

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON
1 AND 2 APRIL 2017**

General Council 2017 Attendee list

Members of Council (voting)

Richard	Lloyd Jones	Vice president
Catherine	MacKay	Vice president
Jerry	Pearlman	Vice president
Malcolm	Petyt	Vice president
Brian	Reader	Vice president
Paddy	Tipping	Vice president
Keith	Wadd	Vice president

Des	Garrahan	Chair
Alex	Mannings	Honorary Treasurer
Kate	Ashbrook	Trustee
Mike	Church	Trustee
Teri	Moore	*Trustee
Paul	Rhodes	*Trustee
Alison	Mitchell	Trustee (convener, Ramblers Scotland)
Christopher	Hodgson	Trustee (chair Ramblers Cymru)

John	Esslemont	Agenda Committee (chair)
Peter	Carr	*Agenda Committee
Elizabeth	Lawie	Agenda Committee
Sylvia	Popham	Agenda Committee
Clare	Wadd	Agenda Committee

Ann	Light	AV Avon
Graham	Smith	BK Berkshire
Lee	Pattison	BK Berkshire
John	Wainwright	BU Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
Jacqui	Stiefel	BU Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
Stephen	Hughes	CE Ceredigion
Eleanor	Hughes	CE Ceredigion
Mike	Gray	CF Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside
John	Andrews	CF Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside
Philip	Guest	CH Cheshire East
James	Eckersley	CH Cheshire East
Lara	Beach	CL Cornwall
Graham	Ronan	CL Cornwall
David	Selkirk	DE Derbyshire
Andrew	Chadwick	DN Devon
Deborah	Welland	DN Devon

Steve	Ryder	DT Dorset
Jan	Wardell	DT Dorset
Tom	Halstead	ER East Yorkshire & Derwent
Peter	Ayling	ER East Yorkshire & Derwent
Alan	Goffee	ES Essex
Michael	Cannell	ES Essex
Hilary	Snell	ES Essex
Jane	Catto	GP Grampian
Anne	MacDonald	GP Grampian
Roger	Bangs	HF Hertfordshire & North Middlesex
Ian	Hardy	HF Hertfordshire & North Middlesex
Arthur	Lee	HW Herefordshire
Marika	Kovacs	HW Herefordshire
Philip	Marson	IL Inner London
Gemma	Butchart	IL Inner London
Caroline	Wall	IL Inner London
Michael	Slater	IW Isle of Wight
Jacqueline	Carter	IW Isle of Wight
Averil	Brice	KT Kent
Alison	Hargreaves	KT Kent
Margaret	Granger	LB Lothian & Borders
Andy	Malby	LB Lothian & Borders
Hugh	Wareing	LL Merseyside and West Cheshire
Emma	Dearing	LL Merseyside and West Cheshire
Pam	Maybury	LN North East Lancashire
Susan	Baxendale	LN North East Lancashire
Stan	Winstanley	LW North Wales
Alan	Norton	*LW North Wales
Susan	Richardson	MC North and Mid Cheshire
Steve	Thomas	MC North and Mid Cheshire
Brian	Dearnaley	ML Mid Lancashire
Kevin	Matthews	ML Mid Lancashire
Gavin	Poulton	MR Greater Manchester & High Peak
Mary	Scally	MR Greater Manchester & High Peak
David	Hunt	NE Nottinghamshire
Christopher	Thompson	NE Nottinghamshire
Richard	Fletcher	NN Northumbria
Nuala	Wright	NN Northumbria
Fiona	Rawlings	NP Northamptonshire
Bob	Entwistle	NP Northamptonshire
Peter	James	NR Norfolk
Julian	White	NR Norfolk
George	Greensides	NS Staffordshire
Graham	Evans	NS Staffordshire
Dave	Cavanagh	OX Oxfordshire
Alie	Hagedoorn	OX Oxfordshire

Jeanette	Allingham	PE Pembrokeshire
George	Allingham	*PE Pembrokeshire
Jay	Wilson	SC Highland & Islands
Jeremy	Kenyon	SD South Yorks & N.E.Derbyshire
Allen	Pestell	SD South Yorks & N.E.Derbyshire
Roland	Wilson	SK Suffolk
Isla	Clough	SK Suffolk
Anne	Thomson	SL North Strathclyde
Karine	Davison	SL North Strathclyde
Robin	Downton	SO Somerset
Philip	Bisatt	SO Somerset
Barry	Holland	SR Surrey
Richard	Watson	SR Surrey
Graham	Butler	SR Surrey
Gillian	Steed	SS Shropshire
Trevor	Allison	SS Shropshire
Gwyn	Lewis	SW Glamorgan
Asta	Smith	SW Glamorgan
Paul	Bould	SX Sussex
Bev	Marks	SX Sussex
Grahame	Lee	WE Wiltshire & Swindon
Tim	Lewis	WE Wiltshire & Swindon
Andy	Page	WK Warwickshire
Diane	Smith	WK Warwickshire
Clare	Stallard	WO Worcestershire
John	Stallard	WO Worcestershire
Stephen	Noble	WR West Riding
Susan	Wilkinson	WR West Riding
David	Nichols	WX Hampshire
Owen	Plunkett	WX Hampshire
Peter	Cresswell	*WX Hampshire

Michael	Duxbury	Ramblers Holidays Group Ltd
Humphrey	Southall	Red Rope

Observers (non-voting)

Barry	Southwell	Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust
Lis	Nielsen	European Ramblers' Association
Catherine	Ross	Guest

Heather	Brown	BK Berkshire
Patricia	Endacott	BU Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
John	Elfes	BU Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex
Sylvia	Ronan	CL Cornwall
Hilda	Blacklaw	CL Cornwall
James	Baldwin	DN Devon

Kate	Gocher	DT Dorset
Lynn	Croskin	ER East Yorkshire & Derwent
Libby	Martin	HF Hertfordshire & North Middlesex
Leslie	Preston	KT Kent
Denis	McAteer	LW North Wales
Martin	Gawith	NE Nottinghamshire
Susan	Rick	NE Nottinghamshire
Roland	Rawlings	NP Northamptonshire
Andrew	Knapman	NP Northamptonshire
Ian	Mitchell	NR Norfolk
Phil	Cheesewright	NS Staffordshire
Judith	Meredith	NS Staffordshire
Mary	Gough	OX Oxfordshire

Alan	Bailey	Candidate
	Clissold-	
Sophie	Lesser	Candidate
Rebecca	Dawson	Candidate
	Dyer-	
Hugh	Westacott	Candidate
John	Ireland	Candidate
Richard	May	Candidate
Dominic	Pinto	Candidate
Peter	Rookes	Candidate

Trustee candidates with voting rights are indicated with an asterisk

1 **Welcome**

- 1.1 Prior to the formal proceedings, the chair of Hampshire area, David Nichols, had welcomed members, guests and visitors to the south coast and back to Hampshire in particular, Council last having visited the county in 2008 in Winchester. He said that Hampshire area comprised over 4,500 members in 16 groups, running a diverse walking programme catering for all abilities over a variety of distances. The area was fortunate in having a good working relationship with Hampshire County Council, which trusted volunteer teams to undertake path clearance and waymarking. The area's footpath committee members would be happy to explain their experience to other areas. He finished by wishing everyone attending a happy weekend.
- 1.2 The chair of the Board of Trustees, Des Garrahan, opened the meeting by welcoming General Council members, guests and visitors to the University of Southampton and explaining the protocol for debates. Des reminded everyone that the Ramblers has been at the heart of walking since 1935, with many memories to be proud of, but he believed that our best was yet to come.
- 1.3 The Ramblers' new Chief Executive, Vanessa Griffiths, and the senior management team reported on the achievements of the last year and the future work programme.
- 1.4 Nicky Philpott, Director of Advocacy and Engagement, talked about creating a country designed for walking and explained that, as a result of the Ramblers' Love

London, Walk London campaign, London now had a Walking Commissioner as well as a Cycling Commissioner. With Mayoral elections imminent in some other large metropolitan areas, this is a good model to follow.

Nicky also explained that the next phase of Pathwatch is well underway, with a review soon to consider lessons learnt so far. She updated Council on how Ramblers' members have made invaluable contributions to preparatory work on sections of the England Coastal Path, and explained that good momentum is building on the vital programme to claim lost rights of way before the 2026 deadline and announced that Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust had agreed to support the Ramblers by funding a project manager to help coordinate this work. She updated Council on a campaign in East Anglia to prevent the harmful closures of level crossings and the importance of ensuring we get the model right here as the programme of closures will likely effect all areas in the future.

- 1.5 Brendan Paddy, Director of Ramblers Scotland, gave an update on Scottish campaigns, including getting core paths properly marked on ordnance survey maps in future, and continuing to champion free access for walkers and wild campers at Loch Lomond. Ramblers Scotland is also piloting a new walk-leadership training-framework in close collaboration with colleagues in England.
- 1.6 Simon Barnett, Director of Delivery and Development, talked about helping everyone to find their feet and connecting people through the Ramblers. He thanked volunteers and staff for helping to deliver the first-ever Walk About festival. Learning is being used to improve Walk About 2018, including a small grants programme for areas and groups. Over the next year the Ramblers will be creating a new coalition of organisations to power Walking for Health in England. Des thanked Macmillan Cancer Support for their partnership since 2012 and for their continued commitment to the programme in the future.
- 1.7 Angela Charlton, Director of Ramblers Cymru, talked about walking activity in Wales, starting with Let's Walk Cymru and the Big Welsh Walk Hinterland challenge. She also updated Council on the work which has already started across the Ramblers to ensure we will be able to protect our rights of way post-Brexit. We are campaigning for access to be an essential part of the package of public goods that should be delivered under any future agricultural payment schemes.
- 1.7 Kate Ashbrook, trustee and vice president; Teri Moore, trustee, and Christine Hathway, Area Support Officer explained how the Board see Areas as "crucial powerhouses", linking the staff team with Groups. This work is ongoing, through the new area working group and volunteer sounding board, to provide better mutual support to areas, with clear descriptions of the role of areas and support for areas in abeyance.
- 1.9 Vanessa Griffiths introduced herself and posed three questions for the Ramblers. Are we fit for the future, in a fast changing world? Are we communicating as well as we can, internally and externally? Are we making the difficult choices we need to make about our priorities and how we invest our resources? The Ramblers' five investment priorities for the immediate future are: fixing our internal infrastructure; improving mutual support for volunteers, areas and groups; better understanding our members' and supporters' needs; developing a strong and regular campaigns cycle; and continuing to invest in income-generating partnerships.

Vanessa observed that we are a strong, mature and successful charity, with huge potential. This potential will only be realised if we look forward and outward and

adapt to our changing circumstances. She also said it was important to her, and to the staff team, that we improve our collective dialogue across the organisation so that we are united, trusting and constructive: we are most likely to succeed and to ensure the Ramblers thrive if we work as one team of walkers, committed to enabling everyone to enjoy the outdoors on foot.

- 1.10 Christine Grant, Director of Services, explained that the new Tapestry project will help us to improve our communication and associated IT issues. Tapestry will enable us to update, upgrade and replace existing systems and introduce and implement wider ICT improvements.
- 1.11 Des concluded the presentation with this John Schaar quote “The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made. And the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination”.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Christine Boston (vice chair) and Alison Hargreaves (Kent area).

3 Appointment of tellers, scrutineers, and timekeepers

The chair approved the appointment of Andy Donovan, Paul Harvey and Dominic Mann as timekeepers; and Richard Kenchington, Mike Powell, Stuart Shurlock, Amy Fowler, Alan Marlow, Dave Milton and John Smith as scrutineers and tellers.

4 Minutes of General Council 2016

It was proposed by Brian Reader (vice president), seconded by John Esslemont (agenda committee) that the minutes, subject to minor amendments, should be approved. Council approved the minutes.

5 Election of president

It was proposed by the chair, and seconded by Kate Ashbrook (Board of Trustees and vice president) that Stuart Maconie be elected as president. Mr Maconie was elected unanimously.

Following this election, a short video presentation from the new president was shown to Council.

6 Election of vice presidents

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

It was proposed by Graham Ronan of Cornwall area and seconded by Paul Rhodes of the Board of Trustees that the following be re-elected as vice presidents: John Foster, David Grosz, Richard Lloyd Jones, Jonathan Kipling, Cath Mackay, Dave Morris, Alan Mattingly, Jerry Pearlman, Malcolm Petyt, Brian Reader, Paddy Tipping and Keith Wadd.

All vice presidents were elected overwhelmingly by Council.

N.B. vice presidents were elected twice during the proceedings to redress an anomaly in the articles. The first motion to Council (see below) has corrected this anomaly.

7 Agenda committee report

- 7.1 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. John Esslemont, the chair of the agenda committee, spoke briefly to the paper. He thanked staff for producing the paper version of the report so quickly, and thanked his fellow committee members for their hard work, in particular for explaining the work of the committee on the Ramblers website. He also especially welcomed the move towards consulting other areas and the board about Council motions before submitting them. Finally, he invited his fellow committee members to make themselves known to Council.
- 7.2 The chair thanked the agenda committee for its work, and Peter Carr of the agenda committee thanked John Esslemont for his hard work behind the scenes in chairing the committee.

8 Annual report and accounts

- 8.1 Alex Mannings, honorary treasurer, gave a presentation on the annual accounts. He reported that the Ramblers was in a healthy financial position. Total income for the year was recorded at £9.6m, providing a surplus of £388,000 (an unrestricted surplus of £167,000). As required, the accounts had been prepared using the new accounting standard for charities and the opportunity had been taken to revalue the two chalets which were owned by the Ramblers and administered by relevant areas. He thanked the local committees for their work in looking after these national assets.
- 8.2 It remained the case that membership subscriptions were the largest income stream, but he was pleased to note that legacy income had risen over the last 12 years and was now averaging £800,000 pa. Partnership and fundraising development was being managed successfully with £200,000 received from the People's Postcode Lottery fund and £800,000 from Macmillan. Another year remained of the Macmillan partnership and discussions about the future were in hand. He also thanked other partners, including Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust, Ramblers Walking Holidays and Cotswold for their on-going support.
- 8.3 There had been a slight decline in membership which stood at 106,000. Although retention rates were high, 10,000 new members were still needed every year to hold level. Across the last ten years despite a 22% drop in membership numbers we have managed an increase of 21% in subscription income.
- 8.4 £8.6m had been expended on the organisation's charitable objectives, the highest proportion of which was on staff costs (41%). Thanks to careful management, the organisation was now in a position to pay off the pension deficit in the coming year.
- 8.5 On the matter of reserves, he observed that 23% of the charity's total reserves were held at area and group level, and that 60% of areas and groups held reserves which were too high.
- 8.6 In concluding the treasurer said that although the Ramblers was in a good financial place there was still a need to manage income streams more actively to ensure their growth and diversity in the face of uncertain external environments, and new internal

commitments such as the tapestry programme (the review and update of Ramblers communications, and finance, human resources, telephony and other ICT suppliers).

- 8.7 Finally, he thanked the Director of Services, Christine Grant; the Financial Controller, Nicky Russell, and the rest of the staff finance team, along with area and group treasurers for all of their work in managing the Ramblers finances.

9 **Questions on annual accounts**

- 9.1 Malcolm Petyt (vice president and Lake District area) welcomed the reference to the chalets, one of which was managed by Lake District area. These has served the organisation well for many years but did need re-development; previously it had proved difficult to get national support for any work and help was needed. The treasurer agreed that this was a matter which should be discussed.
- 9.2 Tim Lewis (Wiltshire and Swindon area) thanked the treasurer for a helpful presentation and asked if there would be any further liability once the pensions deficit had been paid off. The treasurer said that the payment would be a full and final settlement. Tim Lewis also asked about the membership of the board's subcommittees. The chair explained that there were two committees: the finance and services subcommittee (FOSC) which he chaired, and the mission subcommittee which was chaired by the vice chair. Membership was decided once a new board had been elected so would be decided very shortly. Tim Lewis also queried the nature of the investments held by the Ramblers. The investment policy as explained in the annual report indicated that all investments were held as cash in bank accounts but there was also mention of listed investment. Christine Grant explained that these were short-term cash deposits.
- 9.3 Robin Downton (Somerset area) asked if the area annual return forms could be issued to treasurers at the start of the financial year rather than the end. Christine Grant said that the timetable would be examined as part of the planning process.
- 9.4 Ian Hardy (Hertfordshire and North Middlesex area) queried why the expenditure on rights of way appeared so low. The treasurer explained that there hadn't been a drop in expenditure on rights of way, it was rather that the overall expenditure had been distorted by the promoting walking figure where expenditure had increased on walking programmes and promotion.
- 9.5 David Selkirk (Derbyshire area) asked what formula was used to ensure an equitable distribution of funds to areas. The treasurer said that the 'traffic light' system in the treasurers' guidance note explained how funds were monitored in areas and groups.
- 9.6 Brian Reader (vice president) said that it was important that money was made available to areas and groups which were undertaking projects to forward the Ramblers aims.
- 9.7 Council considered the annual report and accounts for the year to 30 September 2016 and agreed they should be adopted.

10 **Appointment of auditors**

The firm of Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP was proposed by Alison Mitchell (Board of Trustees), seconded by Christopher Hodgson (Board of Trustees), and approved unanimously by Council.

11 **Review of actions taken to implement 2016 motions and outstanding motions from previous years**

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

- 11.1 Keith Wadd, vice president, on behalf of West Riding area said that the object of the 2014 motion on waymarking had been to secure better cooperation between Ramblers and local authorities in improving waymarking so as to help and encourage all walkers. The Big Pathwatch report had confirmed that poor signage remained a serious problem and it was clear that some local authorities were still very cautious about allowing Ramblers volunteers to do this work. He remained concerned that not enough was being done to improve matters.

Nicky Philpott, Director of Advocacy and Engagement, said that the signage issue as highlighted in the Big Pathwatch report had been selected for particular attention over the coming year and requested that details of local authorities which were being uncooperative be forwarded to staff.

- 11.2 Cath Mackay (vice president) noted that the deadline of September 2017 had been set for a report on the options relating to the governance review in respect of the board and Council (Motion 4 from 2016: Getting the governance review back on track). She asked whether or not this target was achievable.

Vanessa Griffiths (CEO) said that she had been instructed by the board to review this matter and to provide an update to the Board of Trustees at its May meeting. This would be reported to areas in the CEO's June newsletter, to ensure that the deadline would be met.

12 **Special Resolutions and Motions**

Constitutional motions submitted to General Council 2017

[1] Special Resolution to amend Article 33.1 of the *Articles of Association*: President and vice president terms of office

The following motion was proposed by Mike Church on behalf of the Board of Trustees and seconded by Paul Rhodes, also of the board.

It is resolved by way of a special resolution:

That the final paragraph in Article 33.1 of the *Articles of Association* be amended as follows:

Current final paragraph of article 33.1

The president and vice presidents will hold office until the start of the annual general meeting following their appointment and will be eligible for re-appointment.

Proposed amendment to replace the final paragraph of article 33.1

The president and vice presidents will hold office for a period of one year, which shall expire immediately prior to any vote to appoint the president or vice presidents at the annual general meeting following their appointment. The president and vice presidents will be eligible for re-appointment.

The motion (which required 75 per cent of those voting to be in favour) was carried.

[2] Two Special Resolutions to amend Article 15 of the articles of association

The following resolution was proposed by Kate Ashbrook of the Board of Trustees and seconded by Clare Wadd of the Agenda Committee.

1. It is resolved by way of a special resolution that the following be inserted as a new Article, as Article 15.4 of *the articles of association*:

15.4 At least two-thirds of the *board of trustees* present and voting at a properly convened meeting may resolve to pass a resolution to suspend any *member* admitted in accordance with Article 15.1 where:

(a) the *member* is under investigation in connection with safeguarding concerns, by *Ramblers* or another body, and the *board of trustees* reasonably believes that it is necessary to protect the lawful interests of *Ramblers* or the welfare of any individual(s) at risk to suspend the *member* whilst the investigation is carried out; or

(b) the *board of trustees* believes that the *member* is not acting in the lawful interests of *Ramblers*; or

(c) as a result of the *member's* actions or omissions, he or she breaches any provisions of the *articles of association* or the standing orders of *Ramblers* and he or she fails to remedy the breach (if capable of remedy) within 30 days of receiving a written request from the *board of trustees* to do so.

The exercising of this power is on the basis that:

Under Article 15.4 (a)

(i) legal advice will be obtained by the board or¹ trustees and considered before a *member* is suspended;

(ii) the *member* will forfeit all privileges of membership during his or her suspension and the *board of trustees* may impose any additional conditions that it deems fit in the circumstances;

(iii) once the investigation is complete, the *board of trustees* will have the power to either reinstate the *member*, or invoke the expulsion process under Article 15.3;

(iv) where a *member* is reinstated following the outcome of an investigation, his or her membership is treated as continuous as if the suspension had not occurred; and

¹ Note that the motions as provided to General Council members contained a typographic error: it should read 'of' not 'or'. The chairman decided to proceed with the vote notwithstanding this error. This error has been corrected in the final versions filed with external authorities using the principles of construction. No correction at 2018 is needed

(v) the *member* is entitled to make written and oral representations in person to the *board of trustees*.

Under Articles 15.4 (b) and 15.4 (c)

(i) the *member* is given at least 14 days' notice of the meeting of the *board of trustees* at which the suspension is to be proposed along with the reasons for the suspension;

(ii) the *member* is entitled to make written representations (which must be received by the date specified in the notice of the meeting of the *board of trustees*) and oral representations in person to the *board of trustees*;

(iii) the *member* will forfeit all privileges of membership during his or her suspension and the *board of trustees* may impose any additional conditions that it deems fit in the circumstances;

(iv) once an investigation is complete, the *board of trustees* will have the power either to reinstate the *member*, or invoke the expulsion process under Article 15.3;

(v) where a *member* is reinstated following the outcome of an investigation, his or her membership is treated as continuous as if the suspension had not occurred; and

provided that the above procedures are followed, the suspension of the *member* will immediately come into effect on the date provided by the *board of trustees* in the written notice given to the *member* of its decision.

Existing Article 15.4 be renumbered as Article 15.5 and existing Article 15.5 be renumbered as Article 15.6.

2. The following resolutions were proposed by way of a special resolution that the following be inserted as a new Article at Article 15.7 of the *articles of association*:

A *member* that is expelled in accordance with Article 15.3 will not be eligible to re-apply for membership unless the *board of trustees*, in its sole discretion, permits an application to be made.

The motion (which required 75% of those voting to be in favour) was carried nem con with one abstention.

Policy motions submitted to General Council 2017

[3] Staff Support for Areas and Groups

The following motion was proposed by Michael Cannell of Essex area and seconded by Alan Goffee also of that area.

This General Council notes the initial success of the new staff area support officers who work with areas and groups to help them fulfil the charitable objects of the Ramblers in England, Scotland and Wales. Council urges the Board of Trustees to acknowledge that there is insufficient staff resource to

assist areas and groups, or to work together with them proactively and collaboratively. Council calls on the Board to consider establishing regional area support officer posts throughout England.

The motion was carried.

[4] Ploughing and Cropping

The following motion was proposed by Jeremy Kenyon of South Yorkshire & North East Derbyshire Area and seconded by David Selkirk of Derbyshire area.

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to find ways to reduce the impact of ploughing and cropping on the path network in England and Wales, and to engage with the relevant parties to ensure any new legislation regarding this is practical, effective and enforceable.

The following amendment had been submitted by Norfolk area:

Delate the words “find ways” and insert the words “mount a national campaign to call on Highway Authorities”,

and replace the words “the relevant parties” with the words “all relevant parties”

The amendment was withdrawn by the area, with Council’s agreement, before it was formally proposed.

The motion was carried.

[5] Protection of Rights of Way post-Brexit

The following motion was proposed by Robin Downton of Somerset area and seconded by Lara Beach of Cornwall area.

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to make every effort to ensure that any new agricultural payments system resulting from Brexit contains an effective mechanism to ensure that anyone in receipt of public funds meets their legal obligations with regard to public rights of way and other public access. Ramblers should work closely with other environmental groups, as well as landowners, to ensure that Government subsidies for agriculture encourage improvements to public access and other environmental benefits.

The following amendment was proposed by Peter Carr of the agenda committee and seconded by John Esslemont, also of the agenda committee.

Add “ and local authorities” after “landowners” in the final sentence.

The amendment was carried *nem con*.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to make every effort to ensure that any new agricultural payments system resulting from Brexit contains an effective mechanism to ensure that anyone in receipt of public funds meets their legal obligations with regard to public rights of way and

other public access. Ramblers should work closely with other environmental groups, as well as landowners and local authorities, to ensure that Government subsidies for agriculture encourage improvements to public access and other environmental benefits.

The amended motion was carried *nem con*.

[6] Funding for Restoring Lost Ways

The following motion was proposed by Peter James of Norfolk area and seconded by Julian White of that area.

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 to establish 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.

The following amendment was proposed by the Board of Trustees and accepted by the promoting Area and by Council:

Delete "to establish" between "Council calls upon the Board of Trustees" and "a specific and significant fund" and replace with the following words:

"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".

This amendment was accepted by the promoting area and by Council.
The following amendment was proposed by Philip Guest of Cheshire East area and seconded by James Eckersley of that area:

Replace "all feasible claims" with "claims that are beneficial to the footpath network."

The amendment was lost with 45 votes in favour, 49 votes against and 11 abstentions.

The amended motion reads:

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.

The amended motion was carried overwhelmingly.

[7] Shared Use of Footpaths with Cyclists (England)

The following motion was proposed by Kate Ashbrook of the Board of Trustees, and seconded by Peter Carr of the agenda committee. The motion was also formally supported by East Yorkshire & Derwent area, Hertfordshire & North Middlesex area and Shropshire area.

This General Council notes with concern that there is continuing pressure all over England and Wales to convert pedestrian-only routes into shared routes for cyclists and pedestrians. Council considers that the availability of the footpath network to users other than pedestrians could cause the surface of some paths to be damaged and compromise the safety of walkers. Council further notes that the Ramblers has many different relationships with other users of the path network in order to achieve our aims.

This motion calls for the views of General Council on this issue.

Council also requests the board, as a matter of urgency to:

- continue to have dialogue on this matter with appropriate organisations (including representatives of landowners, land managers and local authorities);
- finalise the policy on shared use, allowing for decisions to be made at local level;
- in conjunction with volunteers, redraft and update the shared-use guidance, to include material on minimum standards, environmental impact, and the recognition of the difference between urban and rural paths, and between ranges and types of user.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

[8] Shared Use of Footpaths

The following motion was proposed by Keith Wadd (vice president, on behalf of West Riding area), and seconded by Steve Noble of West Riding area:

This General Council, whilst acknowledging that cycling is a popular and healthy pursuit, views with great concern the suggestions being made by organisations representing and campaigning on behalf of cyclists that cycling be allowed as a legal right on footpaths or that footpaths be upgraded in some manner to allow such use.

Council urges that the Board of Trustees uses all possible endeavours to oppose the proposals for cycling to be allowed as a matter of course on footpaths in England. The pleasure, benefit, and quiet enjoyment of walking a footpath will be damaged by the speed of cycles and by their sudden appearance, often without any warning.

In opposing such use, Council acknowledges that there are some paths presently recorded on the Definitive Map as footpaths, but there is evidence

to support claims that bridleway rights exist on those paths. Ramblers should and will support the proper identification of such so-called 'higher rights'.

Council also recognises that there is a need for additional routes for use by cyclists which should be provided by creation orders or the creation of cycle ways separate from footpaths.

The following amendment was proposed by the agenda committee and accepted by the promoting area and by Council:

Delete 'and will' from the final sentence of paragraph three.

The amended motion reads:

This General Council, whilst acknowledging that cycling is a popular and healthy pursuit, views with great concern the suggestions being made by organisations representing and campaigning on behalf of cyclists that cycling be allowed as a legal right on footpaths or that footpaths be upgraded in some manner to allow such use.

Council urges that the Board of Trustees uses all possible endeavours to oppose the proposals for cycling to be allowed as a matter of course on footpaths in England. The pleasure, benefit, and quiet enjoyment of walking a footpath will be damaged by the speed of cycles and by their sudden appearance, often without any warning.

In opposing such use, Council acknowledges that there are some paths presently recorded on the Definitive Map as footpaths, but there is evidence to support claims that bridleway rights exist on those paths. Ramblers should support the proper identification of such so-called 'higher rights'.

Council also recognises that there is a need for additional routes for use by cyclists which should be provided by creation orders or the creation of cycle ways separate from footpaths.

The amended motion was carried with 43 votes in favour, 30 votes against and 17 abstentions.

13 Election of members of the Board of Trustees

There were 15 candidates nominated to fill seven vacancies as ordinary trustees, one of these, Hugh Dyer-Westacott, withdrew before the ballot. The election was a two-stage process. Election one was for the full three year terms and election two filled the vacancies arising since General Council 2016.

As a result of the first ballot, three candidates were elected to the board for a term of three years: Rebecca Dawson), Paul Rhodes and Richard May.

At the second ballot, two candidates were successfully elected to the Board of Trustees for a term of two years: Teri Moore and Sophie Clissold-Lesser.

A further two candidates were successfully elected to the Board of Trustees for a term of one year: Peter Carr and Peter Rookes.

John Ireland, Alan Norton, Dominic Pinto and Peter Creswell, George Allingham, Alan Bailey and Paul Evans were not elected.

The Ramblers Board of Trustees 2017 therefore comprises the following:

Des Garrahan (chair), Alex Mannings (honorary treasurer), Alison Mitchell (Scottish convener), Chris Hodgson (Welsh Council chair), Kate Ashbrook, Peter Carr, Mike Church, Sophie Clissold-Lesser, Rebecca Dawson, Richard May, Teri Moore, Paul Rhodes and Peter Rookes.

14 Agenda committee

There was no election for membership of the agenda committee as there were five candidates for the five positions available. The following persons will serve on the agenda committee: John Esslemont, Elizabeth Lawie, Sylvia Popham, Clare Wadd and John Wainwright.

15 Venue for General Council in 2018

General Council 2018 will take place on the weekend of 7 and 8 April 2018 in Bangor.

16 Chair's closing remarks

- 16.1 Before making his closing remarks, the chair invited Lis Nielsen from the European Ramblers Association to address the meeting. Ms Nielsen said that the ERA brought together walkers from 34 European countries to learn from each other's experiences. The organisation represented over 3 million walkers but that was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of people who walked for pleasure across the continent. She urged Council members to visit the ERA website and to sign up for the newsletter.
- 16.2 The chair said that the end of his second year in office marked the end of a chapter with a number of new board members being elected. He thanked those who were retiring, or had retired from the board during the course of the year (Christine Boston (formerly O'Byrne), Moira Fraser, Roy Hunt, Jeremy Kenyon, James Lawson, Alan Norton and Robert Peel). He also thanked Benedict Southworth, who had left the post of CEO last summer, and Natasha Clayton who had served as interim CEO until the arrival of Vanessa Griffiths, for all their hard work for the organisation. He also thanked Paddy Tipping for chairing the hustings.
- 16.3 Thanks were also due to the staff from all three countries for their professional, friendly and helpful work throughout the year, and to those staff who had been helping over the weekend. Special thanks were due to Richard Colwell for his help with the IT which enabled so much of the business to be shown on screen, to Ash Stally-Chudasuma for his work on social media, and to Hazel Robinson who had organised Council so calmly and efficiently. On behalf of Council he presented Hazel with a bouquet.
- 16.4 The chair then thanked everyone who attended Council for giving up their time to prepare for, and attend, the event. It had been especially encouraging to see many first-time attendees speaking, and to receive thanks from delegates who had found the event so enjoyable. He finally thanked all of the Hampshire area volunteers who had helped to make the event such a success either as timekeepers, tellers and scrutineers, and microphone runners, or behind the scenes.

16.5 Kate Ashbrook, vice president and board member, thanked the chair for his hard work in successfully guiding the meeting over the weekend. 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:

John	Catchlove
David	Nixon
Andy	Donovan
Amy	Fowler
Richard	Kenchington
John	Fish
Stuart	Shurlock
Michael	Powell
Dominic	Mann
Stephen	Turner
Pamela	Turner
David	Milton
Alan	Marlow
Paul	Harvey
John	Rothery
Chester	Whapshare
Joan	Pollitt
Frederick (John)	Smith
Rob	Hannah