

NORTH HERTS RAMBLERS GROUP AGM MINUTES 2025

AGM Meeting 7.00pm Friday 14 November 2025

Location: St Martin's Parish Centre, Knebworth

Present: 20 – see attendance register

Apologies: Peter Briercliffe, Liz Fischer, Mary Nudds, Dave Ashby

1. Welcome

Sally thanked everyone for coming on the wettest night of the year.

2. Previous minutes

The previous minutes of the AGM 2024 were agreed and signed.

3. Chairman's report

Once again we have produced a huge walks programme over the year offering walks on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, in addition the dog friendly walks have remained popular. In April we introduced a monthly Sunday short walk which have proved to be very popular so from September we increased the frequency of these walks.

Membership remains stable at around 435-440 and we are often joined by walkers from other groups.

This year Ramblers Association decided to take a new approach to recognising walk leader experience so the organisation can demonstrate that all walk leader skills are up to date. The aim was to reduce the risk of individual volunteers, and Ramblers as an organisation, being exposed if something goes wrong. An email was sent out in July to all registered walk leaders to send a positive and clear message of the Ramblers aims and was intended to inspire the walk leaders to read the hand book to automatically update volunteer records. In addition walk leaders who had completed 12 walks in the last three years were required to declare this on line. Newer walk leaders who had not led 12 walks were required to complete two on line training courses and read the handbook to become registered as a walk leader.

The committee was worried there would be a negative reaction to this and we are very grateful to all the leaders who complied with the new requirements and we currently have a good number of registered walk leaders and we thank them all for taking the appropriate action. We are keen to recruit new walk leaders who will have to complete the online training which is easy to follow. We will support new walk leaders and are willing to offer group training sessions if required.

We enjoyed a variety of social events this year. We visited Barnsdale Gardens and the National Falconry Centre. We had two train trips to London including the annual clues walk. Having had to cancel the two previous garden parties due to poor weather we decided to have the party by the river in Langford so we could use the village hall if it rained. Low and behold it was one of the hottest weekends of the year. We did however appreciate a beautifully air conditioned hall for our bring and share buffet. The Christmas walk and buffet continues to be the most popular event of the year with 40 people booked this year.

We went to Thorpness in Suffolk for our annual holiday in July. The weather was Mediterranean, the food excellent and the evening entertainment enjoyed by all. The dog friendly walkers went to the same hotel in November.

Despite low attendance on walks the previous year the Stevenage Walking Festival went ahead with the backing of Stevenage Borough Council concentrating mainly on shorter walks to attract new walkers. We were also invited by Bedfordshire Ramblers to take part in their walking festival and we offered two walks. The Herts and North London Walks Fest was very popular and, with the Stag Walkers, we led several walks.

Our main publicity is the monthly walks leaflet we produce and is delivered to libraries, information centres and appropriate shops in the area. A huge thank you to Gabriela and Chris who manage this so efficiently.

With the Stag Walkers in April we had a stand at the Stevenage Health Fair and in September the Hitchin Health and Wellbeing day. While it is difficult to judge if this publicity leads to new walkers, 30-40 people took away information at these events.

This year we say farewell to Angela who is stepping down from her post as Treasurer for the last 11 years. A bit thank you to Angela for all her hard work over the years. Sally presented Angela with a token of our gratitude.

We look forward to planning a full programme of walks, social events and our annual holiday which will be in Kent next year.

4. Treasurer's Report

The year commenced with £3608.17 in the bank account (£1854.65 in the main account and £1753.52 in the self funded account).

The annual grant received from Ramblers was £700.00 and together with sales of Ten Walks in North Hertfordshire/Ten More Walks in North Hertfordshire of £43.00 and a donation from Ramblers Worldwide holidays of £140.00, our total annual income was £883.00.

Our annual admin expenditure remains low due to all communications being made via email. Whilst our walks programme is produced electronically, in an effort to attract more members we have again printed walks programmes which have been distributed to libraries and information centres.

The total expenditure under the heading Promoting Walking £367.75 is as follows:-

Printing Walks programmes £92.16
Ordnance Survey subscription £28.99
Stevenage Walking Festival History Walks £50.00
STOOP leaflets & Waymarkers £196.60

Revenue from Ramblers Worldwide Holidays was in total £550.00 and £140.00 has been allocated to the main account and £410.00 to the self funded account.

The Christmas Party and Summer Garden party have been subsidised by the self funded surplus and other social events throughout the year more or less broke even.

The end of year balance to be carried forward is £5067.38 (£2160.49 in the main account and £2906.89 in the self funded account – the self funded balance is higher than the recommended amount of £1500 but is partially offset by the fact we are holding £1320.00 for a holiday planned for 2026 and also £50.00 deposit for a hall booking for the Christmas party to be held in December 2025). £1600 has been designated for 2025/2026 to partially cover the expense of a lectern of the HOOP footpath to be erected near Hitchin Library.

Next year's budget allocation is the basic amount of £580.70.

Thanks to Bob Green who again has audited our accounts and Angela proposed he continue next year.

5. Submitted motions - there were none.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

As Angela is stepping down Julian Young, a dog friendly walker has kindly agreed to be proposed for the role of Treasurer. Sally proposed Julian and Gabriela seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Sally proposed the rest on the committee as follows;

Secretary	Jo Lindridge
Vice Chair	Mark Brumwell
Membership	Carol Stokes
Web Master	Leon Fotiadis
Newsletter	Chris Young
Social	Sally Cannon
Programme secretary	Gabriela Lovelace

Member
Member

Jenny Mason
Alison Baker

Gwyn seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

8. HF Holiday Shares

HF holiday shares entitles the group to £30 per person off a group booking of more than 10 people, should we keep or sell these shares? It was decided that although we have not booked with HF recently at some time in the future we might, so we would keep them.

9. Any other business

Carol said Stevenage Walking Festival will go ahead next year from 2-10 May.

Leon commented on how low the percentage of money returned to the group by Ramblers is compared to the money paid by the group in subscriptions.