

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.