



West Wiltshire Ramblers

Committee Meeting

3 September 2025 @ 16:00
via Zoom

In Attendance:	Frank Martinelli	Maurice Eveleigh	Peter Mundy	Ann Finch
Jen Yearsley	Dave Yearsley	Angela Womersley	Stella Jales	Rob Coles

	Agenda Item	Action/Notes
1.	Welcome.	
2.	Apologies for absence.	Apologies were received from Sally Pearce.
3.	Minutes of last meeting.	The Minutes of the meeting on 23 June 2025 were accepted.
4.	Matters arising.	Peter has started work on adapting the South Wilts promotional flyer for our use. He is not yet ready to pass it to Sally.
5.	Reports:	
a.	Chairman (Frank)	See report below. Frank added that as the skittles evening was a success, he would like to make it an annual event. He has thanked Adrian and Penny for their hard work in making the evening a success.
b.	Secretary (Maurice)	See report below. Maurice will contact Martin G, our web editor, to explain what has been going on with the recent changes to our communications strategy and to ask him if he wishes to continue in the role.
c.	Treasurer (Peter)	See report and financial statement as at 29/08/25 below. Peter reported that he has still not been billed for the Dave Hill kissing gate by Wiltshire Council. Frank and Ann can now co-authorise online banking payments but Peter noted that it is a ridiculous state of affairs where two people are required to authorise an online payment regardless of how small it is but he is able to issue cheques with just one signature. Jen will now send Peter her claims for reimbursement of the cost of the hi-viz gilets and for the flowers sent to Barbara O and Diane T following

			the deaths of their husbands.
	d.	Membership (Ann)	Membership changes have been busy in the last 6 weeks - 10 new and 2 rejoined; 5 resigned; 1 lapsed and 1 deceased - so a net gain of 5 members. As at 27th August 2025 our membership total is as follows: 282 members 3 affiliated members and 30 non-West Wilts walkers that receive details of our walks programme 315 Ann commented that our numbers are at their highest for some time.
	e.	Footpath Officer (Dave)	See report below. Dave has concluded that the most appropriate location to erect a kissing gate as a memorial to Mike Watts is on a path near the back of his house in Atworth. No doubt securing the necessary permissions will be as challenging as ever. It was reluctantly decided that as EasyMapMarker has reduced the size of its free offering again, it is no longer worth recording walk locations using this tool. We were not making enough use of the product's output to justify paying for more use.
	f.	Walks (Jen)	Today's planned walk from Market Lavington was cancelled because of a yellow weather warning for heavy rain. Jen requested that walk leaders advise her as well as those who have booked, so that she can cancel the walk on the Ramblers website. She only found out when nobody else turned up at the start. In the event, the weather was nothing out of the ordinary.
	g.	Events (Frank)	The Newsletter sent out on 8 August contains the latest information. Frank will compile the September newsletter before he departs on his coast to coast walk later this month. He will include news of the Christmas meal at Cumberwell Park on 17 December. He will pass it to Jen to send out together with the next monthly Walks Update.
7.		AGM Preparation	The date and venue for the AGM is confirmed as 15/11/25 at Broughton Gifford village hall. Notice of our AGM must be sent out at least 14 days before the meeting, so not later than 1/11/25. As Maurice is away from 15/10/25 to 29/10/25, he will need reports by 11/10/25 if he is to get everything to Ann in time for printing and for postage to those members who require a printed copy. Having become aware that quite a few members have unsubscribed from our newsletters and walk update emails, Maurice asked what we do regarding Notice of the AGM for those people. Reverting to posting out the Notice would carry a significant increase in printing and postage costs as well as taking up more of Ann's time.

		<i>Post Meeting Note:</i> As informing members of the AGM is mandatory, not optional, Maurice will seek guidance from Area and from Central Office if necessary as we do not want the meeting declared unconstitutional by a member who has not been sent the Notice; we would have to hold the meeting again! Frank asked whether people were planning to remain on the Committee in the next year. Angela advised that she will stand down at the AGM and Jen intends to do so as well if Sally is happy, with the requisite training and guidance, to take over the Walk Programme Coordinator role.
8.	Communications Media	We are learning from experience about what works and what doesn't. The monthly Walk Updates have been accepted by most members but attaching it as a pdf to the email disabled all of the links to other information. These will now be put in the body of the email and we will continue with monthly updates. Maurice has been rewriting the Group web pages in the Trial version of the website, having been given editor Admin rights by the Area webmaster Keith G. This login gives very restricted access and much of what has been done needed to be uploaded by Keith but he is more than happy to make changes to improve the site. Martin G would not have been able to make these changes with his current access level. Maurice is still not happy with the current state of the pages and will continue to tinker with Keith's assistance. More photographs would help to liven it up and Maurice asked for "before" and "after" photos to illustrate the work of the Work Party. It would be good to incorporate a simple map of our area but Maurice's attempts to download one from OpenStreetMap have been unsuccessful. The changes met with approval from the Committee although the photo of the Westbury White Horse was not universally liked. Sally called it boring and expressed a preference for a photo of a group of walkers with a nice view in the background. Jen said the last thing she wanted to see was "a load of old people standing on a hill". Any photo of people would require those in shot and facing the camera to consent to the photo being used on the website, so we agreed to keep the White Horse. Maurice will ask Keith to copy the changes across to our live site. Maurice advised that he has no wish to tread on Martin's toes and is happy for him to continue as web editor if he wishes to do so, as information from a third party is that Martin is tired of doing the web editor role. If Martin does wish to step down then Maurice is happy to take on the role. There was further discussion about the pros and cons of a WhatsApp group to advise walkers of last minute changes to walks, e.g. change of start location or cancellation. Maurice felt this would be easier than sending texts to people who had booked, especially for iPhone users as the default setting is to send individual messages via the internet using iMessage, not SMS. No decision was reached.
9.	Any other business:	

	a.	Use of Zoom	Sally had said that she hates Zoom and would much prefer face to face meetings. Several others agreed that face to face meetings are better, though they tend to take longer. Several people commented that they no longer like to drive in the dark and winter meetings away from the main road network are at risk from bad weather; ice, flooding etc. We agreed that we would in future hold our summer meetings (June and September) face to face and our winter meetings (January and, possibly, March) via Zoom. We have agreed this before but it never happened!
	b.	Ramblers App	Rob had used this to record members who attended his recent walk. Rather than scan members’ membership cards, Rob had manually entered the walkers’ names after the event. Ramblers wants us to use this, presumably to gain a picture of how many are walking with them. Maurice confessed that he had yet to download the app.
10.	Dates of next meetings:		
	a.	15 November	AGM – Broughton Gifford Village Hall
	b.	14 January	At 4pm via Zoom.
	c.	March	Motions to General Council (Face to face meeting?)
	d.	June	Face to Face meeting
11.	Close		Meeting closed 17:20
Maurice Eveleigh Secretary, West Wiltshire Ramblers. 4 September 2025			

REPORTS

5a. Chair

Since our last meeting we have had considerable discussion about how we communicate with the club members, with particular regard to information about upcoming walks. From my own perspective, I can navigate this and find out where the next walk is, but I think it is still a bit clunky compared to our previous Friday Update, which was easy to understand. I presume that the club members are happy with the system, as walk numbers are holding up well?

A really good social get-together recently, with a good number of people enjoying a walk, food and skittles on a hot august afternoon and evening. Many thanks to those who made it happen, especially Adrian and Penny.

From an events perspective, we have a good programme for the future, but I left things too late to organise an autumn coach trip. I am focussed on the Coast to Coast at the moment, and we as a group have been getting together on the Challenge Walks to test our fitness. We had a great walk around the Circuit of Bath, and I would recommend this as an excellent walk, especially the hilly bits round Lansdowne. I shall do a half circuit next year as a Sunday walk. Great interest in our trip to IoW, with 37 people signed up at the moment.

I am holding regular navigation sessions to upgrade map and compass skills, and will start an advanced session, involving some techniques from the silver NNAS, in the Spring.

5b. Secretary

The Area Council has not met since our last meeting; it next meets on 6 October.

Since the last meeting, Central Office has issued it's draft proposals arising out of the Governance Review and it sent out the proposals for consultation. Our area has been represented by Peter Gallagher, a member of SNEW Group. I circulated this paper to the Committee but received only one response, thanks Dave. The main thrust was that the existing Areas would be abolished and Groups would be run much more informally. The existing Clusters, which are attended at Area level and are largely judged a waste of time by our Area, will be replaced by large "regions". All of the Groups in the current SW Cluster Areas will become part of an even larger region. This may replace General Council.

The latest volunteer update email from Central Office is boasting that 20% of existing walk leaders have either been exempted, have completed the declaration, or completed the new training modules. More cynical observers will note that this means 80% have not done so. I am bound to point out that if they have not taken steps yet to re-qualify as a walk leader, then they are unlikely to start now and will simply stop walk leading. Of course, many of these were never going to lead another walk anyway but I know of two groups where active but now deemed unqualified walk leaders are discussing leaving Ramblers and arranging unofficial walks between themselves.

Dave has told me that Chris has told him that Martin wishes to relinquish the post of web editor. I would prefer to hear that from Martin himself. Has anyone else heard anything? Even before this news reached me I had come to the conclusion that our Group website was very staid and boring and I offered to refresh it. Nobody told me not to, so I took that as tacit agreement. Keith Grimes (Area web master) has given me Administrator permissions on the trial site (not the live one) and I have started to fiddle about with it. Adding, editing and removing news items is straightforward. I would like to add photos to brighten up the

pages and this will require structural changes outside my permissions but Keith is willing to undertake these changes. If Martin steps down it would be well within my capabilities to take on the role of web editor. Currently I am the only person who gets items posted, when I ask Martin to upload the latest Committee Minutes every three months or so.

5c. Treasurer

Peter reports as follows. I have continued to bash my head against the intransigence of Unity Bank and Ramblers Head Office. I have been unable to make online payments but I have been perversely able to make payments to Cumberwell Golf Club (Christmas Dinner Deposit by 31st July) and Broughton Gifford (Skittles) through my personal bank account and then refund by cheque. Neither organisation wanted cheques.

The Bank Mandate to include the agreed additional signatories was sent to Unity Bank on 7th August. However these changes were not accepted as I was the only existing signatory requesting the changes. I refused to request approval from Head Office and told Unity and Ramblers HQ to sort it out between them. I was irritated.

I received an email today which is copied below

Dear Peter Royston Mundy,

I am pleased to confirm that we have completed your instruction to update your account(s) for APP-455074

Any user that has requested Internet Banking will receive the log on details to their home address within 5 working days of this email.

The changes since last Committee include

the receipt from the Funeral Directors, £297.50

Christmas Lunch Deposit £150

Skittles Evening Net £43.24 of which £6 needs to be reimbursed to 2 members and the prize purchase by Penny of £4.24.

WEST WILTS RAMBLERS
Receipts and Payments Account
as at 28th August 2025

2024/25

Balance Sheet Brought Forward 01 October 2024

Bank: as per statement 30/09/2024	2,047.87
Cheques/ banked in hand	-
	2,047.87

Transactions October-28th August 2025

b/f 1 October 2024		2,047.87
Receipts		
Christmas lunch		1,328.00
Ramblers Holidays		150.00
Coach Walk Sep 2024 Refunds	220.00	
Coach Walk May 2025	795.00	1,078.00
Don't Lose Your Way		62.50
Donation Arn Hill Seat	500.00	
Ramblers Quota		750.00
Donation Dave Hill Memorial		20.00
Donations		40.00
Mike Watts Funeral Request		297.50
Payments		
AGM refreshments	116.35	
AGM Printing	25.80	
Postage	13.60	
Don't Lose your Way	18.27	
Christmas Lunch	1,178.00	
Working Party Tools	79.89	
Working Party Protective Wear	59.94	
Christmas Lunch Deposit 2025	150.00	
Skittles Evening	49.24	6.00
Unity Bank- Cheque Handling	3.30	
Total Expenditure	3,209.39	
Total Income		3,732.00
Balance 28/August 2025		2,570.48
Balance		
Unity Bank Statement 28/08/2025		2,580.72
Cash and Cheques in hand		-
Creditors - Skittles Prize and Payments	-	10.24
		2,570.48
Represented By		
Dave Hill Memorial		290.50
Mike Watts memorial		297.50
Bradford Randonneurs		65.81
West Wilts Ramblers Funds		1,916.67
		2,570.48

5e. Footpath Officer

Mike Watts

We need to decide the memorial for Mike i.e. kissing gate and location. We sought an opinion from Ben Braine (Countryside Access Officer) about a path (near Mike's house) that needs to be on the near legal line – at this stage Ben has not offered an opinion.

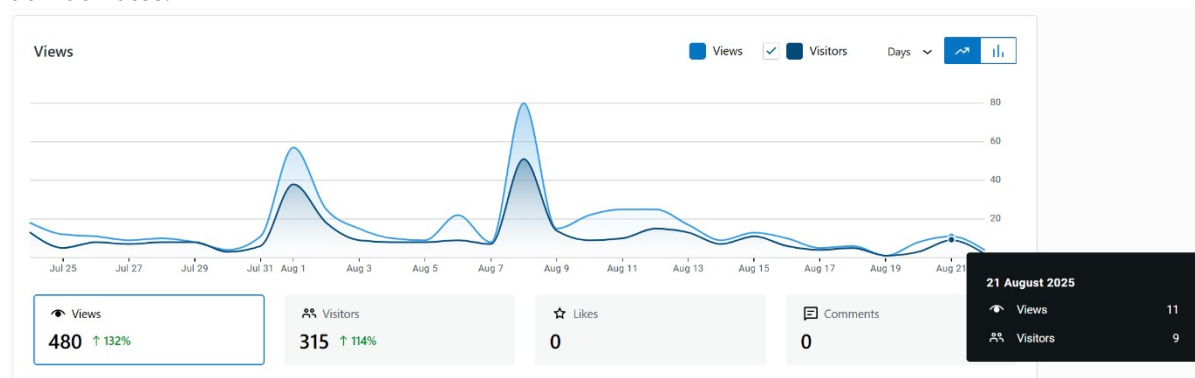
Dave Hill

Liz has got the brass plate, and it needs to be placed near Dave's memorial kissing gate.

Walks Update (Weekly) and Data

Since contacting 'BT Internet Postmaster' in July and getting a positive response, no emails have bounced back (we have sent one newsletter and one monthly update since).

There was a 'need' to continue with 'weekly updates' when the Committee decided that monthly email updates had to be used to avoid the risk of Gmail blocking our email account. And we used WordPress (URL - <https://wiltkickstart.wordpress.com/west-wilts-ramblers-quick-updates-and-newsletters/>) to show 'ad hoc notes'. Maurice E is confident that the same can be done on our Ramblers group page. Most of our members are happy with a monthly email walk update, albeit a few asked why they had not received a weekly update. Hopefully most of our 280+ members are now aware of the WordPress page of ad hoc notes.



Chris Gamage, at the Skittles Evening, highlighted how difficult it was to see the walks planner on a mobile phone. In response, the walks planner spreadsheet has been jiggled to show day of week, 'perhaps' show green if there is a gap in walks programme and historic worksheets have been hidden.

The 'EasyMapMarker' has reduced its free offering from 250 to 100. So for [West Wilts Ramblers 2024/2025](#) I had to reduce the year to 2025.



As of 31st August, we had 111 walks since September. At the moment, I do not know of a click and go process that will be as good as '[EasyMapMarker](#)'. Google used to have lots of free stuff but much has gone, Microsoft have withdrawn all their free offerings and Ordnance Survey is expensive if you accidentally do too much. We use [Grid Reference Finder - Batch Convert Tool](#) for the list of carparks.

We might need to go back to Excel to do our 'analysis' of works. I had a quick look on the main Ramblers site and cannot find out where walks count go to if we use the Ramblers App – so if we want the stats, we need to collate them ourselves.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Brian Micklam continues to lobby Councillors about the state of Wiltshire paths and has spent hours discussing the issue with [Councillor Nigel White](#) he has followed up by attending a surgery with [MP, Dr Brian Matthew](#). He has also sent emails and had positive response.

The [MP, Dr Brian Matthew](#) is concerned about the poor state of many of Wiltshire's footpaths and rights of way. It has not helped that issues discovered on a walk with the MP on 28th May organised by Tim Lewis and Brian Flynn of Mid Wilts Ramblers – are still not resolved.

[Councillor Nigel White](#) and [Councillor Trevor Carbin](#) have been tasked to understand how the Countryside Access Team works. And with Chris Clark (Head of Highways) to create a MOU. Brian M, Nigel and I have drafted a MOU with background information, and this will be considered by Chris. It is not part of this report but draft MOU and background has been distributed to committee.

Whilst there is Councillors' recognition that MyWilts does not work properly. The new administration does not have more resources and perhaps the intransigence of staff is making possible improvement difficult. Brian M is ensuring that [Cllr Martin Smith - Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Flooding](#) understands the importance of Rights of Way.

Lost Paths

Nothing to report.

'Illegally' fenced in path in Monkton Farleigh (MFAR4)

Catherine Wilson sought our opinion about the damage done to the historical path called 'The Grand Avenue'.

I agreed with Catherine that it was unfortunate that the path had been fenced in and gave my opinion (four pages -on 3rd July) that it was obvious that the walked path was often the other side of the fence. I included a photo of how difficult it was to push my granddaughter's push chair along 'The Grand Avenue' due to the slope at edge of field.



On the image above the blue markers are the currently available path. The Council Definitive map shows that the Council path (purple continuous line) and OS path (green dashes) have been pushed to the field corner.

The landowner is in his right to fence a path in and there is not a legal minimum. The NFU suggests 1.5 metres, and the Council suggests 3 metres. I have not raised the issue of 'The Grand Avenue' with Parish or Council and I have not heard from Catherine since.

Work Party

11 June 2025 to 26 August 2025

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on:	Hours
Waymarking	-
Surveying	-
Path Clearing/Improvement	156.25
Stiles	-
Kissing Gates	-
Gates	0.00
Bridges	0.00
Steps	10.50
Other (eg Finger Posts)	-
TOTAL HOURS	151.75
	Number
Metres of path waymarked	-
Length Surveyed(m)	-
Metres of Path Clearing/Improvement	4190
Number of Stiles	0
Number of Kissing Gates	0
Number of Gates	0
Number of Bridges	0
Steps	9
Other (e.g. Finger Posts)	0

Charlie the contractor has decided to end his contract with the Council. One of his reasons was predicting the work that the Council might give him. This is a big loss as in April 2023 we assumed that we would have weekly work with him – he had trailers, jeeps and lots of heavy tools.

We had Council work in June and July but not August. Ben Briane has promised a monthly schedule for rest of year 23rd September; 21st October; 18th November and 16th December.

HIAMS Asset Manager App

As of 27th August across Wiltshire perhaps over 3,400 assets like stiles, bridges, gates, etc, have been recorded. The App used to visually show clusters of counts, but this aspect no longer works and the zooming the screen in and out can cause the App to crash.

In March 2025 (reminders in June and July) we had asked for additional logins for Brian Wright; Colin Hogan; Brian Smyth; Brian Micklam and Duncan Browne to do the Parishes of Hilperton; Potterne; Semington; Winsley and Atworth respectively.

I raised a formal complaint on the 7th August that these logins were outstanding and still no news on whether anyone in our Work Party will be given a login. Coincidentally on the 21st August I was asked to rescind my login so it could be passed to another person. For the moment, I have kept it.

5f. Walks Programme/Statistics

5g. Events