



UPDATE REPORT ON MOTIONS PASSED IN APRIL 2019

At the General Council meeting in Manchester we promised to keep in touch through the year and provide a six-month update on the motions approved in April.

Ahead of the formal update which is provided as part of the General Council papers for the 2020 meeting in Bristol, the following report sets out of some the work which has taken place around those motions.

If you have any questions or comments about the following updates, or would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact us at ceo@ramblers.zendesk.com.

2019 [1]	Special resolution to rename the agenda committee
2019 [3]	Public Rights of Way and recruitment
2019 [4]	Developing links with schools, young people and their communities
2019 [5]	Erosion of riverbank paths (remitted to the board)
2019 [6]	National planning guidance on green spaces and rights of way
2019 [7]	Diverse and representative General Council

2019 [1] Special resolution to rename the agenda committee

It is resolved by way of a special resolution that all occurrences of "agenda committee" in the articles of association and standing orders be replaced by "motions review committee" and that all occurrences of "agenda committee's" in the standing orders be replaced by "motions review committee's".

It is further resolved that all persons elected to the agenda committee by this annual general meeting should serve, instead, on the motions review committee until the close of business of next year's annual general meeting, subject to the provisions of standing order A16.

Update

The articles of association and standing orders have been updated and filed.

2019 [3] Public Rights of Way and recruitment

This General Council recognises the benefits to Ramblers of its ability to offer guided walks on a regular basis across the country and the contribution this makes to the health of the participants and the walking of Public Rights of Way. However Council emphasises that an

equally important function of the Ramblers is to keep the path network open and, where possible, to extend and improve it.

To this end, Council asks the Board of Trustees to increase the publicity that is given to our charitable objects and particularly to the work we do in improving the quality of PRow and our campaigning for increased access.

Update

We have several approaches to publicising the work of our volunteers and staff on public rights of way (PRow):

Campaigns: In November we will launch resources for Groups and Areas to make the case for the maintenance of PRow. At this time, we will gather and share good practice and promote the activities of our path maintenance teams. The website will have clear new information for the public on where to walk, walkers' rights and responsibilities and the Ramblers' role in promoting and protecting PRow in England & Wales.

In early 2020 our Don't Lose Your Way campaign will launch. This flagship campaign is focused on protecting and asserting public rights to access the countryside. Don't Lose Your Way continues capture the imagination of the media, with a full-page feature in Yours magazine in June 2019, and two recent Radio 4 appearances: volunteer Bob Fraser talked about his lost ways work in Cornwall on the PM programme and Farming Today featured and interview with programme manager Jack Cornish on a path near Bristol in July. 4,600 people have downloaded our Guide: the majority of whom are new contacts for our charity.

Much of our policy and advocacy activity on legislation over the past year has focused on the Government's Agriculture Bill. Despite the current uncertainty in Westminster, we are continuing our work to ensure that once enacted the Bill helps protect existing public rights of way through the development of a new regulatory framework. Our current thinking, supported by stakeholders such as Wildlife and Countryside Link and the National Trust and communicated to Defra and parliamentarians, is that future public payments to landowners and managers are conditional upon compliance with existing legal obligations, including those relating to PRow. This was publicised through our Your Path Awaits campaign.

Our recent fundraising campaign, 'path heroes', showcased stories for English, Scottish and Welsh audiences. This campaign was about highlighting the importance of our path maintenance teams' work, particularly in the current budget-constrained environment for local authorities who hold the statutory responsibility for the PRow network.

In September we celebrated the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, its legacy and the campaigning that is still being done by the Ramblers and others. The theme for this activity is #KeepOnRambling and we want to showcase the growing Ramblers movement that is continuing to fight to protect and enhance our paths and landscapes.

We've released a 70th anniversary edition of Walk, the cover of which forms a limited-edition poster and asking people to join up to our campaigning mailing list. Across our channels we are sharing blogs from Stuart Maconie, trustees, volunteers, the public and partners.

Walk magazine, member and volunteer newsletters: The winter 2019 edition of Walk magazine will be devoted to our paths work with a special feature and cover highlighting the vital work volunteers have played in creating the Cambrian Way in Wales. Its publication will coincide with the launch of our new volunteer resources. We will also be reviewing how we

can increase the presence of our path work in regular editions of Walk. We regularly feature path successes through our newsletters to spread the news to our members and volunteers.

Website and social media: We regularly have features on our paths work in the news and blogs sections of our website and we spread this message to our supporters and the general public through our social media channels.

Some examples of recent stories are given below:

August – www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/august/dlyw-path-stories

July – www.ramblers.org.uk/news/news/2019/july/launch-of-new-london-volunteer-schemes

July – www.ramblers.org.uk/news/news/2019/june/launching-the-kearsney-loop

June – www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/june/a-volunteer-award-for-brian

May – www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/may/berkshire-litter-heroes

We would like to promote the work of our path volunteers more frequently on social media. The engagement and operations teams are working together to improve the ways we collect stories and successes from our volunteers to promote through these channels.

Path maintenance work: We are aiming to make the Ramblers more visible, grow our current path maintenance teams and create new ones. We are reviewing our current path maintenance promotional resources and considering additional resources, e.g. signage and/or volunteer clothing. We are also in discussion with specific local authorities and representative bodies of Rights of Way Managers to highlight the contribution of our path volunteers to the PRoW network and to explore ways of doing more together.

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.*

Update

The Ramblers is committed to reaching out to more of Britain's 9 million walkers. In the next few years the membership growth strategy will focus primarily on targeting those walkers (typically age 55+) who are most likely to connect with our current product offering: that is, those who are most likely to value our led walks programmes (delivered by more than 500 Ramblers Groups) and our growing number of independents routes.

At the same time, we recognise the significant opportunity we have to reach out to younger people and their families, to enable them to connect with green spaces and live happier and healthier lives as a result of walking. We warmly encourage more of our Areas and Groups to consider developing family-friendly walks, building on the best-practice examples already displayed by some of our Areas and Groups who already offer such activities. We are

commissioning new research this Autumn to better understand the needs and views of young people with respect to the Ramblers, outdoors activities and walkers' rights. The insight from this research will help us to decide how best to develop our youth offer.

We have now started some pilot programmes to support outreach to young people including Ramblers Cymru's Scramblers project, for schools and families. A successful bid for funding is enabling the development of family-friendly walking packs to be used by schools in South Wales. In addition, Ramblers Cymru is waiting to hear if they have been successful in a second funding application to develop family-friendly walking routes in the Welsh Valleys. Piloting initiatives in our devolved nations gives us the chance to gauge success, reflect on learnings and consider opportunities across GB in the future.

Ramblers Scotland launched a new Young Adults development programme in Autumn 2019 as part of our Out There campaign. This project will support up to 120 18-25-year olds to develop outdoor skills and build their confidence and social networks. Working in partnership with Scottish young Ramblers Groups, and led by a dedicated project officer, our ambition is that at least half the participants will be women, and at least one cohort will be exclusively for women. Participants take part in a skills day, a challenge day and a structured volunteering day, after which they are awarded the Out There Award and gain access to Ramblers Scotland's five young walking Groups.

2019 [5] Erosion of riverbank paths

This General Council is alarmed by the Environment Agency's change of policy not to protect riverbanks in England without full consideration of the potential effect on public rights of way, with the possible consequence that any riverbank paths eroded away would be lost as rights of way. Council is also concerned that Natural Resources Wales might adopt a similar policy. Council notes the precedent of the decision in R (on application of Gloucester County Council) v Secretary of State for the Environment Transport & the Regions and the Ramblers Association in 2000, a case in which the Ramblers intervened and were represented in court.

Council further notes that the concept of "spreading room" that applies to the English Coastal Route does not apply to riverbank paths.

Council therefore urges the Board of Trustees to pursue this matter by all available means as a matter of urgency.

Update

This motion was remitted to the board of trustees.

The Environment Agency has not changed its policy. The position is that a highway authority is under a duty to keep a publicly-maintainable path maintained, which includes preventing or remedying erosion unless the entire width of the path has collapsed in one go, which would extinguish that section of right of way. If that happened, the right would be lost unless a new route was legally created by agreement with the landowner. Another factor is that permission may be needed for work in or around a watercourse, from the Environment Agency or the local authority as lead local flood authority, depending on the designation of the watercourse. We have asked the Environment Agency for clarification on this point.

In a recent government consultation Ramblers suggested conservation covenants as a way to protect riverside paths through a similar "roll back" provision to the coast path under Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. A rolling path agreement would enable the line

of the right of way to roll back in response to erosion and remain in place if the landowner changes and would not depend on the creation of a new path by dedication.

2019 [6] National planning guidance on green spaces and rights of way

This General Council notes that the Government has published a 25-year environment plan that seeks to put the environment at the heart of planning and development. Council therefore calls upon the Board of Trustees: (1) to urge the UK, Welsh and Scottish governments to strengthen and amplify the guidance given to Local Authorities so as to put the provision of green spaces and enhancements to public rights of way at the core of the local planning process; (2) to provide Ramblers' Areas with support in applying these principles at local level.

Such guidance to planning authorities should ensure that the provision of green space and PRowS is considered in the context of the total development planned within the authority's strategic development plan, rather than on a piecemeal one-off approach.

Update

This year we have taken steps to urge local authorities to put green spaces and walking at the heart of plans for development. In England, we have developed a Charter for Walking Neighbourhoods which sets out five things local authorities can do to create better walking environments. The Charter urges local authorities to require that all development and transport infrastructure schemes incorporate 'green infrastructure' (including green space) as integral design components at the pre-planning stages of development and that council policies on planning, health, transport and economic growth contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure. As well as the Mayor of Sheffield, over 30 councillors have already signed up to the Charter and one council – Totnes Town Council – has adopted the Charter.

We have created an online 'toolkit' for local councillors and council officers. This toolkit includes examples of inspirational initiatives that have made neighbourhoods better for walking. We will publish this toolkit on our website soon. We have also drafted guidance on planning applications and local plans (suitable for volunteers in England) and we will make these available to volunteers via our new volunteer website, Assemble, once completed.

We responded to Defra's recent consultations on Biodiversity Net Gain and Conservation Covenants, to urge government to broaden its definitions so that Environmental Net Gain and Covenants could be used to improve green space provision and connection to nature.

Ramblers Scotland works with Greenspace Scotland (GS) on a range of issues of mutual interest. GS leads on engaging with local authorities in developing and implementing their own green space strategies. Ramblers Scotland has a role at a national level in highlighting the benefits of green space and urban walking to decision makers. For example, during 2020 we will be engaging in consultations leading up to the forthcoming National Planning Framework 4. NPF3 included a National Walking & Cycling Network as a national priority, as a result of our own and others' advocacy work, so we intend to ask for similar initiatives in the next iteration. This year we developed guidance for Scottish members on how to engage in local campaigning, including planning applications and local consultations relating to greenspace or active travel: www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits-alphabetically-sorted/scotland

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.*

Update

Following discussion at their July 2019 board meeting the trustees agreed to provide voluntary guidance for Areas, to encourage discussion and review of their practices for appointing Council members and to consider formalising these practices in an open, accountable and transparent way.

The aim of this guidance is:

- (a) to help to address a democratic deficit, under which our legal voting members are not all formally nominated and elected;
- (b) to encourage improved diversity of General Council, to ensure representation is refreshed and to encourage Areas to enable more Ramblers members to experience being a Council member and bring their voices and views to Council.

Over the next six months we will use our new insight hub to review the composition of Ramblers' membership which will allow us to report back to General Council in 2020 on how representative Council is of our membership.