



**Oxon
Weekend
Walkers**

Oxon Weekend Walkers AGM

23 November 2025, 3pm

The Red Lion, Eynsham

MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Richard M, Dave W, and Milly F. 22 members were present.

2. Minutes of last AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on 24th November 2024 were accepted.

3. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from current Committee

a. Chair

You may remember this time last year sitting in this room for our AGM after storm Bert had made its presence known to us all? Well, in the hope that lightning never strikes the same place twice...here we are again! Hopefully everyone has received a free drink from the bar and the chips, chunky or skinny, will be joining us soon.

Thank you to Sara for leading the walk today which has made my morning a lot less stressful than it was last year.

I'm going to start with a recap of the major events of last year.

Our first task of 2025 was to host the AREA AGM which was on Saturday 25th January 2025. I'd like to thank all the volunteers from the group who made it a huge success. There was a lot to think about; leading a short walk before the meeting, delivering drinks and cakes after the meeting, hiring and setting up the hall with IT and seating then clearing it all away again at the end of the meeting. My thanks to Laura, Ian, Jane P, Dave W, Sheila, Sara B and Vanessa. Particularly Sara for being the most patient backmarker ever.

In May, 28 members of the group went to Dunster for a long weekend staying at The Yarn Market Hotel. We had glorious weather and the hotel delivered extremely comfortable rooms and delicious meals. We managed to fit in four walks. The Selworthy loop of 11 miles including coastal walking and Bossington Hill, the 12 miler, taking in Dunkery Hill plus two half day walks on our travelling days in the woods and starting from Blue Anchor. Can I thank everyone who helped with this trip including Lyn with her IT skills, Vanessa for leading a walk, Pam for her encouragement and enthusiasm as Entertainment Officer and particularly Bob for his brilliance in helping plan, find and then lead all the walks.

We have booked a return visit to The Yarn Market Hotel for another long weekend from May 15th to 18th. We currently have 23 people who have signed up.

On June 29th we joined the AREA Picnic event this year organised by Vale of White Horse Group. By a lucky coincidence, we all seemed to pick the longest walk starting from Blewbury and then joining the picnic at Chilton Village Hall. As with the AREA AGM, our attendance really swelled the numbers and our presence was appreciated. Lots of cake was consumed and carried home for later consumption!

At the end of August, we were invited to join the Oxford and Vale Group in their celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Jubilee Walk. Sheila and Kevin very kindly led a walk which coordinated sharing our lunch break at Jarn Mound where we were treated to cakes courtesy of the Oxford and Vale Group.

We have a new adventure planned for December 2025 when 12 of the group have booked to stay at Holme Lacy House, Herefordshire, for a pre-Christmas long weekend. Again, four walks have been planned and reced and, weather permitting, we will explore the beautiful Herefordshire countryside. Thanks again to Bob for helping me plan and recce these walks and Laura for organising our secret Santa!

If you have any suggestions for future trips, please let me know. We're looking to find something for summer 2026.

Well, those are the major events of the year since our last AGM.

Of course, the thing we do best is walk every Sunday in our amazing countryside. This relies on us having willing walk leaders who offer to put time into planning and organising our walks.

Ramblers have made a lot of changes recently regarding walk leading. As I am sure you are aware, Ramblers have created an online training package which they require volunteers to complete in order to become a walk leader. This training takes about three hours to do online and can be done in small chunks, or all in one go. Although we were a bit sceptical at first, the feedback has been very positive. The training covers a lot of common sense, but also reinforces good, safe practice and has raised issues for discussion such as, "is it always best to lead from the front" and "how do I cover the ratio of 1:8, walk leaders:walkers ". I am delighted that we now have 19 walk leaders who have completed the training, and I can strongly recommend that, if you haven't already done it, you should consider doing this training. We always welcome walk leaders. Please don't leave it to the regular walk leaders to do all the work. If you are new to leading, you will get all the support you can wish for and lots of encouragement. Please join the walk leader group.

Earlier this month, ten of our walk leaders attended a First Aid Training course run by St. John's Ambulance in Kidlington. Those attending felt it was a very worthwhile experience and feel better prepared to deal with incidents.

A big thank you to everyone who has led a walk this year. You are the ones keeping us walking every week and without this, there would be no Oxon Weekend Walkers May I also say a big thank you to those who have been back markers. This is a hugely important role which, at the moment, does not require any training from Ramblers! I have noticed that it is often the same people who volunteer for this and I would like this to change. Being the back marker means that you don't get to pick who you have a chat with so easily and you are socially a bit out of the pack. Please take a turn. We should really swap in different people over the walk so no one gets stuck at the back. Wearing the back marker's whistle helps identify the back marker. Although some people say they are happy to be at the back, please ask them, maybe at lunchtime, if they'd like a replacement.

Later in this meeting we will be looking at setting up the committee for next year so, before we reach this I'll give you an overview of the types of things the committee has dealt with this last year, other than the major events which I have already mentioned. We have met four times. We used ZOOM to meet online in January, April and October and we met after a Sunday walk in July (when we had a Combe cream tea). The meetings are about an hour long. We often discuss how to spend our budget and this year we bought secateurs, seatmats, tic removal tools (given to walk leaders), cooling towels, emergency foil blankets, whistles, tic tweezers and hand gels. A 'lucky dip' bag was used to reward those completing the walk leader's training. We have spent time discussing items such as lift sharing with unknown walkers, our Facebook page, updating our website, issues raised by AREA and Ramblers e.g. walk leader training, ICE cards etc.

This is a good time to thank everyone on the committee for giving up their time to support this lovely walking group. It is much appreciated.

We will all be standing down as a committee and we want you to feel welcome to take part in the group by joining the committee yourself. I think we have a delightful, friendly walking group and the committee is also friendly and welcoming. When we get to section 7, election of the committee, Pam has prepared a brief description of each role to give you an idea of what is involved.

b. Walks Programme Secretary

In the last year, the group delivered:

50 Sunday walks including today

1 New Year's Day Walk.

1 Pre-Area AGM Walk.

Stats for Sunday walks

Number of walkers:

Most - 32

Least – 6

Average – 17

Sunday walk mileages.

Longest – 14 miles

Shortest – 8 miles

Average – 10.6 miles

Total – approx. 530 miles.

38 dry walks

Thanks to the 20 walk leaders that led walks this year (including 1 new leader and 1 new to OWW).

Thanks to the 18 walk leaders that have completed online training.

c. Membership Secretary

Membership is currently at 159, an overall increase of ten since our last AGM in November 2024, with no major recruitment drive.

d. Group Representative to the Area Executive

Meetings are held online every three months.

At the 2025 AGM in January, hosted by OWW, Area Chair fortunately agreed to continue in his post for 25/26.

During the year a workaround was found to cover the role of the Walks Environment & Access Officer.

Membership increased over the year to 30th September 2025 from 2367 to 2483. The mystery of the unallocated members was solved and the level of communication with them agreed.

Walk leader training has been tracked and at the October Area meeting 132 of 168, 79%, of active leaders were certified. Chair has offered to help groups if they have problems updating records.

On the financial side, Area wanted to bring reserves down by funding projects to be in line with Ramblers guidance but succeeded in only half the required reduction.

A booking system for equipment held by Area has been set up to ensure that items are available when required.

Area picnic was held on a very hot 29th June in Chilton, Hosted by the Vale group. Next year's will be on 7th June, hosted by West Oxfordshire. OWW's turn comes in 2027.

The Area Chair's group, Didcot and Wallingford, is converting to a flexigroup and so will not appear on the rotas for hosting the AGM and picnic.

There were three first aid courses, including one co-organised by OWW, and a few celebrations - 40th anniversary of the Oxford Jubilee Way on 31st August, Vale Way 10th anniversary. It was also the 90th year of Ramblers.

A dominant issue has been the proposed changes to governance of Ramblers, to be in line with the guidance of The Charity Commission and advised by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

The objectives are to improve communication, reduce bureaucracy and ensure that the Board of Trustees has the necessary mix of skills and experience.

Each member would have a vote at an AGM at which Trustees are elected.

Local groups would become the primary organising units for providing walks, path maintenance and/or campaigning for access and they would receive funding directly from Ramblers. The required officers would be Group Lead, Finance Lead and Activities Lead and there would be no need for a formal AGM.

Areas would have no formal role. There is an evolving plan to replace them with Hubs, one for each local government area.

Area Chair attended online consultation meetings in July and September. He fed back his concern about the lack of detail about how Hubs would operate.

On 6th December there will be an in-person General Council Conference where members can discuss the areas of contention and work through the detail of aspects of the proposals where needed. A review of the role of Areas and Groups has been postponed to 2026.

The other recurring topics have been the major developments of the Botley West solar farm and the Abingdon Reservoir. Oxfordshire Area is registered as an interested party for the solar farm and has provided input on the impact on the path network. The Secretary of State will make a decision in mid-

May 2026. Area has attended meetings related to the reservoir to try ensure that connections to the current rights of way are planned.

Next year's Area AGM will be hosted by BNO on 24th January at Longford Park Community Centre. The next Area meeting is on 12th January 2026.

e. Social Secretary

Nine socials have been offered over the last year:

- Drinks evenings x 2 (includes Christmas drinks)
- Music / band evenings x 2
- Music festival
- Comedy show
- Meals (Nepalese and Italian) x 2
- Mikron Theatre

Events have taken place in Oxford, Witney, Kidlington and Charlbury.

Attendance has varied with Mikron Theatre, meals and drinks being the most popular events with 15 people attending the Nepalese meal.

Thanks to fellow weekend walkers who in addition to myself have suggested and hosted events - Ian, Sara B and Sarah R, Petra and Gavin.

We love our walking, but it is also fun to meet up and attend events outside this, so do please feel free to suggest anything you'd like to see on the Socials Programme. If you don't feel confident enough to lead a walk this is another good way of contributing to our Group.

Although socials aren't as regular as walks, I would encourage people to keep an eye on the socials part of the website as new events do get added from time to time.

Thanks to all who have participated in socials over the past year.

f. Webmaster

The website has been ticking over with minor edits as requested. The infrastructure has been auto updating in the background and we are now up to Joomla 5.4. (Joomla 6 is on the horizon). Hopefully the transition will be painless like the one from 4 to 5 rather than the more painful transition from 3 to 4.

g. Treasurer

- Ramblers' financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September.
- Income comes primarily from Ramblers who provide funding to the group but also an additional sum per member of the group. This amount has gone up from last year.
- In addition, Ramble Worldwide donate a small amount to the group when any OWW Ramblers member attends one of their holidays.
- During the last financial year, the group spent almost as much as it received in income.
- It was noted that the independent examination of accounts will now be done by Peter Ransom who is an OWW member but is not on the committee.
- Below is the finance report for 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
01/10/2024	Balance brought forward			£557.37
21/10/2024	Ramblers funding		£128.06	£685.43
18/11/2024	Income from walking partnership with Ramblers Holidays		£70.00	£755.43
27/11/2024	Secateurs	£29.97		£725.46
27/11/2024	Walk Programme Draw	£30.00		£695.46
28/11/2024	Sit Mats	£13.99		£681.47
28/11/2024	Committee 'Thank You'	£5.00		£676.47
28/11/2024	AGM Expenses	£45.00		£631.47
28/11/2024	AGM Refreshments	£92.35		£539.12
28/11/2024	Key Rings	£17.00		£522.12
16/12/2024	1 Shears Sheath	£6.09		£516.03
16/12/2024	2 Shears Sheaths	£7.39		£508.64
28/01/2024	Auditor 'Thank-you'	£17.95		£490.69
17/03/2025	Income from walking partnership with Ramblers Holidays		£126.06	£618.75
16/04/2025	Tick Tweezers	£37.81		£580.94
16/04/2025	Easter Eggs	£17.25		£563.69
30/09/2025	Balance carried forward			£563.69

Notes

- 1) Receipts £326.12, Payments £319.80 (AGM:£137.35, Equip:£112.25, Admin:£22.95, Other:£47.25)
- 2) Other equipment purchased – Cooling towels, Tuff Cutt scissors + walk leader rewards – next year
- 3) Group allocation for 2024/25: standard group formula (£256.06), 2025/26 - £ 269.40
- 4) Independent examination of accounts now being done by Peter Ransom
- 5) Bank signatories: Sara Burnell (Treasurer), Nicola Copeman (Chair), Laura Thomlinson (Secretary)

h. Publicity

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

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

1. Facebook Group = 554 members. This group size has increased by 50 during the last 12 months.

The following social media accounts are no longer updated:

2. Facebook Page = 34 Followers
3. X (Formerly Twitter) = 117 Followers
4. Instagram = 73 Followers
5. Threads = 14 Followers

Instead, each of the above have a "Profile" stating the following or similar.

@oxonww The Oxfordshire walking group for weekend walkers. Part of @RamblersGB. This account is no longer updated. For details of our weekly walks see <https://OxonWW.org>

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

We have not applied for social media accounts with BlueSky, TikTok or other social media.

5. 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.

6. Stand down of current Committee

Before the current committee stood down, the Vice Chair briefly explained the remit of each role. It was noted that the committee don't expect to their positions to be renewed each year and encouraged those who might be interested in joining the committee to come forward, perhaps joining as Members of the Committee without portfolio in the first instance.

7. Election of new Committee

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Seconder
Chair	Nicola C	Ian M	Kevin H
Group rep to Area	Jane P	Nicola C	Kerry F
Walks Secretary	Bob P	Kerry F	Ann B
Social Secretary	Vanessa C	Kevin H	Gavin P
Webmaster	Richard M	Jane P	Vanessa C
Membership	Pam C	Nicola C	Alice
Publicity	Ian M	Laura T	Lyn R
Treasurer	Sara B	Nicola C	Bob P
Secretary	Laura T	Ian M	Phil
Member of the Committee 1	Callie R	Alice	Bob P
Member of the Committee 2	Ann B	Phil	Kerry F
Member of the Committee 3	Phil	Nicola C	Lyn R
Member of the Committee 4	Millie F	Ian M	Bob P

The new committee was accepted. It was decided the post of Vice Chair would not carry over to this year.

8. AOB

The Chair thanked the outgoing Membership Secretary and welcomed two new Members of the Committee.

End of meeting 4.30pm.