



An update from your CEO

Sent to: area chairs and secretaries – for onward cascade to area executive / council members and group chairs; and then from group chairs onward to all members, and from area membership secretaries to those who are area-only members ie. not in groups.

24 July 2017

I recently spent a fantastic day with the Essex Ramblers. Alan Goffee, Essex area chair, organised for 34 members - from 13 of their 18 thriving groups - to walk together from Matching Green. We made our way through some wonderful waist-high cornfields, via an excellent pub lunch, to Matching's beautiful church. I met some fantastic people and I learnt a great deal. I firmly believe that none of us are as clever or as effective as all of us, and this kind of **informal networking is a brilliant way for us to develop our ideas and our working relationships.**

Talking, as we all know, is always better when walking. We covered much ground in Essex, including the invaluable work which the area is doing on both the Network Rail level crossing closures and the continued development of the England Coastal Path. **I was particularly inspired to learn of the work by the three "Friends Of" groups.** These groups were established over 20 years ago to provide short walks. They now collectively boast over 400 active members and have proven the need for this kind of entry level walk and its significant value as a membership recruitment tool.

One topic which the Essex walkers were keen to discuss was communication. Many of you have told me you find this newsletter useful but struggle to cascade it, given the lack of email contact details. I share this challenge. Providing more relevant and timely information is a priority for us all. This newsletter is a first step, but it is inevitably a "blunt" tool. The tapestry project will enable us to gather missing email addresses and personalise information for individual members. In the interim, too much information is better than too little - **so please do your best and cascade whatever you can, to whomever you can, in whatever format you can,** whilst we improve our data management.

Continuing the theme of communication, many of you have told me that you value updates on staff appointments. Zendesk enables us to see how we perform as a staff team, in terms of the quality and timeliness of our responses to queries. However, zendesk is impersonal and it is important that we put faces to names. In this newsletter you will see **we are currently welcoming some key people to our Ramblers team:** including our new governance manager, head of policy and volunteering manager, as

well as seeking a new director to lead our vital membership and fundraising work.

This newsletter includes invitations to a series of events to help us to shape the future of our Walking for Health programme. It also includes **an opportunity to apply for up to £1,000 to develop local activities** for our Festival of Winter Walks (23 December to 07 January 2018) and Walk About (26 May to 03 June 2018). And there is important news about a new Welsh Government consultation which could significantly alter the Welsh walking landscape. Another item on which some of you have recently requested information is our Code of Conduct, so I have included this too.

We are preparing for AGM season, so **please can you complete the area AGM form** to let us know whether you would like a trustee to join your meeting and indicate whether your area would be interested in hosting General Council 2019. And finally, I have added a brief update on some current - and some recently successful - path protection, in Somerset and Suffolk respectively. These fascinating cases show us at our collective best: bringing together rich historical understanding, dedicated volunteers and legal expertise, to protect and enhance walkers' rights.

As the sloes ripen and the rowan berries turn orange, I hope you get a chance to enjoy the last month of what has so far been a wonderful summer for walking...

Kindest regards,



Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive officer

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AGMs - please fill in the requirements form and flag interest in hosting General Council 2019

Whilst we hopefully still have many weeks of blissful summer weather to enjoy, a few leaves are already falling and with those crisp autumn days comes the start of AGM season again.

Please complete [this form](#), so that we can allocate a trustee and a member of our area support team to join you to discuss our collective progress over the last year, and our plans for the coming year. Your

input will also help us to understand any particular topics of interest to your area and any issues or opportunities where you are seeking specific support from the staff team.

Please also let us know if your area would be interested in hosting General Council 2019, via submission of an informal expression of interest, by emailing ceo@ramblers.zendesk.com by Monday 18 September.

Walking for Health - invitation to a series of events to help to shape the future programme

As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, 2018 will see a change in the way that the English Walking for Health programme is governed. The next few months are therefore a great opportunity to hear from our volunteers and our partners about how the programme is currently structured and what difference it makes to those involved.

We have arranged seven workshops and are inviting Ramblers volunteers, members and Walking for Health schemes to attend these events to share your experiences of Walking for Health, discuss how it integrates with our wider Ramblers activities, and contribute to the future development of the programme. The details of the events are below – please click on the links to register. If you would like more information to forward to members in your area who you think may be interested in participating, please contact Joanna.scott@ramblers.org.uk.

Leicester	Guildhall Museum, Jewry Wall Museum, Guildhall Lane, Leicester LE1 5FQ	Friday 28 July 1pm-4pm	Register now
Birmingham	The Priory Rooms Meeting & Conference Centre 40 Bull Street Birmingham B4 6AF	Monday 31 July 2pm-5pm	Register now
York	The Principal York, Station Road, York, North Yorkshire, YO24 1AA	Friday 4 August 1pm-4pm	Register now
Bristol	YHA Bristol, 14 Narrow Quay, Avon, Bristol BS1 4QA	Tuesday 8 August 1pm-4pm	Register now
London King's Cross	National Council for Voluntary Organisations Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL	Thursday 10 August 2pm-5pm	Register now
London King's Cross	National Council for Voluntary Organisations Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL	Thursday 17 August 2pm-5pm	Register now

Manchester	Friends Meeting House 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS	Monday 21 August 2pm-5pm	Register now
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Ramblers walking festivals - please note the dates and apply for an award of up to £1,000

Hopefully you've had a chance to look at [One Team](#) – our new volunteer guide for Ramblers walking festivals in 2017-18. Our Festival of Winter Walks will run from Saturday 23 December 2017 to Sunday 07 January 2018. Walk About will run from Saturday 26 May to Sunday 03 June 2018. Both festivals will cover England, Scotland and Wales. We hope to use these festivals to raise our collective profile and drive significant new member recruitment. So whether you are planning to run some special activities for one day, for the whole of the festival periods, or for something in between, your efforts over this coming Christmas and/or next May will be very much appreciated.

You can also [apply for a financial award](#) to help to give your festival activity a boost. Thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery, awards of up to £1,000 are available. The deadline for applications is 20 August 2017 for Festival of Winter Walks and 24 September for Walk About.

Volunteer certificates – please submit your nominations by the end of September

I found the stories of our [volunteer award winners](#) in *Walk* magazine this summer to be utterly inspiring. Please do keep [submitting your nominations](#) so that we can continue to recognise volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to the Ramblers. These certificates are produced three times a year and the next closing date for nominations is at the end of September.

Those of you who nominated volunteers for certificates or commendations in the cycle ended 31 May should by now have received them - hopefully in good time to award them to your recipients at your local celebrations. I would love to see any photos or hear any stories...

Susie Corfield, volunteering manager - welcome

[Our approach to volunteering](#) sets out ambitious standards for how the Ramblers aims to mutually support all our volunteers. To help us provide this mutual support, Susie Corfield returned from maternity leave last month to take up a new role as volunteering manager. You may have come across Susie in her previous Ramblers roles as delivery manager and development manager. Before joining our

staff team in 2014, Susie worked with a global network of 9000 volunteers as director of volunteer operations and head of volunteer training for SSAFA, a charity which supports the armed forces and their families. Prior to this, Susie headed up the learning and development team at Victim Support.

Adrian Harvey, policy head - welcome

From September, Adrian Harvey will be joining us to lead our policy and advocacy team. Adrian has a long background in both the voluntary and public sector. He has worked at the National Housing Federation, Citizens Advice, has held various roles in local government as well as a spell in the No.10 Strategy Unit. He is interested in both places and people, has been a long standing Ramblers member and is delighted to be joining our team.

Simon Kellas, governance manager - welcome

Simon Kellas joined us this month after six years at the Institute of Physics, a learned society charity with 50,000 members. At the Institute, Simon was responsible for the oversight of governance matters at trustee level and across a national and regional branch structure. Before that he held a similar governance role at the Physiological Society. His favourite walks are in the remoter parts of the North West Scottish Highlands and Islands, but closer to home he is equally happy exploring disused railway tracks and canal towpaths in and around London.

Membership and Fundraising Division and Director - news about a change of staff structure

From October this year, we will be evolving our existing staff team structure to create a dedicated membership and fundraising division. This change is to enable us to better realise our potential and to drive ambitious growth in these two key functions over the coming years. In effect, the evolved structure means that our existing membership staff will move out of our Services division (HR, IT, Finance and Facilities), and our existing fundraising staff will move out of our Advocacy and Engagement division (Policy and Communication) and come together as a new division, lead by a new membership and fundraising director, who will join the Senior Management Team and report directly to me. We are currently recruiting for this key post.

Code of conduct - for information

The Ramblers has had a code of conduct in place - for all members, volunteers, staff and trustees - since

2009. This code sets out what we should expect of each other to keep Ramblers activities enjoyable, and our working relationships pleasant and productive. Given the debate this month in Westminster Hall, where MPs spoke about the abuse and intimidation they were subjected to during the election, this is a timely topic. We need to treat each other with mutual respect and courtesy at all times. The Ramblers team is a wonderfully diverse one, and when there are differences of opinion - as there are bound to be from time to time - we must always seek ways to resolve these differences constructively and co-operatively. You can find out more about the code on [our website](#).

Ramblers Roadshow - please book your place on one of the last events of 2017

The Ramblers Roadshow is making its way to Glasgow and the Lake District on Saturday 09 and Saturday 30 September respectively. Our Roadshows have received terrific feedback from members and volunteers - so please book [your free place now here](#).

Roadshows are run in partnership with the local area and are helping members and volunteers to get more out of their Ramblers membership. They're a great way to meet other members, walking experts and specialist partners, and are a perfect opportunity to learn more about our organisation and vision, what we do as a charity and the impact that we collectively make.

Suffolk path - news of successful legal action

One of our veteran volunteers, John Andrews, is an expert in the interpretation of old documentary evidence. Over the years he made many applications to Suffolk County Council to prove the existence of rights of way to fill up the gaps in the network which were left when the definitive map was not thoroughly drawn up in parts of that county. Based on an award of 1805 made under the Inclosure Act 1801, John applied for a significant connecting path to be added to the definitive map at Great Barton. Landowners objected and the matter fell to be determined by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inspector declined to confirm the order which would have recognised the path as a public right of way, as in his view, the 1805 award did not describe the route which John was claiming.

John and Ramblers staff believed that the Inspector was applying too strict a test and expecting too much from the draughtsmanship of the inclosure award and map. We therefore took counsel's opinion. Counsel (the renowned expert Ross Crail) agreed with us, and drafted a pre-action letter to the Secretary of State to start judicial review of the Inspector's decision. To our delight, the Secretary of State's lawyers agreed with us, and have consented to "submit to judgment" in this matter of the 1805 Great Barton Inclosure Award. So the decision will be quashed and the matter re-determined. This is good news not just for this matter, but for the many other claims John has with Suffolk County Council based on similar documentation, some of which will turn on the same point of interpretation. It's terrific

that the situation has gone this way, without the need for us to apply to the High Court for a full hearing.

Somerset path - update on a case which the Ramblers are currently defending

On Tuesday 18 July in the village hall at Othery, near Bridgwater, Somerset, a public inquiry commenced into the deletion of a public footpath from the definitive map ("Deletion" means where it is alleged that the path is wrongly shown as a right of way). The Ramblers claimed this path back in the 1950s, so we are opposing the deletion. If re-opened (it has been obstructed for many years) it would be a valuable link. It is half a kilometre long and runs through attractive woodland. The Somerset Ramblers, Carl Earl in particular, are fighting the deletion. It was a Ramblers volunteer, Stan Marriott, who got the path added to the definitive map when it was being drawn up in c1957. Stan was responsible for the addition of dozens of paths in the West Country. Sixty years on, we have instructed an expert rights of way solicitor (Alan Kind of the Byways and Bridleways Trust), to assist the Somerset Ramblers in presenting our case at this new inquiry into the issue. The matter may well attract interest from the media, as it is being championed by the "Intrusive Footpaths" lobby.

Ramblers Cymru - news of a major new consultation

Recent weeks have seen exciting (and in some cases, challenging) proposals put forward by the Welsh Government which could drastically alter the walking landscape of Wales. Perhaps most pertinent to Ramblers is the suggestion that the path network is opened up for cyclists and horse riders. This would be a bold move which would see rights of way legislation diverge significantly in Wales from England. A statutory code for access, the removal of the 2026 cut-off date for historical paths to be recorded, and an all-Wales digitised definitive map are all suggestions which Ramblers Cymru have long called for - and all are included in the proposals - so there is much to welcome too. Ramblers Cymru will be leading a campaign over the coming month, to ask members to respond, to help make sure walkers' rights are protected and to ensure our voices are heard.

Ramblers Scotland - success of family walks and investigation into rogue hill tracks

Following the success of our family walks programmes in Edinburgh and Dundee, walkers in the West of Scotland are hoping to trial a similar series of family-friendly walks. Glasgow Ramblers will coordinate an initial programme of eight fortnightly walks from September to December. Each walk will cover about 3-4 miles and last under three hours, leaving plenty of time for play. If successful, it is hoped it can become a permanent walking programme from March 2018. If you're interested in attending – or even better, running – a family walk, please email info@glasgowramblers.org.uk.

We welcome news that Cairngorms National Park Authority is investigating two unauthorised vehicle tracks on beautiful hills on the Cluny and Glen Clova estates. Fingers crossed for outcomes that will restore these much-loved landscapes. Scottish Environment LINK is currently assessing the damage caused by controversial hill tracks right across Scotland, ahead of a new report next Spring. You can help - please send photos or videos to hilltracks@scotlink.org or tweet using the hashtag #Hilltracks. Find [more info here](#).



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