to know each other extremely well and worked together towards a common goal; forming firm friendships, gaining all sorts of experience and staying safe. Loneliness and homesickness were avoided as far as possible, and a high quality production was delivered to our commissioners, meeting (or sometimes exceeding) their expectations.

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

Diversity allows for people from all walks of life - every background, ability, location, age, culture, creed, sexuality, political view and personality to come together with a shared value: in the case of the Ramblers, that shared value is the freedom to enjoy the Great British Outdoors on foot, and to benefit from the experience.

Throughout my time as a freelance producer and script editor, I've maintained a determination to ensure that all British voices are heard; encouraging and nurturing writers from backgrounds which are underrepresented by the British media. I will always seek out understated people with something unique to express, and would be more than willing to do that for the Ramblers.

The Ramblers website and app are fantastic for offering up walks right across the UK. We could ensure that our doors are open even more widely by (for example) a] highlighting walks that are accessible via public transport, b] flagging up car share opportunities, or c] featuring routes recommended by recognisable role models - from Angelica Bell and Ade Adepitan to Reggie Yates and Nida Manzoor. Creating a visible and inspiring presence of role-model-Ramblers who every potential member can relate to would lead to an ever greater sense of inclusion and belonging for everyone, whether they already benefit - or want to benefit - from the joy of long or short walks.

BEKAH CORK

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

I've recently moved back to England after 5 years in Scotland, serving on the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee since 2020 and as Vice Convener since 2021. I also served as Group Chair of Glasgow Young Walkers for 3 years leading the group from near dissolution to rebounding membership and a flourishing walks programme. The Ramblers to me has been a place to meet new people and cultivate lifelong friendships, somewhere I've learned new skills, pushed my physical boundaries and grown in confidence. Spurred on by the difference walking and the Ramblers has made in my life, I've been determined to share that with as many people as I can.

Being involved in the 'Out There Award' was particularly inspiring. As a group Chair I felt it was important to meet participants, support them on the course and introduce them to our walking group. Some participants went from having with very little experience walking to becoming regular Ramblers walk participants, challenging themselves physically, going from low level walks to taking on strenuous mountain adventures and a number then going on to become walk leaders. Schemes such as these run by the Ramblers have made a huge difference to young people's lives giving them the tools to encourage safe and responsible enjoyment of the outdoors.

I believe fervently in the Ramblers' mission to make the outdoors a welcoming environment for all and I want to support the Board of Trustees in their mission to make that a reality.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

In my professional life I work with a variety of different people and often need to encourage those with differing opinions to collaborate towards a common goal. As a natural do-er and project manager, I've had to adapt my style to make sure all voices in the room are heard. I have learned to remain curious for longer to enable those who may not speak up at first to contribute.

When serving as Area Secretary for North Strathclyde Area Ramblers, I was the first young walker to hold an Honorary Officer role for many years. I had to adapt my style to encourage new ways of working to the Area without alienating longer standing members of the Area Council. I encouraged small changes over time including greater use of remote meetings which are likely to live on beyond the pandemic, administrative efficiencies and encouraging more sharing of ideas between groups to celebrate best practice across the Area. When I stepped down as Area Secretary I encouraged more younger Ramblers members to take on roles with the Area so that the Area can continue to introduce new ideas and views.

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

I work in Classical Music, where increasing diversity is a key priority for ensuring the ongoing future of performing organisations. I have the privilege to introduce artists and repertoire to audiences and it is my responsibility to work towards ensuring those who perform with us represent the society around us, if we are to continue to receive public funding. To me, diversity is encouraging and welcoming the input of those

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who do not immediately fit the mould and challenging the attitudes of those who wish to retain the status quo.

For the Ramblers, if we remain comfortable and only encourage those with the same views and image as ourselves, we will not survive. I would challenge the stereotype of Ramblers walks being more about the tea breaks than the walking and instead showcase the huge diversity of walkers we welcome. From those trying out a new hobby for the first time to those who take on adventures that others can only dream of. We're a community of all ages and abilities looking to welcome anyone who wants a piece of the joy we experience when walking.

CLIVE HILTON

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

Although I am now retired, I have held senior management positions in industry for over 50 years. I have started three businesses, developed them over the years and then sold them. Consequently, I have skills in managing both individuals and teams, arranging training, monitoring performance, setting goals, recruitment of personnel and dealing with disciplinary procedures.

I have been the author of technical journals, quality manuals and was involved in the compilation of a national technical specification, attending many meetings in London over a two year period.

I was a volunteer for the Prince's Trust for approximately 6 years. I initially acted as a Mentor but then helped to deliver programmes for young people and was a regular on the panel that approved Business Plan submissions in order to obtain funding.

I have also had experience in submitting an application to the National Lottery and Sport England to apply for funding to construct an all weather football pitch.

Finally, I am currently Chair of the Bolton Ramblers group and hence involved in the continuous development of the group to improve the benefits of being a member of the Ramblers and to support the volunteers involved with our group.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

Being Chair of the Bolton Ramblers Group means that I have to listen to various and different opinions on how we run our group. This situation will often occur at our committee meetings when there can be varied and different views by individuals on the discussion of a particular topic.

I ensure that everyone is encouraged to state their view to the committee and after reviewing everyone's comments then we mutually decide the most appropriate way forward. I may not necessarily agree with the proposal but my task is to see fair play and to abide by whatever decision the majority of the committee decide.

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

I think that my most relevant involvement with diversity was with Princes's Trust.

The applicants for Princes's Trust had to be under the age of 30 but they were of many different ethnic backgrounds. There were both male and females, ex-offenders, people from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, people who had difficulty communicating or poor language skills, people with disability issues and people who may not have experienced the British culture in general.

However, Princes's Trust included everyone and all volunteers were encouraged to ensure that everyone

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was treated with respect and included.

I have never experienced a serious problem with diversity and believe that all people must be treated equally irrespective of their background, colour or culture.

DR PETER ROOKES

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

I bring to the Board passion and experience of walking, charity governance, and health and wellbeing:-

- I regularly lead local walks of different lengths. As a previous Ramblers Board member for 4 years, 2.5 as Vice Chair, I attended 15 AGMs around Scotland, England and Wales, usually accompanied by local walks. This, together with membership of Warwickshire Area Council enables me to keep in touch with local walkers, to hear their concerns and aspirations.
- Partnership working with other organisations with complementary objectives enables us to make the best use of available resources and experience, which is generally welcomed by funders and the general public. As Chair of the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council Governance Committee, I have contributed towards our organisational governance and cooperation between different charities, particularly during the pandemic. Our fortnightly Connecting Communities programme, which I co-host on local radio, brings together representatives of different organisations. One programme we featured the Ramblers, Sustrans and the Active Wellbeing Society in a discussion about Urban Walking and Cycling.
- As my professional background is nursing and healthcare in the UK and overseas, I am enthusiastic about Walking for Health, and our relaunched Wellbeing Walks, and Friendship Walks jointly organised with Cruse for bereaved people. These are important initiatives for combating the increase in loneliness and isolation, particularly amongst older and otherwise vulnerable people, which we became more aware of during the pandemic. The Social Prescribing programme, which is promoted by NHS England, is a great opportunity for facilitating referrals to the Ramblers.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

I have often had to adapt my style to suit different cultures and circumstances:-

- As a nurse working in clinical, educational and managerial positions, it is frequently necessary to adapt styles from when a quick decision is needed to when a more considered approach is appropriate. Working in multidisciplinary teams comprising medical, nursing, technical, financial and administrative leads, who all come with different perspectives, it is important to hear all points of view in arriving at a decision, which is often a balance between clinical, managerial and financial priorities. As a nurse, I have had to judge when to compromise, and when to press a point in the interest of safe patient care.
- During my 12 years living and working in Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Sub-Saharan Africa and India in health service development, it was important to view different cultural approaches with an open mind. What I learnt is the ability to really listen to what is being said, and being open to adapting and changing my mind based on the points that others have made. Sufficient time and appropriate seating is necessary to encourage everyone to freely express their view.
- It is my experience that consensus management, whenever possible, will gain maximum ownership of a decision. As a membership organisation, it is important that ordinary members of the Ramblers feel that

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their views are heard. I have used questionnaires when anonymity was important, or a series of focus groups when the issue benefited from an exchange of views

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

I see diversity as encouraging and welcoming people of all backgrounds, particularly with the protected characteristics, eg race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, and disability, and making adjustments to practice, enabling everyone to participate on an equitable basis. It recognises that many people face life from systemic disadvantage, but if encouraged, can bring different perspectives to enrich the organisation. It is important to do this in a sensitive, non-patronising manner.

Examples of where I have promoted diversity are:-

- I challenge the term 'hard to reach', with the more accurate 'seldom heard'. if we want to engage with people from an Asian or Caribbean background, for example, or of Muslim or Sikh faith, it is necessary to go to where they are to engage with them. We have used this approach in the Scout movement, resulting in the vibrant development of Muslim Scouts. My experience is that often when derogatory statements are made about particular groups in our society, such views arise from lack of association with that group, for example, particular ethnic groups, faith members or people with a disability.
- The late Jo Cox MP stated 'We have More in Common than that which separates us', which spawned the More in Common movement. We introduced a Birmingham Scout and Guide More in Common badge based on activities demonstrating welcome and friendship towards people who are different from ourselves, which I dedicated to my late wife, Jeanie. In just over a year we have awarded over 1000 badges.

SARA WHITBY

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

Having Cumbrian ancestors inspired a love for the Lake District and a passion for walking in general. As a young, female walker I appreciate being able to go on group Rambler walks.

Currently publicity officer for Sheffield 20s/30s (SWG); applying skills from digital workshops.

With the fact average age of a Rambler member is 67years and the potential that perhaps the general public may see the Ramblers as being for white, middle class retired people; I'm trying on Instagram to show wider diversity, accessibility of the group and to connect with younger walkers.

I have been creating profiles of walk leaders and committee members to encourage others to volunteer.

Last year I organised a Beat the Street team which gained a third place.

SWG, have recently collaborated with Mind and Merell. I use Instagram to get mental health messages across for example around Christmas and Valentine's day when members and those in the wider community may be feeling low and lonely. I'm also making contacts with other Rambler groups and groups such as Muslim Hikers ,We Go Out Too and Access the Dales.

Worked as a Governance administrator during the pandemic and during that time I had a project to look into diversifying committees therefore I have this knowledge to contribute including learnings from this work in a pandemic. Also I'm passionate about the opportunity to capitalise on the interest in walking following people's daily walks and look at new ways of working post pandemic.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

Recent experience as a Governance Administrator. which has given me a valuable experience of that environment and how differing opinions are handled within university committees. Working in this environment was an adaption from the rest of my career in the clinical trials industry.

Within the clinical trials industry, I have worked in global virtual teams. This has been involved being sensitive to different cultural norms. The colleagues I have worked with have had conflicting demands for their time due to other work and home priorities. As a data manager my priorities are different to other team members such as statistician; I have had to understand these different perspectives and balance respecting them with the overall good of the patients and the study. During my time in a cancer hospital I required help from doctors and nurses to complete the data in patient's case report forms but the priority of the medical personal was seeing patients in clinic and speaking to on the phone; I had to be understanding of that and find suitable times to collaborate with them ensuring I was fully prepared with patient notes etc. to enable their involvement to be as brief as possible.

I relish the spectrum of personalities and views within Rambler groups including older groups I have walked with. I do not think any age group or other demographic should be ignored by the Ramblers, it is a question of targeting marketing material. From my governance work I understand change takes time.

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

As a Governance administrator I considered diversity to cover protected characteristics; age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, neurodiversity and also diversity of thought.

As a Governance administrator I was researching how to increase diversity on committees. I created marketing material to advertise vacant committee roles using the textio tool to help me use language that would encourage diversity. I was also developing a glossary of governance terms and frequently asked question web pages to help those who may have been intimidated from joining committees because of the mystifying language associated with committees. I considered adaptations that could help encourage wider participation in committees.

In February 2020 I took part in a session to learn how to guide a visually impaired walker from Belgium. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic then the progress was slowly than anticipated. But I have kept in touch with this walker and encouraged them to attend another walk in December 2021. I encouraged people to help lead and also it was shown that a visually impaired walker does not slow groups down!

Although not formally diagnosed, I consider myself to be on the autistic spectrum. I have worked with others with neurodiversities and this is also something that I come across in the group. Following an incident with a neurodivergent member in a York brewery I had to condole another neurodivergent member. Later I followed up with the brewery to highlight the diversity issues that had arisen to ensure they were aware for the future.

ANNE WHITEHEAD

Explain how your skills, knowledge and experience will support the board in delivering the Ramblers' mission and strategic objectives over the next three years.

I believe some of the long standing institutions in Britain have an ageing membership and there is a lack of diversity in terms of age, sexuality and race. My interest in becoming a Ramblers Trustee is because I would like the organisation I love to engage far more actively and effectively with a wider, more diverse public. Prior to retirement I worked in the NHS predominantly in service improvement and engagement. This trust covers one of the most diverse areas of the country. I also worked in Camden in Central and North London Hospital as Equality and Diversity Lead and Service Improvement.

Outside my work for the NHS I was chair of planning for the London Borough of Harrow. This has a large area of Green Belt along with typical suburban setting. This is always challenging as you have to manage both the developers and residents and requires skill in communication as well as a sound knowledge in planning law.

I am a founding Trustee for Harrow Law Centre which is a highly successful local free facility, much of the work supporting refugees and asylum seekers, excluded children and families in housing crisis.

I have a BSc in Environmental Studies and my dissertation was on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme so I have an in-depth understanding of the conflicts of those who work the land and those who wish to access the land. I also studied ecology and climate science and naturally I am a keen walker.

Outline a time when you have had to adapt your style to work with a wide variety of people with differing opinions, priorities and perspectives.

The very nature of my working life has been to adapt to the needs of patients, public and staff. Working in diverse community's 'one size fits all' definitely does not work. In Somali communities I worked with, printing information even in their own language was not effective; getting elders of the community to inform, whether it was on healthy diets, breastfeeding or exercise, worked better they trusted their own community; so much of the work was through community leaders in some of the communities I worked with.

I ran classes on health improvement for some years and Gujarati ladies would only attend if it was women only and in their own language. This created an environment that was safe and comfortable and they enjoyed themselves.

As part of my community health improvement work we encouraged people to exercise, mainly by walking as its cheap and accessible. I have heard people say that ethnic minorities don't walk (which I have challenged), but in my experience the people I supported wanted to walk, they were often struggling with long term conditions but also lack of confidence. With support and encouragement many started and continued to walk.

I also led walks for people struggling with mental health conditions, and again you had to adapt to their needs (and some of their behaviours). It was hugely beneficial to those who attended and I learnt a lesson, many found it easier to express themselves when they were walking and weren't expected to make eye contact.

What is your definition of diversity? Provide an example when you have challenged stereotypes and promoted diversity and inclusion.

My understanding and commitment to diversity is the inclusion and involving of people from an range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations and beliefs. I also believe that engagement and involvement has to be genuine, not a tick box and that involvement means making no assumptions but engaging with people to find out what they want, what barriers there are to inclusion and working together to solve issues.

One of the issues we had in Camden was around hostility from some members of district nursing against the LGBT community. Some staff with certain religious beliefs would make inappropriate comments to patients from the gay and LTGB community. I organised members of the gay and transgender community to speak at a staff seminar, describing their lived experience and the effect of discrimination. It was moving and insightful event and many staff told me it had changed their opinions.

Closer to home I was out walking with my group and a member started talking about the refugees and asylum seekers crossing the channel in the most derogatory way. We chatted about who these people were, what made them come to the UK, the challenges they face from their camps and also the misconceptions about the meaning of Asylum and Refugee and the rights they have. At the end of the conversation the individual said she would now think differently.

I have also recently challenged a Caucasian walker who announced 'black and brown people don't like walking'.



OPEN MOTIONS: REPORT ON ACTIONS

Motion	Recommendation
2021 [2] Action needed to increase the Ramblers membership and influence	Close
2021 [3] Clusters, communities of practice and special interest groups	Close
2021 [4] Prioritise IT development for supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers	Keep open
2020 [1] Alternative ways for debating topics of interest or concern **	Keep open
2020 [8] Affiliated organisations *	Keep open
2019 [4] Developing links with schools, young people and their communities +	Close
2019 [7] Diverse and representative General Council	Keep open
2018 [4] Roadside signage of Public Rights of Way	Keep open
2017 [6] Funding for restoring Lost Ways	Close

* Remitted to the board of trustees

+ Combined response

2021 [2] ACTION NEEDED TO INCREASE THE RAMBLERS MEMBERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

This General Council urges the Board of Trustees to increase its efforts to retain our current membership and recruit new members to the Ramblers. In recent years we have seen a loss of over 10,000 members. This loss cannot be overlooked if we wish to renew and sustain the organisation and ensure that the Ramblers is seen as relevant to current and future generations.

2022 GC update

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic, we have overcome the loss in membership over the past two years, and as of February our membership is now over 102,000.

Maintaining and building our membership base continues to be a strategic priority, regularly reviewed at board level and the sole focus of a dedicated staff team.

As detailed in our mid-year update, our active membership acquisition programme is delivering continuing success despite online channel privacy changes and pandemic-related uncertainty. Both our digital channels and face-to-face-marketing activity continue to recruit new members at higher-than-expected levels. These members are particularly important to us as they frequently choose to support us with additional donations on top of the standard membership subscription rates.

In addition, a new special interest group (SIG) involving members and staff is focussing on local recruitment. The group has met several times and highlighted key areas for us to focus on in supporting groups and areas to recruit members locally. We know that from group to group and area to area there are very differing levels of knowledge and skills, particularly in how to go about this in a digital age. We have therefore produced a business case to fund a new staff member with specialist expertise to support volunteers in deploying online resources to help recruit members locally. We have produced new guidance (for release end January/early February) on best practice in using social media locally for groups and areas. This includes 'cheat sheets' for key social media platforms such as Facebook. The intention is to launch a pilot programme to support several groups in growing their membership using these tools and then, if it delivers the growth we hope for, to roll it out across the organisation.

To coincide with the launch of the new brand we have produced new publicity materials for our groups and areas, including membership leaflets, badges, pens, posters (in various styles and sizes), and pop-up banners (for borrowing).

New renewals materials have also been produced in the new brand style and will be launched in February to support and improve our already strong retention figures.

The board recommends that this motion is closed.

2021 [3] CLUSTERS, COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

This General Council applauds the establishment of clusters, communities of practice and Special Interest Groups. As well as congratulating the Board of Trustees, the Senior Leadership Team and staff for this initiative and their continued commitment to change, Council urges the Board to evaluate the effectiveness of these new initiatives, consult with membership, extend their remit, resource them adequately and report back to General Council 2022. Particularly in the case of the Special Interest Group concerned with directly elected Mayors, Council requests the Board to ensure that this group continues to meet following elections and expands its membership to include more Ramblers members from relevant Areas.

2022 GC update

The board is pleased to report continued good progress in the development of our clusters and special interest groups (SIGs). They play an increasingly important role in enabling staff and volunteers to work together on key issues and the board remains committed to resourcing them so that they can help shape our future work.

Clusters

Clusters are an informal way of collaborating within a particular geographical location in England (involving several Areas) to address national and local priorities and enable closer working with stakeholders.

Over the past year, five regional clusters have been formed across England: South West, Midlands, South East, North West and Yorkshire & North East. These are now meeting every three to four months with a focus on discussing shared challenges and opportunities, and ensuring volunteers are up to date with organisational-wide initiatives – including the new brand, Don't Lose Your Way and membership recruitment.

We carried out an evaluation of cluster working in February 2022 to ensure the needs of the volunteers are being met.

In Wales it was decided that the Welsh Council Executive Committee can act as a cluster. In Scotland we are taking a slightly different approach steered by a 'rural working group' made up of volunteers and staff to help facilitate connection across groups – rather than focusing specifically on area leaders within clusters.

Special interest groups

'Communities of practice' have been renamed special interest groups (SIGs). SIGs are informal working groups (comprising staff, members, volunteers, partners from across the nations) focused on ways to collaborate on specific strategic topics and solve organisation wide problems. Over the past year five special interest groups have met on the following topics:

- Local membership recruitment – aimed at sharing ideas and good practice to support local recruitment of new members, making best use of the new brand. This group has informed the development of new social media guidance for groups (to be circulated in February) and is now

Open motions: report on actions

exploring the potential for a membership ‘accelerator’ programme to support / fund local groups to test new ideas to make best use of the new brand.

- Volunteer recruitment - aimed at tackling the challenge of recruiting volunteers – particularly to committee roles.
- Young people - aimed at the challenge of managing age-specific groups as members get older, and attracting future young people to the Ramblers.
- Future of group walks – aimed at supporting the future development of Ramblers group walks and inspiring change to welcome more walkers and members. This group developed five guiding principles together with an excellent toolkit (Group walks - for volunteers by volunteers) to share top tips and ideas to support improvement. They are no longer meeting regularly but will come back to review progress later in the year.
- Metro mayors – aimed at bringing together leaders in London and Manchester to support the Ramblers manifesto and local elections in May 2021. This group is no longer meeting – though there is appetite, as articulated in the motion, for future collaboration on urban issues, though not necessarily through a SIG.

Other SIGs are in the pipeline to help share and inform work on our paths / rights of way (to be communicated in February) and diversity and inclusion (date tbc).

The aim is to ensure that outputs from both clusters and SIGs are shared across the Ramblers via platforms such as Assemble – these include the recent guidance on group walks and social media.

The progress across both clusters and SIGs continues to be overseen by the National Clusters and Collaboration Working Group. This group has volunteer and staff representation from England, Scotland and Wales and plays a vital role in helping us to develop and improve our approach.

The board recommends that this motion is closed.

2021 [4] PRIORITISE IT DEVELOPMENT FOR SUPPORTING, ENCOURAGING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

This General Council acknowledges the difficulty that Areas and Groups have in supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers. To help address this, Council urges the Board of Trustees to prioritise those IT developments that directly assist the Areas and Groups. These will include help in

- managing their email distribution lists
- improving the information for membership secretaries
- logging into and running their own websites
- providing a programme of walks and coach rambles.

2022 GC update

Our Groups play a vital role in supporting, encouraging and retaining volunteers. Supporting Groups to do this through a range of digital and non-digital developments remains a priority for the board.

Over the past year, the staff team has been focused on developing a new membership system, national website, and walks manager (replacing the Group Walks and Events Manager (GWEM)). The board is committed to continuing to work with volunteers in shaping these programmes.

Salesforce, our new membership system, was implemented in December 2021 and will enable us to learn more about our members and supporters so that we can improve our engagement with them and build relationships.

The initial beta launch of the new national website and brand took place in January 2022. It represents a significant milestone in the overall digital transformation programme that will support the Ramblers to become more relevant and engage more people in our work and impact.

Subsequent releases of the website and the new Walks Manager are scheduled over the coming months, bringing with them enhanced functionality and content. A period of continuous improvement will also follow, facilitated by user testing feedback and responsive incremental development. We will be working with volunteers to train them on the new digital systems before the existing website and Walks Manager system are eventually switched off by the end of June 2022.

Work has been undertaken on the forum section of Assemble to provide a dedicated communication and peer support tool for volunteers. After a period of communication and engagement for the forum section, we intend to pilot it in early 2022, for up to three months, and then review user feedback.

Improving information for membership secretaries

- We continue to make improvements to the Insight Hub based on volunteer feedback. Over the past 12 months, we have improved data accuracy and introduced 'reinstated members data' and 'affiliated club data'.
- We have published new pdf and video guidance on the Insight Hub and run quarterly webinars to help new and existing volunteers to use the tools available to them

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Managing email distribution lists / sending emails to group members

- The board recognises that accessing email distribution lists for the purpose of contacting group members is a source of frustration to some volunteers, particularly membership secretaries.
- In consultation with volunteers, we are urgently investigating options for the best solution in terms of functionality and security that will be easy for volunteers to use - but ensures that the personal data we hold is managed and used in compliance with the strict rules required by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Volunteer to volunteer communications

- Our volunteer portal, Assemble, is now in place, enabling improved volunteer-to-volunteer communication, volunteer recruitment, volunteer training and information sharing. We continue to review and improve our use of Assemble, introducing new functions and processes, in response to volunteer feedback.

Local websites

- We remain committed to working with volunteers to ensure more consistency in data feeds between our digital platforms and the local Group and Area websites, and in the URL links to the pages of our new national website.
- We have yet to decide on rolling out single sign-on to the various independent Group and Area websites due to team resource being focused on the implementation of Salesforce and website projects.

Improving the Group Walks and Events Manager (GWEM)

- At the time of writing, the new Walks Manager platform (replacing GWEM) is expected to be launched in April 2022, with a period of transition and incremental improvement to ensure that the new system works for our volunteers.

The board is committed to the continuous improvement of our digital systems and will continue to work with volunteers in shaping these programmes.

The board recommends that this motion remains open.

2020 [1] ALTERNATIVE WAYS FOR DEBATING TOPICS OF INTEREST OR CONCERN

This General Council invites the board of trustees to consider and trial alternative, less formal, ways whereby topics can be brought to Council for discussion and debate without the formality of the current “Motions” process. Council considers that alternatives should sit alongside the current “Motions” process to be used where the topic is complex or it is not appropriate at that time to bring a formal motion. Outcomes from such debates/discussions should not be binding on the board but would be expected to help inform strategy, policy, campaigns and the overall business plan. The board is requested to report back to General Council 2021 on its conclusions and to introduce a trial if appropriate.

2019 [7] DIVERSE AND REPRESENTATIVE GENERAL COUNCIL

This General Council cherishes our representative democracy and believes in the importance of General Council being both diverse and properly representative of the membership of the charity. Council therefore requests that the Board of Trustees:

- 1) reviews General Council as an event to ensure it reflects the composition of Ramblers' membership, by identifying and removing actual and potential barriers to participation;
- 2) asks Areas in England, Scotland and Wales to ensure that their appointed Council members are representative of their membership, by examining their practices, including their arrangements for Area governing bodies and their appointment processes;
- 3) reports back to General Council 2020 on its findings and proposals for implementing change across the organisation.

2022 GC update

Alternative ways for debating topics of interest or concern

The board agrees that in many cases, topics of general interest and concern would be more usefully discussed outside the focussed motions process with all the constraints and formality that our rules demand. However, limiting such discussions only to Council members at Council meetings is not representative of the views of the whole organisation since General Council members account for just 0.15% of the membership of the Ramblers. The board would like to think about methods to engage more of our members, and not solely about mechanisms for Council.

In recent years the board has introduced sessions which have allowed more general discussion of topics of interest but in the past two years the priority has been on managing the main business. Ahead of the AGM on 9 April we had arranged some structured and informed discussion sessions on important topics over and above the formal motions process. One of these topics will be based on the report requested on motion 2019 [7] Diverse and representative General Council.

Diverse and representative General Council

Reviewing Area processes

The second action in this motion was made of Areas. The board supports this but has no power itself to change the Articles and/or Standing Orders to enforce a process.

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However, as reported in 2021, ahead of the 2020/21 Area AGMs, the board provided voluntary guidance to encourage Areas to formalise the process for appointing General Council members in an open, accountable and transparent way. This recommendation was made in recognition that not all Council members are formally nominated and elected at AGMs as required by the model constitutions.

When Council members for the coming year are known (information only available to us when registration is complete in February) we shall have a better idea if Areas themselves have collectively made any significant changes to their processes over the past two years to the overall composition of Area-appointed Council members.

- The board would like to hear from Areas at the AGM in April about what they have done to meet the action from 2019 so that they might share best practice with their colleagues at the meeting.

Reviewing General Council AGM

The board continues to review the format of the General Council AGM. In 2020 and 2021 there were understandable and necessary constraints on how the meetings were run, and we were required to meet online and focus on formal business only, with none of the additional residential, conference or fringe elements.

Council should note that the online format used in 2020 and 2021 resulted in significant financial savings for the Ramblers. The budget for a weekend conference for 200 people with all the usual expectations of accommodation, travel, catering, etc has been up to £50,000, even at a university venue. By comparison, last year all our AGM processes cost £3,000.

Council members constitute just 0.15% of our overall membership and are drawn largely from those members who are active at Area level. Therefore, within the constraints of our Articles and Standing Orders, it is not immediately clear how we can remove barriers to participation in the way envisaged by the motion.

The board would like to hear Council members' views on the following at the AGM in April:

- Whether General Council remains essentially an annual conference for 200 members, or should we look at ways to change the event format or processes that enable engagement with the wider membership?
- Suggestions for how they would remove barriers to participation within the constraints of our Articles and Standing Orders.
- Should we consider an alternative approach where voting members are more reflective of the composition of Ramblers' membership? For example, by moving to a model where every member is a voting member?

At the General Council AGM in April, the board will also present the results of a review of its own membership, in the context of the changing regulatory environment, and will seek the views of Council members on these findings. The result of this review may assist Council members to consider the wider issues of member democracy, representation, and the processes around the appointment of Council members which the motion addresses.

The board recommends that these two motions remain open.

2020 [8] AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

This General Council is concerned by the reduction in engagement with affiliated organisations and calls upon the Board of Trustees to put in place a proactive programme to recruit affiliated organisations, including considering reducing or removing the fee, and to look for ways to increase collaboration with our affiliates at local and national level.

2022 GC update

The Ramblers has a variety of affiliated organisations and clubs across the country at national, constituent part and local level, the rules for which are set out in our articles, standing orders and local constitutions. The board recognises that it has been some time since these different relationships has been reviewed to consider the benefits that they bring to both the Ramblers and the affiliated organisations themselves.

The new Director of Income and Marketing recognises the need to understand why and how we should build an affiliate network and will make this a focus. We also recognise that affiliation with the Ramblers is just one way we seek to extend our reach beyond our own current membership and support the wider walking community.

As we broaden our brand engagement and outreach both locally and nationally, we hope we can build more connections with more organisations. However, we recognise that the current affiliate offer is somewhat limited and limiting, and we are investing People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) money in developing more areas of value exchange (for example, training, skills and confidence) that will enable a much greater two-way conversation with both affiliated and unaffiliated organisations and groups who share our joy of walking.

With that in mind we will be speaking with and surveying affiliated organisations to better understand what matters to them and to identify more areas of potential collaboration; and attempt to update the contact data stored on our new membership system.

As mentioned, we have received funding from PPL to explore the development of relevant online or in-person learning and development (for example in areas of walk leadership) and how we might offer this to affiliated organisations either as part of their current membership, or as a more premium membership product. Initial conversations with affiliated organisations have been very positive.

We are also looking to reach new audiences through the development of our Wellbeing Walks programme, largely delivered in partnership with local authorities, as well as exploring partnerships with other community-based walking organisations (for example Disabled Ramblers, Black Girls Hike, and Muslim Hikers). This work will take time, and we ask for your patience and support as we listen to and understand the needs of different partners, and how we can play a role in enabling them to have an even greater impact in their communities.

The board recommends that this motion remains open.

2019 [4] DEVELOPING LINKS WITH SCHOOLS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

This General Council urges the Board of Trustees to develop methods to work with schools and young people as a means of:

- a) increasing awareness of The Ramblers and opportunities for walking;
- b) developing a new cohort of walkers;
- c) supporting national and local initiatives on public health and childhood obesity.

Council suggests this could be done by:

- a) producing a schools' pack for distribution amongst schools (possibly seeking external funding for this) and material aimed at young people to distribute through their organisations and via social media;
- b) producing a pack for Groups and Areas which may wish to follow up this initiative, bearing in mind the issues of safeguarding.

2022 GC update

We are committed to helping more people across Great Britain to discover the joys and benefits of walking. Our priority over the past year has been the development of our new brand, launched in January. This will stand us in good stead to reach and engage more people through a contemporary and vibrant look and feel, and a clearer articulation of our purpose and the benefits of walking.

We recognise that there is a significant opportunity to engage with younger audiences to enable greater connection with the outdoors and nature. We continue to warmly encourage local initiatives led by Ramblers Groups and Areas to connect with this audience – including providing family friendly walks and engaging schools in community activities such as litter picking and path clearance.

Over the past year we have established a Special Interest Group (SIG) of volunteers from across younger Ramblers groups to identify good practice and further opportunities to engage with a younger audience. Their focus has been on how the Ramblers can appeal to younger people; through developing more attractive programmes, establishing links with universities, improved support on safeguarding, better use of social media, and improved data. The group will be circulating a few 'top tips' aimed at existing Ramblers groups in early 2022. We are also looking to maintain a network of interested younger groups to continue to share good practice and feed into future strategy development.

We are also using funding from People's Postcode Lottery to help us explore new opportunities around "skills and training" such as online or in-person first aid or navigation. We are currently in the process of understanding whether this would be an attractive offering for individual walkers, and how we compare to other competitors in the market. It is likely this offer could appeal to all ages but also have the potential to target a younger audience.

In Wales, despite the pandemic affecting the delivery of the family friendly walks, we have still been able to co-design 30 family-friendly routes across the South Wales Valleys, with accompanying activity packs and a 12-week family challenge. In 2022 these are being rolled out more widely across Wales. More family friendly routes are also being created in partnership with Transport for Wales. All activities use our 'Ramble & Scramble' characters.

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This work has supported our current European-funded Paths for Wellbeing project where there are further opportunities to engage with local communities including schools and families.

In Scotland, the delivery of the Young Adult development project has also continued and gone from strength to strength, while adapting to the challenges of the pandemic. This work, funded by the Scottish Government and players of People's Postcode Lottery, is designed to help kick-start 18 to 26-year-olds' journeys into the outdoors, while helping them meet people, boost their CVs and build confidence along the way.

Last year, despite restrictions, our Out There Award in Scotland engaged more than 80 young adults, more than 70% were female and over 50% were from groups who face additional barriers to getting outdoors including ethnic minorities. Pre- and post-award feedback data has also enabled us to track a significant positive impact in participants' confidence, skills, knowledge, and support networks.

The award has continued to be supported by key volunteers in our young walking groups, with members volunteering to help run award days throughout the pandemic. Award participants have also continued to put their free Ramblers membership to use after completing the award, linking up with our young walking groups to carry on walking after the pandemic and beyond. We are now exploring opportunities to reach and scale up the programme across Scotland through an alternative partnership model.

The board recommends that this motion is closed.

2018 [4] ROADSIDE SIGNAGE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

This General Council notes that it is the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Countryside Act requiring English and Welsh highway authorities to signpost public rights of way where they meet with metalled Roads. It further notes that the Pathwatch data indicates that few authorities have complied with the requirements in full. Council therefore requests that the Ramblers gives priority to working with the relevant authorities to bring about a full compliance within the next 5 years as part of the Pathwatch campaign.

2022 GC update

The Ramblers continues to campaign and influence at a national level in both England and Wales to ensure that post-Brexit policy, and in particular agricultural payments, will support better public access for all. We believe that this is the best opportunity to ensure that there is long term funding available at a local level to improve the public rights of way network, including for things like signage.

In addition, we continued to lobby in Wales for the reinstatement of Welsh Government funding for path improvements, resulting in the Access Improvement Grant being made available to highway authorities for a second consecutive year (worth £1.3m in 2020/21 and £1.7m in 2021/22). Signage improvements will be delivered through this grant.

The Ramblers has also recently created a new GB-wide paths team which will support the thousands of dedicated volunteers across England, Scotland and Wales who protect, expand and improve our path network, and advise the public on their rights to use and enjoy their paths. One important aspect of this work will be working with volunteers to engage with highway authorities to ensure that they are undertaking their responsibilities and duties to protect and assert the rights of the public.

The paths team will provide a more joined-up approach to our local influencing and take action to ensure that highway authorities undertake their duties. This is especially important when our network is experiencing increasing usage and where significant local government cuts continue.

We will raise the importance of ensuring that rights of way are signed where they leave a metalled road, alongside the authority's other duties such as dealing with obstructions and processing applications to add paths to the definitive map. The work of this GB team will be informed by the results of the Mark My Paths project in Wales (report to be published in 2022) and our work to set quality standards for, and audit, the path network.

The board recommends that this motion remains open.

2017 [6] FUNDING FOR RESTORING LOST WAYS

This General Council commends the work started in restoring lost ways in England and Wales, but is deeply concerned that resources allocated will be inadequate to ensure that members have the support needed to research and make all feasible claims. Council calls upon the board of trustees urgently to employ a project manager to develop the project in the light of the Don't Lose Your Way seminar in Birmingham in October 2016, answering the questions raised and drawing on internal and external expertise. This will include consideration of funding, for instance the establishment of a specific and significant fund from which areas can bid to fund relevant work, particularly training volunteers, copying the records needed to evidence claims and a 'fighting fund' to respond to challenges to claims.

2022 GC update

The Ramblers is committed to the Don't Lose Your Way programme. Having identified over 49,000 miles of potential lost rights of way, additional digital development has taken place to allow the prioritisation of these paths. Don't Lose Your Way coordinators have now been appointed for more than 50% of England and additional recruitment is ongoing.

Guidance, training, and resources are in development to support individual Don't Lose Your Way volunteers in researching and applying for unrecorded historical rights of way, with the intention to launch in spring 2022. As part of the 2021-22 budgets, funds have been transferred to 24 Areas and Groups for local Don't Lose Your Way volunteer expenses.

The board recommends that this motion is closed.



2022 MOTIONS

Motion	Submitted by
2022 [1] Simplification of risk assessments + #	Berkshire / Merseyside & West Cheshire
2022 [2] Walk leadership requirements +	North Wales / Bucks, Milton Keynes & West Middlesex
2022 [3] Improving communication and consultation	Kent
2022 [4] Strengthening Ramblers' role in protecting paths #	Essex
2022 [5] Return to member activities alongside volunteer activities #	Gloucestershire
2022 [6] General Council meeting format	Norfolk
2022 [7] 50 years anniversary of the Cornwall Coast path	Cornwall
2022 [8] Walk magazine & communication with the wider membership	Leicestershire & Rutland

+ Motions combined by the Motions Review Committee

Amendment proposed by the Motions Review Committee

2022 [1] SIMPLIFICATION OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

This General Council believes that the imposed requirement for written risk assessments in the format prescribed is unnecessary, serves no useful purpose and notes it has led to walk leaders standing down. Council urges the Board of Trustees to identify and implement a simpler and less burdensome approach to documented risk assessments for organised walks as a matter of priority.

Council further calls upon the Board to undertake urgent research and produce robust evidence into how any risks associated with Ramblers walks can best be identified and managed by walk leaders with a minimum of bureaucracy. This work should draw upon the skills and expertise of, and have direct input from, existing Group members. Progress and findings should be shared openly with all Areas and Groups on an ongoing basis.

This motion has been prepared by the Motions Review Committee as a combination of two motions submitted by Berkshire Area and Merseyside & West Cheshire Area (applies to GB)

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE MOTIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Delete the final paragraph.

Background notes to amendment

The committee does not wish to express an opinion for or against the desirability of undertaking research as requested by this paragraph. By submitting this amendment we are giving Council the opportunity to choose between voting on a motion covering just the simpler option proposed in the original Merseyside and West Cheshire Area motion or a motion that includes the potentially more time-consuming option proposed in the original Berkshire Area motion.

Substantive motion would read:

This General Council believes that the imposed requirement for written risk assessments in the format prescribed is unnecessary, serves no useful purpose and notes it has led to walk leaders standing down. Council urges the Board of Trustees to identify and implement a simpler and less burdensome approach to documented risk assessments for organised walks as a matter of priority.

ORIGINAL MOTIONS AND BACKGROUND NOTES

Risk assessment (Berkshire Area)

This General Council believes that the imposed requirement for written risk assessments in the format prescribed is unnecessary, serves no useful purpose and notes it has led to walk leaders standing down. It therefore calls upon the board of trustees to undertake urgent research and produce robust evidence into how any risks associated with Ramblers walks can best be identified and managed by walk leaders with a minimum of bureaucracy. This work should draw upon the skills and expertise of and have direct input from existing Group members. Progress and findings should be shared openly with all Areas and Groups on an ongoing basis.

Background notes

The imposition of the Risk Assessment process caused significant bemusement and resentment. This was exacerbated by a failure to supply information about the insurance policies and claims history, followed by a refusal to respond to further individual enquiries. Walk Leaders have stood down at a time when more are needed. Concerns are about whether the process itself serves any useful purpose and the way in which its introduction was managed.

Walk Leaders need to be properly supported. Not all walks are the same and carry different types and levels of risk. Ramblers do not mandate a pre-walk recce. Of the six elements on the Risk Assessment form only road hazards can be identified at the desk top – the remainder can only be assessed on the ground. Walk Leaders need best practice advice to do this and to properly meet their duty of care. A one size fits all tick box does not do this or make any walk safer.

When saying that individual enquiries would no longer be responded to, the CEO and Chair also said they are committed to improving how they work with members and that staff should be allowed to focus on improving everyone's experience with Ramblers.

The latter statements are welcomed and preferable to a "this is the decision so live with it" approach. This motion would help deliver on those intentions through member consultation and involvement and is intended to produce outcomes that better support Walk Leaders and are negotiable with insurers.

Simplification of risk assessments for organised walks (Merseyside & West Cheshire Area)

This General Council urges the Board of Trustees to identify and implement a simpler and less burdensome approach to documented risk assessments for organized walks as a matter of priority.

Background notes

It is recognized that risk assessments for organized walks are now essential for insurance purposes, however walk leaders have always conducted risk assessments when doing recces for walks, but until Covid there has been no requirement to document these. The present system of separate documented risk assessments for every organized walk is deterring some previous leaders and causing difficulties in filling walk programmes across our area and the country. It is also deterring new leaders from coming forward.

Problems are, some members not having necessary computer skills to use a Microsoft Word template and the storage of these documents for whatever length of time is deemed suitable.

Most people just want to walk, rather than being confronted with the challenges of Ramblers' bureaucracy. There is also the extra burden on the organisers of walk programmes in ensuring risk assessments are properly completed by all leaders.

The Ramblers used to be an inclusive organization and now we are dividing the membership into digital haves and have nots, some division is inevitable but we need to minimize rather than maximize this with less dependence on using digital monitoring.

Given that documented risk assessments are an insurance requirement there is a need to simplify this process. Other organisations use a simpler approach with generic assessments covering the different types of activities, would this work for the Ramblers? Our Wirral group is working on one at the moment, might this be useful?

2022 [2] WALK LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

This General Council is gravely concerned that perceptions of bureaucracy are deterring leaders and potential leaders of group walks from offering their services. Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that, except as required by any current legislation or in the event of an incident that seems likely to lead to an insurance claim, leaders are placed under no obligation to make or keep any written or electronic records relating to their walk, either before, during or after the event. Council therefore calls upon the board to remove the requirement for written risk assessments of group walks and, in doing so, to ensure that the absence of such records will not adversely affect the insurance cover provided for walk leaders.

This motion has been prepared by the Motions Review Committee as a combination of two motions submitted by North Wales Area and Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes & West Middlesex Area (applies to GB)

ORIGINAL MOTIONS AND BACKGROUND NOTES

Removing the requirement for written risk assessments (North Wales Area)

This General Council asks that the Board of Trustees removes the requirement for a written risk assessment of group walks.

Background notes

The requirement for written risk assessments has contributed to a reduction in the number of walk leaders. Five of North Wales Area's nine groups report definitely having lost walk leaders due to this requirement with one group reporting losing 10 walk leaders! The Area Councils and Groups cannot be expected to chase up risk assessments

Other groups such as Welsh Athletics and Cycling UK do not require written risk assessments for their group activities. BMC provides Combined Liability Insurance for clubs and individual members, full details of which are given on their website.

Assessing risk is an essential part of walk leading including during the walk and can be developed and encouraged through experience and training. A tick list covering all types of group walks does not provide an effective view of the risk in individual walks. Some leaders find written Risk Assessments a useful tool and a range of model Risk Assessments could be made available to suit different walks.

We recognise this change may require separate insurance policies for path work groups and for led walks. Also walks primarily aimed at the general public e.g. Big Welsh Walk, may continue to need written risk assessments.

As Tanya Curry and Rebecca Dawson have said "Walking is an inherently safe activity... The Ramblers has some of the most experienced walk leaders across Great Britain and we know that they take the reasonable steps necessary to ensure that walkers are welcomed and safe on each walk."

Walk leadership requirements (Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes & West Middlesex Area)

This General Council is gravely concerned that perceptions of bureaucracy are deterring leaders and

potential leaders of group walks from offering their services. Council therefore calls upon the Board of Trustees to ensure that, except as required by any current legislation or in the event of an incident that seems likely to lead to an insurance claim, leaders are placed under no obligation to make or keep any written or electronic records relating to their walk, either before, during or after the event. Council further asks the Board to ensure that the absence of such records will not adversely affect the insurance cover provided for walk leaders.

Background notes

This motion is primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, concerned with what Ramblers is describing as “risk assessments” and the requirement to keep them for three years. Our tick box form would not be recognised as a risk assessment by the Health and Safety Executive, and offers no proof that the leader has given any real thought to the issues listed.

The requirement to complete and retain such forms is, in practice, unenforceable, though, if their absence would invalidate insurance claims, it is proper that leaders should be warned. As the actual policy terms have not been disclosed it is unclear whether this is, in fact, the case. However, the statement that insurance cannot be obtained without requiring such records is demonstrably false, as the social walks of the Long Distance Walkers Association are insured without any such requirement.

It would appear that, in normal circumstances, the only legal (common law) requirement is that leaders should exercise a duty of care. From that point of view it is acceptable that leaders should be given guidance on matters they should consider when planning and leading walks. Walking, and walk leadership, are generally safe activities and unnecessary bureaucracy has the potential to cause serious damage to our group walks programmes and, perhaps, to membership recruitment.

2022 [3] IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

This General Council believes that the effectiveness of the Ramblers is being significantly diminished by poor communication, failure of meaningful consultation on nationally driven initiatives and lack of openness in debate on these initiatives. It therefore calls upon the Board of Trustees to:

- bring about substantial improvements in these areas;
- set up a process to ensure that all stakeholders, including those in Areas and Groups, are given adequate notice of planned initiatives and are fully and meaningfully consulted before decisions are made; and
- draw up and publish measures for monitoring its success in doing so and to share the results with Areas and Groups.

Submitted by Kent Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

Groups and Areas have been complaining about poor communication from Central Office and the Board for well over a decade. Despite many promises of improvement, the problem has worsened. The final straw for Kent groups was the introduction of written risk assessments for led walks where a difficult issue was made hugely worse by a failure of openness, communication and consultation. The introduction of Assemble represents another failure to communicate and consult, no attempt being made to explain the vision behind the project, to discover what needs Areas and Groups might have of an online support tool for volunteers or to address concerns about the value of the application. The benefits of rebranding could have been made much clearer and there is no excuse for the short notice that Groups are to be limited to two pages on the national web site.

As long ago as 2011, concerns about poor consultation led to a motion being put to General Council seeking improvement and passed unanimously; but it has been little heeded in recent years. Disasters of communication and consultation include the introduction of a new membership system in 2010, a governance review in 2014 and a Pathwatch project in 2015 that failed to deliver statistically significant results.

The consequences of these failings are money wasted, volunteers demotivated and trust lost. We are left with the impression that the Board seems incapable of learning from past mistakes. We call upon the Board for a change of culture characterised by greater openness, better communication and more effective consultation.

2022 [4] STRENGTHENING RAMBLERS' ROLE IN PROTECTING PATHS

This General Council is concerned that the culture of Ramblers' staff seems to be increasingly divorced from the genuine needs of members. There appears to be a disconnect, perhaps as a result of the use of short-term contract staff and high labour turnover, leading to neglect of, or reduced capacity to support, the Ramblers' charitable object of protecting footpaths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot. Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to produce a report of actions to rectify this to be submitted to the 2023 AGM.

Submitted by Essex Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

The emerging image of Ramblers - whether by design or unintentionally - is of an organisation primarily focused on promoting and marketing recreational walking. Important as this obviously is, we should not forget that the first charitable objective of the Ramblers is to "...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". While we might want more people to take up walking, the main challenge of this era - on our watch, if you like - is to prevent the erosion and obstruction of the rights of way network. The tradition of the Ramblers is rooted in strong - occasionally militant - campaigning in the face of pressures to privatise and close down the countryside. Whether through residential sprawl, attempts to close rail crossings, increasingly industrialised farming, or slashed local authority budgets, these pressures are current and real.

Ramblers centrally is not particularly good at this and cannot provide as good a database of well-maintained rights of way networks as it should, and as would be helpful to fieldwork volunteers or those up against cost-cutting or under-performing local authorities. Seeing effort going into rebranding and cosmetic graphic presentation, but little into campaigning advice or proactive casework is not only demoralising to volunteers but makes walking with Ramblers no better than walking with independent local walking clubs.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE MOTIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

In second sentence, delete from "perhaps" to "turnover".

Background notes to the amendment

The committee took the view that the reasons suggested for the "disconnect" postulated by the motion are speculative. Deletion of the speculative wording would allow Council members to concentrate on the intended purpose of the motion.

Substantive motion would read:

This General Council is concerned that the culture of Ramblers' staff seems to be increasingly divorced from the genuine needs of members. There appears to be a disconnect leading to neglect of, or reduced capacity to support, the Ramblers' charitable object of protecting footpaths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot. Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to produce a report of actions to rectify this to be submitted to the 2023 AGM.

2022 [5] RETURN TO MEMBER ACTIVITIES ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to:

- return to member activities alongside volunteer activities;
- make information for both accessible on the website; and
- remove 'volunteer' from member role descriptions where it is not required.

Submitted by Gloucestershire Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

Constitutionally Ramblers is all about Members (even though Members may, at times, be referred to as volunteers). Members elect Officers to our Area and Group Councils and may, in time, be elected themselves.

In May 2021 when Government relaxed Covid-19 restrictions, Members expected to be able to return to near normal activities. However it became apparent that Ramblers' operations had changed. Member activities accessed via the website had become Volunteer activities only accessible through Assemble. For example if Members want to find out about walk leading, they have to first register as a Volunteer to gain access. Previously, activities of Members included walk leading, whereas activities of Volunteers, typically for path maintenance, required registration and a risk assessment.

Volunteers need not be Members, and Members need not be Volunteers. Although volunteering can be defined as an activity that involves spending time, unpaid to help benefit others, the activities of Members can also involve time, unpaid to help benefit others. Ramblers, as Britain's walking charity, has benefitted from both Members and Volunteers. In the 2021 Ramblers Volunteer Survey, only 48% (less than half) of the Volunteers who took part felt Volunteers and Staff shared the same vision, (Members weren't asked). It is hoped that this motion will help turn this around and bring people together by recognising the efforts of Members as well as Volunteers and Staff.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE MOTIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Replace “return to” by “support”.

Background notes to the amendment

The motion, as a whole, assumes a definition of “volunteer” that will not necessarily be accepted by all Council members. Those taking this view are likely to consider that there has been no substantive change from previous practice and, therefore, that a “return” is meaningless.

Substantive motion would read:

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to:

- support member activities alongside volunteer activities;
- make information for both accessible on the website; and
- remove 'volunteer' from member role descriptions where it is not required.

2022 [6] GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING FORMAT

This General Council accepts the necessity of the changes to the format of the annual Council event caused by the Covid pandemic. Council urges the Board of Trustees to revert to the two day format as soon as it is safe and legal to do so.

Submitted by Norfolk Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

Meetings of General Council are essential not just to transact important business relating to the Ramblers, but also to allow the opportunity for groups to meet and engage with others from within the charity. That cannot easily be done with a short general meeting at which engagement with other groups is minimised, as this General Council believes that delegates meeting others, whether delegates or third parties, is highly beneficial social interaction which helps the work of the Ramblers, allows for contacts to be made, allows for the promotion of best practice and inspires individuals to work for the best aims of the charity by learning from others. Meeting people outside of formal events, as well as understanding their views during formal business, is something important and we urge the Board to confirm that the intention is to return to the traditional two day meetings in future years and to assure delegates attending General Council that there is no possibility that they will be reduced to a short meeting which is designed to rubber stamp the decisions of the Board.

2022 [7] 50 YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE CORNWALL COAST PATH

May 2023 marks the 50 years anniversary of the Cornwall Coast Path. Cornwall Ramblers will be celebrating that milestone during the weekend of the 20th/21st May 2023. This General Council urges members of the Ramblers to support and join Cornwall Area in celebrating the anniversary.

Submitted by Cornwall Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

May 2023 will see the 50 years Anniversary of the Cornwall Coastpath which later formed the Cornwall section of the South West Coast Path. Cornwall Ramblers will be celebrating that milestone on the 20th and 21st May and requests Ramblers to join us for the Anniversary. Cornwall Ramblers had the whole Cornwall Coast Path walked in the one day in 1973 and again for the 25th Anniversary. So, our plans are to do just that for the 50th Anniversary! Walking the rugged Cornish Coastpath offers a unique journey exploring mining heritage, smugglers coves, sandy beaches, towering cliffs, heathland and communications history.

2022 [8] WALK MAGAZINE & COMMUNICATION WITH THE WIDER MEMBERSHIP

This General Council requests the Board of Trustees to arrange for Walk magazine to include a section to allow Areas to communicate with members and to inform them about items of local interest.

Submitted by Leicestershire & Rutland Area (applies to GB)

Background notes

As Areas increasingly move to communicating with members by electronic means, the Walk magazine will be a vital link to many of our members who either don't use email or for whom we don't hold up-to-date email addresses.

Walk magazine offers us a fantastic resource for connecting with our members & asking for their help in our local projects and campaigns since many of our members join us for this very reason. At the moment, Walk magazine covers largely national matters and we feel this isn't maximizing the potential of this fantastic resource for the benefit for the Ramblers.

We propose that a small section of each Walk magazine be used to promote important & interesting local projects to a wider Ramblers audience. Inclusion of local news & events might offer inspiration to other local groups in how to increase membership or co-ordinate involvement in campaigns.

Note: It was referenced at our recent AGM that the Southeast Walker which covers London, Essex, Surrey & Kent is included in Walk magazine as a separate mailer and therefore if this is possible to do for one part of the country, it may be beneficial to offer the same opportunity to other counties.