Chair's Report 2026

Welcome to the Redditch Ramblers AGM.

Right, the more boring stuff first. The Ramblers are undertaking a review of how they are structured. So far, this hasn't had any effect on us. The Worcestershire Area has gone into "abeyance" and I don't really think anyone has noticed! Big Ramblers are sending out a lot of information via email so I'd ask you all to check your inboxes to keep up to date with changes & training.

We've had another successful year with a busy programme. There has been a walk almost every Sunday, most Saturdays and some midweek walks & evening strolls in the summer. The weather hasn't always been kind this year with some walks being washed out at the beginning of the year & others postponed due to excessive heat in summer. Our walk leaders strive to bring variety and added interest to our walks which take us into places in our local area and beyond. Thanks must go to the commitment of our walk leaders. This is especially true now that The Ramblers now require that all Walk Leaders must be qualified. Qualified means either by having led 12 walks in the past 3 years or by completing their online training course. The course takes only a couple of hours and is easy to do; you can't fail it. I encourage members to do this course. Though in my opinion, this training maybe a barrier to potential walk leaders coming forward.

We've had a good programme of social events. We returned to The Manor Hotel in Okehampton. We explored the waterfalls at Pontneddfechan. We skipped around the Yorkshire Dales from Skipton. There was a Barn Dance in spring & Skittles in a couple of weeks' time. Thanks again to those who organised, recced & led those events. We are looking for ideas for holidays & coach trips for 2027 so please speak up.

The Working Party/Footpath Clearance group have been under utilised this year. Not through their choice but by the lack of backing from Worcestershire County Council. September & October were the first opportunity they had to dust of their spades & loppers this year undertaking clearance work for North Bromsgrove Footpaths Working Group on the Foresters Walk, near Dodford. I hope they all do the online training the Ramblers require them to do!

You will have seen from your email invitation to the AGM that Alan Athey (Big Al), Julie Moss & Eileen McMahon are stepping down from the Committee. On behalf of the Committee & Redditch Ramblers, I'd like to thank them for their hard work and the time they have given to helping the club. Often a bit like herding cats! We have had a couple of volunteers step forward to be included on the committee & we will come to that business shortly. Please remember the Committee door is always open! That saying, I want to inform you that it is my intention to step down as Chair of Redditch Ramblers with affect from the AGM of 2027. This gives anyone interested in taking over to find out what the role entails & shadow me.

So, to conclude thank you for everyone that makes Redditch Ramblers what it is – the walkers, the organisers & leaders. Here's to another successful year.