



RAMBLERS

**Oxon
Weekend
Walkers**

Oxon Weekend Walkers AGM

24 November 2024, 3pm

The Red Lion, Eynsham

MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Clare B, Ann B, Kerry F, Petra N and Alice M. 22 members were present.

2. Minutes of last AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on 26th November 2023 were accepted.

3. Reports from current Committee

a. Chair

Our last AGM was on Sunday November 26th in the Plough pub at Wolvercote. Unfortunately, we were not able to book that venue this year so we are in The Red Lion Eynsham. Who knew we had picked the same date as the Eynsham 10k? Which is why I had to change the start of today's walk. Note to self for next year and thank you to Alice for the heads up!

We will be hearing reports from the committee members about the events of the last year, but I will start with a brief review of the highlights of the last twelve months. We have had another excellent year thanks to all our amazing volunteers and the enthusiasm of all the walkers.

As a committee we have had a few issues to deal with. As part of its new initiative "Safety on Walks", Ramblers now requires every walker to carry their ICE (in case of emergency) details. After great discussions, we decided to invest in key rings for our members and to use the ICE cards supplied by Ramblers for our visitors and new walkers. Hopefully all our members now carry a key ring with their emergency details. I have some spares here if needed. There is also now a requirement for new walk leaders to register with Ramblers, then to complete some online training, a series of mini videos which are actually very useful for all of us and well worth watching. I do encourage you to find them by logging onto your Ramblers account. They also have safeguarding training which is useful.

Ramblers also offer some online webinars or zoom meetings, not only on walk leading but also on topics such as natural navigation. I have attended some of these and they can be very helpful. I recommend you try them.

We are always extremely keen to attract new walk leaders. Without walk leaders we simply have no walk and no lovely day out. Thank you to all the walk leaders who have led over the last year. Some, and you know who you are, have led many, many walks in order to keep our calendar filled. Thank you. If you haven't led a walk yet, please do try to have a go. There are lots of people who will help you and we will never get cross if you get us a bit lost. In order to encourage more walk leaders, we have run two

navigation training courses this year. Sixteen people have spent a day with Angelina the Mountain Leader and all found the day great fun and very informative. I hope to arrange another course in the spring if there is sufficient interest.

The Oxon Weekend Walkers spent another glorious weekend at the Elan Valley. Their walk leader, Steve, led us on some fabulous walks, we enjoyed good food, plenty of wine and testing our nerves on the Jenga game. There was even a strange treasure hunt! Many thanks to Ian for again arranging this brilliant trip.

Next May, 28 of our members will be spending three nights at The Yarn Market Hotel Dunster. It is a chance to explore Exmoor National Park and some coast path walking. I hope it is as successful as Ian's trips have been.

As you will know, being part of the Oxfordshire Area Ramblers group we are expected to attend Area meetings and events. Jane very kindly attends these quarterly meetings on our behalf and she will report back to you later.

Area holds an annual picnic event which I really enjoyed this year. It was held on Saturday 22nd June and there was a choice of walks to join. I joined a 10 mile walk from Shotover. All the walks converged on a village hall for our packed lunch and cake stop. A few short announcements and we were on our way. I mention this because it will be our turn, in summer 2026, to host this event and we could follow this format. We will need about five walk leaders that day.

Area holds their AGM in January and it is our turn to host the next meeting. It is on Saturday 25th January 2025 and will be at the Eynsham Village Hall. There will be a short walk in the morning, packed lunches eaten in the village hall, then the meeting in the afternoon and possibly a guest speaker from Ramblers. I am seeking volunteers to help on the day. We will need to set out the tables and chairs, brew up teas and coffees and then clear away afterwards. Please see me if you are able to help.

Before I hand over to the committee members to give their reports, I'd like to thank them all for all their contributions over the year. It is amazing to have so many willing volunteers even if one did escape to Australia! My thanks also to everyone who has led a walk. It's not an easy task and I for one always find it a bit scary. Please don't leave it up to the usual walk leaders, do take a turn. Everyone will support you and be so grateful.

b. Walks Programme Secretary

This year we delivered 4 Friday evening short walks, 1 Saturday Midsummer walk and 49 Sunday walks (including AGM). There were two Sundays with no planned walk (Christmas Eve and Elan Valley trip weekend) and one Sunday when no one turned up and the walk was cancelled.

Stats for Sunday walks:

Number of walkers (not including AGM):

Most - 35 on Carolyn B's Wantage Loop

Least - 8

Average - 18

Sunday walk mileages:

Longest - 13 miles on Sheila & Kevin's Best of the Chilterns walk

Shortest - 8 miles

Average - 10.5 miles

Total - approx. 510 miles

Thanks to the 22 walk leaders, including 1 new leader, that led walks this year. Ramblers has introduced some online training for new walk leaders, but I recommend that all walk leaders familiarize themselves with it.

c. Membership Secretary

Membership is currently at 149 which is typical. There have been no major recruitment drives or campaigns, but we seem to be able to maintain this healthy number of around 150. It was estimated that only 50-60 of the members come on regular walks.

d. Group Representative to the Area Executive

Our meetings are held online every three months.

I've attended four online Area Council meetings. There have been some ongoing topics:

- Replacing the function of the Area Footpath Secretary in the southern region as no volunteer has come forward.
- Two major developments that will have a serious impact on paths, namely the Botley West solar farm and the reservoir near Abingdon.
- Another first aid course after the success of the course run by Henley and Goring in February.
- The increase in the number of members who do not wish to be allocated to a group.

Ramblers' policy on safeguarding came up in the July meeting. It was not discussed in October, but it will probably appear again.

Other items were:

- The loss of Assemble which should be replaced with something better suited to members' needs; there was a consultation process.
- The introduction of generic risk assessments for simplicity.
- The requirement to record fixed assets. OWW does not have any fixed assets.

Area membership has increased by 2.7% over the year to the end of September. The retention rate of 84.3% is similar to the national rate and that of other large charities.

The Area picnic hosted by Thame and Wheatley (T&W) on 22nd June was thought to be a great success. The venue was indoors and T&W led all walks, which were of various lengths. This was to promote more inter-group mixing. OWW will host the picnic in 2027.

The next Area Council meeting is 13th January.

OWW is hosting the Area AGM in Eynsham on 25th January. The Area Chair will be standing down.

e. Social Secretary

This year we've had seven socials:

- Pool x1
- Ballet x1
- Live music x3
- Musical theatre x1
- Beer and cider festival x1

Thanks to Petra and Ian for putting on two of these socials, and to Gav for the beer festival. I put on

the other two. The numbers of participants vary, with Mikron being the most popular. Although not fundamental to the walking group, it's positive having these opportunities to meet and enjoy things that we like with other people. I've tried new things by going to socials over the year. And I'm standing down this year, so again thanks to everyone who has contributed.

f. Webmaster

This year I managed to gain full control over the website and e-mail addresses as well as build up an understanding of the tasks required to maintain them going forward. This has been with the very helpful assistance of a contact at RamblersWebs for which I am grateful. Little progress had been made in the preceding year due to the difficulties with communicating with the previous webmaster; this had made the transition overly difficult due to a lack of information and support. I have made some notes on the various tasks and logins that are required which I intend to document so that anybody taking over the role in the future does not have the same issues. However, I am quite happy to continue in the role.

- Each committee member now has their own @oxonww.org e-mail which is forwarded to their personal e-mail address as well as being accessible via a webmail interface.
- The committee@oxonww.org now redirects to all committee members.
- Some old e-mails addresses have been removed.
- The website has been updated to use Joomla 4 as Joomla 3 has been retired. (A similar update to Joomla 5 will be required at some point.) This led to minor changes in the way walks and committee documents are accessed.
- The contact page has been simplified, the number of potential contacts has been reduced and personal information has been removed. Contact can now be made to the chair, membership secretary or webmaster via a webform rather than a published e-mail address. This is the approach recommended by RambelersWeb to avoid scraper programs picking up e-mail addresses to spam. This approach means that no changes will be needed to the page when the committee members change as the members will inherit their appropriate role-based e-mail addresses.
- The login option has been removed from the front page but is accessible on the committee page as it is only committee members who might need to do this.
- Some dead pages and links have been removed.

g. Treasurer

Ramblers' financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September. Income comes primarily from Ramblers itself but also from Ramble Worldwide. They are separate entities, but for every Ramblers member who goes on a holiday with RW, they donate a small amount of money to the person's member group.

The Chair and Secretary are now signatories on the bank account.

We have spent less this year than previous years because we can no longer purchase the group subscription to OS maps.

Finance Report: 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024 – see below.

Ramblers Association: Oxon Weekend Walkers (OX40)**Accounts: 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024**

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
01/10/2023	Balance brought forward			£400.26
20/11/2023	Income from walking partnership with Ramblers Holidays		£50.00	£450.26
30/11/2024	Ramblers funding		£117.00	£567.26
20/12/2023	AGM Expenses	£122.95		£444.31
26/01/2024	Hoof picks	£23.94		£420.37
22/04/2024	Ramblers funding		£117.00	£537.37
13/05/2024	Income from walking partnership with Ramblers Holidays		£20.00	£557.37
30/09/2024	Balance carried forward			£557.37

Notes

- 1) No IT/communications costs due to Dave Flitney
- 2) £17 to pay Nicola for key rings
- 3) Group allocation for 2023/24: standard group formula (£234.00), 2024/25 - £256
- 4) Independent examination of accounts now being done by Louise Stratton - must buy "thank you"
- 5) Bank signatories: Sara Burnell (Treasurer), Nicola Copeman (Chair), Laura Tomlinson (Secretary), Peter Ransom (former Treasurer), Kevin Hessey (former Secretary)
- 6) No longer able to obtain Group subscription to OS Maps, so expenses £100 down on previous years

h. Publicity

The groups' main source of communication is our website www.oxonww.org. Many thanks to our webmaster Richard for all of his work on this.

As a group we also currently have 5 x social media accounts as follows:

- Facebook Group = 504 members
- Facebook Page = 32 Followers
- X (Formerly Twitter) = 122 Followers
- Instagram = 69 Followers
- Threads = 12 Followers

We also have some printed postcards and business cards for anyone wishing to hand them out.

Facebook has the largest following, probably because this is the only place where updates are regularly posted. It was noted that there are far more members of the OWW Facebook group than members of OWW. It's likely we will drop X (formerly Twitter) in the not too distant future.

4. Walk Leaders draw

There were three prizes for walk leaders drawn out of a hat, as a thank you for leading walks during the last year.

5. Stand down of current Committee

6. Election of new Committee

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Seconder
Chair	Nicola C	Lyn R	Sheila H
Vice Chair	Pam C	Vanessa C	Jane P
Group rep to Area	Jane P	Carolyn B	Ian M
Walks Secretary	Bob P	Nicola C	Pam C
Social Secretary	Vanessa C	Nicola C	Mark M
Webmaster	Richard M	Sheila H	Carolyn B
Membership	Dave W	Carolyn B	Richard M
Publicity	Ian M	Gav P	Milly F
Treasurer	Sara B	Nicola C	Sheena D
Secretary	Laura T	Kevin H	Jane P
w/o Portfolio 1	Milly F	Pam C	Vanessa C
w/o Portfolio 2	Ann B	Carolyn B	Milly F
w/o Portfolio 3	Unfilled	NA	NA

The new committee was accepted.

7. AOB

The Chair thanked the outgoing Social Secretary and welcomed the new Social Secretary.

Gav P proposed Christmas drinks on 14 December at the Lamb and Flag pub in Oxford, 7.30pm.

End of meeting 4.30pm.