

Area and Group AGMs: FAQs for 2020-21

These FAQs sit alongside the guidance, 'Area and Group AGMs: How to hold your 2020-21 AGM'.

You can find 'Area and Group AGMs: How to hold your 2020-21 AGM' on the Ramblers website and in the [Document Hub on Assemble](#) (Folder: Running a Group or Area > Governance).



If you have any further questions, please use the details below to get in touch:

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1. What is the purpose of an AGM?

The main purpose of an Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to ensure that the formal business of Ramblers Areas and Groups is carried out in line with their appropriate constitutions and ensure good transparency and accountability.

In addition to the formal business, AGMs also provide Areas and Groups a chance to engage with their wider local membership – to celebrate past successes and look forward to the next year.

2. What formal business must take place at an AGM?

According to The Ramblers' model constitutions, each AGM must:

- consider the annual report
- consider the income and expenditure and the balance sheet
- appoint office holders and committee members
- appoint representatives to the governing body of the Area (Groups only)
- appoint General Council representatives.
- appoint an independent examiner for the accounts
- discuss and consider motions
- vote on any proposals to changes to the constitution.

3. Are there 'legal' implications of not holding an AGM?

There are no legal implications, but it would be a breach of The Ramblers' Articles and Standing Orders. We recommend all Area and Groups hold an AGM as they're an important part of internal governance.

Area AGMs do play a role in appointing our 'legal' company members (General Council members) and can put forward motions to the General Council. Refer to **Question 13: How can we put motions forward to General Council** for advice on submissions to General Council.

4. When do we need to hold our AGMs?

The key dates are set out in the model constitutions:

Area AGMs should be held in the first five months of the Ramblers' financial year, in readiness for General Council and the Scottish and Welsh Council meetings – between 1 October and 28 February.

Group AGMs should be held in the first quarter of the Ramblers' financial year – between 1 October and 31 December.

Where this is not possible, please try to hold before your Area AGM.

5. What do we need to do differently this year?

COVID-19 means there are a few extra considerations, so please refer to the separate AGM guidance to help you plan.

The main difference is that if you decide to hold an in-person AGM you will need to comply with government guidelines. This may mean placing a limit on numbers, maintaining physical distancing and managing other risks.

Our recommendation is for all Areas and Groups to plan for an online AGM – at the very least as a contingency. An online AGM will enable you to engage more people as well as minimise any risks associated with Covid-19 transmission.

6. What is the minimum number of people needed to attend an AGM?

Most Group and Area constitutions don't state a minimum number but check your individual constitution in case there is one specified.

We would encourage you to include as many members as possible.

7. Is there a limit to the number of people who can attend an AGM?

There is not usually a limit on attendees – however if you decide to hold an **in-person AGM** for 2020-21, you will need to consider introducing one – dependent on the venue. Please speak to the venue and also follow the appropriate government guidelines:

- 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').
- Scotland | [Coronavirus 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](#)

8. How much notice do we need to give members ahead of an AGM?

You'll need to let members know the date and agenda at least 14 days in advance. Groups should also let their Area know about their AGMs.

Check your constitution to make sure there are no additional requirements for your Area or Group.

9. What do we need to do if we are planning changes to our constitution?

- If an Area or Group committee is proposing a change to the constitution, members must be given advance notice.
- If you agree a change to your **Group** constitution at your AGM, it will need to be ratified by the Area.
- If you agree a change to your **Area** constitution at your AGM, it will need to be ratified by the Board of Trustees for England, Scottish Council Executive Committee for Scotland or Welsh Council Executive Committee for Wales. The Area Support Team can help you with this.

10. What records need to be kept after the AGM?

- Areas and Groups should share written financial reports and updates on annual activities with their members ahead of their AGM.
- It's good practice for Areas and Groups to keep a record of each AGM but it does not need to be long. It can simply state: the decisions taken; record of approval of the report and accounts; note the names of the newly elected committee and note of appointed Council members.
- The record of the previous year's AGM is presented at the next AGM for the approval of the membership.
- Each Area and Group should keep an archive of their AGM records.

11. What do we need to do if there are changes to our committee?

Please complete the [changes to volunteer officers form](#) on the website and email it to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com. We will then update the volunteers record on Assemble.

12. What about Area Annual Reports?

We love to share your Area Annual Report with other volunteers so please send yours to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com and we'll upload it to the Document Hub in Assemble.

Motions and General Council

13. How can we put motions forward to General Council?

- Please refer to the motion [submission process](#) on The Ramblers' website.
- Every member has the right to propose a motion for discussion.
- Motions should be presented to the Area Committee in advance of the AGM and should have the support of a seconder. Area AGM attendees will vote on the wording of the motion and whether or not to submit the motion for debate by General Council.

14. How do we decide who will be appointed as the General Council members from our Area?

- Each Area can appoint at least two General Council members who have the right to attend and vote at meetings of the General Council. We are keen to have a diverse representation at General Council.
- Ask for nominations prior to the Area AGM. Where more than two members are nominated, you will need to vote on who will be appointed.
- More information about [the role of General Council members](#) can be found on the Ramblers website.

15. How can we put forward motions and discussion topics for Scottish Council?

As well as suggesting formal motions, if you have topics you'd like to see discussed at Scottish Council, please email your ideas and suggestions to Jeannie.cranfield@ramblers.org.uk by 31 January 2021.

Motions: Every member has the right to propose a motion for discussion which should be submitted by their Area or Group in Scotland.

- A maximum of two motions may be submitted from each Ramblers Scotland Group.
- A maximum of three motions may be submitted from each Ramblers Scotland Area.

Motions should be consistent with the Ramblers Scotland charitable objectives. Motions may be put forward that are not in line with current policy if there is disagreement with current policy and a desire for change. Motions may also be submitted to amend the Ramblers Scotland Constitution or Standing Orders.

More detailed guidance on submitting motions, amendments to motions and the submission forms, can be found in the [Scottish Council toolkit](#).

16. Is the 2020 Welsh Council AGM taking place?

The Welsh Council Executive Committee (WCEC) at their meeting in April 2020 agreed to cancel Welsh Council AGM 2020, retain the same WCEC membership for an additional extraordinary year and carry forward motions to 2021.