

Minutes of the AGM of Greater Manchester and High Peak Ramblers held on Saturday 30 November 2024

	Present	Margaret Manning, John Ireland, Alan Manning, Salle Dare, Andy Barclay Debbie Watson, , John Rattray, Stewart Ramsden, Prue Ramsden, Margaret Squires, Liz Jones, Mags Metcalf, Mary Carr, Alan Scholes, Edgar Ernstbrunner (on line), Janice Kerrigan, Sean Dunne, Andrew Read, Jacqui Knowles, Jan Moore, Rod Ford (visitor from East Cheshire) Mark Chung (Trustee), Rachel Foster, Jacci Broomhead, Peter Capon, Lesley Kenworthy, Sue Daber, Geoff Rudd, Catherine Fox, Colin Fox, Katerina Frienski, Mary Morley, Phil Machen, Ellie Schenk, Mark Behan, Duncan Challen, Christine Bell, Ed Stacey, Stephen Slater, Andrew Read, Tom Ross (president candidate)	
	Apologies for Absence	Barry Windle, Barbara Keeley, Cath Fernley, Chitra Ramachandran and Kath Thorley	
1.	Chair's Opening Remarks	The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked people for coming on the walk. Chair gave Barbara Keeley's apologies and explained that she had resigned as president. Barbara said she had enjoyed being part of the Ramblers and from her position in the Lords is still willing to help the Ramblers. The chair introduced Tom Ross as leader of Trafford MBC and the Green City Lead for Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) The Chair announced a minute's silence for all those who have passed away during the last year: Roy Baker, Derek Clutterbuck, John Edwards, Geoff Holland, Ann Jones Adrian Lohrey, June Mabon, Nick Mills, Wilfrid Sutton, David Woods, Jeff Snowden Finally, the chair invited everyone to a social gathering after the meeting organised by Debbie Watson and Andy Barclay.	
2.	Ramblers Trustee Address – Mark Cheung	Mark Chung described to the meeting how the Board of Trustees works. There are 13 Trustees, and he is the only person from the North. There will be one vacancy this year and he urged people to put themselves forward. He reminded the meeting that as a Charity the Ramblers has to benefit the public and the Ramblers can only do this through the volunteers. The Ramblers as a whole is grateful for all the work the volunteers do. The Ramblers is focussing on a revised and refreshed strategy which means concentrating on the Charitable objectives, including reaching out to people who don't walk and addressing the inequalities in path access and overall accessibility to walking. Part of this is trying to influence the government through the Access to Nature Bill. In addition, an anonymous donor has provided an	

		accessibility fund to improve PROW. He urged local groups to send before and after photos to RACO to support the campaign. We need to encourage more younger people to join, and Ramblers Scotland has developed “Out There Awards” to give 18 – 25 years olds an opportunity to lead walks. Ramblers’ wellbeing walks are taking place all over the country to help people with health issues. In response to a question from Alan Manning about moving from a members-based organisation to a supporter-based model Mark replied that the Ramblers had looked at similar organisations and research showed that younger people are reluctant to join an organisation and become a member but are willing to become a supporter. This may only be for a short time till they decide to support some other cause. The discussion is continuing but it is intended that there will still be membership of the Ramblers, but the organisation needs to broaden its appeal and adapt to developments amongst the public. The Chair thanked Mark for his interesting presentation.	
3.	Address by the candidate to be Area President, Tom Ross, Leader of Trafford Council and Green City Region Lead for GMCA	Tom said he was so pleased to be part of GMHP Ramblers and felt his invitation is an absolute honour and he wants to use his role to make a difference. He described his introduction to walking for leisure during COVID and how he went onto to walk a number of trails including the GM Ringway. He spoke warmly about the GM Ringway and the impact it has had, including on local businesses, so it is clear that such initiatives have an economic impact He talked about his role with GMCA and will be presenting a 5 year environment plan to the Green Summit, which will include retrofitting buildings, reduce reuse recycle, active travel etc and links the local nature recovery strategy and bio diversity. He has a role in a range of work in Trafford including children, adult social care, music, economic regeneration, environment. The PROW network falls within his remit as leader of Trafford MBC and the council have already invested a large amount into improving the network including Hale 6, but this has to be seen in the context of the overall financial position facing councils – Trafford has had £300m cut from its budget which is why there is such a backlog in PROW work. However, he wants to continue to try and improve the network because it has so many benefits including improved health, safety and social benefits. GM has had some success and working with Dame Sarah Storey, the Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner and they have some strategies in place including transport for 2040.	

		Alan Manning referred to the slides on work in Greater Manchester commending the role of GM Walking Voice and he also said that Ramblers were working with colleagues on a GM leisure walking plan to recognise the importance of walking for leisure.			
4.	GM Ringway	Andrew Read updated the meeting on latest development on GM Ringway now that the funding has come to an end. He was grateful for all the groups that had supported him particularly Margaret Manning and the Ramblers and CPRE who were the lead on managing the project. He was proud that the GM Ringway linked completely in with public transport. Local Authorities had been helpful in general but there had been some difficulties over signposting. The National Trust way marked the trail on their properties of Dunham Massey and Lyme Park. The next stage is moving to a friends group which will oversee the management of the trail. There is already an IT expert volunteer who is setting up ticketing system to resolve issues that the public raise. He still needs volunteers to manage the social media campaigns. He has secured a contract to write a Pathfinder guide for short walks in GM Manchester, including some of the GM Ringway. The Ramblers Area EC has agreed to fund the Mailchimp or similar for a limited time to distribute the newsletter, which Andrew will write. He hoped to produce a guide book for the GM Ringway too.			
5.	Minutes of the AGM held on 25th November 2023	Andy Barclay moved – John Ireland seconded. The minutes were approved			
6.	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising			
7.	Presentation of Annual Report	The Chair spoke to annual report and thanked John Ireland who had been area secretary for 10 years. There were no questions or comments, and the report was approved unanimously			
8.	Presentation of Accounts for 2023/2024 and Examiner's Report	The chair recorded thanks Jacqui Knowles who took over as treasurer during the year. The treasurer reported that final statements had been received and the budget request has been approved. Payments will be made to the groups in the near future. The final report from the Examiner now received. The treasurer thanked Jon Buckland for his support and all the group treasurers for submitting budgets and year end returns on time. The report was approved unanimously The meeting recorded its thanks to Jon Buckland for all the work he has done as treasurer			
9.	Election of Officers and individual members The AGM is required to vote for/approve the following posts at the AGM.				
		Name	Nominated	Seconded	Approved
	President	Tom Ross	Margaret Manning	Alan Manning	Yes

	Chair	Margaret Manning	Mags Metcalf	Andrew Read	yes
	Vice Chair	Salle Dare	Alan Manning	Sue Daber	yes
	General Secretary	Alan Manning	John Rattray	Debbie Watson	yes
	Treasurer	Jacqui Knowles	John Ireland	Margaret Manning	yes
	Membership Secretary	Gavin Poulton	Salle Dare	John Ireland	yes
	Minutes Secretary	Salle Dare	Andy Barclay	Debbie Watson	yes
	Footpath Co-ordinator	Chitra Ramachandran	Margaret Manning	Alan Manning	yes
	Walking Environment Officer	Alan Manning	Salle Dare	Debbie Watson	yes
	Website Administrator	Brian Coxon	Margaret Manning	Alan Manning	yes
	Publicity & Information Officer	No nomination			
	Wednesday Walks Officer	John Rattray	Sue Daber	Philippa Sharpe	yes
	Sunday Walks Officer	Jeff Lewis	Margaret Manning	John Rattray	yes
	Elected Member (up to 10)	John Ireland	Margaret Manning	Salle Dare	yes
		Edgar Ernstbrunner			
		Debbie Watson			
		Andy Barclay			
		Andrew Read			
10.	Election of Delegates to General Council	General Council will be held on 5 th April at the NEC in Birmingham. The Area is allowed 2 delegates based on our membership. John Ireland attends General Council as a member of the Motions Review Committee. No nominations were put forward and this was deferred to the January EC.			
11.	Appointment of Examiner	The current examiner, David Littlemore, is stepping down. The treasurer will write to thank him for doing this for several years. Jon Buckland has said that he is happy to take this role.			Agreed unanimously to appoint Jon Buckland as Examiner
12.	Motion for debate: Updating of Ramblers Articles	“This General Council asks the Board of Trustees to prepare special motions to a future General Council to update the main body of the Ramblers Articles of Association so that the document is fully gender neutral”			The motion was carried unanimously

	of Association for Gender Neutrality	John Ireland spoke to the motion. It will require legal advice and there is fixed time limit. The process has begun, and this motion represents the second stage. This would bring the Ramblers into line with other similar organisations such as the British Mountaineering Council. The Civil Service has produced a useful guide.	
13.	Any Other Business		
13.1	Area Booklets	It would seem that some members are not receiving the Area Booklet or getting it too late to plan walks. It was recognised that many groups now only use electronic communication, and no paper copies are sent out. The cost of printing and postage means that this trend is likely to grow. It was agreed that members without email should still have access to Ramblers material as part of the requirement to be inclusive. The feeling of the meeting was that members should be asked to opt into receiving printed materials. In other cases, members are not identified with a particular group so there is not group secretary to send out the material. There is a growing number of these “non-group” members and the chair has asked Central Office to transfer these members to a specific group. It was agreed we should keep the Area booklets because many members find them useful, and they are useful for handing out to non-members as a way of promoting the Ramblers. The next EC can consider any further issues to ensure those who want paper booklets get them in good time. Coach Rambles are advertised in the Area booklet and the point was raised that there are issues with falling numbers. The chair asked for this to be discussed outside the AGM.	
13.2	90 th Anniversary	2025 marked the 90 th anniversary of Ramblers. The chair asked groups to send in stories and pictures across 90 years that they may have from across the 90 years of history.	
13.3	Walk magazine	The last issue of Walk Magazine was e-mail only. The chair asked for members views. About half the members had opened the e version and a few had read more than one article. There was concern that the Ramblers are using this as a cost cutting exercise and also focussing on younger people who use emails as a means of communication, although Ramblers maintain this was a one-off exercise. The point was made that members leave the magazine in libraries or other public spaces as a way of promoting the Ramblers.	

		It was agreed that Ramblers should continue to produce the Magazine in hard copy and individual members should send in their comments to head office. This would have more impact than a general response from the area.	
14.	Closing Remarks	The chair said the presentations from Mark Ching and Tom Ross will be posted on the Area Website, thanked members for attending and reminded them of the social following the meeting.	