

Leicestershire and Rutland Area AGM

Sat 24 Jan 2026, Lutterworth Town Hall

All papers as single PDF

Agenda

Draft minutes of 25 January 2025 AGM

Officer Reports

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**Leicestershire
& Rutland**

37th Annual General Meeting AGENDA

24 January 2026 - 10 am

The Hansom Suite, Lutterworth Town Hall

1. Chair's welcome
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Approval of minutes of previous AGM
4. Matters arising
5. Presentation of Annual Reports
 - a. Chair's report
 - b. Treasurer's report and presentation of accounts
 - c. Secretary's report
 - d. Footpath Officer's report
 - e. Walking Environment Officer's report
 - f. Membership Secretary's report
 - g. Communications Officer's report
 - h. Group reports
6. Adoption of accounts and acceptance of the officers' and groups' reports
7. President's Address
8. Election of Officers
 - a. Chair
 - b. Membership Secretary
 - c. Other officers - en bloc
 - d. Members of affiliated organisations – up to two members to the AEC

9. Confirmation of Presidents
10. Confirmation of appointment of Auditor/Independent Financial Examiner
11. Any proposed changes to the Area constitution
12. Nomination of two representatives to General Council
13. Address and Q&A session with representative from Ramblers HQ
14. Any other Business
15. Area events
 - a. Area walk – early summer – LRWG
 - b. Area Quiz – Oct / Nov – Loughborough
 - c. AGM - Sat 23rd Jan 2027 – LRWG



**Leicestershire
& Rutland**

MINUTES

36th Annual General Meeting

25 January 2025

Location: Wing Village Hall

Start time: 10:00

Present:

Martin James - **Acting Area Chair** (Melton), Rob Jones - **Acting Area Treasurer** (LRWG), Peter Williams – **President** (L&R Area), Roy Denney – **Area Walking Environment Officer** (Coalville), Sue Bicknell – **Area Member without Portfolio** (Lutterworth & Market Harborough), Trevor Martin – **Area Member without Portfolio** (Hinckley)

Hinckley: Wendy Martin, Tony Smith, Mike I'Anson

Leicester: Mark Woodall, Sue & Ian Forsythe,

Melton: Ruth & Barry Clarke, Helen & Nigel Mee, Suzanne Elliott, Chris & Jo King, Simon Peacock

Coalville: John & Moira Boodle, Glynis Batchen, David Rogers

Rutland: Michael Gillon, John Pitts, Kate Hitchcock, Anne & Jay Ivory, Julie Rolland

Loughborough: Tess Kay

Lutterworth & Harborough: Anita & Tony Mothersole

LRWG: Yvonne Lake, Mark Hewitt

L&R Area: Rachel Hooke

Undeclared: Steven Pain, Debbie Hoy

Ross Maloney – **Rambblers Chief Executive**

1. Chair's welcome

Martin welcomed all to the AGM, and thanked Michael Gillon and Rutland group for hosting.
Richard Siddaway (Area Secretary) is currently unwell, therefore Suzanne Elliott is taking the minutes.

2. Apologies for absence

Richard Siddaway (Area Secretary), Ray Phipps (Area Membership Secretary), John Samson (Area Newsletter Editor), Bob Lucas (Rutland), Nan Ingrams, Helen Czasznicka.

3. Approval of minutes of previous AGM on 27 January 2024

Minutes approved

4. Matters arising

none

5. Presentation of Annual Reports

All reports were circulated prior to the AGM.

a. Chair's report (Rob Jones)

As circulated

b. Treasurer's report and presentation of accounts (Rob Jones)

As circulated

Additional info: Area began the year with c £6k and ended on £5.4k, which is still a healthy balance so additional funds have not been requested this year. Area anticipate spending c £1k over the coming year. Simon Peacock asked where reserves are kept? Rob responded that Area accounts do not work like group accounts (ie they have no reserves)

Mike l'Anson queried if Newsletter Distribution refers to the Area newsletter which is circulated online so no printing costs. Rob confirmed that the amount shown is for the Mailchimp account. Roy Denney asked if the balance shown on the Area account includes money for the Local Access Forum.

Action: To be checked after the meeting (MJ confirmed since the meeting that Lost Ways / LAF is a separate account, and not shown on the balance sheet)

David Rogers stated that Coalville use Mailchimp for free, but that after a certain limit £15/month is demanded. This is why he couldn't use Mailchimp to send out the AGM agenda, and had to use John Spink's email. Can groups use/link with the Area Mailchimp account? Does the RA recommend that groups pay this fee?

John Boodle asked if Ramblers is saying that groups can't communicate due to costs?

Action: Area to investigate the most cost-effective way for Area and groups to communicate with members, by using a shared Mailchimp account.

David Rogers asked if the accounts identify extra money supplied from Area to any groups? Which groups have requested extra funding and how much?

Rob responded that the accounts do not identify extra money supplied to the groups, that Hinckley have been given £75 due to an unforeseen increase in mileage.

Simon Peacock stated that looking at the financial model, funding from Area can't possibly sustain travel expenses at 45p/mile, therefore how does it work?

Rob responded that groups could request from Area if they believe their basic allocation won't cover this, however he believed that a cap may be needed. He went on to say that mileage claims can be made for a pre-walk, however it is L&R area policy that trips away are classed as holidays/social events and therefore must be self-funded. Ramblers guidance is that **areas** decide whether or not to fund pre-walking for trips away. Most areas do not fund this.

Action: Rob to send a reminder to all groups of how they can spend their allocation, and clarify mileage claims and pre-walk costs

Martin reminded the AGM that the Ramblers is a charity, and that claims should be made only if you need to claim. The Area committee is mindful of the needs of all members including those who do not walk; therefore any spending needs to be limited.

David Rogers stated that Coalville applied for further funding from Area, which they have only partially received. If groups are expected to keep the level of spending down to 1 year, and Area have a lot of funds, why does this not apply to Area?

Rob replied that Area have not ruled out further payments to Coalville, but that Area need a breakdown of Coalville expenditure. Hinckley had a portion of their recent request turned down by Central Office. Mike l'Anson to pick up this point with David Rogers.

David Rogers asked why Area holds c £5k year on year?

Rob replied that Area has not requested funds this year, and that Area will continue without funding until the balance is down to standard levels.

Martin clarified that Area had built up funds in budgeting for expenditure related to the Lost Ways project, which were then not required.

Additional info following the meeting: Martin realised that some of the surplus was generated when the Area switched to electronic communication.

c. Secretary's report (Richard Siddaway)

As circulated

d. Footpath Officer's report (Martin James)

As circulated

Additional info: Network Rail want to close 2 crossings (N59 and N54) on grounds of health and safety, and are going to apply for a Temporary Traffic Restriction Order (TTRO) for a 3-month closure to sort out the issue of trains stopping on crossings.

Roy said that there are a couple of very long trains only at night, and in his experience temporary closures mean forever, therefore we should object. Roy also suggested a site visit.

Dave Rogers asked if the Coalville Footpath Officer is aware of the situation. Martin confirmed that the info had been sent to him as soon as it was received.

Action: Martin to arrange a site visit with Network Rail, following which the Footpath Committee will look at the proposal.

e. Walking Environment Officer's report (Roy Denney)

As circulated

Additional info: Lottery funding of Charnwood Forest Project is running behind schedule due to Covid, and has been granted 18-month extension. The path in Bradgate Park to Old John has been approved.

Roy asked all present to remember Stan Warren, who passed away last year. Stan did a lot for the Ramblers and rights of way in general.

f. Membership Secretary's report (Ray Phipps)

As circulated

Additional info: In Ray's absence Martin summarised his report: there have been no significant changes in membership numbers, with Area total at 1529 members (from 1526 last year). Some groups have increased, others decreased. LE96 (L&R Area members not allocated to a specific group) numbers are increasing.

Rachel Hooke stated that people joining do not easily get to choose which group they are assigned to, and then Central allocate them to L&R Area. Sue Forsythe said that people may not realise they can choose a group.

Martin replied that group allocation used to be done on Postcode, and that people joining now have to choose. If people want to move groups at a later date then they have the option to do so.

Action: Martin to get Ray to send out a communication to L&R Area Group members, to help them decide.

At the last AGM a question was asked around whether Area receive funding on a per head basis for LE96 members. Rob confirmed that Area does not receive a per head funding for this group.

Roy Denney asked if the membership figures show the level of churn. Martin confirmed that they do not.

g. Communications Officer's report (John Samson)

As circulated

Additional info: In John's absence, Martin summarised his report: John thanked Georgina for her help. He is currently managing the website, however he does not want to continue with this part of the role, therefore if anyone wants to be considered for this then get in touch with Area.

Mike l'Anson is looking at updating the Hinckley website. Martin said that John will be able to help with this. *During the interval Martin spoke with Trevor Martin (Hinckley webmaster)*

h. Group reports

See reports, as circulated.

6. Adoption of accounts and acceptance of the officers' and groups' reports

Accounts adopted and all reports accepted. Proposed by Ruth Clarke, seconded by Helen Mee.

7. President's Address (Peter Williams)

Peter gave a short address.

8. Election of Officers

a. Area Chair

Martin James (Proposed by Peter Williams, seconded by Michael Gillon)

b. Area Vice Chair

Roy Denney (Proposed by Martin James, seconded by Chris King)

c. Area Secretary

Carol Gillespie (Proposed by Martin James, seconded by Roy Denney)

d. Area Treasurer

Rob Jones (Proposed by Martin James, seconded by Anita Mothersole)

e. Area Footpath Secretary

Martin James (Proposed by Rob Jones, seconded by Sue Bicknell)

f. Area Membership Secretary

Ray Phipps (Proposed by Roy Denney, seconded by Jo King)

g. Area Walking Environment Officer

Roy Denney (Proposed by Sue Bicknell, seconded by Trevor Martin)

h. Area Newsletter Editor

John Samson (Proposed by Martin James, seconded by Rob Jones)

i. Area Website & Social Media Editor

Vacant position

j. Area Member without Portfolio

Sue Bicknell (Proposed by Roy Denney, seconded by Mark Hewitt)

k. Area Member without Portfolio

Trevor Martin (Proposed by Roy Denney, seconded by Mark Hewitt)

l. Members of affiliated organisations – up to two members to the AEC

Vacant positions

9. Confirmation of Presidents

Peter Williams to continue as President. This was approved via a show of hands.

Action: Appointment of a Vice President to be discussed at Area committee.

10. Confirmation of appointment of Auditor/Independent Financial Examiner

Chris Tipper is happy to continue in the role. Proposed by Sue Bicknell, seconded by Roy Denney.

The Area members would like to thank Chris Tipper for his many years acting as our Independent Financial Examiner.

11. Any proposed changes to the Area constitution

none

12. Nomination of two representatives to General Council

5th April @ NEC Birmingham 10.30-4.30. No nominees were identified at the AGM

Action: To be discussed at Area committee.

13. Address and Q&A session with Ross Maloney [Ramblers CEO]

Ross said that this was a great opportunity to meet members, and thanked everyone for the time and effort they put into Ramblers.

He spoke of footpaths, membership, strategies and campaigns, finances, and volunteer support. People associate Ramblers with its values: its campaign work, and enabling people to get out there.

Question & Answers

Q. What strategy is there to get younger people involved? (Julie Rolland)

A. We could spend time targeting younger people but people who join are typically in their 50's, where the kids have moved on.

Q. There are lots of people walking. How do we get these people to join the Ramblers (Yvonne Lake)

A. Walking is free, and should we have the monopoly on that? We are more than a walking club, we are a charity, and a charity is a public benefit that should go beyond our membership. People associate the Ramblers with its values.

Q. If people are on a low income, how do they afford to buy decent walking equipment? What if we had 2nd hand sales of gear, or grants to buy gear? (Sue Forsythe)

A. Schemes do exist. Centrally we have got to think differently about how to enable this. There are lots of barriers to walking, so can we make it easier. We need to think how we utilise resources.

Q. The biggest barrier to walking is fear. How to go on walk, where, how to get back. What is being done about this? (Roy Denney)

A. The strategy is to build confidence to get out there.

Q. If more money was given to groups they would use it. When you joined the Ramblers did you join to work, or as a member? Are all staff members? (David Rogers)

A. They get a staff benefit to opt in.

Q. You are a Paid executive, we are volunteers. The Ramblers website says each volunteer has a volunteer manager. Who is this for us? (David Rogers)

A. I don't know who, as the role of Volunteer manager is not about hierarchy, it is based on issue/topic.

Q. The membership website feels incomplete as you can't see demographics, ethnic groups, etc, and there isn't a box to say who's middle class! There is a lot of stuff on there, that seems to disappear, a search box is needed. (Tony Smith)

A. Demographic data is extrapolated from many systems behind the scenes. Search function – Ross will take that back to Central Office.

Q. What about using TV adverts to encourage new people? Is it worth investing in targeting social media or are we already doing this? (Ruth Clarke)

A. TV campaigns are super expensive and don't always work. It could be a challenge between what we sell and the experience that people have. Facebook provides the biggest conversion rate into new members.

Q. Could the Ramblers target schools? (Ruth Clarke)

A. Ramblers have looked at specific programmes, family walks, and engaging young people, but we need to focus on what we're good at – campaigning and getting people out there.

Q. Are there ways to propose new paths? Some areas are a challenge. (Ian Forsythe)

A. The CROW act review of land designation has been delayed numerous times, but would open up the opportunity. More houses are planned, and we are involved where footpaths are involved. (Roy Denney commented that local authorities already have power to create new paths although probably not the resources needed)

Q. Concentrating on the over 50s is ok, but youngsters' attitudes are different these days. (John Boodle)

A. Youngsters are the most activist by nature. They care about the planet and nature.

Q. A lot of work has been done to engage more diverse groups. A common trend is collaboration, and asking people what they wanted. They want to feel ownership and fitting into something. (Tess Kay)

A. Community outreach officers are there to build confidence in groups. We can't just run in to communities and leave, we need to deliver something that is sustainable and long term.

Q. With the Lost Ways 2031 deadline now scrapped, there is the temptation to forget all the work that has gone on. What will the Ramblers do nationally to bring this to completion? (Peter Williams)

A. There were lots of missing rights of way identified, and much of that work is now with local authorities. The campaign continues, and we can help local authorities to free up the process.

Q. Where are we with the right to walk woodlands and waterways? (Roy Denney)

A. This is part of the Access to Nature bill.

Q. What information needs to be collected on walks? Leicester have different system and versions. (Mark Woodall)

A. Central Office need to know what's going on in groups, and if we don't know much about who is walking, then we can't understand the difference we are making. (Martin commented that this question came up at Area committee recently, and will be discussed with group chairs)

Q. Tell us about your background, and interests outside of walking. To settle a dispute, what colour is your fleece? (Simon Peacock)

A. Ross gave an overview of his background, interests, and some of the key roles and experience that has led him to the Ramblers. He confirmed that the colour of his fleece was terracotta!

Martin thanked Ross for his interesting talk, and providing answers to the many questions.

14. Any other Business

none

15. Area events

The dates for the area events for the next twelve months are as follows:

- a. **Area walk – Saturday in early summer – Lutterworth group**
- b. **Area Quiz – Friday in October / November – Coalville group**
- c. **AGM - Saturday 31 January 2026 – Lutterworth group**

Full Rota of Area events

YEAR	AGM (Jan)	Area Walk (summer)	Quiz (Oct/Nov)
2025	Rutland	Lutterworth	Coalville
2026	Lutterworth	LRWG	Loughborough
2027	LRWG	Leicester	Hinckley
2028	Leicester	Coalville	Melton
2029	Coalville	Loughborough	Rutland
2030	Loughborough	Hinckley	Lutterworth
2031	Hinckley	Melton	LRWG
2032	Melton	Rutland	Leicester

The meeting closed at 12.35

AGM 2026

Area Chairman's Report.

I would like to thank the Area Officers and the Group representatives for their hard work and support over the last 12 months. Unfortunately I have not managed to get round to attending a committee meeting of each of the groups but this is still on the agenda should I be re-elected as Area Chair.

I would like to say a big thank you to Ray Phipps.

Ray has indicated that he will not be standing for re-election as Area Membership Secretary at the AGM.

Ray has had two sessions in this role. When he was first in position the role involved keeping records in a card file system. There was a lot of cards and it was very time consuming. I know all of this as when Ray retired for the first time he passed everything over to me. He's not going to pass it to me this time.

I believe that the role is a lot easier these days so if anyone would like to take this role on please let the Area Secretary know.

Ramblers Governance.

The Area Officers have spent quite a bit of time looking at the Ramblers proposed governance changes during the last few months. You will, no doubt, find out what this means to you when the changes are passed.

Walk Leader Training.

This has been a bit of a hot topic for a while now. Many existing walk leaders felt that to be asked to go through some training, even though they had been leading walks for many years, unacceptable.

The Ramblers, like every other organisation these days, have a duty of care to their volunteers. Part of this care is to provide volunteers with the training and support they need to carry out their role.

Some people have seen this as forcing more responsibility onto walk leaders. This is not the case, the training is there to help not hinder. It helps both new and existing leaders to provide an exciting and safe framework for leading group walks.

When this whole training requirement was first bandied about many people could see that it would cause issues. I can remember participating in an Area Cluster meeting and listening to other Areas expressing their concerns about the whole process. One of the main concerns was that many people didn't want to do online training. At the time I requested the training documents be made available for offline use. The training documents were continually being amended in the early days. However, once the format was set the documents were made available for offline use.

It was hoped that doing the training as a group, where discussions and sharing experiences were encouraged, would be beneficial. So in November I ran a course for a small number of Melton Group and invited committee members from another three groups to come along to see how things worked. Unfortunately only Rutland Group sent representatives. Everyone on the course found it extremely useful and they thought it should be offered to more people.

Since then I have run another 2 courses, one in Rutland and one in the Hinckley area.

From the feedback 99% of those who have done the training have found it interesting and helpful.

Through the three courses we have now trained nearly 70 leaders.

Ramblers - Leicestershire and Rutland Area

Receipts & Payments Account Year ended 30th September 2025

	Current Year	Prior Year
	£	£
Income:		
Central Office funding	4,027.84	2,298.32
Donations	0.00	0.00
Other income	0.00	0.00
Fundraising	0.00	0.00
Deposit interest	0.00	0.00
Publication/goods sales	0.00	0.00
Total Income	4,027.84	2,298.32

Expenditure:		
Funding to Groups	4,077.08	2,282.33
Newsletter printing	0.00	0.00
Newsletter distribution	441.06	391.14
Publicity and website	0.00	82.50
Campaigns and casework	0.00	170.00
Meetings, inc. AGM and GC	223.78	238.86
Restoring the record	0.00	0.00
Administration costs	170.00	24.00
Other expenditure	143.50	65.00
Total Expenditure	5,055.42	3,253.83
(Deficit)/Surplus	(1,027.58)	(955.51)
Funds brought forward	5,461.28	6,416.79
Funds carried forward	4,433.70	5,461.28

Balance Sheet at 30th September 2025

	Current Year	Prior Year
	£	£
Assets:		
Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00
Investments	0.00	0.00
Stock	0.00	0.00
Debtors	0.00	0.00
Cash & bank	4,433.70	5,461.28
Total Assets	4,433.70	5,461.28
Liabilities:		
Creditors	0.00	0.00
Total Liabilities	0.00	0.00
Net Assets & Funds	4,433.70	5,461.28
For information, the distribution of the Area entitlement to Groups was as follows:		
Coalville	446.24	337.40
Hinckley	660.00	377.05
Leicester	1,800.00	497.99
Loughborough	234.92	227.31
Lutterworth	499.96	188.93
Melton Mowbray	0.00	200.04
Rutland	238.12	236.40
L & R Walking Group	197.84	217.21
Total	4,077.08	2,282.33

Note: In accordance with RACO guidelines, these accounts are prepared on a "receipts and payments" basis, and debtors and creditors are accordingly not recognised.

Treasurer's Certificate:- I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the books and records presented for audit were an accurate record of the Area's financial affairs and were complete in all respects.

[Signature] 31.12.2025

Auditor's report to the Members of the Area:- The above Receipts and Payment Account and Balance Sheet are in accordance with the books and records of the Area and other information provided by the Treasurer.

E. S. Tippe 31.12.2025

Area Secretary's Annual Report - 2025

Leicestershire & Rutland Ramblers

My first year in post has been spent getting to grips with the scope of the role whilst on a steep learning curve, particularly with regard to the workings of Central Office and challenges on the IT front along with the vagaries of the internet and email links. My thanks go to the Chair, Martin James, for his support & guidance.

Activities have included the administration & attendance related to the regular Area meetings including the quarterly AEC meetings and four Officers' meetings.

A great deal of time has been spent disseminating & circulating the lengthy documents from Central Office with regard to the Governance Review. This is ongoing with some change anticipated early in 2026.

Group officer lists and contact information have been updated in recent weeks, the latest year-end reports from individual groups have been collated for Area records.

As a walk leader, I completed the online training and also attended the face to face training session run by Martin James on 29/11/25.

Carol Gillespie
9/12/2025

Footpath Secretary's Report.

There has been a continual stream of diversions. Most of them very minor. We have had some additions to the definitive map through Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's).

Your Group Footpath Secretaries will be receiving a steady amount of Planning Applications to look through to see if there are any Public Rights Of Way (PROW's) affected. Developers have got much better at making provisions for PROW's and now keep the amount of estate roads doubling up as footpaths down to a minimum. However, the continual erosion of the countryside and farmland to more and more houses is concerning.

I have attended several site meetings and site inspections. Network Rail has expressed a desire to close two footpaths in the Coalville area. The reason they have given for the need to close the paths is that because of the amount of new housing in the area the crossings are being used more. !!!!. Surely that should have justified keeping the crossings open and even improving them as there is obviously a greater need for the paths? As yet they have made no formal applications to extinguish these paths.

Should anyone require more information please email me footpaths@langsett1.com

Walking Environment Officer's Report 2025/6

Roy Denney

The big interest in our area of late and ongoing is the status and protection of the gems we have in CHARNWOOD: The Warren Hills, Timberwood Hill etc. Wildlife Trust area is now accredited as a National Nature Reserve. The Scheme under the Charnwood Landscape partnership formed by the regional park, has been utilising several million pounds of lottery funding throughout Charnwood but is coming to an end this year but a legacy plan is being devised to continue to protect it and manage it as some form of regional park.

There are still some projects to be completed including some big-ticket ones. A much-improved track from Old John down to the Deer Barn in Bradgate is one such.

The ambition is to have Charnwood Forest recognised as an internationally important geopark which it undoubtedly is.

Speaking as a member of the board of the Regional Park at the end of November there was news that, with the approval of their British Committee, we had submitted our UNESCO application with the endorsement of Sir David Attenborough; we've seen a surge in interest, with lots of new people signing up to the newsletter and as volunteers!

There are numerous groups of volunteers helping in many ways, some directly for The Charnwood Regional Park, some groups under the auspices of the County Council (LCC) carrying out repairs on stiles etc., but some coordinated by the Wildlife Trust and user groups, all improving the walking environment. Our sister organisation, the Leicestershire Footpath Association and working with LCC to identify dangerous crossings where footpaths meet busy roads.

The partnership project was also to enhance and protect the forest area and educate people as to its uniqueness and importance. This should encourage people to protect it from overdevelopment and inappropriate development. As part of that process, a supply of the map I had produced last year has been donated to the Charnwood Forest and, in turn, they have given a copy to every primary school which has outdoor learning classes.

The scheme has invested in new interpretation panels and visitor information hubs at key sites, which members may have noticed. These installations encourage exploring on foot and direct visitors to less crowded areas to take pressure off the honeypots.

The Forest Board is developing a new website that will serve as a central information source for visitors, teachers and volunteers. This Geopark website will provide information on sites, walks, and local businesses, while supporting sustainable economic development and working toward international recognition of the importance of our geological, palaeontological, and cultural historical sites.

The walks on the site were in the large part produced by our members.

The scheme has helped fund roadside paving and the development of new trails, including the creation of new permissive footpaths and the rebranding of walking routes, some of which were contributed by members. Efforts are underway to improve public transportation to the Forest Geopark, which is still under development.

One of the routes being created aims to be a through route from within Leicester to Loughborough via Charnwood. And it includes improving many of the paths

As Area Footpaths Officer, a member of the LLA and Footpath Secretary of the Leicester Footpaths Association, Stan Warren did a lot to assist in the early days.

Stan's friends donated money at his funeral which has funded a bench to be provided near the entrance to Bradgate Park, dedicated to Stan. Funds were collected to mark his passing

appropriately. The bench is being made by Bradgate from their own timber and should be erected in March and cost just short of £1000.

I acted as executor to Stan's estate and he left £16,000+ to the air ambulance service which saved his life and is invaluable to us if we have issues in remote places. He left the same sum to the Great Central Railway, LOROS and the National Trust.

We are identifying a route to be called the Stan Warren Way to commemorate the work our late member. It will probably be the route from Glenfield, skirting Anstey and arriving in Newtown Linford facing Bradgate Park. We have some funds left after paying for the bench and will use these to mark this route and if any member wishes to quietly add to this fund at the AGM to enhance this signage please have a word with me.

Membership Secretary's Report. for Area 2026 AGM
 These figures are for the end of October 2025

	2024	2025	Difference
Area total	1529	1564	+35
LE01 Hinckley	201	194	-7
LE02 Leicester	422	416	-6
LE03 Melton	113	104	-9
LE04 Coalville	234	229	-5
LE05 Rutland	140	151	+11
LE06 Loughborough	139	158	+19
LE07 Lutterworth	95	92	-1
LE50 LRWG	99	98	-3
LE96 Others	86	122	+36

As can be seen, a set of very conflicting figures with quite encouraging rises for Rutland and Loughborough being the almost exact numerical opposite for the other six groups. LE96 (members not attached to a specific group) has clearly shown to be the dramatic winner here as highlighted with the following figures from 10 years ago.

Area total	1565
LE01 Hinckley	229
LE02 Leicester	464
LE03 Melton	152
LE04 Coalville	220
LE05 Rutland	121
LE06 Loughborough	139
LE07 Lutterworth	110
LE50 LRWG	112
LE96 Others	17

I have been a member of the RA for over 35 years and served on the Leicester group committee as Chairman, Secretary and Membership secretary for most of those years and on the "Area" committee as the group representative but mainly as the membership secretary. Over those years the means of communication from central office went from dozens of sheets of computer-generated (green striped) paper to conventional A4 paper and then the breakthrough to a 3.5" "floppy disc (1.44meg) (and paper) and then to e-mail downloads with a dire warning not to open the file if it was blank!

By the time of the AGM in January I will be approaching 81 years of age so this will (should!) be my last AGM report. I wish my successor every success.

Ray Phipps (Area membership secretary) November 2025

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER REPORT 2025

The role involves the management and updating of the Area website <https://leicsra.org.uk> and publication of Write of Way, with editions this year in March, August and December (at the time of writing, in preparation), going to (currently) 1890 subscribers, mostly Area members but some external subscribers.

A few people have made contact through the website about walking with groups; hopefully some are now walking with us.

The role also involves maintaining the social media accounts <https://www.facebook.com/leicsrutlandra> and <https://x.com/AndRutland>, which you can safely follow without being overwhelmed with updates.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the Write of Way this year. If you have something of interest to members you wish to share in the next issue, please send it to me by the end of February. If timely dissemination is important, I can put it on the web site and/or social media.

John Samson (contact via landrarea@gmail.com)

27 Nov 2025

Report to Area 2025: COALVILLE RAMBLERS

Our group has been very active this year with holidays and day trips.

In December, 33 of us attended our annual Christmas meal which was held at The Birch Tree in Coalville, organised by Geoff Branton. We held a raffle and raised £83 for our social fund.

In January, 14 turned out in the freezing cold for a Sherry evening at The Priest House where we got together to talk about ideas for future events for the group and to socialise.

4 of us attended the Area AGM and annual walk at Wing in Rutland where we could network with members from other Ramblers groups from area.

As the funding continued for First Aid training, we had 4 more attend in January and April and they all completed the training and gained certificates. Unfortunately that funding has now finished but Lutterworth are still offering training dates and there are other places, like the Red Cross that offer it free.

4 more did some training with The Red Cross recently and reported back that the training had some issues and some of the advice was incorrect, so I think we will just use training through Ramblers in the future.

In April, our 4 night holiday to Eastbourne was attended by 24. A variety of walks were put on, using local buses and taxi's on one day as it was Good Friday and the bus we needed wasn't running! The weather was windy but kind to us. The iconic Seven Sisters walk was the highlight and other walks around Jevington, Alfriston and East Dean were included. Some of us joined in with a pub quiz one evening with the locals which was good fun.

In May we organised a day trip to Dovedale using several cars. 20 attended and completed an 11 mile walk.

August came and a coach ramble to Upper Hulme and the Roaches was arranged with 26 attending. Some from the Loughborough group joined us and we were rewarded with some fabulous views.

Exmoor and Minehead was our next holiday which was a self- drive and organised by our treasurer David Jackson. We mostly stayed in The Premier Inn and did a variety of walks, coastal, Dunkery Beacon circular and then a drive into the heart of Exmoor to Tarr Steps on day 3. The weather was generally mild and no rain which was a bonus. 21 came along and group meals were arranged.

1 week ago, it was our turn to host the Area Quiz night. 8 teams of 4 participated with a very good quizmaster and once again Loughborough was the winning team!

Area Rep report.

I represented Coalville Ramblers interests at 3 Area Executive meetings and at the Area AGM along with 3 other Coalville members.

Hinckley Ramblers Annual Report 2024–25

Overview

2024–25 has been a positive and active year for Hinckley Ramblers.

We've seen strong growth in walks and attendance, new leaders stepping up, and continued enthusiasm across the group — despite a slight fall in membership.

Walks and Leadership

A total of 142 walks were offered this year, up 35% from 105 last year.

We welcomed six new or returning leaders — Sarah Hall-Craggs, Maxine Aston, Dave Hall, Karen Saunders, Mark Walbank, and Julie Rock — who together led 23 walks.

Sarah and Maxine both led 5+ walks thereby earning their Walk Leader badges.

While leader numbers rose from 29 to 32, just seven led over half of all walks, so recruiting and supporting new leaders remains a key priority.

Our WhatsApp group helped add 12 short-notice walks without affecting the regular programme, which continues to run smoothly.

Walk Leader Training

The new training requirements for walk leaders have proved contentious, particularly among some of our more experienced leaders who feel they should not have to complete additional training.

Unfortunately, some have chosen not to do the training and have indicated that they will no longer lead walks as a result.

As a group, we will be doing everything possible to encourage and support leaders to complete the training, which we believe is worthwhile regardless of experience.

To make the process more user-friendly, we have organised a 'Walk Leaders' Training Session in November 2025, which we hope will satisfy the requirements for most of our leaders and minimise any negative impact on the group's walk programme.

Attendance and Membership

Total attendance rose 23%, from 1,262 to 1,558, though average attendance per walk dipped slightly (12.0 → 11.0) due to the higher number of walks.

Membership fell from 205 to 195.

15 new members joined, 2 rejoined, and 27 left overall.

Recruitment will be a focus next year, with more promotion through social media and local publicity.

Committee and Organisation

The committee has worked effectively throughout the year:

- Chair: Mike l'Anson
- Secretary: Gill Spatcher
- Treasurer: Angela Preece
- Membership: Tony Smith
- Walks Coordinator: Pete Hopewell
- Walks Organiser: Jean Davies
- Footpaths: Wendy Birt
- Social: Hazel Dalziel & Angela Preece
- Web / IT: Trevor Martin & Brian Knight
- Map Library: Lin Cook

Thanks to all for their time and commitment.

The committee for the new year (2025–26) remains unchanged, providing welcome continuity and stability.

Social and Activities

Social events organised by Hazel and Angela — including the Christmas Dinner, River Cruise, and Coach Ramble to Worcester — were well supported.

Special thanks to Gill and Eddie Newell for hosting the Mince Pie event for ten years, and to Tony and Donna Smith for organising the Alfa Holiday to Ilfracombe (next year's trip to Weymouth is already full).

Our long-distance walk, Shakespeare's Avon Way, covered 90 miles over eight days, with nine members completing the full route.

Thanks to Chris Catlin and Mick Beasley for leading sections.

In 2026 we'll tackle the Jurassic Way from Banbury to Stamford, and we look forward to once again welcoming members from other groups.

Monthly Hillwalking weekends, introduced by Jean Davies, have become a popular and successful feature, and have also attracted new members and additional walk leaders to the group.

Finances and Footpaths

Although spending has remained in line with the budget and overall finances are well managed, the group has continued to suffer from the unbudgeted and unfunded increase in the recce mileage rate for walk leaders.

As a result, our reserves have fallen well below the recommended 40% level, and we have come close to running out of money at times.

We hope that this issue will be addressed in the new financial year to ensure a sustainable position going forward.

Thanks go to Angela Preece for her careful stewardship of the accounts, and to Chris Catlin for serving as our Independent Financial Examiner.

Wendy Birt continues to do excellent work as Footpath Secretary, helping resolve several long-standing access issues.

Communications

Our weekly newsletter, Pete's Ramblings (now over 600 editions) and our website, maintained by Trevor Martin and Brian Knight, keep members informed and engaged.

Our Facebook page with over 1,750 followers continues to grow helping raise our local profile and support recruitment of new members.

Looking Ahead

Despite a small membership decline, 2024–25 has been a strong year with growth in activity and renewed enthusiasm.

Priorities for next year:

1. Recruit 24+ new members
2. Develop 3+ new leaders
3. Increase average attendance to 12+

Thanks to everyone who has led, organised, or supported our walks and events.

Here's to another enjoyable year of walking, friendship, fresh air (and even the occasional beer) with Hinckley Ramblers.

Mike l'Anson

Chair.

Overall this has been a very good year. Membership has dropped marginally, but the number of active members has increased, as seen by the walk report summaries.

I believe that we have the widest and most comprehensive walks programme in the country, with a total of 350 walks.

Also, I have not seen a better website than ours.

We now have 5 different all day walks, as well as a selection of morning walks catering for a wide range of needs, from 4 mile leisurely strolls, to 14 mile strenuous hikes.

This would not be possible without the efforts of the walk organisers, supported by the leaders, all brilliantly coordinated by our two skilled IT operators.

I have been very lucky to have the backing of a committee of very capable and industrious individuals. They have all used their initiative to improve their particular activity.

I am pleased to say that our funds are now in a healthier state. The main fund has been built up, and the coach fund is now strong enough to survive a disaster, thanks to us now having a financially astute coach secretary.

Regrettably our operation is becoming bogged down by the pedantic bureaucracy of head office. This is having a negative effect on the number of walk leaders, who represent the core of our organisation. We are trying to assist members work their way through the website training routine. Whilst the training course contains a lot of useful information, we are getting a negative reaction from some who feel they are being forced into doing it. I get comments along the lines of 'our subscriptions are being spent by deskbound nerds who are telling volunteers what to do!'

Also, communications both with HQ and the area leave a lot to be desired. Neither HQ nor the area show us the courtesy of keeping us informed on all the important issues. For example, why were we not told that members of Boundless have free access to our walks? Messages come down infrequently, but little gets passed upwards. It seems that this charity is operating like a top down PLC.

I am afraid that I am powerless to do anything about it, apart from venting my feelings to whoever from HQ attends the area AGM next January.

As I am getting long in the tooth, I only intend to stand as chairman for one more year.

Mike Goodrich

November 2025

Loughborough and District Ramblers

Annual report 2024-25

Introduction

1. This annual report brings together office holders' reports on Loughborough and District Ramblers' activities during 2024-25. A verbal report was presented at the AGM in autumn 2025 and a summary will appear in the end-of-year newsletter.
2. The group's AGM was held on 25 October 2025 when the following office holders and committee members were elected for 2025-26.

Loughborough and District Committee 2025-26	
Chair	Tess Kay
Treasurer	Chris Rimbault
Secretary	Elizabeth Darcy
Membership secretary	Jackie Wales
Walk Programme secretary	Sue Mears
Social secretary	Sue Mears
Webmaster	John Samson
Area representative	John Samson
Footpaths officer	Guy Jackson
Newsletter editor	Tess Kay assisted by Mark Aylett
Committee member	Liz Jones

Group activities 2024-25

Membership

- The group's current membership is 156. As well as active walkers, this includes many members who either no longer walk with us or do so only very occasionally. We value this continued attachment to the group.
- Recruitment is strong for a group of our size. So far in 2025 we have had:
 - (1) 22 'new to Ramblers' members
 - (2) 9 'rejoining' members
 - (3) 6 transfers to Loughborough from other areas
- New members tend to be active. A number have quickly transitioned to walk leading, and/or made other contributions to the group's organisation and activities.
- We have had a small number of departures, mainly from members who had not been active walkers for some time.

Walks programme

As a relatively small group we have sometimes found it challenging to sustain a substantial walk programme so we are very pleased to report several positive developments this year.

- We have increased the number of walk leaders within the group: both longstanding and new members have stepped up to complete the online training courses and lead walks.
- We are now able to plan and publicise walks further in advance than previously, allowing members and newcomers to plan further ahead.
- We have established a WhatsApp “Walks” group dedicated solely to walk arrangements which works well for walkers and leaders alike. We invite anyone who walks regularly with us to be added to this group – it is not limited to our own group members - and use WhatsApp polls as an efficient method for signing up to walks. Those who are not members of the WhatsApp group can join the walk through the established method, i.e. by contacting the walk leader through the details given on the website.
- We have run a very substantial programme of Wednesday walks of 5-7 miles throughout the year which has been thoroughly enjoyed. These walks typically attract 15-20 walkers. We have also put on a range of Saturday walks of varied lengths and difficulty, both locally and occasionally further afield e.g in Derbyshire.
- In addition to the increase in trained walk leaders, we have also had eight group members complete a one-day First Aid training. This is a really appreciated further contribution to our capacity to deliver an effective and secure walk programme.

In 2026, there are a number of steps we would like to take to strengthen the programme further:

- We do still rely too much on a small number of leaders to deliver a large part of our programme. In 2026 we hope that even more members will complete Walk Leader training and go on to lead walks.
- We hope to provide more help to leaders to progress from training to actual walk leadership, by helping them identify and plan walk routes. We have a large number of mapped walkable routes that are suitable for this and the information we hold could form the basis of resource “packs” that could ease the transition from training as a leader, to actually leading.
- We would like to build up our longer/Saturday walks programme. In 2025 we have enjoyed some excellent longer walking in Derbyshire during the summer months; however walks of 10-12 miles that are local to the Loughborough area are also very popular - and easier for many people to access - and we hope to increase these in 2025-26.

Overall our walk programme has become fuller and more stable in 2024-25. The increase in walk leaders has been an enormous benefit to the group, allowing us to establish a substantial and regular programme. We feel well-positioned forward to further development in 2026.

Social activities

Many of our walks offer additional social elements e.g. an optional café refreshment stop during the walk or a meal stop at the end. In addition the group traditionally puts on a number of specific “social” events. In 2024-25 these were:

- A well-attended annual Christmas walk and meal in the Groby and Newton Linford area

- An outstanding day trip to the Cotswolds in April, with about 40 people joining from our own and other local ramblers. Two walks were offered, with the longer walk starting from Broadway and the shorter walk starting in Chipping Campden to enjoy a meal and drink before returning. We were very pleased to see some of our longer standing members joining us for this.
- A warm summer evening river walk along the Soar followed by pub food at the Waterside Inn in Mountsorrel.

Online presence

Our online presence is important to us, especially as a “window” for those outside our group, including the wider local community – for example, membership of our Facebook page is much larger than our group membership. Within the group itself, much communication within the group is via WhatsApp, including e.g. sharing of walk photos that might previously have been posted on Facebook. The current role and status of our website and Facebook pages are:

- The group’s website tells people who we are, provides access to walk details and other resources, is where members can find resources and where potential new walkers are likely to find out about us. The initial hard work of building the site was undertaken by longstanding member Dave Twigg; the current webmaster John Samson works continually to maintain the structure and keeping the content updated with recent news and events.
- John also manages the group’s Facebook page. It is used largely to advertise walks and other group events and to share photos of group walks. It reaches a wide community and has three times as many members as our group. Walk leaders who are on Facebook are urged to promote their forthcoming walks on the Facebook group.

Newsletter

With the increased use of our WhatsApp groups for “chat-about-walks” and exchange of information, the role of the newsletter is changing somewhat. We are producing a single “annual review” newsletter in 2025, which members will receive before Christmas.

Conclusion

The Loughborough and District group have had a positive year, improving our walk programme, increasing our membership, and filling our previously vacant committee positions. We greatly appreciate the contributions of all our members, new and longstanding, who bring such vibrancy to the group. My own special thanks are due to our tireless committee, for their sterling work and for the positive, friendly spirit in which they do it.

Tess Kay

Chair

Loughborough

29 November 2025

Area AGM 2025 – LRWG report

LRWG's membership figure continues to hover around 100. We still have a limited programme of walks and as always we encourage new leaders to come forward.

LRWG has been using Meetup.com as a platform for a number of years, but we have decided to leave Meetup at the end of December and move to a new platform, Klubraum. Meetup has served us well as a way to promote our walks but in other respects it is less than ideal and we feel that Klubraum will serve our needs better from now on. We will also ensure our programme is visible on our own website and on Ramblers Walk Finder, and we intend to make more use of Facebook too.

There are changes afoot on our committee. Kirsten Wood and Barney Jones are stepping down; thanks to both of them for their efforts on our behalf. Mark Hewitt is stepping down from the role of secretary but intends to stand again in his other roles of Footpath Officer and Area Rep. John Walwyn joined the committee at our last AGM as website administrator, and Lee Charlesworth is standing for election as walks programme manager.

Finally, I hope to revive group weekends away in 2026 with a weekend in the Peak District.

And as always, my thanks to my committee colleagues and to all those who lead walks for the group. It is your efforts that keep the group going.

Rob Jones, Chair of LRWG

Expected committee for 2025-6 (subject to confirmation following AGM on 30/11/25)

Chair – Rob Jones

Treasurer – Phil Vose

Secretary – vacant

Footpath Officer – Mark Hewitt

Walks Programme Manager – Lee Charlesworth

Website Administrator – John Walwyn

Area Rep – Mark Hewitt

LUTTERWORTH & HARBOROUGH DISTRICT RAMBLERS AGM

Chair's Report, October 2024-25

Thank you for joining us today for our 2025 annual general meeting – my first as chairperson.

This year has been a learning curve, but I've been very lucky to have been supported by a great team, and I'm particularly grateful to Anita, who chaired the group for eight years, and who is now doing a sterling job as group secretary.

Thanks also to area chairperson Martin James, who has been on the end of the phone whenever I've had questions or queries.

On the whole, we've had a good year's rambling – lots of lovely walks, plenty of mud and rain in the early part of the year, and, more recently, bone dry ground, and blazing sun. Many thanks to the walk leaders, who put so much time and energy into making these walks happen.

Unfortunately, we've sometimes struggled this summer to run a full walks programme, either because of the unavailability of walk leaders or because of a lack of take up, particularly for the Sunday walks. Disappointingly, we only managed one summer evening walk.

This suggests two things – first, we need to increase our pool of walk leaders to take the pressure off existing leaders; and, second, we need a better understanding of the reasons behind the poor turn outs.

This was something we discussed at length at our last committee meeting. We've considered possible solutions, and will be asking for your thoughts shortly.

The spring first aid course attracted a mix of area and local members, and we'll be looking to organise another one this year. As last year we'll be seeking area funding for this event.

Anita, assisted by Val, ran another successful navigation training course at Bradgate Park. Thanks to them, I've now got the hang of using a compass. We're now looking at dates to repeat the training in the coming year.

We were unable to hold our usual autumn Lutterworth outreach event because of problems with the venue. However, we held a successful meet-and-greet in April as part of the Broughton Astley monthly community market, and we're taking a stall again at the December market.

We've had some very successful social events – including a sit down Christmas dinner at The Chequers at Claybrook Magna; a bring and share lunch in February and our summer barbecue. Many thanks to everyone who helped organise or contributed to all these events, especially Val and Rob, who carried on barbecuing even when the heavens opened.

We hosted the annual area walk in August – thanks to John and Geoff for leading two lovely walks – and will be hosting the area AGM in January.

Once again members enjoyed walking breaks in Jersey and Norfolk – Anita has already been asked by a number of members to organise trips to both places for the 2025-2026 season.

In addition, she's investigating an Isle of Wight break, and Kev and I are looking to organise a walking weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon – birthplace of Shakespeare, and my dad!

We have now established a marketing sub-committee, tasked with raising our profile and attracting new members.

If re-elected, my priorities for the coming year will be:

- To address the issue of recruiting and supporting the training and development of new and existing walk leaders
- To work with the marketing team to raise awareness of the group locally and to expand our membership base.

Sue Featherstone.

MELTON MOWBRAY

Most of our walks have been well attended and we have gained quite a few new members again this year, which is great news.

As usual we are keen to advertise our walking programme, and in addition to e-mailing it weekly to the majority of our members and placing it on the website, we upload it onto the Ramblers "Walks Finder", have a regular section in the local weekly newspaper, The Melton Times, and local radio station, 103 The Eye.

We had one holiday this year. This took place in May, where we spent three nights in Hartington and had some wonderful walks. The weather was good to us on most of the days and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The scenery was beautiful and it was such lovely walking that we hope to arrange another next year.

St Mary's Parish Church, in Melton Mowbray, is having another magnificent celebration of Christmas Trees from Friday 28th November to Tuesday 2nd December this year and we will be decorating a Ramblers tree for this event. This is always very popular in our area, and is well worth a visit.

2025 has proved to be a fantastic year for our Group, and I'd like to say a big "thank you" to all our members for their support during the year.

Jo King

Rutland Ramblers

Committee members

Rutland Ramblers held its own AGM on the 9th November 2025. The following people were elected as committee members for the coming year:

John Pitts (Chair)
Michael Gillon (Secretary)
Janice Ferguson (Treasurer)
Richard Siddaway (Membership & Walks Programme)
Margaret Cole (Website)
Jackie Dodsley
Nigel Smart
Andy Fisher

Annual Report:

2025 has been another successful year for our rambling group. In terms of membership, we have just passed the 150 mark, up about a dozen on this time last year. We have also managed to provide a fairly full and varied programme of walks, some 60 in all over the 12 month period. Unfortunately, we were 'stymied' on a handful of occasions this year because of the increasing vagaries of our wonderful weather - including once when it was just too hot!

Like every other group in the country, we have been wrestling with the contentious issue of walk leader training (now a requirement) during the second half of this year. As a committee, we took the view early on that a basic level of training was now a necessary step to help support and protect both the organisation and our individual walk leaders, and we sent out a strong message that we needed our leaders to work with us on this to ensure the long term viability of the group. It is pleasing to see that the vast majority of our 20+ leaders will have completed the training, either on-line or in group sessions (facilitated most ably by Martin James - Area Chairman) by the December deadline.

On the social 'front', our main event earlier this year was a quiz/supper night at Empingham Cricket Club. Over 30 members (and guests) came along to test their knowledge and to enjoy a first rate meal, served up by Neil and Karen of the local Horseshoe Catering Company. The rather inappropriately named 'No Hoppers' stormed to the front on the final round to claim the winning prizes - an 'I Love Rambling' mug for each team member.

Finally, our November AGM at Launde Abbey, following a decent 8-mile ramble, culminated in the usual manner with tea and cakes for all attendees. With 28 folks staying behind to cram into one of the dining rooms, one suspects that the attraction wasn't the normal AGM business!

Michael Gillon (Secretary - Rutland Ramblers)