



SHROPSHIRE RAMBLERS AGM 2026

MINUTES OF THE FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING OF THE SHROPSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS HELD
AT LEEBOTWOOD, SHROPSHIRE ON SATURDAY 24TH
JANUARY 2026

Date: 24th January 2026

Time: 14:00hrs

Meeting called to order by: Charles Edwards (Chair South Shropshire Ramblers)

1. IN ATTENDANCE

South Shropshire Group: Charles Edwards (CE), Gwyneth Edwards (GE), Mandy Casserley, Jane Grant, John Grant, Gill Mortimer, Stephen Hill (SH), Pam Farquhar, Bob Woodley, Darren Hall, Lorraine Munn,

Oswestry Group: Diane Gray (DG), Maggie Hill, Richard Cox, Alison Curran, David Law, Peter Carr (PC), Trevor Allison (TA),

Market Drayton Group: Jeff Vaughan (JV), Janice Vaughan, Claire Baker (CB),

Shrewsbury Group: Phil Barnes,

Telford & East Shropshire Group: Helen Hurman (HH), Marion Law

Shrewsbury Young Ramblers Group: Hannah Jones, Ben Finch (BF),

Shrewsbury Hill-walking Club: Louise Dermont (LD),

Bridgnorth Walking Club: Pam Day (PD),

Whitchurch Walkers: Malcolm Monies (MM),

1.1. APOLOGIES

Sue Turner, Amanda Hartley-Newton, Gillian Stead, John Miles, Heather Morris, Chris Humphries, Val Arbery.



2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on the 1st February 2025 were approved with minor amendments to names which should read Claire Baker and Helen Hurman.

Issue was raised in connection with the publishing of the financial statements for the year 2024. Members reported not being able to find the financial statement for this year. (CE) and (PC) apologised for the failure – the Area website has become dormant - and confirmed that the Financial Statement had been published on the Area website before the 2025 AGM and circulated to all groups with the Minutes of the 2025 meeting.

The legality of the AGM was raised as Members raised the issue of whether in the current circumstances, with limited Area Officer participation and no current Area meetings being convened, that the current organisation and therefore AGM could constitute a legally compliant AGM.

(PC) confirmed that guidance from Ramblers national office had confirmed that the current Area structure was compliant with the Ramblers constitution and that a review of national, regional and group structure was under way, with an expected report in late 2026.

Four objections were recorded for the proposal to accept the minutes and the legitimacy of the AGM for 2026. The proposal was accepted by majority vote.

3. REPORTS FROM GROUPS

- 3.1. **Shrewsbury Group** – Written Report, copy attached.
- 3.2. **Shropshire Young Ramblers** – (BF) provided a verbal report on the group. Committee members role have been filled. Social Events are progressing with an appointment of a Social Events role. In response to concerns around recruiting and retaining Walk Leaders for the group, good progress has been made; innovation in this area is to schedule new Walk Leader dates in the walks programme to encourage new Walk Leaders to submit walks.
- 3.3. **Market Drayton Ramblers** – (CB) provided a verbal update on the group. Key items were, footpath and planning for area is robust and effective, group has Facebook/WhatsApp and a new Web presence. The group has provided 135 walks and 10 weekends for members in the last year. Currently the group has 46 Walk Leaders registered. Concern is the ageing demographics for the group which sees an inevitable loss of active members.
- 3.4. **Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers** – (HH) provided a verbal update on the group. Offering a wide range of walks over the preceding year. A joint walking partnership with the Bridgnorth Walking Club has been very successful. Key issues are the registration of Walk Leaders, this has seen a drop in active Walk Leaders for the group. Budget for the group is healthy, and the funds have provided training, hi-vis vests and equipment for footpath clearance. Membership is robust at around 270 members of which 50 are active members.
- 3.5. **Oswestry Ramblers** – (DG) provided a verbal update on the group. 104 walks provided for members in the preceding 12 months, 657 miles. Currently 28 Walk Leaders registered. The group maintains a Facebook page and has participated in four public



- 3.6. events as well as two holidays for members. Christmas Lunch was actively published and enjoyed by all members who attended. Issues of concern were that current finances stream does not meet expected expenditure for the group.
- 3.7. **South Shropshire Ramblers** – (CE) and (SH) provided a verbal update on the group. 48 walks provided in the preceding 12 months, 450 miles. Walking holiday provided for members to Exmoor. Participation in public events to promote Rambler's footpath and walks programme. 140 members currently with 30 active members. Currently 18 Walk Leaders. Plan to supply leaders with 1st aid kits. Key concerns are ageing demographics with inevitable loss of members. Walk Leader recruitment and retention.
- 3.8. **Bridgnorth and District Walking Club** – (PD) provided a verbal update on the group. Currently 60 members with a membership fee of £15 p.a. Active walk programme with a programme of social walks. Group offers three mountain walks per year. Finances are robust with funding for First Aid course and First aid kits supplied to all Walk Leaders in the preceding 12 months. Group has two Facebook presence, a public and a second private page for members. Walk Leader training is an ongoing commitment. The group has provided a Spring Ramble/ Mince Pie Ramble for members, plus two walking holidays for members.
- 3.9. **Whitchurch Walkers** - (MM) provided a verbal update on the group. Celebrating 50yrs of being a walking club this year, Neil Moore was remembered as the long-standing chair of the group. The group has published the Whitchurch Wheel book of walks. The recent canal breach has required several footpath diversions and will be in existence for some time while repair and restoration work is undertaken by the Canal Trust. The group has installed a seat on the Sandstone Trail. A weekend break in Cumbria has been provided for members. Current concerns are the recruitment and retainment of Walk Leaders.
- 3.10. **Shrewsbury Hillwalking Club** – (LD) provided a verbal brief for the group. The group has provided a walk every week for the preceding year, 70 members with 30 active members. Car sharing is encouraged to reduce parking requirements at isolated locations. Mentoring and New guide training has been provided. First Aid kits issued to all Walk Leaders. An active social programme is provided. Trips for members have been provided including Peak district/ Lake district and Alps. Budget is robust with a £12 membership. The group has a Web/WhatsApp presence which attracts new members.

4. REPORTS FROM AREA COMMITTEE OFFICERS

4.1. Area Secretary and Footpath Officer – Peter Carr

(PC) provided a verbal briefing. The well documented financial issues at Shropshire County Council have impacted the level of liaison with Council officials on planning applications which adversely affect footpaths across the county.

Shropshire Area Ramblers are persisting with establishing and renewing contact with council officers to resolve these issues and establish a robust consultation process.

4.2. Area Environmental Protection Officer and Lost Ways Researcher – Trevor Allison

(TA) provided a verbal update to the members. Having undertaken the role for several years it is apparent that current budget restriction are negatively impacting Shropshire County Council services in respect of footpaths and rights of way.

Continued efforts will be made to improve the consultation process with Shropshire County Council.



4.3. Area Treasurer – Jeff Vaughan

(JV) provided a verbal briefing to the group. Financially the Area budget was robust. Key issues are the lack of spending on identified priorities, including an allocation to training which has not been spent. Member were alerted the possibility that unspent funds may be repaid to central funds in the future.

Groups are requested to submit spending proposals to the Area Treasurer for budget allocation to prevent loss of funds to central office.

(JV) apologised for the published accounts for 2024/25 accounts being available for members to view. Every endeavour will be taken to ensure this omission is rectified for the 2025 published accounts, which are attached to these minutes.

4.4. Shropshire Hills National Landscape Representative – Charles Edwards

(CE) highlighted the change in format for the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. Previously Ramblers had a position on the National Landscape Partnership but will now become Members of the National y Landscape Forum, meeting twice a year. The current focus is on encouraging and supporting wildlife friendly farming developments. Continued efforts will be made to enhance and improve public access to the National Landscape under the new format.

5. GROUP BEST PRACTICE

(CE) called on groups to provide a single example of best practice which could assist other groups in 2026:

- Shrewsbury Ramblers – having fun, which is what it's all about
- South Shropshire Ramblers – utilise WhatsApp for group communication
- Shropshire Young Ramblers – Allocate a New Walk Leader date in the programme each month to encourage engagement
- Market Drayton Ramblers – Encourage culture of training Walk Leaders
- Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers – Add a dog walk to the programme and provide short/social walks.
- Oswestry Ramblers – Publish a walk recce as an informal Walk Leader training session.
- Bridgnorth Walking Club – Provide a varied walking programme
- Shrewsbury Hill Walking Club – Fill every weekend with a walk.



6. NOMINATIONS FOR AREA COMMITTEE OFFICERS

(CE) called for nominations for Area Committee officer roles. No nominations were received for the vacant positions. The proposal was that existing post holders would retain their existing positions and the Committee was elected en-bloc.

ROLE	NAME
Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Website Officer.	Vacant
Treasurer	Jeff Vaughan
Area Footpath Secretary	Peter Carr
Area Environmental Protection Officer and Lost Ways Researcher	Trevor Allison
Shropshire Hills National Landscape Representative	Charles Edwards
Publicity Officer	Amanda Hartley-Newton
Membership Co-ordinator	Heather Morris
Area delegates to General Council	Helen Hurman, Claire Baker

7. FUTURE OF SHROPSHIRE RAMBLERS AREA

(CE) handed the Chair to (PC) to lead the discussion on the future organisation and structure of the Shropshire Area Ramblers.

(PC) briefed the meeting on the current situation and guidance from the national office on structure, potential changes and the current national review of the structure of Ramblers across the national, regional and areas.

A discussion was conducted regarding the Oswestry Ramblers procedural point about whether the current suspension of the Area organisation was legal and within constitutional rules. (PC) confirmed that abeyance of the Area committee would be constitutionally valid and compliant.

A discussion was held on the proposal following the 2025 AGM for the groups to take it in turns to run the Area for a year. This had failed to gain the necessary support across the area, with some groups highlighting that they did not currently have the resources or willingness to undertake additional roles supporting the Area management structure.

A proposal was put to the meeting by Oswestry group to dissolve Shropshire Area, on the basis that not running it properly was wrong and it would be better to put the area out of its misery. A counterproposal was made by Charles Edwards that the Area be put into abeyance for a year pending the outcome of National RA's review of Areas and Groups, with the Committee



members elected as per Item 6 above continuing as official 'point of contact' individuals for their respective responsibilities for the year.

The proposal to dissolve was defeated and the abeyance counterproposal was passed by majority vote. Objections were noted and will be considered prior to any future changes in structure or responsibilities.

Market Drayton Ramblers offered to host the Shropshire Area AGM in 2027. This was accepted and noted.

It was noted that the existing Area Website required maintenance and updating. The meeting accepted a kindly offer by Marcus Whitcomb from Telford and East Shropshire to undertake this task. This is a short-term solution to alleviate the current issues with Area communication with members and the public.

Area delegates to the General Council were retained as per the current roles (shown above).

8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER FOR AREA TREASURY ACCOUNTS

Appointment as independent examiner for Area treasury accounts called for nominations. Claire Baker was nominated and voted into the role.

9. NEXT AREA AGM

Next Area AGM is to be held in February 2027, hosted by Market Drayton Ramblers. Time/Venue will be published.

10. AOB

Members were reminded that Walk Leaders' First Aid kits require continual review to ensure all items within the kit are in current use by expiry dates.

11. MEETING CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 16:00hrs.

Financial Report at 30/09/25

	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Main</u>
<u>Income</u>		
From CO (Funding)		2,500.00
Deposit Interest		0.00
Wat's Dyke	3,155.05	
Transfer from Groups		200.00
Transfer from Restricted		500.00
Total	3,155.05	3,200.00
<u>Expenditure</u>		
To Groups (Funding)		1,882.20
Bank Charges		
Newsletter/Publicity		151.58
Campaigns/Casework		0.00
Meetings (incl AGM)		40.50
Admin		0.00
Other		450.00
Transfer to Main	500.00	
Total	500.00	2,524.28
+/- Income v Expenditure	2,655.05	675.72
Balance b/f from previous year	500.00	1,982.77
<u>Total</u>	<u>3,155.05</u>	<u>2,658.49</u>
<u>Total all categories</u>		<u>5,813.54</u>
% RESERVE		414.04

Assets

Bank balance per statement	5813.54
Current liabilities (Cheques not cashed)	<u>0.00</u>

Net Assets

5813.54

Financed by:-

Funds brought forward from 2023/24 (Main Funds)	1982.77
Plus excess of Income over expenditure (Main Funds)	675.72
Plus Restricted Funds	<u>3155.05</u>
	5813.54

Independent Examiner's Statement

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group Independent Examination Guidelines, I consider the Shropshire Area accounts to have been properly prepared and give a true and fair view of the Area's finances for the year to 30th September 2025

Signed: 

C. Baker- Independent Examiner

Date: 27/10/25.

Signed: 

J.I. Vaughan - Area Treasurer

Date: 27/10/25