

# 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*