

Wiltshire & Swindon Ramblers Area Committee

Meeting 20 April 2026 Minutes Rev B

Quick recap

The meeting focused on preparations for the upcoming General Council meeting on 25th April, where Area representatives will vote on new trustees. David and Peter Gallagher will be the Area's representatives at General Council. The meeting discussed three motions to be considered

(1) Changes to member allocations to Ramblers groups

(2) Modifications to ratios of walk leaders to walkers

(3), Guidance requested for unacceptable behaviour.

The group also addressed the potential restructuring of Ramblers' organisational setup, which will eliminate future General Council meetings in favour of regional forums. Barry reported on recent path work in Biddestone and Slaughterford, including challenges with replacing stiles due to new mobility gate requirements under the Equality Act. The conversation ended with a discussion about reporting footpath improvement data to central office, where Charles agreed to use the simpler pro forma format rather than his detailed spreadsheet, to streamline the process.

Next steps

- [David: Pass Nicholas Roberts' email to Chair so that Chair can ensure Nicholas receives future meeting invites.](#)
- [Chair: Send future meeting invites \(including October meeting\) to Nicholas Roberts once email is received from David.](#)
- [Barry: Post a copy of the presentation/information on Section 147 and gate/gap guidance to the group when received.](#)
- [Charles: Generate and submit footpath improvement reports to Tim using the pro forma/report format Tim sends out, in addition to maintaining the detailed master Excel workbook, to facilitate reporting to both Ramblers and the council.](#)

Summary

Meeting Attendance

The meeting participants were Tim Lewis, Keith Grimes, Barry Cox, Charles Penn, Carolyn Bouckley & Rob Coles. David Trease joined late after a reminder from Keith. Maurice Eveleigh was on holiday, Sarah Bailey, Dee Tod and Sally Webber did not attend.

Meeting Technical Difficulties and Logistics

The Chair noted that Nicholas Roberts should be added to future meeting invites as a Member Representative at Area Committee Meetings, and David agreed to provide his email address for this purpose. Nicholas had enquired about attending General Council as an observer, but unfortunately only delegates can be accommodated. Rob confirmed that he had not received an agenda, though it was not critical.

General Council Meeting Preparation

The meeting focused on reviewing actions from the January 5th meeting and preparing for the General Council discussion. Tim noted that while the West Wilts footpath secretary appeared to have been resolved, he was still awaiting confirmation from Sophie at Central Office that she had written to Dave Yearsley as she had offered to do. The group discussed three motions to be considered at the General Council, including the Area's Motion 2026 (1) about member allocations to Ramblers groups and areas, Motion 2026 (2) about increasing ratios of walk leaders to walkers, which Oxfordshire had proposed to address insurance concerns about lower ratios in the Walk Leaders Handbook, and Motion 2026 (3) requesting guidance on handling complaints and addressing unacceptable behaviour, with Charles raising concerns about the ambiguity in the wording.

Company Law and Trustee Selection

David noted that as the current setup with General Council would be changing, this would be the final meeting with the current structure, as Ramblers were establishing a different arrangement to handle legal and company law matters with regional forums being established for local discussions. David also mentioned that 11 candidates were vying for trustee positions, making it difficult to assess their suitability.

Ramblers Organisational Structure Changes

The group discussed changes to the Ramblers' organisational structure, where a proposal to revise areas and groups was shelved. David explained that area representatives will vote this year for three new trustees from a field of 11 candidates, with individual member voting being introduced next year for a third of trustee positions.

Other Matters

The group addressed concerns about footpath improvements reporting, where Charles agreed to use Tim's simpler reporting proforma rather than creating duplicate detailed reports for the Ramblers central office.

Next Meetings

The next meetings would be on Monday 1st June (Tim gave his apologies) and 5th October.

