

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.