



Surrey Ramblers

Surrey Area of The Ramblers

Annual Report

Year Ending 30th September 2024

Area website: www.surreyramblers.org.uk

Surrey Area Groups

Croydon	East Surrey	Epsom & Ewell	Farnham
Godalming & Haslemere	Guildford	Kingston	Mole Valley
Reigate	Richmond	Staines	Surrey & Beyond (SABRE)
Surrey Heath	Surrey Young Walkers (SYW)	Sutton & Wandle Valley	Woking

Area Officer List for this Period

Area Role	Name	Email
Chair	Vacant	chair@surreyramblers.org.uk
Vice Chair (& Acting Chair)	Elliott Cairnes	vicechair@surreyramblers.org.uk
Secretary	Nick Bragger	secretary@surreyramblers.org.uk
Treasurer	Ka Yiu Lau	treasurer@surreyramblers.org.uk

Footpaths/Access	Andrew Bowden	footpaths-access@surreyramblers.org.uk
Membership	Colin Venton	membership@surreyramblers.org.uk
Publicity	David Cooper	publicity@surreyramblers.org.uk
Webmaster	Deb Skinner	webmaster@surreyramblers.org.uk
Minutes Secretary	Keith Chesterton	

Area Acting Chair's Report

Holly Matthews completed her 5 year term as Area Chair. At the February AGM, Elliot Cairnes was re-elected (unopposed) as Vice Chair. There were no candidates for Chair so Elliot volunteered to act as Chair until a suitable candidate was found (noting he did not consider himself as ideal for the Chair role due to his not presently walking). No candidates has to date come forward. Elliot as Area Vice Chair / Acting Chair has continued to date.

Surrey Area Council meetings and other formalities have progressed to schedule through the year to date. Presently, the roles of Chair and from year end Web Master are vacant and being advertised. Other roles are presently filled and active.

A growing low attendance at Area Council meetings has been noted with some groups not represented. An Area Council motion and circular is aiming to ensure improved attendance and coverage by all groups.

Surrey Area sent 3 representatives (Plus Brian Reader as Vice Chair) to Ramblers General Council at NEC in Birmingham.

The Surrey Summer Party - started by Holly - was not progressed this year with little appetite to organise.

Please note the continuing Chair vacancy - Your Surrey Area needs you!

Treasurer's Report

Happily, Surrey Area's activities in 2023/24 continued to recover from the disruptions of previous years. The 2023/24 budget requested funding of £5,960, with planned main expenditure totalling £5,915 (excluding group funding, restricted funds, and designated funds). The budget aimed to reduce our year-end reserves to approximately £4,800, achieving a reserves percentage of 81%.

Actual main expenditure during the year amounted to £5,100, resulting in a year-end reserves percentage of 103.6% and a remaining main bank balance of £5,600. The higher-than-planned reserves percentage was primarily due to lower-than-budgeted spending on publication cost and walk leader training.

Financial Highlights:

Publication Costs

Surrey Area's net contribution towards the *South East Walker* publication was £3,790, which was £510 lower than budgeted. This reduction was achieved because of a decrease in printed copies and £130 owed by Bedfordshire from the previous year was received in November 2023 and accounted for in this year's balance.

Walk Leader Training

£210 was budgeted to provide training for new walk leaders; however, no expenditure occurred during the year.

Practical Work

Two Brushcutter training courses were held at a total cost of £480, supporting efforts to maintain paths and walking routes across Surrey.

Meeting Costs

Total meeting costs for 2023/24 amounted to £630, which includes £260 for Surrey Area's in-person AGM held in February 2024. This compares to £245 in 2022/23 and highlights a rise in in-person gatherings as normal activities resume.

Restricted Funds

Surrey Area began the year with £1,435 designated for the "*Don't Lose Your Way*" (DLYW) project, which focuses on researching lost paths in Surrey. During the year, £57 was spent on related expenses, leaving £1,378 available to support this valuable work in the coming year.

Designated Funds

At the beginning of the year, Surrey Area held £330 in designated funds for Graham Butler's memorial plaques. These funds were transferred to the Vanguard's Rambling Club in November 2023.

Looking Ahead: Budget for 2024/25

Surrey Area's 2024/25 budget has been set conservatively, with a continued focus on reducing reserves to fall within the 40-100% range recommended by Ramblers Central Office. The key highlights of the upcoming budget include:

Funding Request: £4,000

Total Budgeted Expenditure: £5,525

Target Year-End Reserves: 51%

Planned Spending:

Practical Work: £600 to support essential footpath maintenance and related activities.

Walk Leader Training: £210 allocated to train new walk leaders.

Publication cost: £3,850 for four printed issues of *South East Walker*.

Notably, a digital trial was conducted for the December 2024 issue, with £828 spent on creating a PDF version. This marks a significant step towards modernizing our communications, balancing cost-effectiveness with the need to engage our members.

Meanwhile, Surrey's 16 groups have requested funding totaling £15,200 for 2024/25, an increase from £9,322 for 2023/24. This increase will support new first aid courses and kits for walk leader training, as well as the purchase of two kissing gates. At the end of 2023/24, cash balances amounted to £47,800, compared to £14,600 at the end of 2022/23.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the 16 Surrey group Treasurers for their dedication and diligence throughout the year. Their contributions ensure the smooth financial management of both the Area and its Groups, supporting our shared mission to promote walking, protect paths, and serve the walking community in Surrey.

Area Footpath & Access Secretary's Report

The Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)

There is still a significant backlog of problems/faults on footpaths in Surrey but Surrey County Council Access department are now at full strength so matters should improve. They are actively working to check and remove old problems from the database as well as dealing with new problems as they come in. They say that they have dealt with 4000 footpath problems in the last 12 months (compared to 3200 in the previous 12 months) with the yearly incoming problem count at about 3600.

We have agreed that the Surrey Ramblers Local Footpath Secretaries (LFS) and Volunteer Path Wardens (VPWs) are available for carrying out site visits under SCC instructions to help clear the backlog. This activity is ongoing with SCC assigning "Tasks" to LFSs via the CAMS and LFSs replying via this system.

Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW).

Our LFSs and Volunteer Path Wardens have volunteered to work on the detailed identification and research of Lost Paths in Surrey using historical records. We started with 60 High Priority routes in Surrey which have now been reduced to 26 after preliminary research (a lot turned out to be on the List of Streets ie already public). The remaining 26 are located in 6 of the more rural districts. Several of the districts, including all the outer London boroughs, have completed their research and have not

identified any lost paths within their areas. Further progress has been negligible during the summer.

No DMMOs (Definitive Map Modification Orders) have been applied for yet by Surrey LFS under the DLYW project. Two potential DMMOs have been identified. For information - SCC Access Dept are currently processing 43 DMMOs submitted mostly by others (only 2 are by Ramblers), some from as far back as 2015. Most of these are based on User Evidence (ie they are currently in use but not public rights of way) rather than on historical research.

Monthly "catch-up" meetings are held with the Ramblers Central Office DLYW Team although with recent staff changes/reductions at Central Office this is in flux.

MoD land in the west of Surrey - Interaction with the MoD is proving difficult and complex. Brian Reader is working on it and submits a review at each LFS meeting. Further details can be supplied if required.

BVPI

The May 2024 BVPI survey shows 83% of paths in Surrey are easy to use, similar to last year. Guildford Ramblers are again supplying administration staff to organise the survey.

LFSs and Volunteer Path Wardens (VPWs)

Training of VPWs was planned for October/November by SCC but this has not happened. Ramblers Centre Office have agreed to producing modular courses for new LFS - awaited.

Working Parties

Thomas Chatfield of SCC manages the 10 Surrey Ramblers Working Parties who go out clearing paths and repairing infrastructure (simple bridges, stiles, gates, signposts) each month.

Over the last 12 Months, Volunteers have contributed to over 2000 hours of work, by over 500 volunteer attendances. Since April they have built 4 bridges, installed 12 gates, and over 160 steps. They have cut over 6500m of overgrown vegetation and improved well over 60km of public rights of way. 11 gates are waiting to be installed. We have an ongoing discussion about when we can use power tools without SCC supervision.

Consultations

A number of consultations are sent to Surrey Ramblers every month. These are passed to the relevant LFSs and the responsibility for replying is delegated to them. Most are routine planning applications. The number of consultations appears to have increased recently but gone quiet again over the summer.

Surrey's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Every council must have a RoWIP and keep it up to date. To commence the consultation, SCC have asked the public to complete a survey about their views concerning the footpaths in Surrey. This survey closed on 10th March 2024 with over 4000 replies. Surrey Ramblers have made a submission as a group, suggesting that each council district holds a list of improvements that Surrey Ramblers (and/or others) would like to see so that local councils are aware in the event that funds become available. The RoWIP draft has now been issued for comment and the Local Footpath Secretaries are considering the contents.

Area Webmaster's Report

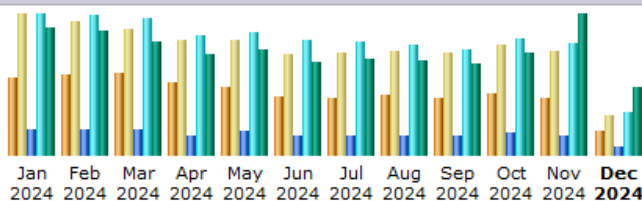
In March this year the website transitioned from Joomla 3 to Joomla 5, thanks to Dave Hodgkinson & his team, all volunteers, who did the work for this. The transition went very smoothly, as I know it also did for many other Ramblers group websites that are looked after by him.

Following "AGM season" I haven't had to do much work on the email forwarders that I set up last year as all those that were chair@. secretary@ etc. the changes are done locally by the group's webmaster. However, there are still a number of groups that have officers using personal email addresses, which of course have to be changed every time there's a change of officer. I would therefore once again ask that those groups that haven't set up these generic email address to consider doing that.

I hope that the various Chairs, Secretaries etc., are able to communicate with each other easily using this system, rather than the groups.io emails, which go to a less targeted audience.

Looking at the website statistics, (see below) the number of visitors etc. dropped off a bit in May & then again in June, remaining fairly consistent at about 1800/month (obviously December is incomplete). Looking at the downloads, SEWalker (different months) is downloaded regularly, featuring 4 times in the top 5 downloads of the year & the most visited page is the Surrey Area programme.

Monthly history



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2024	2,407	4,359	11,312	62,046	6.64 GB
Feb 2024	2,477	4,145	11,154	61,891	6.50 GB
Mar 2024	2,539	3,911	11,567	60,416	5.87 GB
Apr 2024	2,242	3,540	8,519	52,828	5.26 GB
May 2024	2,088	3,549	10,644	53,838	5.47 GB
Jun 2024	1,821	3,134	8,718	50,560	4.85 GB
Jul 2024	1,747	3,188	8,771	49,694	5.04 GB
Aug 2024	1,856	3,205	8,894	48,317	4.90 GB
Sep 2024	1,751	3,157	8,669	46,355	4.74 GB
Oct 2024	1,928	3,429	10,230	51,664	5.32 GB
Nov 2024	1,789	3,238	8,739	49,206	7.33 GB
Dec 2024	769	1,233	3,704	19,018	3.51 GB
Total	23,414	40,088	110,921	605,833	65.45 GB

Group Reports:

Croydon

The Group issued 4 quarterly Newsletters and Programmes during the year. On average some 10/11 walks were on offer each week. Distances ranged from 1 to 2 miles up to 10 to 11 miles. Once again the annual Lewis to Eastbourne walk of 23 miles took place in July.

The Executive Committee was enhanced with an additional office responsible for publicity with a member co-opted to the role. Also a member came forward to take on the Footpath Working Party Office which had remained vacant for some time. That brought the Committee to a compliment of 11.

Membership remained steady at 760 with leavers being offset by joiners.

Social events during the year included 'Cream Teas' for walk leaders of 2023 and for long Standing members. As in previous years a Quiz Night was held in November with 9, 8 member teams taking part.

6 Group holidays were on offer during the year. Those to HF house remaining popular with members.

A recent addition to the Group's activities has been in support of raising of funds for good causes. This year the local charity supported was 'Their Voice'. A charity in

support of people who have endured trauma of human trafficking and modern day slavery. Nearly £2000 was raised.

The AGM was held on 9 November with 100 or so members attending. All 11 offices were filled to serve in 2024/25.

East Surrey Walkers

East Surrey Walkers group has run 262 walks this year with 3191 walkers enjoying a range of different walks across our programme. Short circular walks on Wednesdays remain the most popular, with walker attendance up by almost 30% on last year.

We also participated in organising a local walk for the London Blind Club in May, which was well supported by our members.

We have continued to attract new members every month but overall our membership has declined very slightly this year from 464 to 461 members. Sadly we lost 5 of our members during the year and others did not renew their membership, the main reason given being related to poor health and inability to walk.

Three new footpath secretaries have been appointed during the year and our team of seven have continued to inspect, monitor and take action on issues affecting local footpaths; in particular they continue to monitor the effect of the latest 'temporary' path diversions that have come into effect due to the expansion of the Sibelco quarry site. The team has worked in conjunction with Ken's Krew, our monthly working party, who have gone out along with volunteers from Croydon and Reigate groups and Surrey Rights of Way to complete tasks of vegetation clearance, installation of kissing gates, bridges and finger posts etc to maintain and improve local footpath access. They have done a huge amount of work despite the challenges of the weather at times.

Group holidays remain very popular and three very successful UK holidays have taken place during the year with short and longer walks organised each day and social activities in the evenings.

Social events this year have included a delicious New Year's Lunch, afternoon tea at a local golf club for the 'walking wounded' unable to walk for health reasons, a Cream Tea event in June and our Summer Buffet event in August. At the latter a raffle was held which successfully raised funds to be used for the purchase of a kissing gate.

There were two committee changes following our AGM in November. We have a new Chair in Helen McDonnell and a new treasurer in Stuart England.

East Surrey Walkers are looking forward to another busy year of walks and social events in 2025.

Epsom & Ewell

49 people attended the AGM on Saturday November 2nd 2024.

Key points included:

Our Membership secretary stated we have just 4 fewer members than last year, with membership now standing at 363 members.

The Walk Secretary reports that in terms of the total number of walks and walkers the figures are holding up and are very similar to previous numbers post lockdown. Currently walks are offered on four days each week.

The Social Secretaries have worked very hard throughout the year devising a variety of popular social activities which have included a winter lunch and a summer lunch, an evening walk followed by a meal and a coach trip to Dover Castle. An HF holiday in Selworthy, Somerset, was organised in July.

We installed a Kissing Gate this year at a cost of £520.

All committee members expressed a willingness to stand again for a further year, although there are still two vacancies on the committee, which are yet to be filled.

The chairman reiterated the need for more walk leaders to come forward and reported on work completed over recent months to enhance the walk leader experience with greater assistance and guidance. First aid training will be offered as well as walk leader workshops twice a year, by which updates and guidance may be given.

Farnham

Membership is stable with 448 members and 7 affiliates. There were a total of 436 walks this year which included walks for the Farnham Walking Festival plus breakfast and evening pub walks in the summer months. 8 new Walk Leaders joined our team of experienced leaders who enable us to offer a varied programme. 53 members attended our AGM on 24th November and welcomed news of a new monthly walk proposed for 2025 of 15-17 miles in length. All volunteers were thanked and special commendation was given to long standing member, David Ross for his dedication and service to the group.

Special thanks was also given to the committee who despite not having had a Chair for 2 years have simply made it work with everyone stepping up to cover the tasks required. It has been another successful year of walks, group holidays to Swanage and Bourton On the Water, a coach ramble to Salisbury and a summer evening cruise on the Basingstoke Canal. In addition, we hosted a day with the Blind Ramblers group and participated in community events with stands at the Farmer's Market and Music in the Meadow.

Godalming & Haslemere

269 local walks during the year, average attendance 14, just 1 up from last year. We had our usual good variety of walks and we hosted the London Blind Ramblers in July. We had a 3 day walking holiday based in Weymouth in May and a 7 day trip to the Lake Garda area in September. Also 3 coach trips for linear walks further afield from our local area, Eastbourne, Penshurst Place and Oxford.

We hosted the Area AGM in February in Godalming. 142 attendees and 88 out on walks before the meeting.

We had a busy social programme, including Christmas lunches, a New Year lunch, a Quiz evening, a Photographic (holiday photos) evening and a tea party to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of Godalming Ramblers. This was effectively the creation of Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers, Haslemere Ramblers having been formed in 1970. The combined name was formalised in 1976. We issued a walk challenge to our membership with 2 options; a) 50 miles of G&H walks in a single month June to September and/or b) 50 miles of short walks, less than 6 miles, in the 3 months July to September. 25 members completed the challenge with 2 members each clocking up 349 miles of G&H walks in the 4 months June to September.

Our Footpath Work Party has been busy and at last doing more construction/repair work as well as vegetation clearance. Our membership reduced slightly to 443.

We have a full committee. At the AGM Andrew Piercey stood down as Chair having served his 3 year term. Heather Dillon was elected as the new Chair.

Guildford

A brief report cannot possibly do justice to the effort, enthusiasm and hard work which goes into Guildford's activities. This 35th year has once again been a very successful with a membership of about 300 and a very full programme of walks, holidays, footpath work and social events. The hard work and efforts of our Footpath Maintenance Team volunteers should be applauded. The team have provided 255 hours of free labour in the last year.

Our 33 Walk Leaders led 140 walks with 2007 walkers, an increase on last year. We recruited 4 new walk leaders. 105 Guildford members were recorded as attending at least one walk. On average 20 members turn out on a Wednesday, 11 at the weekend and 8 on a Monday. We provided 5 walks for Guildford Walkfest in September 2024.

The social aspect of our Group is extremely important and included the Christmas Drinks walk, the Winter Lunch in February, the Summer Picnic in June and the party for our 40 volunteers in July to celebrate their hard work and support to the Group. We enjoyed 2 group holidays. In May, 40 of us visited Exmoor staying at the HF House,

Selworthy. A total of 11 walks during the 4 days. In August we took 18 members to the HF House at Freshwater, Isle of Wight enjoying 5 days of excellent walking.

Kingston

2024 AGM: Returned to Kingston Quaker Centre for our 61st AGM. Forty members heard Julia Whiteman give an interesting talk on first aid. Winners of our photo competition ('reflections') were announced.

Committee: Re-elected plus Steve Ransome. The following stood down: Caroline Cunliffe (Programme Compiler) and Nick Hollis (Treasurer). Adrian Baker is being coached by Paul Draper to be Treasurer.

Walks: Walks on three or four days a week: Wednesdays, Thursdays (short), Saturdays and by car Sundays. Rest by public transport. Most leaders enter their rambles on the Walks Manager and the Programme Compiler publishes them. More leaders wanted!

Membership: 551 an increase of six on previous year.

Social Events: Summer picnic at Horton Country Park. Bavaria walking week and Ipswich walking weekend were successful. David Cooper organised two Sunday walks with the London Blind Ramblers plus Balsam Bashing with volunteers on the Hogsmill and Thames. A Christmas meal is planned.

Publicity: Stalls at the Autumn Fest and Surbiton Festival. Photos are entered on website and Facebook page. Articles and photos published in South East Walker. WhatsApp groups are successful.

Mole Valley

Walks programme - We have a thriving group, offering a growing number of walks to a growing number of attendees. We have had 352 walks offered over the year, with 4615 participants, a 15% increase in walkers compared to the previous year and 15% of our walkers were from other Ramblers Groups.

We organised two workshops to tell people more about what walk leading involves, and how we in MVR are implementing the new Ramblers safety guidance. That together with a survey of all our leaders has led to four new leaders, and a pool of 40 currently active leaders.

Outings & events - We had two one-day outings: a boat trip on the Wey & Arun canal, with cream tea, in April and a midsummer coach trip to the White Cliffs of Dover. Both were sell-out successes. We used Eventbrite to handle the bookings and payments. This proved well worthwhile and saved our Treasurer a lot of effort.

We continued with our tradition of a Spring Walks Festival, with a final gathering at Mickleham, and a multi-walk picnic in August for which 58 people came together on Ranmore.

Holidays - There were two Group holidays: to Snowdonia in August, based at the HF Centre, and to Norfolk in September, self-catering. The Norfolk holiday allowed for more leisurely walks and visits to properties.

Path maintenance - the team had a rewarding year. Their most recent task was to install 30 steps on a previously difficult to climb slope on the Wotton Estate. They also installed six kissing gates, three of which were donated by MVR, carried out further work on the White Hill steps up to Mickleham Downs and several paths cleared of heavy vegetation.

Group membership has remained almost steady with just a slight overall drop (from 498 to 494), despite having gained 63 new members in the year.

Committee membership – There were three retirements from the Committee: Fiona Spencer as Chair, Janet Pusey as Treasurer and Louise Stilwell-Stage as Publicity Coordinator and Vice Chair. I am delighted to say that five new volunteers come forward and were elected at our AGM on 9 November: with Abdul Elahi as our new Chair, Kevin Wood as Treasurer, and Henri de Bossart, Rob Tomlinson and Jill Reid Committee members. That filled all posts except Publicity Officer.

Reigate

This has been a good year for Reigate Ramblers but the future is uncertain. Our walks and social events are popular and our membership numbers and attendance on walks are broadly similar to previous years.

We have 236 members at the last count. We have provided 81 walks with an average of 13 people per walk. Attendances have held up during and after the Covid era. We continue to attract members from other groups and we think there is greater willingness these days for people to choose walks from any of their local groups and not just stick with their “home” group.

We need new leaders. Fewer and fewer leaders are delivering more and more walks between them. This is not sustainable. We have tried hard to interest our membership in leading with little result.

We have been trying out an informal arrangement with our friends from East Surrey Walkers, Mole Valley Walkers and Sutton and Wandle group, allowing each group to fill gaps in their programme by advertising walks offered by the other. It is early days on whether this will be effective or useful.

We have had some novel social events under the direction of our new Social Secretaries and this has revitalised our offering.

Our footpath maintenance team has done good works around the Reigate and Banstead area with renewed leadership and enthusiasm. SCC seems more willing to put in the work needed to prepare tasks and resource them so we have been able to carry out high-value/benefit work such as bridge building and gate installs.

We have also had a hugely successful Autumn break, walking in the north Norfolk area with 36 people attending. Sadly, our Holiday Co-Ordinators are stepping down and there is no replacement.

We also have to report that our Treasurer intends to stand down soon. We have no replacement and have to consider the viability of our group going forward.

In summary – a good year of enjoyable walking and other activities but big issues on how to stay viable as a group in the next year.

Richmond

43rd AGM – 23 NOVEMBER 2024

We presented 81 walks during 2024 compared with 95 in 2023. The proportion of Richmond members was 49%, down from 65% in the previous year. We had an average of 10.5 walkers per walk, up on the 9 per walk in 2023.

At the date of the AGM there were 449 Richmond Ramblers members, including 49 affiliates. We have been experiencing some software problems in collecting membership data and these numbers may need to be revised.

An enhanced mentoring scheme is to be introduced in the coming year along with other measures to attract new members and to increase member participation in our walks.

A New Year lunch was held in January, with a summer picnic, preceded by a walk through Bushy Park in June. During the year our members joined the London Blind Ramblers on a walk from Hampton Court through Bushy Park to Teddington.

At our AGM our Chairman, Alan Matthews, stepped down and Andrew McKay was elected as his successor. All existing committee members were re-elected.

Surrey and Beyond (SABRE)

The SABRE AGM was held on Saturday 2 November with 32 members attending. We had a 7 mile walk in advance of the meeting and enjoyed a good selection of homemade cakes after the formal meeting.

For the second year we received no nominations for a Chair and I (Clair Baynton) am acting as the point of contact in the Chair's absence.

Committee members appointed were as follows:

Membership Secretary - Clair Baynton (new)

Walks co-ordinator - George Estruch

Treasurer - Linda Holloway (new)

Secretary - David Le Qusene (new)

General committee member - Mike Boon

Webmaster - Derek Moyle

The membership of SABRE at September 2024 was 234 members which was a reduction of 21 from September 2023.

We have run 107 walks over the year with more walks of 10 miles plus being offered versus shorter 5 miles plus. We have offered a small number of longer (circa 17 miles) walks during the summer months.

One kissing gate was paid for by SABRE and installed after the AGM.

We organised a group holiday at HF Selworthy in September and were able to occupy the whole house with 40 members joining us. We also organised a walking weekend based in Hastings in October.

Looking forward to 2025 we are organising a group holiday at HF Monk Coniston in September. We are also going to walk the Kent section of the Greensand Way over two weekends in March and May having completed the remainder of the Greensand Way in 2023.

Surrey Heath

Our 30th AGM was held on 17th Nov 2024. Likewise, the lure of scrumptious cakes attracted 60

Unsurprisingly, the theme adopted was volunteering, with namesake exemplified for arranging increasingly popular biannual Getaways. Core values were reaffirmed. Principle outcomes were:

Chair, secretary, membership and paths secs re-elected.

New walks coordinator, Paul Seidman elected, new Treasurer, Sally Antiri elected

New Webmaster appointed, Neil Purcell

User group set up to assist webmaster in redesign of website

Second Area Representative elected Sean Brett to focus on guidelines and best practice

A vote of thanks was given to resigning walks coordinator and publicity officer for their stellar contributions to the success of our group during those difficult COVID years. Thanks also went to our retiring treasurer and webmaster, both giving eight years of dedicated service.

Memberships up by 8 bringing the total to 290 members, not including 9 affiliates. Our new walks coordinator reported 8 new walk leaders being registered, totalling 38. Our paths sec. reported an increase in volunteers resulting in 4 kissing gates being installed

Heralding in 2025,

New Year Lunch with entertainment, that's magic!

Bradford on Avon Spring-3-day Getaway, 38 hotel rooms reserved

Ramblers Matera/ Alberobello Italian Holiday 20 booked for May

In spite of having a difficult year, we maintained our programme, dignity and members loyalty. largely down to our committee for their courage and endurance. With new blood and renewed mandate, we can do it, let's look forward to a great 2025

Sutton & Wandle Valley

Membership: Our membership has shifted throughout the year from a figure of 415 in September 2023 to 413 in September 2024. We have had a total of 73 members either new or transferring into our Group. However, we had 75 members leave.

Walks: This year we successful executed 226 walks (between 4 /5 a week) compared with 245 last year. The total length of the walks was 1,439, miles (down from 1,627 last year). In total 13,973 miles were walked compared with 14,928 in 2022/23. The average attendance on our walks was 9.79, up slightly from 9.57 last year. Pre-covid, the average was around 13. We rely heavily on a core group of dedicated leaders to lead the walks.

Social Events: Our Group remains very active socially. We ran two coach trips (Chichester and Whitstable). We arranged visits to four museums, Crossness Pumping Station, a tour of 2 Temple Place and visits to Merchant Taylors Guildhall and West Horsley Place. These visits are very popular with between 5 and 22 members attending. We also arrange monthly pub nights, and coffee mornings for our members who are no longer walking with us on a regular basis.

Publicity and Outreach: We hosted a stall at Carshalton ECO Fair and led a walk on behalf of London Blind Ramblers which was well attended.

Committee: Our committee was re-elected at our AGM in November. Three committee members left but we successfully recruited replacements. We still carry a gap for the position of Publicity Officer. Our Webmaster has now been in the role for 6 years but has agreed to remain for another year (with the agreement of Ramblers). But we will need to recruit a new Webmaster in the not-too-distant future.

AGM 2024: Our 30th AGM was held in an upper room at the Robin Hood pub, Sutton. 38 members attended. Main issues raised were our ongoing drive to recruit new walk leaders and other volunteers and also plan for the Group's 30th anniversary celebrations in 2025.

Woking

Two of our officers retired at the 2023 AGM, with a further change of Treasurer during the year. But new volunteers were found to cover all the vacancies.

Group membership increased by 25 from 207 to 232.

We held 162 walks, ranging in length from 3 to 12 miles. Saturday walks were re-introduced to the programme.

5 path maintenance tasks were tackled by group working parties, ranging from vegetation clearance to building a new footbridge with a kit supplied by SCC. We continue to do BVPI178 path inspections for SCC. Other good news is that a Modification Order to add a new footpath to the definitive map was confirmed, but less good was that a bridge carrying a footpath over a railway was hit and damaged by a crane on a maintenance train and later removed.

Popular social events included a New Year lunch, a summer evening meal (both at local pubs), and a 4-day group holiday in May near Hungerford.

END OF REPORT