

Ramblers Area and Group AGMs 2020-21

This guidance is for anyone organising an Area or Group AGM for 2020-21.

AGMs in 2020-21 must be COVID-secure and this guidance outlines how this will affect your AGM planning.

While we have covered the different considerations for both in-person and online AGMs, we strongly recommend organising an online AGM if possible.

Transmission of COVID-19 is still a significant risk and an online meeting is less vulnerable to restrictions and cancellation should guidance change locally or nationally.

If you have any questions, please refer to refer to the [Area and Group AGMs: FAQs](#) or use the details below to get in touch.

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Key points

- ✔ **Area AGMs** should be held in the first five months of the Ramblers' financial year - between 1 October 2020 and 28 February 2021, in readiness for General Council and the Scottish and Welsh Council meetings.
- ✔ **Group AGMs** should be held in the first quarter of the Ramblers' financial year – between 1 October and 31 December 2020. If this is not possible, please make sure it's held before your Area AGM.
- ✔ Area and Group Committees will need to decide whether to hold the AGM either in-person or online. **We strongly recommend organising an online AGM if possible.**
- ✔ If you still decide to hold an AGM in-person, you will need to comply with the relevant government guidelines and manage the appropriate risks – including maintain physical distancing and capturing contact details to support Test and Trace. See section 3 for more detail.

Areas should also consider:

- ✔ Inviting a trustee and / or a staff member to attend, online or in-person.
- ✔ In **Scotland**, Areas should also make provision for at least one member of Scottish Council Executive Committee and one member of staff to attend as standard. Similarly, in **Wales**, Areas should make provision for one member of the Welsh Council Executive Committee and/or one member of staff to attend as standard.

Areas - please let us know your proposed **Area AGM** dates and plans for trustee and staff involvement by completing [The Ramblers: Area AGMs 2020-21](#) form by **30 September 2020**.

Extra information

1. Deciding an approach: online or in-person?

In current COVID guidance, the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments all make provision for public gatherings to take place when related to voluntary or charitable services.

However, these gatherings should be kept to a minimum to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and our recommendation is to hold an online AGM if possible.

With this in mind, some pros and cons of each option are below.

Online AGM: Use of a digital platform (eg Zoom) with members joining from home.	
Pros	Cons
<p>Opportunity to reach and engage more people, including members who may not have attended before.</p> <p>Greater flexibility and low cost.</p> <p>Reduces risks associated with COVID-19, including members who are anxious about meeting in-person.</p> <p>Likely to be shorter and more focused.</p> <p>Can record the meeting/chat transcript.</p>	<p>Varied levels of confidence in digital platforms as well as reliability of connection to the internet. This may mean some members may need additional support.</p> <p>May require a change to agenda and a different method of facilitation.</p> <p>Limited two-way discussion.</p> <p>Less opportunity to socialise, go for a walk etc.</p>

In-person AGM: Use of an indoor venue with limited numbers participating in person.	
Pros:	Cons:
<p>It would be familiar territory because it would be similar to previous years.</p> <p>Some people find group discussions easier in person.</p> <p>It might be easier to involve people who are less confident with IT (information technology).</p> <p>There is an opportunity to socialise and / or include an outdoor activity/walk.</p>	<p>Needing to comply with government guidelines on COVID-19 – which could change on a regular basis – including placing a limit on numbers, maintaining physical distancing, use of face coverings and minimising the use of shared facilities and equipment such as food and papers.</p> <p>Need to capture details to support NHS contact tracing.</p> <p>Additional travel & transport limitations.</p> <p>Individual concerns about meeting in-person, large gatherings – which may exclude some people from attending.</p>

2. Running an online AGM

Choosing an online platform

- ✔ If you're holding an online AGM, Zoom is a good option as it allows a larger number of people to join.
- ✔ A Zoom 'Pro' licence costs £11.99 per month and enables up to 100 people to join. Zoom subscriptions are annual but can be cancelled at any time so to make sure you pay for one month only, you will need to remember to cancel. Visit their website for more information on [Zoom licences](#).
- ✔ You can claim the above Zoom costs on expenses. We have explored an organisation Zoom licence, but the number of potential hosts mean single licences is more cost effective.

The U3A have produced extra guidance on running large meetings / AGMs on Zoom – including use of online polls. Please have a look at their [video tutorial](#).



- ✔ Whichever platform you choose - you might find it useful to run a practice session ahead of the AGM.

Setting the agenda

- ✔ All AGMs (whether **in-person or online**) must at least cover the formal business – this includes the
 - Approval of last year's AGM report and any matters arising
 - Presentation and approval of annual reports and accounts
 - Election of committee members and independent examiner
 - Discussion of motions
 - Nomination of Council delegates
- ✔ If you're **in Scotland**, please allow 20 minutes in your agenda for the Scottish Council Executive Committee to present and answer questions.
- ✔ It's good to also have some informal activities alongside the formal business. This could be a guest speaker, quiz, short video or film, recognition of team or individual contributions, a panel discussion or a virtual walk!

Promoting your AGM and managing numbers

- ✔ Use your local webpages and social media to promote your AGM. You can also contact all the members in your Area or Group by email to let them know about the AGM, regardless of their contact preferences.
- ✔ Provide clear guidance on how to join online and access the meeting. You could also use a buddy system for those who are likely to struggle with IT.
- ✔ You may want to ask people to pre-register, so you have an idea on numbers. Zoom provides some advice about [setting up registration before a meeting](#). If your members are already using an online booking system such as Eventbrite for walks, use what they've used before.

Housekeeping, note taking and voting

- ✔ At the start of the AGM, let everyone know what functions are available and how to use them – such as raising your hand or using the chat box for questions. Also ask everyone to mute themselves when they're not speaking.

On Zoom the host can mute everyone at the same time – something worth doing at the beginning of the meeting.



- ✔ An advantage of an online AGM is you'll be able to record the meeting and save the chat box conversation as a record. You must let participants know that you are doing this and why – to gain their consent in advance.
- ✔ You can also use the chat box for voting (ask people to type yes and count these votes). Ask one or two people to keep an eye on the chat box to answer questions, to count the votes and note any proposed motions.
- ✔ Platforms such as Zoom also provide a 'polling' function which can be used for votes. If you are using this extra functionality, we recommend carrying out a test beforehand. Further details can be found on the Zoom website, as well as within the online tutorial provided by the U3A – see Useful Links below.

3. Running an in-person AGM – extra considerations

- ✔ If you decide to hold your AGM in-person you must follow the relevant government COVID guidelines – see the Useful Links below.
- ✔ You will need to find a suitable venue and carry out a Covid-19 risk assessment, together with the venue and as recommended by the government guidelines.
- ✔ Mitigating actions may include –
 - Asking all those experiencing coronavirus symptoms not to attend.
 - Maintaining physical distancing by wider spacing of chairs and tables.
 - Use of face coverings
 - Minimising the use of shared facilities and equipment such as food and meeting papers.
 - Limiting numbers – dependent on the venue restrictions, the activity and the management of Covid-19.
 - Finding a venue that is accessible. This includes having adequate car parking spaces given that members may not be able to car share with people from outside of their household or bubble.
- ✔ To manage the numbers of people attending you may need to introduce a booking process - asking members to contact the organiser in advance or use a separate system such as Eventbrite.
- ✔ You must also capture the contact details of attendees to support the NHS Test and Trace system.
- ✔ We have provided a [risk assessment template](#) – however you may find that most venues already have this in place and can be adapted to include any extra steps you are taking as the event organiser.



Useful Links

The Ramblers:

- **Area and Group AGMS in 2020-21: FAQs** on the [Ramblers website](#).
- [The Ramblers: Area AGMs 2020-21 Form](#)
- [Ramblers Groups Model Constitution](#)
- [Ramblers Areas Model Constitution](#)
- [How to hold a meeting online – general guidance](#)
- [Risk assessment template](#)

Zoom:

- [Setting up registration for a Zoom meeting](#)
- [U3A tutorial on running large meetings and AGM using Zoom](#)

Government COVID-19 advice:

- England | [Guidance on meeting people from outside your household](#) (especially ‘Staying alert when meeting people you do not live with’ and ‘Gathering in large groups’).
- England | [Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- Scotland | [Guidance- what you can and can't do](#)
- Scotland | [Coronavirus guidance – gatherings and occasions](#)
- Wales | [Coronavirus guidance: frequently asked questions](#)
- Wales | [Coronavirus guidance : safe use of multi-purpose community centres](#)