



West Wiltshire Ramblers

Committee Meeting

15 January 2026 @ 11:00

at Hartley Farm Shop & Kitchen, Winsley

In Attendance:	Frank Martinelli	Maurice Eveleigh	Peter Mundy	Rob Coles
Dave Yearsley	Sally Pearce	Bev Stapleton		

	Agenda Item	Action/Notes
1.	Welcome	
2.	Apologies for absence	Apologies were received from Ann Finch, Julie Cullen and Paul Reynolds
3.	Minutes of last meeting	The Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.
4.	Matters arising.	None.
5.	Reports:	
a.	Chairman (Frank)	See report below. Frank added that the shorter Sunday walks are proving popular. He will also be leading longer "Challenge" walks once a month on Wednesdays.
b.	Secretary (Maurice)	See report below.
c.	Treasurer (Peter)	See accounts position as at 31/12/25 below. The amount shown as received for the Christmas lunch is £150 greater than the amount paid. This discrepancy is because the deposit of £150 was paid to the venue in the previous accounting year; therefore the transactions balance. We have still not received an invoice from Wiltshire Council for the Dave Hill kissing gate.
d.	Membership (Ann)	See report below.
e.	Footpath Officer (Dave)	See report below.
f.	Walks (Sally/Jen)	Sally has still not taken over from Jen but Jen was unable to attend. Dave read Jen's report as follows. Since 1 October we have had:

		19 Sunday walks, including 3 short walks and these attracted 304 walkers. 16 mid week walks, including 2 Challenge walks which had 265 walkers. So a total of 569 walkers. We currently have 28 qualified walk leaders; 7 by virtue of leading 12+ walks in the last 3 years and 21 who have completed the online training. There are known to be 3 more people currently doing the training modules. Jen updates the monthly update weekly and uploads it to the WordPress site. Dave advised that 22 visits had been made to the site in the last week. Maurice had been unaware that this was being done and advised that he did not plan to upload the weekly table to the website as the most up to date list of our walks already appeared on the same page of the website, rendering it a pointless exercise.
	g. Events (Frank)	See report below. The coach walk to Dorchester will be on 12 July 2026; Frank will book the coach. The walking holiday to Keswick will be from 12 to 19 June 2027. The walking holiday to the Dolomites will be from 12 to 24 September 27. Bev is planning an away break in West Cornwall in April 27. Peter will contact Cumberwell Park Golf Club to obtain dates etc. for our Christmas meal in December.
	h. Web Editor (Maurice)	The draft Minutes of our last meeting and the AGM have been uploaded to the website. The monthly Walk Updates and Newsletters are also uploaded as they are released. These are “unpublished” automatically shortly after the following version is released. The Area web manager, Keith, runs software that automatically deletes content over about one year old from the site. This is good housekeeping but it is also a security tool to limit the amount of information that might be obtained if the website was hacked. I have updated the About and Work Party pages on our site; these may have gone live by the time of our meeting. I would like to include a page for walk leaders, not reproducing what is already available but signposting it with links. I plan to include what a walk leader needs to do to add a walk to our programme but I will wait until Sally has decided how she wants to run things. Dave has requested that Maurice includes a link to his One Drive folder, so that “parishes” could see photos of work done on their footpaths. Maurice is considering the wider implications of this proposal.
7.	Area AGM	The Area AGM will be held on 7 February at 10:00 in North Wraxall Community Hall, North Wraxall, SN14 7AQ. We have been asked to forward the Annual Report and Notice of AGM to all of our members by 23 January and this will accompany our next Newsletter. Maurice will also upload it to our website.
8.	Format of Future Meetings	With the exception of one meeting a year, our Committee meetings have been via Zoom since the Covid pandemic and held in late afternoon or early evening. Some people prefer to use Zoom because it cuts down

		travelling and the meetings are shorter due to less chit chat. Some people prefer face to face meetings because they are more productive and people don't get talked over. Ann had told Maurice that she preferred Zoom meetings and that she was generally unable to attend morning meetings, hence her absence this time. The meeting favoured face to face meetings in the mornings. Maurice pointed out that this would make it difficult for Ann to ever attend. Our Constitution states that any Committee member who misses three consecutive meetings without an acceptable reason is deemed to have resigned. Frank advised that Ann's existing commitments did constitute an acceptable reason for absence. Sally still works but takes Wednesdays and Thursdays off but as Wednesday is a walk day, that makes Thursday the only option. So it was agreed that future meetings would be face to face on a Thursday morning. If Ann is unable to attend she will be able to submit her membership report in advance and raise any points that she wishes to make about items on the Agenda via the Secretary. Several people present found it difficult to hear what was being said in the cafe, so it was agreed that we should find a suitable meeting room for future meetings. Town centre venues were not favoured, due to traffic congestion and parking issues, so a village hall would seem to be the only viable option. Broughton Gifford was suggested for the next meeting.
9.	Any other business:	
	a. First aid training	See comments in both the Chair and Secretary's reports. Rob has agreed to see what options there are for some first aid awareness training lasting around half a day for our volunteers. Sally will speak to a contact to obtain a rough order of cost to produce more of the Walk Leader Checklist/First Aid Advice cards for our walk leaders.
	b. Email account	Sally and Rob both require access to our email accounts. Sally may have an issue, as her laptop is a company device.
10.	Dates of next meetings:	
	a. March	2/4/26 at 10:15 at Broughton Gifford village hall.
	b. June	Set budget for 26/27 financial year.
	c. September	AGM preparation
	d. November	AGM
11.	Close	Meeting closed at 13:00
Maurice Eveleigh Secretary, West Wiltshire Ramblers. 20 January 2026		

REPORTS

5a. Chair (Frank)

I am very pleased with our achievements last year; the club seems to be functioning well, and people are enjoying our range of walks and our 'holiday' opportunities. We are looking to diversify slightly, with shorter walks on Sundays in addition to the usual 10 to 12 milers, and longer walks on a Wednesday for those wanting a bit more challenge as well as the usual 5 to 6 milers. This is all to the good, and thanks to the walk leaders for making this happen.

We have several new walk leaders, including Ruth Wilson who is very keen and has already put in several dates over the next few months. I look forward to a greater variety of walk leaders and less reliance on myself and Nigel Vile to 'fill in the gaps'.

I have agreed with Rob that he will take over Chairmanship after the committee meeting in March, so he will chair his first meeting in June. He will need access to the WWR email in all its delights, so that he can continue with the Newsletters (if he so wishes).

Rob has kindly agreed to try to organise some basic First Aid for the walk leaders. Hopefully we can find something cheap.

5b. Secretary (Maurice)

There is not much to report at this quiet time of year.

Tim Lewis has sent me the fourth update from the Ramblers Core Campaign Group, of which he is a member. I have not seen the first three updates and had never before heard of this group. It is attached for you to read.

If any of our past or current walk leaders are still storing Risk Assessments for any walks that they led in 2022, they can now be deleted or disposed of.

Now that the planned changes to the Area setup have been binned by Central Office, Charles Penn at South Wiltshire Ramblers has raised a Motion to General Council to dissolve the Area Group, which now has 141 members, almost as many as Mid Wiltshire. Area does not understand how new members end up in the Area Group, rather than an ordinary group but, once in it, the members receive no information about walks or events. This is thought to be a widespread issue across all Areas. The Motion will first need to be approved at the Area AGM before being submitted for General Council consideration. A copy of the draft Motion is attached for comment.

At our AGM Bev asked if there was a pocket sized guide to what a walk leader should do in the event of an incident. I have just such a list; it consists of a walk leader checklist and basic first aid produced by the Red Cross. This guide is now discontinued and Ramblers has no plans to reprint it. Their response was as follows. "Having looked at the photo and speaking to colleagues- this is not a resource that we recognise and we're not aware that we've ever provided. The only thing we could think of, is that perhaps someone in your group developed it themselves using the British Red Cross information. We don't provide specific first aid information like this because that is not our remit. We are however providing a first aid session in the new year which will be hosted by two outdoor first trainers that you might be interested to go along to.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/ramblers-3448430213>

In addition, members can access discounts on first aid training (scroll down to discounts)

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/first-aid-group-walks>"

I scanned my copy of the guidance in to my PC and a copy is attached. The "first aid session" referred to above is a one hour session on Zoom in March and it is not first aid training.

5c. Treasurer (Peter)

WEST WILTS RAMBLERS

Receipts and payments Account

3rd January 2026

2025/26

Balance Sheet Brought Forward 01 October 2025

Debtors

-

Bank: as per statement 30/09/2025

2,553.20

Cheques/ banked in hand

-

Cash in hand (Book stock holders)

-

2,553.20

Transactions October-December 2025

b/f 1 October 2025

2,553.20

Receipts

Christmas lunch

-

1,260.00

Ramblers Holidays

-

150.00

Ramblers Quota

-

150.00

Payments

AGM refreshments

106.50

AGM Printing

50.00

AGM Hall Hire

52.00

Christmas Lunch

1,110.00

Ramblers leaflet

83.73

Unity Bank- Cheque Handling

0.90

Total Expenditure

1,403.13

Total Income

1,560.00

Balance 3rd January 2026

2,710.07

Balance

Unity Bank Statement 31/12/2025

2,710.07

Cash and Cheques in hand

-

Balance 30 Sept

2,710.07

Represented By

Dave Hill Memorial

290.50

Bradford Randonneurs

65.81

Mike Watts Memorial

297.50

West Wilts Ramblers Funds Main

811.39

West Wilts Ramblers Social

1,244.87

2,710.07

5d. Membership (Ann)

Since the end of November 2025 we have welcomed 6 new members plus 1 has rejoined. However, 1 membership lapsed and 4 others resigned - so a net gain of 2 members.

As at 5th January 2026 our membership total is as follows:

281 members
3 affiliated members
284 plus
32 non-West Wilts walkers that receive details of our walks programme

So our numbers are stable as we continue to bob along at around 300 members.

5e. Footpath Officer (Dave)

Blocked Paths Broughton Gifford

Rights of Way BGIF22 and BGIF26a are currently unsigned from Mill Lane. Access through private garden of No.2 Mill Farm is blocked by heavy plant pots inside a kissing gate and a locked field gate. A footbridge on the line of BGIF26a is obstructed by vegetation. On the 13th November, I met the owner of the land around Mill Farm and she said the land was private and that she was suing the Police and Council. I said West Wilts Ramblers would object to the closure of these paths. Rights of Way Officers Vicky Roscoe and Ben Braine asserted on the 18th November that these issues would be resolved within two weeks – paths still closed and unsigned.

Private Lake – Boundary Farm, Melksham

We have objected to Planning Application [PL/2025/06704](#) as the proposed private lake will obstruct the legal line of MELW117. The Rights of Way MELW117, MELW5 and MELW6 go through the ‘industrial area’ of Boundary Farm and are difficult to follow. We would not object to minor modification of the definitive map to give better access near or through the ‘industrial area’.

Brian Micklam

Brian commented to The Ramblers that a campaign to remove stiles in the Countryside was pointless if the Councils do not have the resources to follow through. Stephen Russell, Policy and Public Affairs Manager of The Ramblers has offered to join our work party, but it is unlikely that a Council Officer will join us or share their intended policies.

Brian has lobbied Wiltshire Highways to allocate Active Travel funding for a cycle route from Bradford Upon Avon to Melksham via Holt. And reminded the Council that the draft for the 2025-2035 Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) should be shared with the Ramblers.

A stile had been fitted reluctantly by Cotswold Wardens in May 2024 near St Peter’s Church in Monkton Farleigh. It is a route from Elderly Social Housing to the Church, and a stile is not appropriate. The Parish Council says that it should be a gate. We have asked the Rights of Way Team to use their Regulatory powers to insist that a gate or gap is used instead – answer none.

Mike Watts

No news from Council about establishing legal line of ATWO19 which was near Mike’s house. A kissing gate might be needed.

Work Party

Colin, Duncan and Brian W of the Work Party had agreed to record ‘assets’ in the Countryside – unfortunately, they cannot get the required software to work.

01 October 2025 to 06 January 2026

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on: Hours

Waymarking

-

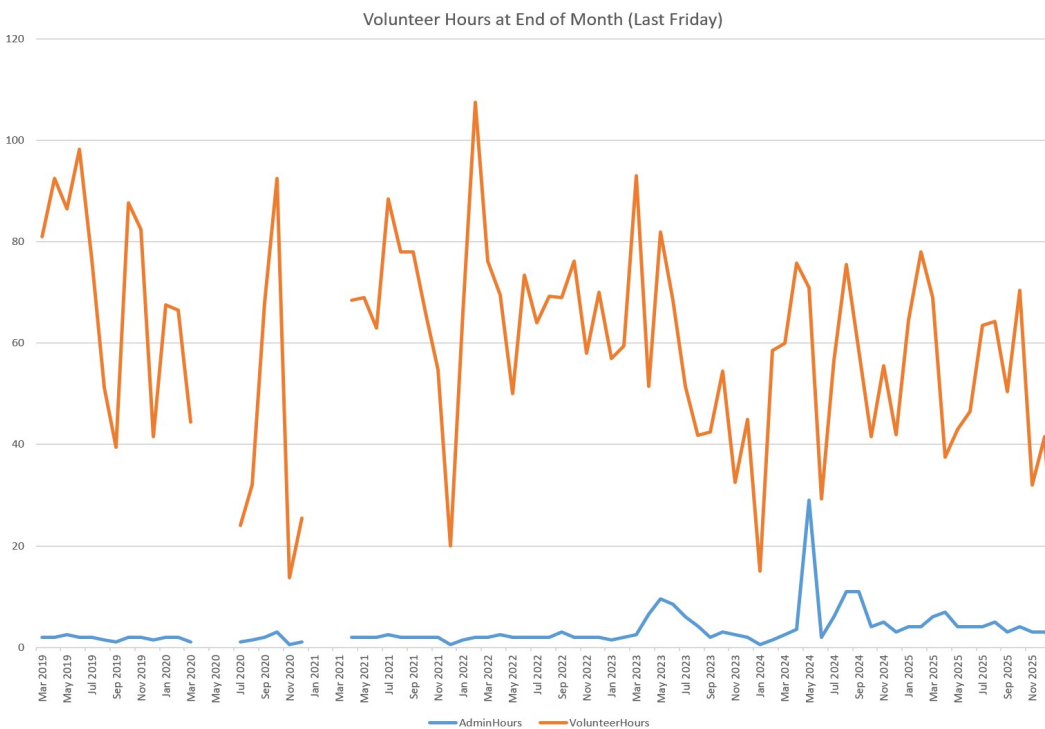
Surveying

Path Clearing/Improvement	-
Stiles	144.00
Kissing Gates	6.00
Gates	0.00
Bridges	0.00
Steps	-
Other (eg Finger Posts)	-
TOTAL HOURS	150

Totals since start of spreadsheet
Number

Metres of path waymarked	-
Length Surveyed(m)	-
Metres of Path Clearing/Improvement	4150
Number of Stiles	1
Number of Kissing Gates	0
Number of Gates	0
Number of Bridges	0
Steps	0
Other (eg Finger Posts)	0

Vicky and Ben (Rights of Way and Countryside Access Officers), since April 2023, have been unable to supply regular monthly work and this is reflected in the number of volunteer hours -see graph.



Lost Paths

Research suspended.

5g. Events (Frank)

Next year is pretty much full in terms of walking holidays, with Dartmoor, Malvern, Lake Como and Malham. Bev S has agreed to sort out the next Coach Walk, and it will be to Dorchester, with walks going south to Maiden Castle, and back round. There will be a 5 and a 10 mile alternative. Date to be announced.

I am looking to holidays in 2027 already, and have in mind a June visit to Keswick in the Lakes, and also a trip to Austria in September. Early days for these, but I will need to get thinking soon, as places get booked up. I suspect that 2027 will be my last year of organising events, but I guess that will depend on health considerations.