



Sutton Coldfield Ramblers

(Reg: Charity 1093577)

Website

suttoncoldfieldramblers.org.uk



**Sutton Coldfield Ramblers
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday 19th November 2025**

Apologies: Sharon Freedman, Sue Wood, Irene Ordidge, John Broadmore, Kay Ford, Jim Horton, Sue Howles

39 people in attendance

Minutes of 2024 AGM

Approved

Chair's Report

As is usual, I'd like to give an overview of the year's activities, acknowledging the support of all our volunteers, and then look ahead to what will be the 35th year of Sutton Coldfield Ramblers. We have continued our programme of walks on Sundays, with occasionally two walks on offer, and shorter, more local walks on the first two Thursdays of the month. Thanks to Andy and Julie for co-ordinating walks and to all our walk leaders who are much appreciated. Evening pub walks in the summer months were again popular with favourable weather throughout. Thanks to John and Marcia for leading these walks. Travelling further afield, we enjoyed well-supported coach walks last Christmas to Cleobury Mortimer, the Peak District in March and Llangollen for our summer coach walk. Our Christmas walks next month are in the Ludlow area with the meal afterwards at the Fishmore Hotel. There is more travelling involved to recce coach walks so thank you to Rosie, Tony, John Collins, John Twort and Ken for leading and to Tony for acting as coach secretary.

Our spring and autumn holidays to Bourton, organised by Rosie and Tony, and the Mumbles organised by John and Marcia, provided comfortable accommodation, an excellent choice of walks each day and lively evening entertainment. The time and effort that goes into organising these breaks is much appreciated as is the contribution of walk leaders and 'entertainers'. It was lovely to have friends, who no longer walk regularly with us, come on these holidays. In June a small group of Ramblers walked the last stage of the Francigena route from Siena to Rome, organised by John, who has also planned for a group to walk the Camino from Porto to Santiago over two weeks next May. Proposals for two other holidays next year did not receive sufficient support for them to go ahead. If anyone else has ideas for possible short breaks in the coming year, please let me know.

Social events have been varied this year: a lively curry evening organised by Tony was held in February; a fascinating tour of the Birmingham Symphony Hall followed by lunch was arranged by Sue and, for keen gardeners, I organised in August a guided tour of Castle Bromwich Hall Historic Gardens. There is another opportunity to get together on our Mince Pie walks in Sutton Park on Sunday 21st December. An evening meal is again proposed for a date in February if anyone would like to help with planning that event.

Our website has functioned extremely well for over a year: keeping members, and especially new members, updated with walk details, maps of routes completed with photos and a useful section of mapping tools added by Tom, as well as forthcoming social events. Rob and Tom have done a great job in maintaining the website and thanks also to Rob for the many emails he sends out. Please check your emails and the website so you're aware of what is happening in your group. Sharon is to be congratulated on producing an excellent newsletter every two months. She is grateful for contributions from members – submissions for the December newsletter to her by 16th December.

John Harden, as our Footpath Secretary, has been consulted by Birmingham City Council regarding the Langley Urban Extension plans for walking routes within the development and connecting to the local area. This has entailed a huge amount of time as some of the documents are several hundred pages long. The Footpath Working Party has maintained footpaths in the Shenstone area, but more help from volunteers would be welcome next spring.

Thanks to June who has served another year as our Welfare Officer, contacting members who have been unwell or in hospital. June would appreciate hearing of anyone who you think would like her to get in touch on our behalf.

Membership remains fairly constant at around 225-230, with a steady supply of new members to replace those who leave. Rosie, who as both General Secretary and Membership Secretary, welcomes new members to the group. Our Facebook page has over 800 followers which is useful publicity.

Tony has managed the group's finances efficiently and will present the Treasurer's report shortly. John Collins has kindly agreed, once again, to audit the Annual Accounts for which we are grateful.

Now looking ahead – far ahead in fact: it is our turn to organise the Warwickshire Ramblers' AGM for approximately a hundred members in February 2027. The URC Centre in Sutton has been booked and catering arrangements made. But more immediately, looking at the coming year and how you can contribute. We are planning a coach walk in March and you will have seen in the newsletter that we're asking for volunteers to lead the walks. If you could help and have a suggestion for a location, please speak to Andy. Closer to home, you may have an idea for a social event – something you have enjoyed and think others would, too. Please speak to Rosie or myself.

However, the main focus for the future is increasing our pool of walk leaders which has diminished partly through older members not wishing to continue leading, which is fair enough as they have led walk over many years, but also the Ramblers' new obligatory training requirement for existing leaders has had an impact. At the moment we have only 16 eligible leaders, so there will be gaps in the walks programme if more people don't come forward to lead walks. I should point out that a shortage of walk leaders has affected many groups and has resulted in some local groups combining for walks: Tamworth and Lichfield Ramblers have merged and walks are shared between Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton groups.

There may be the impression in the group that offering to lead a walk means that you have to become a regular walk leader. This is not the case. If you could lead just one or two walks – short, local, whatever - during the year it would help. There may also be the misapprehension that you have to go it alone – again not the case. There is support available in choosing and planning the walk, having someone recce with you and co-lead on the day. As was mentioned

in the newsletter, we can offer Ramblers' training offline in an informal setting – at my house, for instance, for anyone who isn't happy with the online format. Please give it your careful consideration and contact Andy or Ynyr if you think you could help in leading a walk. In conclusion, we have had an active and enjoyable year and I hope that we can continue in the same vein. A sincere thank you to all those who have contributed in whatever way, and to everyone for your participation, support and great company on walks. Thank you, all.

Treasurer's Report

We control our funds through two separate accounts:

Charity Account

The Charity Account is funded by Ramblers and is used to cover our club running costs, i.e. the AGM, committee meetings and admin costs, plus any other costs for charitable purposes, e.g. the working party equipment.

Last year we claimed a budget of £650 from Ramblers to cover our anticipated costs for the year. Because we now receive our funding quarterly we also need to maintain sufficient funds in the account to cover our main costs for the year being the AGM which falls in November.

The costs for the year totalled £499 resulting in a surplus of £150. This increased the amount carried forward into the current year to £369. We have been fortunate to continue to receive the funding for our AGM in the budget allocation.

General / (Social) Account

The General Account is used for our social activities. We also received advertising income from Ramblers Holidays (£300) and HF Holidays (£50), together with a donation from Ramblers Walking Partnership (£90). This amounted to £440 which is used to subsidise our social events.

During the year there were 3 successful social events with support of £253 for a meal at Zazzi and trips to Symphony Hall and Castle Bromwich Gardens, together with 2 coach walks (support of £190) and our usual Christmas coach walks and meal event (support of £211). The 2 club holidays are always self-financing.

Overall this resulted in a deficit of £191 for the year which is in line with the committee's expectations. This amount is deducted from the balance brought forward to give a total of £2,385 to carry forward to support future events.

In Conclusion - the club's finances remain at a healthy level and the committee anticipate providing similar support for social events in the current year.

Finally, my thanks to John Collins who has taken over the role as our new Independent Examiner to review the group's Annual Accounts and the underlying records.

The approval of the Accounts was proposed, seconded and voted for.

Footpaths

In John's absence, no report

Election of Officers

As usual, the Committee stand down and then offer themselves for re-election. Julie Hamblen however is standing down as Thursday Walks Organiser but will remain as an ordinary member. Many thanks to Julie for all her hard work over the past years. Ynyr Owen has volunteered to take her place, and has been nominated by Mike and seconded by Tom. A vote was taken in his favour.

No other nominations have been received.

Accordingly the Committee offered themselves for re-election and were proposed, seconded and voted in en bloc, as follows:

Chair	Barbara Twort
Group Secretary	Rosie Power
Treasurer	Tony Power
Walks Organisers	Andy Addison (Sundays)
Footpaths Officer	John Harden
Communications	Rob Halley
Web Editor	Rob Halley
Membership Secretary	Rosie Power
Welfare	June Wright
Newsletter	Sharon Freedman
Area representative	Barbara Twort

Appointment of Auditor – John Collins was duly appointed

Any Other Business

Jenny expressed her concern as to safety on walks where large numbers are involved, having experienced 36 people on a recent walk led by her and Chris. Barbara pointed out that there were always experienced leaders present on walks who could assist with back marking and middle marking.

Meeting closed 8.00 p.m.

Date of the next Annual General Meeting is 18th November 2026.

Signed Dated.....