

**Draft minutes of the annual meeting of general council held at Derwent College,
University of York
3 April 2016**

Kate	Ashbrook	president
Richard	Lloyd Jones	vice-president
Cath	Mackay	vice-president
Jerry	Pearlman	vice-president
Keith	Wadd	vice-president
Des	Garrahan	chair
Alexander	Mannings	honorary treasurer
Christine	O'Byrne	vice-chair
Mike	Church	trustee
Moiria	Fraser	trustee
Roy	Hunt	trustee
Jeremy	Kenyon	trustee
Richard	May	trustee
Teri	Moore	trustee
Paul	Rhodes	trustee
Alison	Mitchell	trustee (convener, Ramblers Scotland)
Alan	Norton	trustee (chair Ramblers Cymru)
Clare	Wadd	Agenda committee (chair)
John	Esslemont	Agenda committee
Elizabeth	Lawie	Agenda committee
Sylvia	Popham	Agenda committee
Brian	Reader	Agenda committee
Ben	Burke	Avon
Susan	Carter	Avon
Lee	Pattison	Berkshire
John	Wainwright	Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
John	Elfes	Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
Geoffrey	Williams	Carmarthenshire
Brian	Foster	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Janet	Cartwright	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Christopher	Hodgson	Ceredigion
Chris	Meewezen	Cheshire East
Geoff	Sproston	Cheshire East
Graham	Ronan	Cornwall
Sylvia	Ronan	Cornwall
John	Cooper	Clydesdale to Solway
Sue	Weatherley	Derbyshire
Keith	Shiers	Derbyshire
Tessa	Smith	Devon
Andrew	Chadwick	Devon
Peter	Evans	Dorset

Michael	Heckford	Dorset
Ian	Reavill	East Yorkshire & Derwent
Tony	Corrigan	East Yorkshire & Derwent
Hilary	Snell	Essex
Alan	Goffee	Essex
Michael	Cannell	Essex
Mike	Gray	Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside
John	Andrews	Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside
Gwyn	Lewis	Glamorgan
Ray	Chaney	Gloucestershire
Richard	Holmes	Gloucestershire
Jane	Catto	Grampian
John	Ireland	Greater Manchester & High Peak
Gavin	Poulton	Greater Manchester & High Peak
David	Nichols	Hampshire
Owen	Plunkett	Hampshire
Alan	Marlow	Hampshire
Arthur	Lee	Herefordshire
Marika	Kovacs	Herefordshire
Phil	Escritt	Hertfordshire & North Middlesex
Libby	Martin	Hertfordshire & North Middlesex
Vic	Royce	Highland & Islands
Philip	Marson	Inner London
Dominic	Pinto	Inner London
Caroline	Studdert	Inner London
Rod	Senior	Isle of Wight
Michael	Slater	Isle of Wight
Alison	Hargreaves	Kent
Robert	Peel	Kent
Sigurdur	Skulason	Lothian & Borders
Sandy	Janas	Lothian & Borders
Charles	Shepherd	Lake District
Roy	Denney	Leicestershire & Rutland
Anthony	Smith	Leicestershire & Rutland
Geoff	Mullett	Lincolnshire
Stuart	Parker	Lincolnshire
Dave	Callan	Merseyside and West Cheshire
David	Beacher	Merseyside and West Cheshire
David	Kelly	Mid Lancashire
Kevin	Matthews	Mid Lancashire
Julian	White	Norfolk
Peter	James	Norfolk
Steve	Thomas	North and Mid Cheshire
Alison	Woodward	North and Mid Cheshire
Roland	Rawlings	Northamptonshire
Robert	Entwistle	Northamptonshire
Nan	Errington	North East Lancashire
Susan	Baxendale	North East Lancashire
Max	Grant	North Wales
Margaret	Thomas	North Wales

Penelope	Ford	Northumbria
Richard	Fletcher	Northumbria
John	Marshall	North Yorks & South Durham
Karine	Davison	North Strathclyde
Anne	Thomson	North Strathclyde
Jenny	Fillingham	Nottinghamshire
Rod	Fillingham	Nottinghamshire
Richard	Birch	Oxfordshire
David	Godfrey	Oxfordshire
George	Allingham	Pembrokeshire
Jeanette	Allingham	Pembrokeshire
Alan	Austin	Powys
David	Gilmartin	Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute
Peter	Carr	Shropshire
Eric	Allison	Shropshire
David	Thompson	Somerset
Robin	Downton	Somerset
Allen	Pestell	South Yorks and N.E.Derbyshire
Terry	Howard	South Yorks and N.E.Derbyshire
Graham	Evans	Staffordshire
George	Greensides	Staffordshire
Roland	Wilson	Suffolk
David	Hodgkinson	Suffolk
Jennifer	Caddy	Surrey
Graham	Butler	Surrey
Barry	Holland	Surrey
Clive	Grumett	Sussex
Graham	Elvey	Sussex
Nick	Hillier	Warwickshire
John	Moroney	Warwickshire
Grahame	Lee	Wiltshire and Swindon
Angela	Womersley	Wiltshire and Swindon
Sue	Davies	Worcestershire
Peter	Davies	Worcestershire
Stephen	Noble	West Riding
Martin	Bennett	West Riding

Annette	Cotter	Ramblers Holidays Group Ltd
Diane	Goodyear	The Camping and Caravanning Club
Paul	Lawrence	Long Distance Walkers Association

Observers (non-voting)

Barry	Southwell	Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust
Michael	Duxbury	Ramblers Holidays Group Ltd
Andrew	Malby	vice-convener Scottish Council Executive Committee
Jason	Pollard	Governance Review Consultant
Mark	Sampson	Avon
Jacqui	Stiefel	Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex

Lara	Beach	Cornwall
Peter	Holloway	Cornwall
Mary	Weston	Cornwall
Carol	Shiers	Derbyshire
Peter	Ayling	East Yorkshire and Derwent
Bernard	Gill	Gloucestershire
Molly	Roberts	Gloucestershire
Mary	Scally	Greater Manchester and High Peak
Ian	Hardy	Hertfordshire and North Middlesex
Alan	Mather	Hampshire
Declan	Leyden	Hertfordshire and North Middlesex
Mark	Hewitt	Leicestershire and Rutland
Stan	Warren	Leicestershire and Rutland
Ian	Mitchell	Norfolk
Andrew	Knapman	Northamptonshire
Fiona	Rawlings	Northamptonshire
Rachel	Orange	Northumbria
Eleanor	Peacock	North Strathclyde
Keith	Wallace	Nottinghamshire
Robin	Harrison	Oxfordshire
Gavin	Powell	Oxfordshire
Christine	Hewitt	South Yorkshire and N.E.Derbys
Mark	Hodgkinson	SYNED
David	Cashmore	Staffordshire
Marjorie	Cashmore	Staffordshire
Paul	Bould	Sussex
Bev	Marks	Sussex
Wendy	Moroney	Warwickshire
Elizabeth	Snow	West Riding
Helen	Lloyd Jones	
Gillian	Reader	

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1 Welcome

The chair of the board of trustees, Des Garrahan, opened the meeting by welcoming delegates to the University of York and explaining the protocol for debates.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Alan Mattingly and Paddy Tipping (vice-presidents) and Ann Rankin of Clydesdale to Solway area.

3 Appointment of tellers, scrutineers, and timekeepers

The chair approved the appointment of Stephen Down, Steve Hoather, Marian Thomas and Judith Whalley as tellers; Malcolm Dixon and Geoff Richardson as timekeepers; and Ann Laing, Judith McCreery, Steve Owen and Avis Strudwick as scrutineers.

4 Minutes of general council 2015

The minutes were approved by council subject to minor amendments.

5 Agenda committee report

Council noted a report from the agenda committee which had met to consider the motions and amendments, and the order in which they should be debated. Clare Wadd, the chair of the agenda committee, spoke briefly to the paper, mentioning that there had been one appeal against a decision made by the committee which concerned the order in which motions should appear. The matter had been thoroughly discussed and the appeal disallowed. One emergency motion had been tabled. The question of whether the emergency motion should be debated would be put to council as the next item on the agenda and a two thirds majority would be necessary in order for the emergency motion to be accepted for debate. Ms Wadd went on to thank the previous chair of the agenda committee, Brian Reader, for his many years of service in that capacity and urged all delegates to participate in the election of agenda committee members.

6 Emergency motion

It was proposed by Elizabeth Lawie on behalf of North Strathclyde area, and seconded by Brian Reader of the agenda committee, that the following motion be granted urgency and debated:

This general council deplores the decision of the board of trustees not to distribute background notes with the motions this year. Council requires that, in future, the background notes (of up to 250 words in length) be distributed with council paperwork, subject only to the removal of any wording that could be construed as potentially libellous or which, if circulated, might pose a risk to the Ramblers.

There were eighty five votes in favour of granting the motion urgency, twenty eight against and four abstentions. The motion was therefore granted urgency. It would be debated as the fourth motion on the order paper.

7 Annual report and accounts

- 7.1 Alex Mannings, honorary treasurer, gave a presentation on the annual report and accounts. It was his first general council as honorary treasurer and he explained that this year he would be calling on members of the senior management team to assist in his presentation.
- 7.2 Under the memorandum and articles of the Ramblers, general council is required to receive the annual report and accounts. The accounts had already been given an unqualified audit opinion and were approved by the board of trustees in February. This session would provide more detail.
- 7.3 The honorary treasurer was pleased to be able to report that the Ramblers was a strong, solvent organisation. Total income for the year stood at over £10m, an increase of £1.3m over the previous year, providing a surplus of £1.7m. Income broke down as follows: £3.4m in membership subscription (including gift aid), £2.2m in legacies, £1.5m for special projects (i.e. the expenditure was restricted to those projects), £1.0m from fundraising, £0.1m from investments, and £2.0m from area and group events.
- 7.4 Turning to how money was being spent, £8.4m was direct charitable expenditure with only 6% spent on governance costs (a smaller sum than many other charities). The context for this expenditure was the strategic framework, as agreed by general council last year, which was governed by the four charitable aims (covering rights of way, countryside protection, freedom to roam and promoting walking) and three ambitions (connecting people, helping people find their feet, and a country designed for walking). The honorary treasurer invited members of the senior management team to explain how money was being spent within that framework.
- 7.5 Nicky Philpott, director of advocacy and engagement, outlined some of the key work undertaken under the heading of 'A country designed for walking' the new strategy for paths, access and urban greenspace. This included reorganising the way in which rights-of-way casework was undertaken and recorded. At present there were thirty five significant cases in hand and an average of £100,000 was being spent in legal fees each year to pursue cases through the courts. Every success was being talked about in news stories and through social media. Every change to the network was still being recorded and then dealt with by volunteers at the local level. Training in researching lost ways was in hand, and funding was being sought to give more support to that work. Staff continued to work through the stakeholder working group on the regulations and guidance to support the Deregulation Act. A response had been made to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's strategy document, stressing the importance of walking. Other work included new information on the website, and campaigning in respect of the mayoral election in London, and for the Welsh and Scottish government elections. The work on HS2 had been highly productive with the company now taking action to ameliorate the effects of the scheme on one hundred and fifty paths. Elsewhere though there were problems with Network Rail's crossing-closure programme and efforts were being made to address this issue. Across the country, path

maintenance teams were continuing their excellent work, saving local authorities more than an estimated £1m. The two real highlights of the year had been the Court of Appeal victory in the Andrews case, which was already helping to record lost ways and, of course, the Big Pathwatch. Supported by the biggest-ever grant from Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust, this had provided a huge amount of data about the state of the network, and Ramblers needed to make maximum use of this. There were many challenges ahead including the privatisation of the Land Registry, the government's localism agenda, changes to the Judicial Review regime and the cuts to local authority funding. In respect of the last of these Ramblers needed to persuade local authorities that public rights of way were an asset, not a problem.

- 7.6 Angela Charlton, director of Ramblers Cymru, highlighted some major initiatives: the development of a Ramblers policy on fracking which had been developed by all three countries working together; the continuing work on the Wales Coast Path; and the Welsh government's green paper in which the possibility of access following the Scottish model was explored.
- 7.7 Jess Dolan, director of Ramblers Scotland, said that in Scotland one of the key campaigns had been in respect of the proposed byelaws to prohibit wild camping around Loch Lomond. The national park had sought these to combat anti-social behaviour but they had been opposed by Ramblers because such camping is an enabler for people going walking and such controls are a degrader of the access legislation. Ramblers' alternative proposal was for better visitor management with toilets, litter bins and recycling facilities provided. Working with a consortium of other organisations, Ramblers had met with Ministers to oppose the byelaws and had so far achieved a delay in their introduction until 2017 and a reduction in the area of land affected. The byelaws would also only last for three years in the first instance which would provide opportunity for a campaign to ensure they were not renewed.
- 7.8 Simon Barnett, director of delivery and development, said that £3.5m had been spent on promoting walking. Over the ten years of the vision the ambition is to give people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to go walking. The delivery of that ambition involved the provision of 3,000 weekly walks.
- 7.9 Over the last year there had been three key developments. The first was the theory of change, developed with our partners, Macmillan Cancer Support, which defines the long-term strategy for this work. The second was the accreditation scheme which had proved necessary because variation had crept in; standards had now been developed with walks fitting a ninety-minute/three-mile model. Finally, there had been consolidation of other bespoke projects. The Get Walking, Keep Walking scheme, which had comprised a twelve-week programme in discrete locations, had been wound down but its spirit lived on in Walking for Health.
- 7.10 Council then viewed a short video on the Medal Routes project in Scotland which involved short pre-mapped circular walks which can be viewed on an App or downloaded. Funding for this project has been received from four sources including Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust and NHS Scotland. There were now more than six hundred routes available.
- 7.11 The work of the division also involved connecting people through the Ramblers. One third of the budget went to areas and groups directly for the organisation of their walks

programme and for supporting infrastructure (insurance, websites, Ramblers Routes, support for short walks and reaching out to health walk participants). Four hundred people had joined the Ramblers through health walks, with the number of group walks which were fewer than five miles having risen by 25%.

- 7.12 Other support for volunteers has included face-to-face support at volunteer development days (VDDs), and the development of a help desk. Connecting people also involves diversifying. Four young people's groups were present at Scottish council this year, bringing energy and enthusiasm to the event and several members of young people's groups were elected on to Ramblers Scotland Executive Committee.
- 7.13 Christine Grant, the director of services, explained that her division had a GB wide remit. Out of the total expenditure of £8,469k across the organisation £2,427k was spent on services. 40% of those costs related to servicing members. The team had the largest staff complement and their work was supplemented by office volunteers. The division had also dealt with internal matters e.g. a staff grading project and eight division re-organisations. Although 68% of staff had changed there had been minimal redundancies. Ramblers Scotland had moved offices and the website had been re-developed to be mobile phone friendly. Future IT needs were now the subject of a major development project.
- 7.14 The recruitment and retention team was putting together new building blocks to attract and retain members. These included the VDDs and the new innovation of the members' day.
- 7.15 Underpinning all of this was the work of the finance team, and the director of services was pleased to be able to report that in summary, staff organisation, office space, IT and staff retention had all improved in the last year.
- 7.16 The honorary treasurer concluded the session by discussing governance costs. These had amounted to £525,000 in the last year of which £129,000 was spent at area and group level. There had been a 40% increase in governance costs last year but this was largely because the holding of General Council in Cambridge had proved expensive. The cost of the governance review in 2014/15 had been £43,889 compared to £6,112 in 2013/14. Governance costs were only 6% of total expenditure.
- 7.17 The honorary treasurer said that the Ramblers had come a long way from the financial crisis of 2008/9. Robust financial processes were now in place with the board's finance and operations sub-committee (FOSC) now providing oversight. In our budget planning, core expenditure did not exceed core income and legacy income was used to fund future projects, not relied upon for core funding. In addition, there had been a £3.4m rise in total income since 2008/9.
- 7.18 The principal risk remained membership, which was still the main source of income (41%). However it is still necessary to recruit 10,000 new members each year just to maintain numbers. Legacies were growing and represent almost 27% of income, and new key fundraisers had been employed to explore corporate and trust fund sources as well as funders such as the People's Postcode Lottery. Further managed diversification of income is required. The pension deficit (with The Pensions Trust) stood at £1.2m and could only be settled in full. An extra £400,000 had been added to the reserve which now stood at £1,050,000.

- 7.19 Overall, the honorary treasurer said, the Ramblers is in a good financial place with a strong balance sheet.

8 Questions on annual report and accounts

- 8.1 Dave Callan, Merseyside and West Cheshire area asked about the nature of the pension scheme. The director of services explained that in 2014 the Ramblers had left the final salary scheme operated by The Pensions Trust but the historic debt associated with that remained. To date over £1m had been set aside to cover that debt.
- 8.2 Chris Hodgson (Ceredigion area) asked if the Ramblers had an age profile of its members. The director of services said that historically such information was not collected, although it was known that a large proportion of members were over 50 years old. An effort was being made to attract younger people and families.
- 8.3 Susan Carter (Avon area) said that whilst it was great news that the Ramblers was strong and solvent financially it was not a good idea just to keep the money in the bank. Why not identify some quick-win, short-term project? The honorary treasurer agreed that large reserves were not considered to be a good thing for charities.
- 8.4 Annette Cotter (Ramblers Holidays Group Limited) asked how many staff members were in the pension scheme to which the deficit related. The director of services said that the number of current and ex-employees still with rights in the scheme was about 25.
- 8.5 Kevin Matthews (Mid Lancashire area) commented that the fact that final salary pension schemes were a thing of the past could impact on Ramblers both through a decrease in legacies and on the number of people retiring early and then coming forward as volunteers. The honorary treasurer agreed and said that was another reason for Ramblers seeking to diversify its income streams.
- 8.6 David Nichols (Hampshire area) asked how many of the members who failed to renew membership after one year had been given membership as a gift. The director of services said that 45% of new members did not renew after their first year but that the number which were gift memberships was not available.
- 8.7 Council agreed that the annual report and accounts for the year to 30 September 2015 be adopted.

9 Appointment of auditors

The firm of Crowe Clark Whitehill was proposed by Mike Church, seconded by Teri Moore, and agreed by council.

10 Review of actions taken to implement 2015 motions and outstanding motions from previous years

Council noted the report of this review and the following questions were asked, and the following points raised:

- 10.1 Max Grant (North Wales area) said that an updated version of *Guidance for Footpath Workers* as sought in motion four from general council 2014 had still not appeared, and asked when such a document would be published. The chief executive said that the production of new advice was in the business plan for next year although its format might be different. However, new advice on various issues was constantly being published on the website.
- 10.2 Phil Marson (Inner London area) commented in the context of motion eight from 2011 (on regional structures) that the forthcoming election for the Mayor of London had highlighted the need for a London-wide voice. He said that support from Ramblers office campaign staff had meant that the *Love London, Walk London* campaign had operated across the greater London area, but he made a plea for more support for London-wide issues.
- 10.3 Owen Plunkett (Hampshire area) said in the context of motion seven from 2015 that there was a need to be pro-active on fracking issues. The chief executive said that the policy which had been developed flowed from existing countryside policies and set out a platform from which areas could operate; however, areas needed to react to individual schemes on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.4 Keith Wadd (vice-president) said that he was disappointed that nothing had been done on waymarking (motion three, 2014). The director of advocacy and engagement said that the Big Pathwatch results had identified waymarking as a major problem. It was an issue to be addressed and came up in discussions with the Institute of Public Rights of Way and Access Management (IPROW).

11 Election of officers

Vice-presidents:

The following **past presidents** automatically remain **vice-presidents**:

Andrew Bennett, Julia Bradbury, Chris Hall, Mike Harding, Peter Melchett, Chris Smith, Janet Street-Porter.

It was proposed by Teri Moore and seconded by Mike Church, both of the board of trustees that the following be re-elected as **vice-presidents**:

Geoff Eastwood, John Foster, David Grosz, Richard Lloyd Jones, Cath Mackay, Alan Mattingly, Jerry Pearlman, Malcolm Petyt, David Sharp, Paddy Tipping and Keith Wadd.

It was proposed by Alison Mitchell (board of trustees) and seconded by the chair of the board that **Dave Morris** should be elected as a new vice-president.

It was proposed by Graham Butler (Surrey area) and seconded by Kate Ashbrook (president) that **Brian Reader** should be elected as a new vice-president.

It was proposed by Alex Mannings (honorary treasurer) and seconded by the chair of the board that **Jonathan Kipling** should be elected as a new vice-president.

All officers were elected overwhelmingly by council.

Council further noted that, as the retiring president, Kate Ashbrook would automatically be appointed as a vice-president.

12 Election of members of the board of trustees

Elections to board of trustees

There were four candidates for three ordinary board member places: Kate Ashbrook, Roy Hunt, Richard May and Robert Peel. As a result of the ballot Kate Ashbrook (112 votes), Robert Peel (108 votes) and Roy Hunt (81 votes) were elected. Richard May (47 votes) was not elected.

13 Agenda committee

There were seven candidates for the five agenda committee places: Peter Carr, John Esslemont, Elizabeth Lawie, Allan Pestell, Sylvia Popham, Clare Wadd and John Wainwright. As a result of the ballot Peter Carr, John Esslemont, Elizabeth Lawie, Sylvia Popham, and Clare Wadd were elected.

14 Welcome from Roy Hunt, chair of East Yorks and Derwent area

As Roy Hunt, chair of the host area, was a candidate for election to the board of trustees, his welcome address was deferred until after the election had taken place. Roy extended a warm welcome to York and Yorkshire, extending his welcome even to those from the wrong side of the Pennines! He said that the suggestion that East Yorkshire and Derwent area should host general council had come from Tom Halstead four years ago. It was Tom who had assembled the support team and found the location and he was to be congratulated on bringing it all together. His band of willing helpers was doing a wonderful job. Thanks were also due to Ramblers staff who played the major role in bringing council to York, and to the university staff for looking after everyone so well.

15 Motions

Constitutional motions submitted to general council 2016

[1] Special resolution to amend the memorandum and articles of association and standing orders

The following motion was proposed by Christine O'Byrne on behalf of the board of trustees and seconded by Clare Wadd of the agenda committee.

It is resolved by way of a special resolution:

That the draft articles of association and the draft standing orders in the forms attached are approved and adopted as the articles of association and standing orders of the association in substitution for and to the exclusion of all existing articles of association and standing orders of the association.

That the existing memorandum of association of the association be amended and restated so that it conforms with the draft memorandum of association in the form attached.

The motion was carried, with 126 votes in favour, one vote against and five abstentions.

[2] Ordinary resolution to amend standing orders

The following motion was proposed by John Esslemont of the agenda committee on behalf of Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex area, and seconded by John Wainwright of that area:

That the standing orders be amended by insertion of the following new standing order after standing order A15 (or at the equivalent position in a revised set of standing orders, and with corrected cross reference, if such a revision has been agreed) and by any consequent changes to standing order numbering and cross references:
“If a nomination is received at the office by the date required by these standing orders and is found, within seven days of receipt, to contravene any of the requirements of standing order A15, the nominee will be notified. A corrected nomination for the same nominee received at the office not less than seven working days before the annual general meeting will be treated as valid. Any such contravention not found within seven days of receipt will not invalidate the nomination, or the nominee's tenure of office if elected.”

The area had submitted an amendment to this motion:

Add a further paragraph at the end (not forming part of the proposed new standing order):

For the avoidance of doubt, should special resolution [1] have been approved, the proposed new standing order above should be inserted as A45 (before the “vacancies” heading) and, within its text, “standing order A15” should be replaced by “standing orders A40-44”. Standing orders A45-49 should be renumbered as A46-50 and the reference in standing order A6 to “standing orders A45-48” should be replaced by “standing orders A46-49”.

The amendment was accepted by council.

The amended motion read:

That the standing orders be amended by insertion of the following new standing order after standing order A15 (or at the equivalent position in a revised set of standing orders, and with corrected cross reference, if such a revision has been agreed) and by any consequent changes to standing order numbering and cross references:
“If a nomination is received at the office by the date required by these standing orders and is found, within seven days of receipt, to contravene any of the requirements of standing order A15, the nominee will be notified. A corrected nomination for the same nominee received at the office not less than seven working days before the annual general meeting will be treated as valid. Any such contravention not found within seven days of receipt will not invalidate the nomination, or the nominee's tenure of office if elected.”

For the avoidance of doubt, should special resolution [1] have been approved, the proposed new standing order above should be inserted as A45 (before the “vacancies” heading) and, within its text, “standing order A15” should be replaced by “standing orders A40-44”. Standing orders A45-49 should be renumbered as A46-50 and the reference in standing order A6 to “standing orders A45-48” should be replaced by “standing orders A46-49”.

The motion was lost, with 46 votes in favour, 82 votes against and 7 abstentions.

[3] Ordinary resolution: amendment to standing orders paragraph concerning the automatic allocation of new members and affiliates to Ramblers

The following motion was proposed by Ray Chaney of Gloucestershire area, and seconded by John Esslemont of the agenda committee:

That the standing orders be amended by:

If the special resolution (motion 1) is passed:

- After B7g insert ‘or areas’ after ‘groups’
- Then insert after ‘choice’ in B8 ‘ and new members may request allocation to a specific group or area on joining’
- Replace the remainder of B8 from ‘This allocation by the board of trustees’ with

“This allocation by the board of trustees may be made by any means that combines reasonable convenience of identifying the location of members’ postal addresses with the minimisation of discrepancies between such allocation and the territory of an area and/or group as defined in its constitution, provided that areas and groups are consulted about the means of allocation.”

If the special resolution (motion 1) is not passed replace standing order B4(g) with the following:

"The allocation of affiliated local organisations and individual members to areas, and of individual members to groups. Individual members may, at any time, request to be allocated or transferred to their chosen group (and the area covering that group) or may request not to be allocated to any group, in which case they may request allocation or transfer to their chosen area. In the absence of such requests allocation shall be made with reference to the territories defined for areas and, if required, groups.

This allocation by the board of trustees may be made by any means that combines reasonable convenience of identifying the location of members’ postal addresses with the minimisation of discrepancies between such allocation and the territory of an area and/or group as defined in its constitution, provided that areas and groups are consulted about the means of allocation.”

The motion was carried.

[3A] Non-distribution of background notes at general council [emergency motion]

The following motion was proposed by Elizabeth Lawie of the agenda committee on behalf of North Strathclyde area, and seconded by Karine Davison of that area:

This general council deplores the decision of the board of trustees not to distribute background notes with the motions this year. Council requires that, in future, the background notes (of up to 250 words in length) be distributed with council paperwork, subject only to the removal of any wording that could be construed as potentially libellous or which, if circulated, might pose a risk to the Ramblers.

The motion was carried.

[4] Getting the governance review back on track

The following motion was proposed by Barry Holland of Surrey area, and seconded by Graham Butler of that area

At general council 2013 a motion seeking a governance review was carried overwhelmingly. The motion included a request for an interim report on options considered, together with a brief rationale for dismissing those rejected and notes on those remaining. This general council agrees that there is no good reason why the board of trustees should not have produced this report. Council now requires a report on the options relating to the board and council (one option being maintaining the status quo) with advantages and disadvantages of each option, the report to be sent to areas by the end of September 2016.

The following amendment was proposed by Moira Fraser on behalf of the board of trustees and seconded by Mike Church of the board:

Replace “by September 2016” with “by September 2017”.

A further amendment was proposed from the floor by Charles Shepherd of Lake District area. This proposed that the report be split with that on area and group changes prepared by 2016, and other issues, including the principle of “one member, one vote” being deferred until 2017. The chair took a straw poll of delegates in respect of this proposal which indicated that council was marginally in favour of the idea.

The board of trustees’ formal amendment was carried with fifty seven votes in favour, fifty six against and five abstentions.

The amended motion reads:

At general council 2013 a motion seeking a governance review was carried overwhelmingly. The motion included a request for an interim report on options considered, together with a brief rationale for dismissing those rejected and notes on those remaining. This general council agrees that there is no good reason why the board of trustees should not have produced this report. Council now requires a report on the options relating to the board and council (one option being maintaining the status quo) with advantages and disadvantages of each option, the report to be sent to areas by the end of September 2017.

The amended motion was carried.

[5] Governance of areas and groups

The following motion was proposed by Geoff Mullett of Lincolnshire area and seconded by Stuart Parker of that area:

This general council rejects the proposed wording of the area and group agreements as set out in "proposals for a new governance structure for the Ramblers" dated April 2015.

Council instructs the board of trustees to devise less prescriptive agreements for areas and groups that are more appropriate for unpaid volunteers and more closely reflect current serving volunteer capacity.

The motion was carried.

[6] Governance review

The following motion was tabled, having been composited by the agenda committee from motions submitted by Derbyshire, Kent, and South Yorks & North East Derbyshire areas:

This general council calls upon the board of trustees to end the current governance review.

The following amendment, submitted by Alison Hargreaves of Kent area, was accepted by the proposing areas and by council:

Replace the complete text of motion 6 with the following wording:

'This general council calls upon the board of trustees to withdraw immediately the current governance proposals. The problems experienced by areas, groups and volunteers should be identified through consultation with them, solutions to those problems proposed and agreed by them and we should seek to pilot various ideas on a voluntary basis in selected areas and groups. This will be a collaborative approach which will allow faster progress than imposition through constitutional change.'

The following amendment, which had been submitted by Clare Wadd on behalf of the agenda committee, was subsequently withdrawn:

Add second sentence 'council further calls upon the board to re-examine its approach to governance issues, and to seek solutions based on partnership and communication.'

The amended motion, as follows, was proposed by Alison Hargreaves of Kent area, and seconded by Allen Pestell of South Yorks & North East Derbyshire area:

This general council calls upon the board of trustees to withdraw immediately the current governance proposals. The problems experienced by areas, groups and volunteers should be identified through consultation with them, solutions to those problems proposed and agreed by them and we should seek to pilot various ideas on a voluntary basis in selected areas and groups. This will be a collaborative approach which will allow faster progress than imposition through constitutional change.

The amended motion was carried.

[7] Communication

The following motion was proposed by John Elfes of Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex area, and seconded by Owen Plunkett of Hampshire area:

This general council requires that the board of trustees, as a matter of urgency, sets up a scheme of communication between trustees, area chairmen, area secretaries and council members, to which these volunteers may subscribe, to communicate amongst themselves with ease, by email or using an online forum.

The motion was carried.

[8] Rights of way network

The following motion was proposed by Graham Elvey of Sussex area, and seconded by Peter Carr of Shropshire area:

This general council believes that not enough action has been taken to implement the motion carried overwhelmingly in 2011, which called upon the board of trustees to ensure that Ramblers has sufficient expert staff deployed to fully protect the Rights of Way network. The 2011 situation still prevails, so council again calls upon the board to ensure that there is an adequate number of expert staff working on Rights of Way to reflect the high priority attached to this work by Ramblers. It is vital that resources are made available for staff recruitment, training and development in this core policy area.

The motion was carried.

The following motions, which had not been put to a vote by the time specified on the agenda were, in accordance with Standing Order A7, remitted to the board of trustees.

[9] Enhancement of Ramblers Policy on Rail Crossings and Rights of Way [Leicestershire area]

This general council recognises and welcomes the current policy regarding the permanent closure of rail crossings. However, it considers that it fails to address the issue of the ongoing 'temporary' closure of crossings by Network Rail, either with the compliance of Highway Authorities by means of a Traffic Regulation Order, or unilaterally using the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974.

Council notes that these closures generally arise from 'convenient' revised risk assessments done by Network Rail, and requires that the board of trustees engages with Network Rail as a matter of extreme urgency in a review of this process and, in the meantime, immediately takes all measures possible to contest unjustified temporary closures not following recognised legal processes.

[10] Shared use policy guidance- update needed [Hertfordshire and North Middlesex area]

This general council notes that there is continuing pressure to convert pedestrian-only routes into shared routes for cyclists and pedestrians. The policy guidance in Ramblers Circular 97/25 –shared cycle routes, remains relevant but the circular is no longer widely known nor readily available and the background information and guidance are in need of revision and updating. Council therefore requests that the board of trustees arranges for this circular to be revised and updated as soon as possible and then made widely available to all footpath workers.

[11] Lost Ways [West Riding area]

This general council welcomes the recent training sessions held by Ramblers on restoring lost ways, but is very concerned that members do not receive enough support to enable them to carry out this work, which is very complicated and time consuming. Council requests that the board of trustees as a matter of urgency sets up a system to help members prepare and register claims including the employment of experts; additionally council urges the board to create a central point or electronic depository for the collating of the documentation and methodology required and the locations where the official records can be found.

[12] Family membership [Wiltshire and Swindon area]

This general council believes that encouraging children to go out walking would be beneficial and therefore urges the board of trustees to create a new category of family membership.

Teri Moore of the board of trustees had submitted the following amendment:

Replace “create” with “consider the possibility of creating”.

[13] Barcode on membership cards [Greater Manchester and High Peak area]

This general council asks the board of trustees to include on membership cards a barcode representing the membership details already present on the card, as a low- or no-cost addition to allow innovative future uses, such as register-taking or fitness tracking.

16 Venue for general council in 2017

General council 2017 would take place on the first weekend of April 2017 in Southampton.

17 Chair’s closing remarks

17.1 The chair thanked all of the volunteers who had helped to make this such a well-run general council, commenting that he had never experienced a council at which so many votes needed counting. He also thanked all delegates for their well-mannered and informative contribution to the debates. He particularly thanked Tom Halstead, who had headed the volunteer team from East Yorkshire and Derwent area, and Roy Hunt, the area chair, for their leadership over the weekend and said that it was clear that all involved had looked forward to, and greatly enjoyed, the event.

- 17.2 Thanks were also due to the university staff for all of their hard work, and to the retiring board members Richard May and Richard Trueman, and also to the retiring president, Kate Ashbrook—although she wasn't going anywhere, having been re-elected to the board of trustees. He added that it was very difficult to imagine Kate not serving the Ramblers in some capacity. He also welcomed the other newly-elected members of the board, including Alison Mitchell, the new convenor of the Scottish executive committee.
- 17.3. Finally, he thanked the staff in all three countries for their work at general council, at the highly successful members' day (which he hoped would be repeated), and throughout the year.
- 17.4 The retiring president, Kate Ashbrook, thanked the chair for chairing general council with such humour and good nature. Kate's comments were greeted with applause.

This ended the business

Many thanks to the local area volunteers who helped make the event a success:

Event volunteers

Tom	Halstead	Local event volunteer coordinator
Richard	Beaton	
Jean	Beaton	
Andrew	Brownlie	
Graham	Collett	
Malcolm	Dixon	
Lynda	Doughty	
Stephen	Down	
Nigel	Emery	
Doreen	Felton	
Ian	Gibbs	
Di	Halstead	
Steve	Hoather	
Ann	Laing	
Judith	McCreery	
David	Nunns	
Steve	Owen	
Patsy	Pendegrass	
Jane	Preston	
Ian	Reavill	
Geoff	Richardson	
Vera	Silberberg	
Eric	Smith	
Terry	Strickland	
Avis	Strudwick	
Brian	Strudwick	
Brian	Taylor	
Marian	Thomas	
Ros	Thompson	
Irene	Walton	

Judith

Whalley