

Redditch Ramblers AGM

Minutes

Sunday 2 November 2025

12.30 pm

Webheath Village Hall, Heathfield Road, Redditch B97 5SQ

There were 34 members present

1. Apologies: Sheila Derges, Neil Webb, Deb Baker, Paul Field, Denise Field, Julie Flowers, Mary Shaw, Diana Holt, Marie Dallow & Deb Rood

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 17 November 2024 would be recirculated by **Steph.**

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Acting Chair's Report

2025 had been a remarkable year for Redditch Ramblers. January saw the 40th anniversary of the inception and a walk along pretty much the inaugural route was held to mark this. Some of the founding members came along and were welcomed at the midway point. The 40th anniversary was also to be marked at the Redditch Ramblers Christmas meal at the Neville, now fully booked, and it is also being marked by Worcester Area at their AGM in February.

Redditch Ramblers had continued to offer a variety of walks designed to cater for the needs and desires of members. This was due to the willingness of walk leaders volunteering their time and knowledge to find a walk and the walks coordinating team ensuring that blanks in the walk programme were filled. Members had enjoyed another busy year travelling on holidays & coach trips. Thanks were given to the organisers of these events. There had, as ever, been an array of social events organised, so thanks were also given to those people for giving up their time to make events special for everyone.

It could not have gone unnoticed that the committee this year was markedly different from that of the last AGM. Gay, Denise, Paul, Annie & Sara had all stepped back. All were thanked for their hard work, but special thanks went to Gay. Gay, as Chair was at the helm for nearly a decade of outstanding success for Redditch Ramblers and it was to her we all owed a debt of gratitude. At a rough estimate, between them, they had given somewhere in the region of 50 years of voluntary service to Redditch Ramblers.

No ramblers group could function without volunteers. Those members who just wanted to walk were urged to consider what goes into that walk behind the scenes. Someone (a Walk Leader) decided to put on a walk & recce it, possibly several times to ensure was safe, had car parking, views and loos. The walk details were passed to one of 3 walk coordinators (Sue Upton, Eileen & Chelle) who checked amongst other things the postcode and W3W were correct, whether walkers knew where the walk was starting from etc. Then those walks were passed on to the main walks coordinator (Deb Rood) who rechecked all the details and published them on the national Ramblers website so that any Rambler nationwide could see what we are offering. Also, the details were taken and sent out to members as a walks programme, a lot of work before a Rambler has even put their boots on!

The volunteers didn't just stop with planning & leading walks. There was also a footpath group, who try to meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month to keep access to footpaths open.

Redditch Ramblers could not exist without these vital volunteers, (including the committee), whose work goes largely unseen. The volunteers made walks enjoyable & legal. There followed a plea to those not actively involved in volunteering to become involved. Existing walk leaders were willing to help with map reading and planning a walk. There was a WhatsApp group for people wanting to recce to find a buddy. For those not wanting to lead, the vital role of back-marker was also available. Further opportunities included helping the committee ad hoc by contacting a coach company or phoning the local village hall to book a meeting or picking up shears to help the footpaths group once a month. Members were again urged to consider giving something, anything back to Redditch Ramblers which is a thriving club and wants to continue to be so. This was not possible without our unpaid, unsung heroes, our volunteers.

5. Treasurer's Report

It had been a quiet year – receipts were £4024.67 and payments were £4129.76

This year Redditch Ramblers had to pay bank charges which are approximately £4.25 per month

All socials ie last years Xmas meal –Motown night, skittles night, and kayaking all balanced out as did the coach trip to Llangollen

We were paid £292 from area but our payments paid against this figure were service charges £30.97. last years AGM £168, working party expenses £121, Recce costs £87 and misc. expenses £40 which amounts to £446.97 which is a overspend of £154.97

The bank balance stood at £1689.05

The only outstanding debit was a deposit paid for the Barn Dance of £120.00 which leaves a credit of £1569.05

6. Secretary's Report

The secretary had received leaflets promoting ramblers which she had passed to the Membership Secretary

7. Membership Secretary's Report

As of the 27 November 2025 there were 208 members which is 23 more than at the last AGM in November 2024, this being the largest increase in our membership year on year to date and a very positive statistic. Over the past three months there had been 14 new members an average of 4.67 per month. Redditch Ramblers responds to enquiries and introduces people to the Ramblers at least once a week - so again this was extremely positive. The average of a Redditch Ramblers was 69 years old, a slightly lower figure than last year.

9. Walk Programme Report

During the last 12 months Redditch Ramblers had offered a very wide variety of walks, most Saturdays and Sundays and also including many mid-week walks. There had been 103 walks, covering an incredible 921 miles and incorporating a mixture of easy, leisurely and moderate levels of walking, with something to suit everyone. We had also had the pleasure, on many occasions, of welcoming visiting walkers from other Rambler groups which is a testament to what Redditch Ramblers has to offer.

In addition to the regular walks, during 2025 Redditch Ramblers had delivered one coach trip and 3 walking holidays all which had been well supported.

Thanks and recognition were passed to all the walk leaders and walk co-ordinators who had put a huge amount of time and effort into compiling such a diverse and well thought out walking programme and also to those people who had dedicated a large amount of time organising all of the trips and holidays.

As always, Redditch Ramblers were keen to encourage members, new and long-standing, to step forward and offer any assistance with putting together the walk programme, whether it be leading walks or working alongside the current walk leaders to come up with ideas and suggestions for new walks. This had been discussed with the Committee and some proposals to take this forward were being considered.

Website

There had been a combined effort in ensuring that the current Redditch Rambler's website had been brought up to date. This was not only to provide details of the current walking programme but also to include important information about forthcoming events, social and otherwise, that take place throughout the year.

Photographs had been updated and it was hoped to continue to build the website as a platform to promote and advertise all the good work we are doing as a group.

10. Footpaths Report (Glyn Thomas)

The work this year had been severely affected by staff losses and budget cuts at Worcestershire Countryside Services (WCS). In previous years WCS would allocate us local tasks from their priority list of footpath reports from the public, contact the landowner concerned for permission to carry out the work, then bring the materials and tools required to the site so that we could do the job – under the supervision of a WCS footpath officer. The officer is required so that our volunteers are covered by WCC insurance when working.

Currently, WCS only had one member of staff covering volunteer groups for the whole county and at the end of last year they had advised that they could not supervise groups or offer transport of materials and tools to site. Consequently, we were only able to carry out self-supervised work such as vegetation clearance or waymark replacement. Vegetation clearance was not possible from March to September due to concern for nesting birds.

In one instance we were asked by WCS to replace a ditch crossing unsupervised, however the effort required for me to find the work site, do the risk analysis, contact the landowner, find a secure storage site near the work and arrange for a WCS contractor to drop off timber at the location took six site visits and numerous phone calls for a two-hour task - which we successfully completed. More recently, WCS asked us to do some work on installing steps – but at a site on the other side of Kidderminster. As this was a 40-mile round trip, it was turned down as it was not a “local” job

Glynn had decided not to do this type of work until such time as WCS can return to normal operations which is hoped to be at some future date.

Despite the above complications the Redditch footpaths team had completed two extensive clearance tasks – one at Elcocks Brook in January and one at Burcot in October. Ten volunteers had turned out on each of these tasks, and Glyn thanked everyone for their effort and enthusiasm in hacking through brambles and undergrowth to clear the way for local walkers. Five volunteers turned out to heave some heavy timbers across fields, dig out the old rotten planks and replace a ditch crossing in Bentley. Glyn again thanked those involved - not least for their sheer effort in carrying several 3.6 metre timbers for about a quarter of a mile.

Glyn hoped that 2026 would see an improvement in the situation at WCS and that the Footpaths Group could return to more regular working. The enthusiasm of the footpaths team was undimmed, and they were “raring to go” in the New Year – if they could get some work!

11. Committee Elections

		Proposed By	Seconded By
Chair	Steph Mills	Julie Moss	Sara Delaney
Treasurer	Max Jones	Ray Greenway	Deb Baker
Secretary	Julie Moss	Chelle K	Sara Delaney
Membership Secretary	Alan Athey	Steph Mills	Chelle K
Walks Coordinator /web Master	Deb Rood	Steph Mills	Chelle K
Saturday Walks Coordinator	Sue Upton	Eileen McMahon	Steph Mills
Sunday Walks Coordinator	Chelle K	Max Jones	Sara Delaney
Weekday Walks Coordinator	Eileen McMahon	Sara Delaney	Chelle K

12. Holidays & Social Update

:9 January: Barn Dance £10 ticket. Payment is to be made to Ramblers Account by 31 December. **Steph** to email out the details

22 November: Disco at Rocklands Members to inform **Eileen** if they wish to come Pay on the door

5 December: Area Carol Service organised by Bromsgrove

18 December: Christmas Meal at Neville. This is now full with 32 members booked

March: Trip to Okehampton

April: Possible coach trip being organised by Paul and Neil. The coach trip planned by Bromsgrove Ramblers has been cancelled.

May Holiday to Malta. This is now full.

13. Any Other Business

Andrea queried why National Ramblers had initiated Walk Leader Training. Andrea has already contacted them but the replies did not make it clear. The issue was raised of whether need a local interpretation of the training so that it is clear

that we have done all we can. Central Birmingham have organised training sessions. ICE cards make it clear we have done all we can.

Steph to email for volunteers to serve on a group to look into this. Veronica thought area could organise something and funding might be available. Area has also asked for budget to provide more first aid training.

The meeting closed at 1.25pm.

DRAFT