



**West  
London**

**Ramblers' Association West London Group  
Welcome!**

**Annual General Meeting      7.30pm Tuesday 7th December 2021.**

**Northfields Community Centre, 71A, Northcroft Road, W13 9SS**

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Welcome statement by Chair.**

The chair welcomed 21 members to the meeting and was pleased to see so many after the last 18 months of the pandemic. Apologies were received from Margaret Spooner, Hansa Jadvapati, Anna Harris, Margaret Thomas, Sue Neville, Jyoti Gudka, Gill Peabody and Innes Garden.

#### **2. Agreement of minutes of last AGM, 1st December 2020 and matters arising.**

The minutes of the 2020 AGM which had been held by Zoom were approved (proposed by Howard Densley and seconded by Jackie Gower).

#### **3. Reports from group officers for the year ending 30th September 2021.**

The following reports were made by the group's officers.

##### **a) Chair.**

My first year as chair was dominated by the Covid pandemic. I was elected at a well attended Zoom meeting and the committee meetings I chaired were all held via Zoom. After each meeting I produced a newsletter. The committee took the decision to no longer post the newsletter and programme to all those who haven't provided an email address, but ask members to opt in to the postal system. This reduced the number from around 100 to 5. We did however post the recent newsletter as it advertised the AGM.

Shortly after the AGM walking was once again paused due to another lockdown, but eventually we emerged to walks with limited numbers advertised via a bimonthly programme sent out by email. Carolyn put together a survey to find out what sort of walks our members want us to provide and we had an amazing response with 133 returns. In summary, members want a variety of walks in terms of mileage and prefer the countryside as long as we can access the walks via public transport avoiding central London mainline stations. Thanks go to our walk leaders who have provided a good number of varied walks and put up with the booking system for most of the year. We have only just started to put the walks on the national Ramblers website but hope this will be able to continue. The committee is looking into getting a group licence for OS maps so walk leaders don't have to pay for their own licence.

On behalf of the group, I supported the campaign to turn Warren Farm in Hanwell into a nature reserve by contacting a number of relevant politicians, but so far there is no confirmation as to what

will happen to the site. Howard our footpath officer has managed to find volunteers for most parts of the two boroughs Ealing and Hounslow and we have done a couple of litter picks and are investigating getting our own equipment. As in previous years we have organised walks with the London Blind Ramblers and contributed to keeping the London Loop and Capital Ring up-to-date. Because of the limitations imposed by Covid our social programme has been more limited than before. We had however a very interesting Mindfulness session via Zoom led by Jyoti. My thanks go to all the committee members for their continued work over the year and for Chris Parnell for taking on sending out the emails to members.

**b) Treasurer.**

The treasurer's report was accepted and has been audited.

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the report for the period October 2020 to September 2021. In truth there is very little to report. Key points are: -

We forwent the Q4 Funding from Area as our reserves are good.

Expenditure over the year has been minimal, mostly due to doing much of our work on line.

Balance has increases slightly over 2020-21 from £1347.14 to £1511.28.

**SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

A full summary is shown in Table 1 and 2 below: -

**Table 1 - Income**

| Date     | From                     | Description           | Heading                   | Amount |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| 28/10/20 | The Ramblers Association | First Quarter Funding | Main: From Area (funding) | 142.67 |
| 28/10/20 | RWH Travel Ltd           | TWP Oct 20            | Main: Donations           | 20.00  |
| 26/01/21 | The Ramblers Association | Quarter 2 Funding     | Main: From Area (funding) | 142.68 |
| 04/05/21 | The Ramblers Association | Quarter 3 Funding     | Main: From Area (funding) | 142.68 |

**Table 2 Expenditure**

| Date     | Payee                   | Description          | Heading                     | Amount |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 20/10/20 | B/P to Margaret Spooner | Expenses             | Main: Newsletters/publicity | 78.49  |
| 20/10/20 | B/P to Margaret Spooner | Expenses             | Main: Admin                 | 22.80  |
| 20/10/20 | Ealing Arts & Leisure   | Membership/Hall hire | Main: Meetings (inc. AGM)   | 50.00  |

|          |                    |          |                             |        |
|----------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 16/04/21 | B/P To Monika Eady | Expenses | Main: Newsletters/publicity | 132.60 |
|----------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|

The Following Table summarises our income for 2020-21 (and 2019-20 for comparison).

| Source                   | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| The Ramblers Association | £704.09 | £428.03 |
| RWH Travel Ltd           | £190.00 | £20.00  |
| Total                    | £894.09 | £448.03 |

## ACCOUNT APPROVALS

The Accounts have been subject to scrutiny by our Independent Examiner (Linda Foster) and she has approved them. They were then submitted to the Area Treasurer who is content.

## SOME KEY POINTS

Lower than normal expenditure due to Covid-19

Little meeting costs as being done by Zoom and walks programme mainly by email.

We forwent our Fourth Quarter Payment from Ramblers HQ. This was agreed given lower levels of expenditure, the belief that Head Office would make better use of the monies in the circumstances and the position regarding our reserves.

## RESERVES

Our current level of reserves is strong. The following table summarizes our reserves position over the past three years.

| Financial Year | Expenditure | Income    | Reserves  | % Reserves to Expenditure |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 2018-19        | £993.65     | £1,400.00 | £964.35   | 97.1%                     |
| 2019-20        | £511.30     | £1,518.18 | £1,347.14 | 263.5%                    |
| 2020-21        | £283.89     | £448.03   | £1,511.28 | 532.3%                    |

The position is complicated by lower expenditure in the last two years. This is as a result of Covid and as we have reduced our costs. If the current reserves were compared against 2018-19 expenditure, then they would be at 152%. This is well above 100% level recommended - Ramblers recommends taking action if reserves are above 100%.

This is why we forwent our Fourth Quarter Payment from HQ. In addition we have some planned new items of expenditure - e.g. OS Mapping software for Walk leaders, and will be keeping the levels of reserves under close review.

## **RAMBLERS HOLIDAYS**

Please remember to use Ramblers Holidays – we get a small commission where members use them. Not surprisingly the level of such holidays was much lower last year due to COVID.

### **c) Footpath Secretary.**

## **PATH CHECKING**

There was an excellent response to the email sent to all members in November 2020 seeking more volunteers for path checking.

We now have 20 volunteer path checkers, with two positions vacant (to cover paths in Northolt and Southall). On average, each checker is covering 12 paths, and I would like to thank them all for their valuable work. The current position is:

London Borough of Ealing: 146 paths have been checked, out of a total of 186 (that is 79%).

London Borough of Hounslow: all 77 paths have been checked.

The main problems identified are litter, fly tipping and inadequate signage.

Litter and fly tipping can be really serious where a path is divided between two boroughs. Two such paths have been cleared so far thanks to the efforts of the Ealing based volunteer group LAGER Can (Local Action Group – Ealing Residents Can), in Northolt and Norwood Green, with participation of one or two WLG members.

Further litter picking experience was gained when 5 WLG members supported the Friends of the Grand Union Canal in clearing litter from a towpath on part of the London Loop. There are some photos of this on the Group's facebook page.

We were able to borrow litter picking sticks and hoops (for holding bags open), and bags were supplied.

## **LITTER PICKING**

Litter tends to discourage people from using a path, and attracts the dumping of yet more litter, leading to the path eventually becoming disused. This is the exact opposite of what the Ramblers as an organization exists for.

There are lots of paths within the boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow, and I think as Ramblers it is reasonable to confine our attention to the 260 of them which are official Public Rights of Way.

At the last committee meeting it was decided that we, as a Group, should purchase initially 2 sets of picking sticks and hoops, and work either independently or together with other organisations to tackle litter on paths which are PRow's.

We could for example, consider tackling Borough of Hounslow footpaths 55, 56 and 57 in Cranford, which have been identified by our path checkers as having a serious litter problem. This location straddles the border between 2 London boroughs. To do this it will be necessary to have the support of the local councils, and this is being sought.

## **LOST PATHS**

According to the Ramblers website over 49,000 miles of “potentially” lost paths have been identified in England and Wales and marked up on the current OS map, which is on the website.

This work was done by volunteers comparing historical and current maps. The next stages in this process are:

- Prioritise those paths which add the most benefit for people.
- Research individual paths to find out if they can be saved.
- Build applications based on historical evidence.
- Submit applications by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

Ramblers central office recognise this will require volunteers to have an appropriate skill-set, and they are working on providing guidance and on-line training. Members who are interested are invited to sign up to their mailing list.

The meeting was told that Litter picking walks could be put on the website.

### **d) Programme coordinator and Walks organiser.**

Our optimism at the last AGM proved ill-founded and we were forced to cancel the winter walks programme in mid-December when a new lockdown was announced. We decided to invite members to take part in a survey on whether they were likely to return to group walks when they were allowed again, the kind of walks they would go on and what forms of transport they would be willing to use. We were delighted by the response (133 members completed the survey) and we used the results to help us plan a programme that would appeal to as many people as possible when the restrictions were lifted.

We were able to resume group walks after Easter but decided to produce two-monthly programmes as the situation remained unpredictable. We decided to leave it up to the leader's discretion to set a limit on numbers and initially all walks needed to be booked in advance. Fortunately, most walks were not oversubscribed so most people were able to go on the walks they chose. Gradually over the year we have been able to return to a more normal way of running group walks and members are free to just turn up on most walks on the winter programme but we clearly have to keep the situation under review.

Thanks to our loyal team of walk leaders, we have been able to offer a full and interesting programme with two walks available on most weeks. Initially, many walks were local but many members were clearly keen to get out into the countryside and over the summer and autumn we ventured further afield and also increased the distances. There have also been a number of 'special' walks that were highlights of the programme: Howard Densley led a long and hilly walk around Godalming to mark his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday; Tom Berry repeated the walk he first led for the group 50 years ago; there were two very well-attended joint walks with the London Blind Ramblers and we contributed four walks to the festival to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the London Loop.

We are extremely grateful to all our leaders without whom none of this would be possible. Apart from offering so many interesting walks, they have also cheerfully dealt with the added bureaucracy of risk assessments, bookings and NHS test and trace requirements.

Looking ahead to 2022, we are keen to encourage new leaders to come forward so we can continue to offer a full and varied programme. We are therefore planning to hold a meeting for potential new leaders, build a resource tool-kit to support them and hopefully run a practical map reading and compass workshop in the summer.

#### e) Membership secretary.

##### Membership report

|                                   | 18 Oct 2021 | 12 Jun 2021            | 13 Feb 2021          | Oct 2020 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Total                             | 524         | 466                    | 507                  | 515      |
| - Full members                    | 488         | 429                    | 476                  | 487      |
| - Affiliates                      | 36          | 37                     | 31                   | 29       |
| Contact via emails                | 365         | 340 (73%)              | 335                  | 339      |
| Contact in print                  | 92          | 95                     | 104                  | 110      |
| New members since previous report | 29          | 16 full / 5 affiliates | 18 full/2 affiliates |          |

Increase in membership since Oct 2020 = 1.7%

**Note re leavers (only have numbers since 17 July):** 7 in total (3 lapsed; 2 resigned; 1 deceased; 1 moved area)

##### Other news:

I received a handful of enquiries via the Contacts link on our WL site asking how to join WL Ramblers. I've provided details for Ramblers membership in response.

I've not heard from Chris Parnell of any members for which their email addresses have failed when he mails out, so I'm assuming all is in order there.

##### Rough Analysis of Location in respect to WL catchment area (Ealing/Hounslow boroughs)

| Postcode (PC) area                | Count of members | How postcodes (PC) breakdown btwn LBE or LBH     |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Borough of Ealing or Hounslow     | 426              | LBE PCs: 99; HOU PCs 40; LBE/HOU shared PCs: 291 |
| Other areas within Greater London | 58               |                                                  |
| Outside Greater London            | 40               |                                                  |

#### 4. Election of Committee.

The following members were elected to the group committee.

| Role                  | Member appointed | Proposed by     | Seconded by       |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Chair                 | Monika Eady      | Jackie Gower    | Mary Rutherford   |
| Secretary             | Martin Harris    | Mary Rutherford | David Bays        |
| Treasurer             | Innes Garden     | Pete Grist      | Margaret Lydamore |
| Membership secretary  | Mary Rutherford  | Monika Eady     | Sue Williams      |
| Programme coordinator | Carolyn Oxley    | Monika Eady     | Rowena Muir       |
| Walks organiser       | Jackie Gower     | Martin Harris   | Howard Densley    |
| Footpath secretary    | Howard Densley   | Jackie Gower    | Jim Barnes        |
| Webmaster             | Pete Grist       | Jackie Gower    | Carolyn Oxley     |
| Publicity coordinator | vacant           |                 |                   |

|                  |                   |             |              |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Social secretary | Jyoti Gudka       | Monika Eady | Jackie Gower |
|                  | Sue Aldridge      | Monika Eady | Jackie Gower |
|                  | Hansa Jadva-Patel | Monika Eady | Jackie Gower |

It is anticipated that a new treasurer will need to be appointed by the committee in the new year because Innes Garden is moving away from the area.

#### **5. Appointment of Ind. Examiner (auditor)**

Linda Foster was appointed. Proposed by Monika Eady and Seconded by Howard Densley

#### **6. Questions about the Report and Any Other Business.**

a) There was a discussion on future ideas and in particular holidays. The ideas discussed were:

- Isle of Wight (supported by 10 members)
- Long weekend near Portsmouth (supported by 5 members)
- Thames Path (supported by 6 members)
- HF hotels
- Clewydian Holidays
- Rydal Hall

Members were asked to email Jackie Gower with any more suggestions.

There was a suggestion that a holiday with either Ramblers Holidays or HF could be booked for 2023 since it was expected that both organizations would be fully booked for 2022.

b) It was agreed that in future business will only require proposers and seconders if required by the constitution.

#### **7. West London Group AGM in 2022.**

The meeting agreed that The Northfields Community Centre was a good venue and that the committee would arrange a suitable date.

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