



**Oxon
Weekend
Walkers**

Oxon Weekend Walkers

Committee meeting 21 October 2025

Online via Zoom

Minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Webmaster, Area Rep, and Treasurer.

2. Minutes from last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting of 27 July 2025 were agreed as accurate.

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

- Lifts to walks: Chair had reported several requests for lifts to the starts of walks, including on the Facebook site. Walks manager now adds a note to each walk entry on the Ramblers website making clear that whilst lift sharing is encouraged, we do not organise this for safety reasons. In addition, when people request to join the Facebook group, they are asked to confirm they will abide by the rules, including not posting for lifts.

4. Chair

- Jubilee Walk: A good number of OWW members joined this walk to celebrate 40 years of the Jubilee Way and enjoyed cake at Jarn Mound with the Vale group. With thanks to Sheila and Kevin for leading.
- Walk leader training:
 - 17 OWW members have now completed the training. Chair organised a 'goodie bag' to reward the first 20 to finish the training and this has been well received. Prizes included emergency foil blankets, mountain whistles, tick tweezers, seat mats etc.
 - All have found the training useful, particularly the section on the prevention of incidents.
 - The training recommends that the walk leader walks in the middle of the group but walk leaders on the committee preferred to lead from the front as this allows them to set the pace and can warn of upcoming hazards (e.g. busy road) on the route. If there are new walkers, the walk leader can check in on them at coffee or lunch.
 - The training suggests a ratio of 1 walk leader to 8 walkers. OWW regularly get groups of up to 30 and there are always walk leaders among those attending. There is also always a backmarker. However, it would not be feasible to achieve this ratio if it is expected that all the leaders have attended the recce. The walk leader could share the route on OS maps in advance so that any other walk leaders attending would be aware of the route.
 - The training recommends that the walk leader submits a report for any incidents. The committee noted this and agreed that any walkers who might be considered vulnerable should be required to have a mobile phone with them and ideally to share numbers with the walk leader in advance of setting off.
 - It was noted that that training did not cover reporting complaints, but the committee agreed that it might be useful to do so, especially if there has been a problem that might escalate to a formal complaint or legal issue. The Chair also noted that the Ramblers can provide general advice about any difficult situations that might arise.

- First aid training: training has been organised with the St John Ambulance for OWW walk leaders who have completed the training. This will take place on 8 November. There are three spare places. There is no cost to OWW as this will be covered by Area, but attendees might want to offer the trainer something as a thank you.
- ICE cards: Chair reminded walk leaders that ICE cards are still available to hand out to new walkers at start of walks
- Pens: Chair has requested some of the Ramblers promotional pens to hand out with ICE cards and is awaiting a reply.

5. Walks

- Since the last meeting, there have been 11 walks, 7 dry and 4 in the rain.
- The average distance was 10.5 miles and the average number of walkers 18.
- There were 9 different walk leaders, including 1 new walk leader.

6. Weekends away

- 12 OWW members have signed up for the pre-Christmas weekend at Holme Lacy House Warners hotel. Chair has stayed at hotel and recced a few walks, bearing in mind possible alternatives if the weather is poor or if there is flooding.
- 27 OWW members have signed up for the Dunster weekend in May 2026. It was noted that the hotel does not want a deposit this year but will ask for half payment in January with the remaining balance to be paid by 1 May 26. Only bar bills will need to be paid at the end of the stay. Chair confirmed the format will stay as before with half day walks on Friday and Monday and full day walks on Saturday and Sunday.

7. Socials

- There has been one social event since the last meeting – a trip to the Mikron theatre – which was very well attended.
- An autumn meal has been organised for 1 November. This is instead of a Christmas meal. Social Secretary noted that there had initially not been many takers and wondered if members are not noticing the social events on the website. More signed up after it was advertised at the start of walks and via email.

8. Membership

- Since the last meeting in July, six new members have joined and three members have left, Overall, the OWW group membership has increased from 156 to 159. Five of the new members have been welcomed via membership email, one opted for no emails. There have been no email enquiries since the last meeting.

9. Committee

- The AGM will take place on Sunday 23 November. This will be held in the Red Lion in Eynsham at 3pm after a walk led by the Treasurer. It was noted that parking should be easier this year as it will not clash with a village event. Chair suggests offering chips and a drink to all who attend as this was successful last year. It was suggested to give a small gift to those who have led their first walk.
- Membership secretary plans to step down. Other committee members are happy to continue in their roles if there are no other volunteers.
- It was suggested that rather than asking if there are any other volunteers for each individual role as it comes up, an announcement is made at the start listing all the roles available. This will give others an overview of the available positions and a chance to consider if they are interested in volunteering.
- Committee agreed it was useful to keep the role of Deputy Chair.

10. Finance

- Annual return has been submitted to Area Treasurer by October 13th as requested. Forms still need to be audited before the end of the year (Rambler's year runs from October 1st to September 30th). OWW broke even this year with a surplus of just £6.32. The end of year balance is £563.69 with one outstanding payment of £29.95 for tick tweezers.

Incomings: £326.12

£256.12 from Ramblers

£70 from Ramblers holidays

Outgoings: £319.80

£137.35 AGM related

£22.95 Thank you to Auditor + Committee

£47.25 Thank yous to walk leaders

£112.25 Purchases (key rings, sit mats, secateurs)

11. Web

- The Web Manager has edited the website in a few places where updating was required, including removing text that said anyone can lead a walk and that OWW has group membership to the OS app (group membership is no longer available).
- The Cotswold Outdoors offer has changed so we were asked to remove it from our front web page.

12. Publicity

- The Publicity Manager reported that there is lots of engagement with the after-walk posts on Facebook.
- It was noted that some of the photos used on the OWW Facebook have been taken and re-used by Dave Cavanagh for the Oxfordshire Ramblers magazine 'talking walking'. There was no objection to this, but Chair will ask him not to use the full name of the photo taker, only the first name and initial of surname.

13. Ramblers guidance/policies

There were no items to discuss here.

14. Area

- Conversion of Didcot and Wallingford to a flexigroup has been approved. This group will no longer host the AGM or area picnic.
- Ramblers AGM is to take place on 6th December - to review governance of Ramblers with a view to reducing bureaucracy. Issues include a move to One Member One Vote and the ability of the Board of Trustees to override Governing Council. Area Chairman and Membership Secretary will attend. The review of the role of Area Councils has been postponed to 2026.
- Membership is increasing and now stands at 2483.
- Finances are reduced but not by as much as expected.
- Area Picnic in 2026 will be held on Sunday, 7th June, i.e. a little earlier than in previous years.
- Walk leader training - 132 out of 168 are trained. A leadership course is being run by the Vale in Abingdon 22nd, 23rd and 25th October.
- First Aid Course organised by OWW and Henley and Goring was mentioned.
- Botley West Solar Farm - some parts of the application need to be rewritten due to inconsistencies. Final decision by Secretary of State expected mid-May 2026.

- Abingdon Reservoir - nothing new to report.
- Henley and Goring group have concerns about the recommendation in the Handbook on walker to leader ratio for different grades. The rep will prepare a proposal to General Council. It was pointed out that the Handbook is now less prescriptive.
- Cluster Group meeting - requirements for insurance of trips away was discussed. There seemed to be a lack of clarity and Chairman will check. OWW Area rep communicated the approach used by OWW.
- Area President has written another book on the benefits of walking called "Dr Gray's Walking Cure." He is conducting some research into longevity and has offered to give an online talk.

15. AOB

- There was no other business.

16. Date of next meeting

- Date of next meeting (AGM) is Sunday 23rd November 3pm, The Red Lion, Eynsham.