



10 Year Vision and Strategic Framework 2016 - 2026

Cover Photo By:
Michael Arrowsmith

Our Vision

A Scotland where everyone is encouraged supported and enthused to enjoy the outdoors on foot, and benefits from the experience.

Who we are

For over 50 years, Ramblers Scotland has been campaigning to support walkers and promote access rights. Ramblers Scotland is recognised by sportscotland as a governing body of sport and we are a membership organisation and a charity with members with a grassroots network of 55 local groups, all run by volunteers. Ramblers Scotland is part of the Ramblers, which has been campaigning across Great Britain for 80 years to secure and facilitate access, promote walking and protect the natural beauty of the countryside.

What we know¹

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

We know that Scotland has some of the finest landscapes in Europe - from stunning lochs and beaches to heathy Munros. Our natural and cultural heritage attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. We benefit from the most progressive access legislation in Britain, meaning walkers can explore almost all of Scotland on foot.

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

We know most people benefit spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally from walking regularly outdoors.

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

We know that walking can enable families and groups to spend time together, and that there are proven benefits to children spending more time outdoors.

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

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

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

¹ For further evidence of the benefits of walking, please see Appendix 1: The Case for Walking (page 9)

Ramblers Scotland's Mission

Ramblers Scotland's mission is to promote walking for Scotland's wellbeing.

We strive to create a Scotland where everyone is supported to enjoy the outdoors on foot and benefits from the experience.

Scotland's outdoor access legislation offers everyone opportunities to explore Scotland on foot. We will work to ensure many more people are aware of these opportunities, by educating and enthusing members and non-members alike in terms of their access rights and responsibilities.

Ramblers Scotland aspires to a Scotland where walking is part of everyone's daily lives, whether as a way of spending time with friends and family, as a means of staying healthy, as a mode of transport or simply for the joy of being outside. We will help create a Scotland where there is a sense of stewardship for our countryside and greenspaces, fostered through supporting many more people to get active in Scotland's landscapes. Ramblers Scotland will work to ensure that our natural and cultural heritage is valued and the benefits to health and wellbeing gained through being outdoors are recognised. Ramblers Scotland will help people to explore their local area and the beauty of Scotland by facilitating access to green spaces, promoting and protecting paths and through ensuring that the rights and freedoms of walkers are upheld.

We will support people of all ages, from childhood to later life, and from all backgrounds so they can experience the great outdoors on foot, supporting social justice in Scotland by improving the health, wealth and happiness of people from all communities.

Our approach (how we do our work)

Ramblers Scotland benefits from being part of Ramblers GB and delivers work in collaboration with colleagues beyond the border of Scotland. We also work within formal and informal partnerships to effect change in Scotland. Some of our mission is delivered through volunteers (both members and non-members) generously contributing time and expertise. Some programmes are delivered solely by Ramblers Scotland, whereas other types of work may be delivered through partnerships. Collaborative working is an established and expected part of working within Scottish policy-making, campaigning and project delivery.

Whether leading a piece of work or contributing to it, we ensure we bring the following values:

Positive - looking to have fun and create enjoyment

Welcoming - to all, and particularly to newcomers

Inclusive - welcoming people from diverse backgrounds and being sensitive to the concerns of different communities

Democratic - remembering that our Board of Trustees and Scottish Council Executive Committee are primarily selected by our membership

Ethical - being respectful of others, honest in what we say and thinking through the consequences of what we do

Empowering - helping give people the confidence to help themselves

Environmentally responsible - promoting activities and behaviours which are sustainable and which benefit the environment

Context

Three key factors mean there is significant potential for Ramblers Scotland to grow, work collaboratively, and engage many more people in walking at all levels. These are:

Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC)

This legislation means that Scotland has some of the best access rights in Europe and by far surpasses existing access legislation in England and Wales. These access rights are comprehensive and cover a huge range of different recreational activities, providing a shared platform for Ramblers Scotland to work with other outdoor organisations.

Our landscapes: natural and cultural heritage

Scotland is world-famous for its stunning lochs, glens, mountains and coastline. It offers the “wildest” and most unspoilt landscapes in Britain. A major Scottish visitor survey in 2015, found that 55% of all visitors had a short walk or stroll, while 39% of all visitors enjoyed a longer hike. Our landscapes are an integral part of our national heritage and offer unrivalled opportunities for walking at every level. In 2010, Scottish Natural Heritage determined that nature-based tourism in Scotland (including walking and associated activities) generated £1.4 billion through visitor spending. In addition, Scotland is home to a multitude of city parks and urban green spaces which provide valuable connections across the country’s urban heritage.

The policy background in Scotland

There is a great deal of positive policy positions within Scottish Government and beyond. The introduction of the National Walking Strategy and subsequent National Walking Strategy Action Plan are positive signs. In addition, the Active Scotland division’s ongoing monitoring work is helping increase recognition of the importance of physical activity for people’s health and wellbeing.

² www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/visitor_research/all_markets/scotland_visitor_survey.aspx

³ www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B726802.pdf

⁴ www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00452622.pdf

Creating the change: the next ten years

During the next ten years, Ramblers Scotland has three ambitions in order to help us fulfil our mission and make our vision for Scotland a reality.

1. A Scotland designed for walking

Improving access to the outdoors

Scotland's access rights are among the best in the world, but there is a constant need to uphold these rights and ensure they are not diminished over time. There is also a need to promote and engage people to understand their rights and responsibilities, enabling many more people to benefit from Scotland's natural assets on foot.

There is also a need to expand and improve our path network to enable people to walk around and between our communities and into the surrounding countryside.

Nationally we will act as advocates for walkers, Scotland's access legislation, and the path network. We will act as advocates for the expansion of path infrastructure, including the development of new routes and improved signage. We will develop ways for our members, volunteers and supporters to engage with and deliver path maintenance, path creation and route mapping activities within their communities, and act as local access

champions.

Protecting the walking environment

Scotland's natural heritage is widely recognised as a national asset and a magnificent setting for outdoor recreation. Evidence is growing as to the value of the outdoors for our physical and mental health and well-being. Ramblers Scotland will champion the importance of the special places we love to walk and advocate on behalf of landscape protection, supporting communities to engage with shaping their landscapes and responding to the impacts of climate change.

We will play a leading role in ensuring that our natural heritage and landscapes are protected and enhanced for all to enjoy on foot, through our policy and advocacy work. We will support our members to engage in local land-use decision-making.

Promoting walking and outdoor recreation

The Scottish Recreation Survey found that there was £2.6 billion expenditure on outdoor recreation visits - showing the economic value of Scotland's natural heritage and landscapes. The greatest potential for getting more people active on a regular basis is through fostering a sense of fun and enjoyment that is gained through being outdoors and cannot be

replicated elsewhere. Investment in outdoor recreation via the two national parks and beyond, as well as the promotion of Scotland's iconic long-distance trails and in developing a network of well-signed and well-maintained paths is essential.

Working with agencies whose role is to promote Scotland domestically and internationally will be a key component of the Ramblers Scotland implementation plans, enabling Ramblers Scotland to engage with visitors and residents alike. Likewise, Ramblers Scotland has allies across the outdoor recreation sector, all of whom benefit from Scotland's progressive access legislation.

We will link the walking and outdoor community with the tourism industry, leading a broad network of organisations that value and acts on the unique natural and cultural characteristics that makes Scotland such an attractive destination for walkers and outdoor enthusiasts.

2. Helping everyone find their feet

Promoting active healthy lifestyles

Promoting active healthy lifestyles Scotland has the some of the worst life expectancies levels in Western Europe and evidence is mounting of the role physical inactivity plays in entrenching this situation. Inactivity increases our risks of developing over 40 diseases, including heart attacks, type 2 diabetes, depression, dementia and some cancers. We recognise that people are living longer, and walking can support people to stay active in later life, reducing the risk of some

age-related diseases as well as boosting quality of life. Ramblers Scotland will support more people to start walking, through the provision of a nationwide network of timed, short, circular routes, and by working with partners to reach sections of the population who face the greatest barriers to getting active.

We will continue to ensure that we offer activities and opportunities that support people to begin and to sustain walking to benefit their physical and mental health. We will work with partners across the health sector to develop and deliver intervention projects that meet defined needs and enable those who are physically inactive to become active, and those who are already active to sustain their activity levels throughout life.

National Walking Strategy Action Plan

This strategy presents a clear opportunity to boost levels of walking in all settings. It establishes a comprehensive framework for getting everyone in Scotland to be active through walking more in their daily lives. Ramblers Scotland is a key partner in this delivery and will have a role in identifying and developing targeted projects within this strategy.

We will play a leading role in the National Walking Strategy Action Plan delivery group. We will ensure that our existing work is recognised for the significant contribution it makes to the delivery of this Strategy. We will contribute to agreeing KPIs to support the delivery of this strategy and will develop and deliver projects that meet the overall ambitions within the strategy. We will act as advocates for the aims of the National Walking Strategy, ensuring that walking is recognised for the multiple societal positive outcomes it engenders, as well as ensuring that facilities and support for walking are resourced appropriately.

3. Connecting people through Ramblers Scotland

Over the next ten years, our ambition is to help improve the quality of life of our members and supporters by providing the resources, support and information for them to enjoy and explore the outdoors. Ramblers Scotland will specifically focus on:

Supporting member programmes

Ensuring that members continue to benefit from a range of programmes, resources, events and opportunities which support them to go walking in groups, individually and with friends and family.

We will provide activities that enable members to walk in, enjoy, explore and understand the outdoors. To achieve this we will provide the largest and most diverse organised social walking programme in Scotland, made possible by creating a sizeable network of volunteers. We will make it easier for groups to attract like-minded people to come walking.

Training and support for members

Developing a training framework to support all members to develop their skills to ensure they have the confidence and skills to walk in all of Scotland's terrain, in all weathers, safely and with others.

Ramblers Scotland's training offer to members will become respected across the sector. Being able to access high quality training will be one of the incentives for members to join us. We will work across the outdoors sector to achieve standards so that everyone enjoys a quality and safe experience and develops a

better understanding of their access rights and responsibilities.

Develop a broader range of volunteering opportunities, reflecting the changing nature of people's time, energy and commitments

We recognise that established group structures do not appeal to everyone and that members and non-members alike may seek ways to contribute in a more bespoke or time-bound fashion.

We will diversify the ways in which people can volunteer with us, recognising that this may change over time. We will support volunteers to build skills that are of benefit to them. In order to ensure the organisation is the best that it can be, we will need to seek volunteers from beyond our existing membership for key projects or activities.

Campaigns and projects that seek to connect people both offline and online

The nature of campaigning has changed as social media has made it easier to build online support for causes quickly and easily. People expect to be able to interact much more with named faces of an organisation, as well as to comment and meet with each other - both online and offline. Our campaigns and projects will be developed to facilitate people making links with each other - recognising that part of the appeal of walking for some, is that it can be a sociable activity.

We will develop campaigns that seek to mobilise mass engagement. We will build a strong network of advocates for Ramblers Scotland policies, both online and offline. We will develop projects that support people to connect with like-minded others as well as meeting clearly defined needs.

Communicating effectively

In everything we do, we must ensure that we are communicating effectively - raising our profile with our existing and potential members and volunteers, with the general public, online, in social media and in targeted print publications.

We aspire to Ramblers Scotland being a familiar, trusted name to many, both through our campaigning work and through the success of our projects on the ground. We will influence policy makers and politicians and we will be respected across the sector for the contributions and leadership we exhibit.

Leading from the front

Ramblers Scotland has been a well-respected campaigning voice in the outdoor community in Scotland for many decades. We were instrumental in shaping the Land Reform Act 2003 which has created world-class access legislation in Scotland.

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

We will also work collaboratively with colleagues in Ramblers GB and Ramblers Cymru, particularly around membership and engagement, to ensure that in every nation Ramblers is flourishing and diverse and attractive to those who are new and old to the organisation.

Standing together

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

We will ensure we are recognised as a sector leader who can significantly benefit

society through our expertise, passion and commitment. We will share our knowledge with the outdoors community, to help people influence local and national government.

We will provide the support and resources to empower people to create the outdoor environment they want for themselves and future generations. We will continue to support and deliver networks of volunteer advocates to promote our activities and run public campaigns.

Inspiring people

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

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

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

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

We will make sure no one misses out on the benefits of walking. We will diversify our supporter and membership base by making our activities and resources more relevant to a wider variety of communities.

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

We will provide ways for people to learn more about their access rights, creating networks of people that value and champion the importance of Scotland’s access legislation and cultural history of access. We will offer materials and resources online and offline, and provide training to upskill members and volunteers on specific issues. We will develop campaigns that champion the importance of access and connect this to people’s everyday lives.

We will make sure our volunteers and members have the right skills and knowledge and ensure they are trained, upskilled, and supported, so they feel confident and competent. Over the next ten years, every volunteer will have an experience which is

rewarding, enjoyable and fun. We’ll ensure volunteers and members across Scotland can access resources to deliver activities that enjoy widespread and deep-rooted support. Volunteers will understand their contribution, the expectations of the organisation and have confidence that the work they are doing is effectively managed.

Working in partnership

We will identify and work with an increasing number of partners who share our passion to deliver the benefits of the outdoors to everyone. Partnering with a wide range of people and organisations has been the key to our success over the past 50 years and will continue to be over the next ten years. We value our existing and past allies and partnerships and will continue to work with those who share our agenda. We will also develop new partnerships across sectors, including sport, landscape, recreation, tourism, health, with local authorities, and beyond. We will seek to enter into multi-year partnerships with defined benefits on both sides.

We will ensure people have the best possible experience wherever they walk. Over the next ten years we will work in partnership with other organisations in Europe and beyond to support the collective needs of walkers everywhere. We will work with tourism bodies in Scotland and champion walking opportunities for visitors to Scotland through iconic walks (such as the West Highland Way and other long distance routes) as well as through the huge variety of walking opportunities Scotland offers.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

The case for walking - Ramblers GB and Ramblers Scotland

Walking is good for our physical health

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

Walking is good for our mental health

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

Walking can help reduce healthcare costs

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

Walking supports local economies

Popular walking routes are major assets to the

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

Walking is good for the environment

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

Walking is a free and inclusive means of transport

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

Walking is good for your neighbourhood

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

Appendix 2:

Charitable objects

The Ramblers has several objects. We aim to promote, encourage or assist in:

The provision and protection of foot paths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot, including the prevention of obstruction of public rights of way.

The protection and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the beauty of the countryside and other areas by such lawful means as the trustees think fit, including by encouraging the provision, preservation and extension of public access to land on foot.

The provision of facilities for the organising of open-air recreational activities and in particular rambling and mountaineering with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities are intended, namely the public at large, and in the interests of social welfare (including health).

Advancing the education of the public in subjects relating to access to, and the preservation and conservation of, the countryside and of the health benefits of outdoor recreational pursuits.

The trustees may further the objects particularly by helping all persons to a greater love, knowledge and care of the countryside and urban open spaces, and by encouraging

participation in walking for recreation and as a means of transport.

