



West Wiltshire Ramblers

Committee Meeting

16 July 2026 @ 10:15
at Broughton Gifford Village Hall

In Attendance:	Rob Coles	Maurice Eveleigh	Peter Mundy	Julie Cullen
Dave Yearsley	Sally Pearce	Frank Martinelli	Bev Stapleton	Paul Reynolds
	Agenda Item	Action/Notes		
1.	Welcome.	Rob Welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. He explained that Paul would be a little late joining us due to a medical appointment.		
2.	Apologies for absence.	Ann Finch		
3.	Minutes of last meeting.	Due to exceptional circumstances beyond our control we did not ask for the Minutes of the last meeting to be accepted at this meeting.		
4.	Matters arising.		None	
5.	Reports:			
	a.	Chairman (Rob)	See report below.	
	b.	Secretary (Maurice)	See report below.	
	c.	Treasurer (Peter)	See Accounts below. Peter advised that the coach trip to Dorchester had made a surplus of £53. Expenditure since the last meeting was: Work Party tools £18.40 Hire of BG Village Hall £19.00 Christmas lunch deposit £150 Unity Bank admin charges £0.80	
	d.	Membership (Ann)	See report below. Paul joined the meeting at this point. Ann will continue in post until our AGM. Paul will meet with Ann to hand-over, probably in October, due to holiday commitments. Maurice will register Paul as Membership Support with Central Office so that he can access membership data in the Insight hub.	

	e.	Footpath Officer (Dave)	See report below.
	f.	Walks (Julie/Paul)	See reports below.
	g.	Events (Frank)	See report below.
	h.	Web Editor (Maurice)	See report below.
	i.	Publicity Officer (Sally)	A short discussion took place on the merits of setting up WhatsApp groups for Wednesday and Sunday walkers. Sally will set these up and invite anyone on our circulation list to join. The benefits will be that walk leaders who join can push details of changes or cancellations to members easily and members can use it to ask for car shares etc. Walk leaders can also use it to request a buddy to help with a recce or when leading their first walks.
7.		Budget for 2026/27 Financial Year	No requests for additional funding in the next financial year were submitted.
8.		Data Storage and Email Account	We agreed that the first meeting of the IT sub Committee would be held on 7/8/26 at Frome Tool & Gauge, Marston Trading Estate, Frome at 10:00.
9.		Complaint against Dave Yearsley	This matter is still unresolved.
10.		First Aid Training	Central Office has mandated that at least one member of the Work Party must be first aid trained if power tools are being used. Dave and Duncan B have said they will undertake the training. St.John Ambulance has quoted £205 per person but a discount is available to Ramblers. Julie has details of other first aid training providers and courses. Rob advised that all walk leaders require is first aid awareness, which St John provides free. They would require three dates from us. Once a date is agreed, we could hire BG village hall for £18 per hour. Frank also had details of a first aid course. Details will be passed to Rob.
11.		AGM Date and Venue	The AGM will take place on 7/11/26 and Peter was asked to book BG village hall again. There will be a short walk starting at 10:00 and the meeting will start at 12:00.
12.		Any other business:	
	a.	Coach Walks	We agreed that we would only do one walk next year, in April/May or September/October when the weather is cooler. Late October would be least satisfactory due to earlier sunsets. Tewkesbury was suggested by Bev.
	b.	Christmas Meal	Peter has booked Cumberwell Park for 2/12/26.
13.		Dates of next meetings:	
	a.	17 September 2026	AGM preparation

	b.	7 November 2026	AGM
	c.	January	
	d.	April	
14.	Close		
Maurice Eveleigh Secretary, West Wiltshire Ramblers. 17 July 2026			

REPORTS

5a. Chair

It was during our last committee meeting that Frank handed over the reins of chair to me, so I would like to begin my first report by thanking Frank for all the effort and hard work he has put in to lead and promote the group over the years. I sincerely hope, with the committee's support, I can continue Frank's good work.

Prior to our last meeting it was necessary to reassign some key roles when Jen Yearsley stepped down from the walks programme role and Ann Finch announced she would be resigning from her role as Membership Secretary by our next AGM. Many thanks to them both for their dedication and hard work during their time on the committee. We seemed to play musical chairs with these and other roles for a while, but it was all sorted by the time the music stopped and my thanks to Bev, Julie, Paul and Sally for putting themselves forward to fill the roles. Although Frank has stepped down from the Chair he, along with Bev, will continue to organise the group holidays and away days.

The first few weeks in my new role were taken up with issues surrounding a complaint we received with regards to our objection to the extinguishment of a footpath in Melksham (MELK103). The issue was passed up the line to Ramblers HQ and is still ongoing. It may be for some time yet before this is settled. Because of this we are unable to post the minutes of our last meeting on our website.

Finally, we have set up a sub-committee to look at the issues surrounding our data storage, and access to it, and emailing problems.

5b. Secretary

Following the last meeting, I submitted the spreadsheet containing updated Committee member roles to Central Office, along with a list of volunteers/roles to be deleted. As a result, Central Office requires me to undertake GDPR training prior to being granted access to the Insight hub. Paul will almost certainly require this training when he takes over as Membership Secretary. Following the last meeting, I also updated and submitted our Contacts list to Area.

Peter Gallagher and David Trease (both SNEW members) attended the General Council at the NEC Birmingham on 25 April. Peter's Report on the meeting will be attached to this Agenda and appended to the Minutes. This year was supposed to have been the final General Council before the proposed new system was introduced but the failure of the special motion to reach the required majority has thrown everything into doubt. The Wiltshire Area motion to reallocate Area Group members to their local Group passed, as did the Motion requesting more guidance on handling difficult situations. The Motion on the ratios of leaders to walkers failed to pass. The Trustees claimed that the ratios which were presented to us as mandatory, are in fact optional!

The Area Council is currently barely functional, with an Acting Chair and an Acting Secretary. Notes on the meetings are produced using AI and are woefully lacking in detail. I no longer forward them to this Committee because they contain almost no information of value. The Area Publicity Officer suddenly resigned before the last meeting, meaning that we are unlikely to see another edition of the Write of Way magazine. Another Group representative withdrew because she could not get Zoom to work on her device. We are allowed two representatives on the Council in addition to any Officer roles we might choose to volunteer for but we have not fulfilled our quota since I was "voluntold" onto it five years ago. If anyone would like to join me at these quarterly Zoom omni-shambles' (held on Monday evenings at 19:00) you will be most welcome. They last little more than an hour but they might run longer if they were conducted properly.

5c. Treasurer

WEST WILTS RAMBLERS Receipts and payments Account 7th July 2026

2025/26

Balance Sheet Broughtt 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)	-
	<u>2,553.20</u>

Transactions October-July 2026

b/f 1 October 2025		2,553.20
Receipts		
Christmas lunch	-	1,260.00
Ramblers Holidays	-	210.00
Ramblers Quota	-	450.00
Coach Walk Dorchester		880.00
Payments		
AGM refreshments	106.50	
AGM Printing	50.00	
AGM Hall Hire	52.00	
Broughton Gifford Meetings	36.00	
Christmas Lunch	1,110.00	
Christmas Lunch Deposit 2026	150.00	
Working Party Tools	18.40	
Ramblers leaflet	83.73	
Unity Bank- Cheque Handling	1.70	
Total Expenditure	1,608.33	
Total Income		2,800.00
Balance 7th July 2026		<u>3,744.87</u>
Balance		
Unity Bank 07/07/2026		3,744.87
Cash and Cheques in hand		-
Balance 30 Sept		<u>3,744.87</u>
Represented By		
Dave Hill Memorial		290.50
Bradford Randonneurs		65.81
Mike Watts Memorial		297.50
West Wilts Ramblers Funds Main		1,148.19
West Wilts Ramblers Social		1,942.87
		<u>3,744.87</u>

5d. Membership

Since the 25th March 2026 we have welcomed 12 new members. However, 2 have left the area; 2 have deceased; 5 resigned; and 12 have let their memberships lapse - so a net loss of 9 members.

As at 14th July 2026 our membership total is as follows:

278 members
4 affiliated members
282 plus
30 non-West Wilts walkers that receive details of our walks programme.

5e. Footpath Officer

Mike Watts

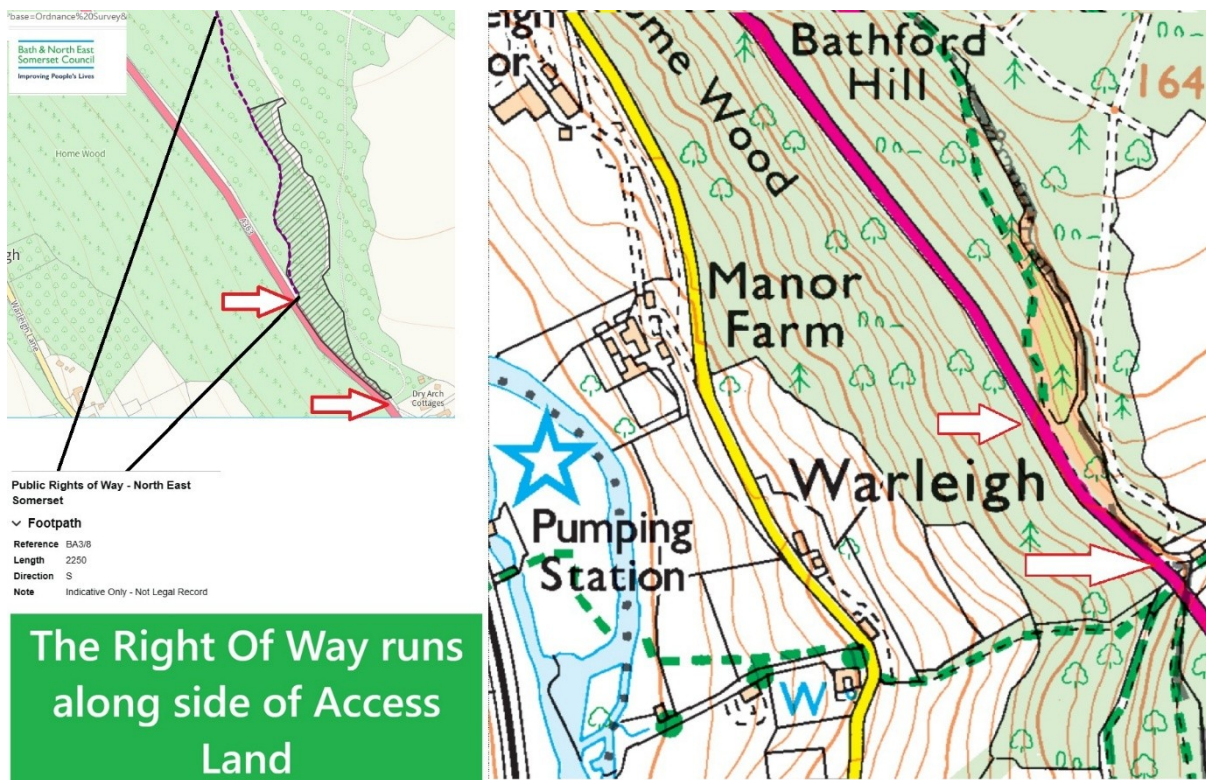
Ben Braine (Countryside Access Officer) has agreement from landowner to put the Atworth path (ATWO19) on the legal line. And plans a start this winter (after bird nesting). Atworth Parish, perhaps because of Mike Watts, has again thanked the Work Party for its work. We need to remember that Mike's influence (and of course Brian M's) had directly led to the Councillors at Parish and Council insisting that our Work Party be given more support. I can confirm that is happening. A win, albeit very slow.

Brian M:

- **Monkton Farleigh - MFAR1**

A stile recently (and reluctantly) fitted by Cotswold Wardens was removed and replaced by a pedestrian gate. A win for a Liz Watts, a Parish Councillor, who lobbied West Wilts Ramblers (via Brian M). Liz said 'I have been watching the over 90's who would like to walk to the church and graveyard get older and just hoping this would happen in their lifetimes'.

- **BANES Path BA3/8 joins Road A363**



The path at side of A363, see above image, is narrow and needs to be widened. Ideally a crash barrier should be in place rather than a series of posts. Ironically, just south of bottom arrow (map image above) a crash barrier is there to stop cars going down the slope. Brian has contacted all relevant authorities. It is understood that Stefan Chiffers, the Chief Engineer, is involved but Bathford and BANES had to put things on hold until their next budget.

- **Up-grading the towpath in several places between Bath & Bradford-on-Avon.**

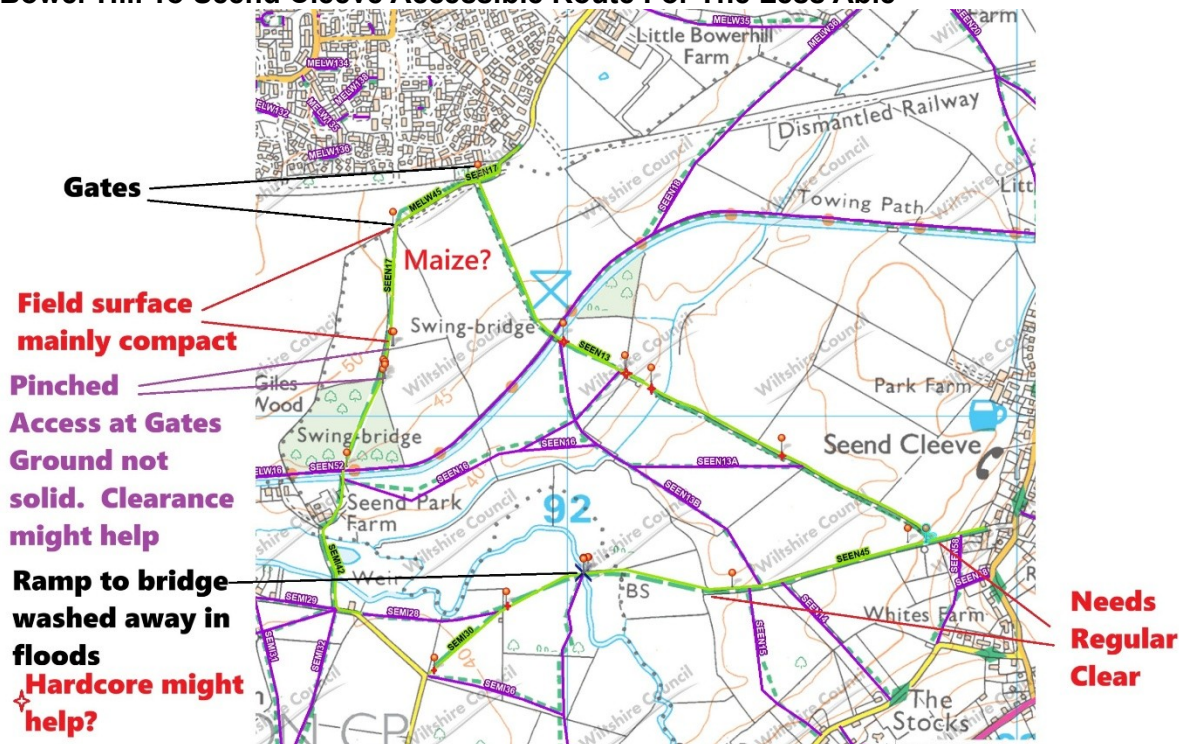
Brian has lobbied several parties to get funding. He is waiting for a response from the Enterprise Manager Canal & River Trust, Wales and SW Region. Bradford-Upon-Avon walking wheel is also involved, along with the Wessex Greenways Association who hope to get a grant from the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) who, in turn, claim funding from Active Travel.

Maurice might be better placed to report more on this one. See Appendix A.

Limpley Stoke Parish Council - LST07

The Parish wanted to extinguish as dogs were fouling the path. The Council agreed not to close the path and advised that a Public Spaces Protection Order be taken out instead (our initial advice). A win.

Bower Hill To Seend Cleeve Accessible Route For The Less Able



Nathan Sealey and I have discussed this route. Nathan's wife is dependent on a mobility vehicle and can no longer use the above route. The Countryside Access Officers (Ben B, Vicky Roscoe and Ali Rasey) have proactively reviewed the route. A gate has been removed and the whole of MELW45 is available. Ali has contacted the Canal and River Trust to see if a bolt can be moved on swing bridge. Paul Millard in his role of Countryside Access Development Officer might be able to get funding. And the Work Party has cleared the route and levelled some ground near swing bridge on SEEN13. A win but on-going it would be great to have a media event with lots of mobility vehicles.

MELK103

The Northern part of MELK103 is currently overgrown with nettles and impassable. The Planning Committee affirmed the order to extinguish. The next stage is appeal. A small article in the Melksham News about this path attracted 64 comments and a spirited debate. Most comments argued that the path should be available for use and not extinguished.

The next stage is submitting 'Statement of Case' to the Planning Inspectorate. Head Office have drafted a tighter more legal script which I will use in the main body of appeal to the Inspectorate. Peter Gallagher, more experienced, legal and politer had already agreed to help with our Statement of Case. Draft workings can be found on [MELK103DraftStatementOfCase](#).

Craig Harlow, Definitive Map Officer has submitted his 'Statement of Case' see [MELK103DraftStatementOfCase](#). Peter H (one of us and is neutral) has agreed that I can quote his words.

MyWilts (Rights of Way)

Cosmetically much better, more stable and the beginning of sharing other peoples reports in the locality of an intended report. Core functionality like saving multiple and large images is improved but still flaky. The Councillors have access to a better version that shares more details about reports.

HIAMS Assets

The App to record Assets, for me, has got increasingly difficult to use. Footpath Officers - Tim Lewis (Mid Wilts) and Charles Penn (South Wilts) have not had the same problems. I am hoping that applying more App filters will help. Colin Hogan has not found the App robust enough to use but is going to check whether, like me – he did not apply enough filters. If it works better, then I think we should mention the App and MyWilts in a Newsletter.

Since last committee (2nd April) I have recorded details for Hilperton, Holt, Great Hinton, Stapleton and Atworth. I will start on Trowbridge soon. I understand that there are six unused Council licenses. No news on when this data will be in the Public Domain.

Lost Paths – No action

Work Party

Maurice is considering putting the link to [West Wilts Ramblers Tuesday Work Party](#) on the Ramblers Group Page, along with a heat map indicating where works have been done. It would be great if the current text could include reference to Work Party History.

Duncan Browne and I have agreed to be trained as first aiders. Going forward, all Ramblers Work Parties are required to have first aiders and the minimum standard is 'Emergency First Aid At Work' – click [first-aid-discounts](#).

We bought our Stihl equipment from Shires in Devizes, unfortunately they are now closed. Fortunately, we were able to get one of our brush cutters serviced for the princely sum of £18.40 from Leigh Park Garden Machinery.

03 April 2026 to 8 July 2026

Person hours, excluding travel time, spent on:	Hours
Waymarking	-
Surveying	-
Path Clearing/Improvement	150.50
Stiles	-
Kissing Gates	-
Gates	17.50
Bridges	-
Steps	-
Other	6.50
TOTAL HOURS	174.50
	Number
Metres of path waymarked	-
Length Surveyed(m)	-
Metres of Path Clearing/Improvement	4195
Number of Stiles	0
Number of Kissing Gates	0

Number of Gates	2
Number of Bridges	0
Steps	0
Other: Fixed a spinning signpost and levelled ground for mobility scooter	2

5f. Walks Programme/Statistics

Julie reported:

Wednesday walks: from 2nd April to 16th July incl:

Short: 16 + 2 cancellations.

Long: 6

Sunday walks: from 2nd April to 16th July incl:

Short: 6 + 1 cancellation.

Long: 12 + 1 cancellation.

Not including: Dartmoor, Malverns, Como or Coach walks.

Paul reported:

April -June 2026

West Wiltshire Ramblers have planned 63 walks during this period

6 were cancelled, mainly due to hot weather. Giving a total of 57 walks / 643 Walkers

17 walks on Sundays (208 Walkers)

19 walks on Wednesdays (226 Walkers)

33 walks in Wiltshire/Somerset area

3 walks further afield

21 walks on Walking Holidays (209 Walkers)

Walk Distance

1 - 9 Miles – 21

10 - 15 Miles – 27

15 miles and above – 9

Number of days where there were 2 walks.

Sundays – 4

Wednesday – 6

Number of days where there were 2 walks on holidays

Dartmoor – 2

Great Malvern – 4

Lake Como – 2

Total – 18

We occasionally have walkers from other Ramblers Groups and new walkers who live locally to the walk location join our walks.

Details for the same period (April – Jun) last year

	Walks	Walkers
Wed	14	187
Sun	12	169
Others	2	19
Total	28	375

5g. Events

1. A very successful recent trip to Lake Como. Unfortunately it was rather hot, and walking up too high was not possible, but some of us managed to do a 10 to 12 mile walk every day and some people dipped out and spent the days on ferries, in bars and in ice cream parlours. All in all a great week at

Hotel Lovenio, and one that will be repeated in a couple of years. Transfers organised by Paul worked exceptionally well.

2. It looks like the weather is again going to be hot on our coach trip to Dorchester. Plans are in place for shortening the walks.

I think the Spring coach trip and an autumn coach trip is a better model, especially if we are going to continue getting these heatwaves.

3. Yorkshire Dales in September. 15 people in Holiday Fellowship Newfield Hall, and 13 people in alternative accommodation. Walk programme will be produced in August.
4. 2027. Cornwall in April, Coleridge Way in May (full) Keswick in June and Dolomites in September. Bev is considering a few days in October, but no plans yet.
5. 2028. A long way ahead, but these things need thinking about. I will look at possibilities on the Amalfi Coast (walk of the Gods), plus the Cilento national park, further South (quieter but less spectacular. In addition, Bev and I will separately organise a week away. Requests welcomed.

5h. Web Editor

The purpose of our website is to be a resource for our members and to act as publicity for any prospective new members. As such, the information within it has to remain current. It is not designed to be an archive listing things we did many years ago and the Area Webmaster can and does delete stale content periodically.

The site has to comply with current GDPR regulations, which means that, just like on our Facebook page, photographs of people may not appear without their permission.

When I took over this role a year ago, the site had not been updated for many years and the only additions to it had been the Minutes of Committee meetings, which I asked my predecessor to upload. My permissions are quite limited; all I can do is publish short news items and upload documents such as Minutes. I have been updating the site and writing new content but I cannot publish this myself. Those permissions rest with the Area Webmaster, Keith Grimes. Keith's primary concerns are to keep the website secure from hackers and denial of service attacks and to guard against inexperienced web editors crashing the site! That said, Keith has actively supported my efforts and some new content has already been published.

For almost a year I have been trying to write a new page to assist walk leaders through the introduction of the new processes. It made no sense to publish this before our new Walk Programme Secretary was in post, as Julie was bound to make changes, as she did. By that time a lot of the new content had already been rendered obsolete so it was removed. Julie and I met to discuss this a couple of months ago and the new page was finally submitted for publication.

I have also tried to upload a link to the Walk Planning spreadsheet but the detailed instructions provided did not cover this, so the attempt failed. I asked Keith for guidance and he put the link on the Trial site but I don't know how he did it, so that didn't help!

The new Work Party page also remains a work in progress but neither Keith nor I are keen on linking to Dave's historical photographs of the Work Party's past triumphs for all of the reasons stated above and below.

Keith has been very busy with work since the start of the year, so he has had little or no time to deal with my queries or new pages. To those who chase me almost every week to put links on the site I can only say that miracles are performed every day but the impossible takes a little longer. Patience is required.

IT Sub Committee

Several times I have attempted to get the matter of our Email account and IT discussed at Committee meetings but it always gets kicked into the long grass. After yet another failure at the last meeting, I suggested to Rob that we should form a sub Committee to look into the art of the possible and bring our oven ready proposals to the main Committee in due course. The sub Committee comprises Rob, Julie, Paul and myself. We have not yet met due to most of us being constantly on holiday but I have done some research.

The main issues are:

1. We are using a “personal” email account with four or five users and, because of multi factor authorisation at logon, security alerts are constantly being triggered. Notifications are sent to Jen’s mobile phone even though she is no longer on our Committee and emails are sent to our account and my personal account. In one month I received seven security alerts! I always assume that it is one of us, which rather defeats the object of the security.

2. Officers are holding Ramblers documents in their personal IT devices and several are stored in Dave and Jen’s one-drive and accessed by members via the web. The first part of this is a business continuity issue; important documents need to be held in our own data storage so that, in the unfortunate occurrence of an officer dying suddenly, access to the information is not lost. This also raises IT security issues. Whilst MS cloud facilities should be secure, opening up private cloud storage by placing links on websites opens attack vectors to threat actors that would not otherwise be there. The risk is low but it increases the exposure of both the owner’s one drive and our website. As a matter of principle, Ramblers data should be held in accounts owned and controlled by the Ramblers, not by well meaning members. We would not put our income or expenditure through one of our members’ accounts and the same principle applies to our intellectual property.

A chance discussion with Derrick H revealed that Microsoft provides free or reduced cost MS 365 accounts to non-profit organisations and that Somersetshire Coal Canal Society had managed to secure such an arrangement. If we could be granted the necessary licences it would solve all of our problems. We could store our data in our own account, link to it where required from our website and have individual Outlook email accounts for those officers who require them. Keith was not aware of this (it is not advertised) and he has said that he will investigate as it has implications for the whole organisation. However, as stated above, he is a very busy man...

5i. Publicity