# THE RAMBLERS – ALTON GROUP

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Monday 19th October 2026 at 7.00pm

in Alton Maltings Centre (Shaftsbury Room)

Present:

Patrick Giles, Chairman

Linda Naish, Treasurer

AJ Barlow, Secretary

Louise Fletcher, Membership Secretary

Mark Buckwell, Website Officer

Paul Naish, Footpath Secretary/ Programme Secretary

Ann McKee, Publicity Officer

Maxine Dalton, Social Secretary

A J Barlow, Walking Environment Officer

Plus 13 members of Alton Ramblers, including 2 from Walk Alton, from sign-in sheets.

The meeting started with a Special Announcement from Chairman Patrick Giles, where Patrick asked members to remember members who'd passed away this past year. He also asked for members to consider standing as Chair or Publicity Officer, or any other committee post.

The Guest Speakers were: Megan & Andrew Countryside Services, Hants County Council, giving an interesting talk on their activities over the county and around Alton area also.

## AGM Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
   Received from Helen Jeffries, David Blower, Catherina Egger, Lynn Frances, Judy Aiken, Rosemary Cornick, Tor and Simon Randall, Ian Beveridge, Peter and Cei Conlan

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2025.
   Accepted Proposed by Louise fletcher Seconded by Ann McKee

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes none

4. Chairman's Report

Chair's Report for AGM 19th October 2026

- We had a very good summer, walks wise and weather wise, although I think most of you will agree it was too hot at times.
- With the prolonged drought due it was a real relief when the rain did eventually fall!

- Thank you to our core group of walk leaders who have done a great job in putting on a large variety of walks through the year, during the week and on weekends.
- Please keep up your amazing work. We literally can't Ramble on without you!

- The Alton Ramblers Holiday to HF Derwent Bank with the Pertuis Randonneurs in late June was a great success.

- We had some great walks, amazing scenery, camaraderie and good food and accommodation at the hotel.





5. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts

**Alton Ramblers Treasurer's Report as at 30th September 2026**

The bank and cash balance as at 30th September 2026 was **£984.20** of which £50.00 is held as a cash float. A summary of the activity for the period 1st October 2025 to 23rd September 2026 follows:

**Main**
The opening balance was **£629.93.**

**Income for the period £3,916.96**
We received the full budget request from the Ramblers in the sum of £2,075.00. The bulk of it is for training and equipment for the footpath maintenance team.
EH Community Lottery have paid us £577.50 relating to the lottery ticket sales. Many thanks to anyone who donates to us in this way. It keeps our Footpath Maintenance Team going!
A donation was received from Cllr. Andrew Joy in the sum of £500.00 to help with brush cutter training and a total of £450.00 has been received from our Parish Councils (Froyle, Bentworth, Worldham, Medstead, Farringdon and Four Marks).
Miscellaneous donations were received for £171.96 resulting from the sale of items.
Ramble Worldwide holiday commission was received in the sum of £120.00.

**Expenditure for the period £3,809.40**
Equipment expenses total £2,566.35 and was spent on a couple of hedge cutters, harness, battery, battery charger, small tools, first aid kit rucksacks and items to repair and maintain the equipment.
Footpath Maintenance Team brush cutter training for four people was £980.00 and £41.10 on training day refreshments, totalling £1,021.10.
A walk leader recruitment event was held and refreshments totalled £33.25.
Unity Bank charged £1.80 to process cheques or cash.

The closing balance is **£737.49**.

**Restricted**
There were no transactions relating to this category.

**Self-funded**
There were no transactions relating to this category and the closing balance is **£246.71**.

**Funding request 2026/2027**

We have put in a budget for next year requesting £1,405.00 which includes equipment £600, training £330, repairs and servicing £300 plus meeting, training and AGM costs.

Linda Naish

## ALTON RAMBLERS
## Receipts and Payments Account for the year from 01/10/2025 to 30/09/2026

### Receipts and payments

| | 2025/26 Main £ | 2025/26 Restricted £ | 2025/26 Self-funded £ | 2025/26 Total funds £ | Last Year Total funds £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Receipts** | | | | | |
| Publications (book sales) | 22.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 22.50 | 269.47 |
| Membership subscriptions | 2,075.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,075.00 | 995.00 |
| Donations | 1,799.46 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,799.46 | 489.98 |
| Transfers between Bank and Cash | 20.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 44.50 |
| Grant | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,864.01 |
| Self-funded events | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,103.37 |
| ***Total Gross Income / Total receipts*** | **3,916.96** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **3,916.96** | **5,766.33** |
| **Payments** | | | | | |
| Equipment | 2,566.35 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,566.35 | 1,080.39 |
| Paths | 1,021.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,021.10 | 508.00 |
| Meetings including AGM | 167.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 167.40 | 412.57 |
| Walk Leader Training | 33.25 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 33.25 | 0.00 |
| Publicity / newsletters | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| Transfers between Bank and Cash | 20.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 44.50 |
| Admin | 1.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.30 | 1.80 |
| Grants paid out | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,864.01 |
| Self-funded events | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,152.84 |
| ***Total Gross Expenditure / Total Payments*** | **3,809.40** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **3,809.40** | **6,084.11** |
| ***Net of receipts/(payments)*** | **107.56** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **107.56** | **(317.78)** |
| **Cash funds last year end** | **629.93** | **0.00** | **246.71** | **876.64** | **1,194.42** |
| ***Cash funds this year end*** | **737.49** | **0.00** | **246.71** | **984.20** | **876.64** |

**Notes**
1. The Income & Expenditure Statement is prepared above as required by The Ramblers Association.
2. The Income & Expenditure statement shows three columns:
3. **Main** refers to the income and expenditure relating to the charitable aims of the Ramblers.
4. **Restricted** refers to funds donated to the group for a specific purpose.
5. **Self-funded** refers to income and expenditure for our social activities.

### Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

| | 30/09/2025 Main £ | 30/09/2025 Restricted £ | 30/09/2025 Self-funded £ | 30/09/2025 Total funds £ | Last Year Total funds £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cash funds** | | | | | |
| Bank current account | 687.49 | 0.00 | 246.71 | 934.20 | 826.64 |
| Cash/Floats | 50.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Total cash funds (Agrees with R&P Account) | **737.49** | **0.00** | **246.71** | **984.20** | **876.64** |
| **Stock** | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 209.07 |
| **Total** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **209.07** |

**Notes**
1. Stock for last year relates to The Ramblers 'Walks from Alton' books.
2. The value of remaining stock has been written off as at 30/09/2026 due to no further interest from retailers.
3. Stock does not include tools for practical work as they are not to be re-sold.

Accounts were adopted by audience without vote or comment

6. Appointment of independent examiner for 2026/7

Penny Varnam agreed kindly to be Independent Examiner for 2026/2027. Our thanks to her.

7. Summary Reports were given by each committee member to the meeting. Full reports appear here:

a) Membership Secretary

**Membership Secretary Report October 2026**

Our membership has grown this year with many of our newer members actively involved either walking or with our footpath maintenance. It is also great to report that several guests who have come along to try us out on our regular walks are then joining Alton Ramblers.

We have offered the same number of walks as last year and have walked in all weathers but walk participation has slightly decreased, possibly due to the exceptionally hot summer. We have had 14 walk leaders leading walks this year and have a couple of members who have recently completed their online walk training and will hopefully soon lead some walks for us. Overall 45% of our membership has engaged with one of our various activities this year.

**The numbers;**

**Membership @ 30/09/2026**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Current Membership | 201 | (187 as at 01/10/2025) |
| New Members since 1 Oct 25 | 34 | |
| Leavers/Lapsed since 1 Oct 25 | 20 | |

**Walk Statistics to 01/10/2025 – 30/09/2026**

Short < 5.9
Medium 6.0 – 7.9
Long > 8.0
( ) = figures for same period last year 01/10/24 -30/09/2025

| | Midweek Short | Midweek Med | Midweek Long | Evening | Weekend Short | Weekend Med | Weekend Long (previously Sunday) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number walks | 19 (16) | 11 (14) | 5 (3) | 4(5) | 7 (7) | 4 (8) | 36 (33) | 86(86) |
| Number Walkers | 158 (203) | 89 (134) | 51 (39) | 42 (64) | 86 (76) | 35 (79) | 292 (265) | 753 (860) |
| Av walkers/walk | 8.3 (12.7) | 8.1 (9.6) | 10.2 (13) | 10.5(12.8) | 12.3 (10.9) | 8.8 | 8.1 (8) | 8.8 (10.0) |

b) Website Officer

# Website Officer Report

## AGM 19th October2026

**Handover**

Handover was completed from John Jones to Mark Buckwell has been completed, including training.

**Website Reorganisation**

A tidy-up of the website was completed to reduce the number of menus at the top and make things easier to find.

**Website Articles**

Website articles have continued to be published covering events, holidays and path closures. The website has many capabilities and articles have been published to remind members of the benefits they provide, such as the routes library.

**Footpath Maintenance Team Posts**

Many parishes are unaware of the work we perform in maintaining public rights of way and there are now regular posts of the work being completed to raise awareness.

**Routes and Car Parks**

An additional twelve walks were added to the route's library, and updates to four car parks.

**Shared File Storage**

Data was migrated from different sources and combined into a single OneDrive folder, including all photographs.

**Alton Town Map**

New maps were created for Alton parish showing wards, public rights of way, adopted paths and other paths that may be permissive.

**Website Analytics**

Users of website has slight growth of 1.5k to 1.7k users for the same period in 2025.



c) Publicity Officer

# Publicity Officer's Report

## Alton Ramblers committee meeting 28th September 2026

1. With reference to April's report, we helped man the WA stall at the ATC Spring Fayre in May, and offered our books for sale as well as leaflet. Unfortunately, the footfall this year was not as good – for a variety of reasons – and no books were sold. Walking generally was promoted, however, and as one of Alton's major walking groups we may have benefitted.
2. Social media continues to provide a useful platform for passing on news about the footpath environment and our walks programme etc.
3. By the time of this meeting the Big Alton Charity Walk will have taken place (on the day before). It has provided an excellent way to bring the walking community together and to collaborate with representatives from all of them – which can only be positive. Hopefully the team involved will have a 'wash-up meeting' to feedback on pros and cons. Whether the idea of walking for charity will be carried through to the next or subsequent years is up for discussion!

Side note: as a consequence of my involvement with the Charity Walk over the past 6 months, I have stepped back somewhat from my role as Publicity Officer. I have, however been heavily involved in the publicity and promotion side of the Charity Walk, which has involved the Ramblers as well.

500 followers on FB page, 1500 views in 28 days, many in 24-64 age group- new members??
Need leaders for Alton Walking Festival 2027, planning starting in November.

d) Social Secretary

# Alton Ramblers Social Secretary's Annual AGM Report

## 19th October 2026

Since the AGM of 2025 we have had three social gatherings. January, The Flower Pot with 43 members, April, The Spice Bank with 23 members and September, Cucina Dei Sapori with 18 members attending.

I thank you all for your support making them excellent social evenings.

- I have contacted The Princess Royal pub at Runfold, Farnham, The Barn Owl pub, Blacknest and The Bluebell pub, Dockenfield

The feedback received of Barn Owl Pub is that they have a good menu and good food though little pricey.

The range of prices are; Starter from £7.95-£9.95 Olives £4.95, Main course £16.95-£26.95, Lite Bites £11.95-£13.95, Puddings £7.45-£8.95, Ice Cream £2.95 per scoop. Cheeses £4.95-£14.95. They do offer small puddings and a coffee for £9.25-£9.45.

- Bob has offered to lead a walk from the Princess Royal, Runfold with a meal to follow. I have spoken with a member of staff and now I think it will be in 2027.

- The Bluebell Pub menu for mains range from £15.50 to £20 with ample parking and willing to take group bookings.

I have not been successful in finding a venue for Skittles or a Quiz evening unfortunately.

Thank you

Maxine Dalton,

Social Secretary.

Sat 5th December, 1 pm lunch at Princess Royal, Runfold. 10:15 walk before the lunch. Details to follow. Flower pots proving popular, try to schedule it again.

e) Programme Secretary

# Annual General Meeting Report — 19 October 2026

## Overview

In 2026, Alton Ramblers maintained a varied walking programme, expanded its trained leader pool and supported local walking initiatives. The year also featured a successful Lake District visit with guests from Bromley Ramblers and Les Mille Pattes of Pertuis.

## Walk Programme

The group organised and published 90 walks in the year 2025 to 2026:

| Month | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| October | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | **8** |
| November | | - | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | **6** |
| December | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1 | 2 | **7** |
| January | - | - | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | **9** |
| February | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **7** |
| March | - | - | - | 4 | 3 | 2 | **9** |
| April | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | **6** |
| May | - | 1 | 3 | - | 5 | 2 | **11** |
| June | - | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | **8** |
| July | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | **6** |
| August | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | **7** |
| September | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | **6** |
| **TOTAL 2025 -2026** | | | | | | | **90** |

Early delivery relied heavily on a core group of leaders, so continued recruitment and wider participation remain vital to a broad, reliable programme.

## Leadership and Development

Paul Naish became Walks Programme Coordinator on 1 February 2026. The group thanks John Jones for his many years of diligent service and support during the handover.

f) Footpath Secretary

# Footpath Secretary Report

## Annual General Meeting Report 19 October 2026

### Overview

During 2026, the Footpath Maintenance Team continued to make a substantial contribution to the upkeep and accessibility of the local footpath network. The year was marked by sustained volunteer activity, stronger operational leadership, increased training and safety capacity, and effective use of grants and parish council donations.

For context, the team completed 41 work-party days and approximately 898 volunteer hours in the year 2025 to 2026. In 2026, weekly work parties resumed in February and had recorded 663volunteer hours by the end of September.

### Team Activity and Achievements

The team remained strong at approximately 22 members, with a core of 10 volunteers attending regularly. Despite three resignations early in the year, recruitment interest remained positive. The development of three path leaders enabled the team to operate up to three work parties on the same day, improving its resilience and capacity.

Work undertaken included vegetation cutting and clearance, repairs to steps and handrails, improved signage, and the removal and construction of two sleeper bridges in Selborne by a 12-person team in a single day. The team also adopted permanent cutting lists for its parishes and selected routes in the Petersfield area. Its contribution to the Hampshire Countryside Services Access Team was recognised on several occasions in the team's monthly newsletter.

### Training and Safety

A well-attended team gathering and safe-working training day was held on 18 February, with supporting documents distributed to all members. Four volunteers—Matt Flood, Graeme Wylie, Jim Armitage and Phil Mossman—completed brush-cutter training, contributing to a total of seven qualified operators.

Following revised Ramblers Association guidance requiring trained brush-cutter operators and a first aider at each work party, the team expanded its first-aid provision. Matt Flood, Mark Buckwell, Phil Mossman, Bill Coady and Graeme Wylie completed first-aid training to bring the total number of qualified first aiders to seven.

### Footpath Monitoring and Planning

BVPI survey findings continued to inform the work programme. Issues identified during the Froyle survey were added to the maintenance schedule. The 2026 survey focused on Selborne parish, with surveys planned for May and November. By September, Sue Rogers and her team had completed 60% of the paths, and the Footpath Maintenance Team had already addressed many of the reported issues.

Footpath wardens continued to identify and report problems for inclusion in the work programme.

**Funding and Equipment**

The Ramblers Association approved the team's operating budget in full, supporting tools, training and an electric hedge cutter. A £500 grant from County Councillor Andrew Joy funded brush-cutter training for four team members. Parish council donations comprised £50 each from Froyle, Bentworth and Worldham, £100 from Farringdon, and £150 from Four Marks. Graeme Wylie and Matt Flood also donated a mattock and sledgehammer.

Donations supported the purchase of a Husqvarna hedge cutter and harness, a battery charger, two spare brush-cutter batteries, three loppers, two shears, three pruning saws, two lawn rakes, three rucksacks, two replacement hedge-cutter blade decks, and three first-aid kits.

**Conclusion and Outlook**

The team's work during 2026 demonstrated sustained volunteer commitment, improved leadership, stronger safety arrangements and effective collaboration with local partners. The programme of weekly work parties, continued survey activity and investment in equipment leave the team well placed to maintain and improve the local footpath network in the coming year.

The committee records its thanks to all volunteers, footpath wardens, surveyors, funders, parish councils and supporters whose time and contributions made this work possible.

g) Walking Environment Officer

<u>Alton Ramblers Walking Environment Officer Report, Sep 2026</u>

Projects in Alton area impacting paths at present are:-

Copse Close Solar Farm, Worldham. No movement, due to grid connection delay.

A new planning application for a 200-acre solar farm between Caker Road and Selborne Road is just announced in local press, application number EHDC-25-0716-FUL. This is essentially enlarging the current solar farm on the east side of Farringdon to a much larger area. Path 087/19/1 and 2025/5/ cross this, from Hall lane over to the B3006 Selborne Road. The applicant has committed to a 20-30 m width of the gap in the solar arrays where the path is going, so no Green Corridor effect to be expected. I put in a comment as WEO, neutral stance.

Proposed new Footpath, linking Wilsom Road to Hangers' Way at Neatham Down: the public inquiry only looked at last 20 years of use up to 2016, so Gill's DMMO was rejected on lack of use grounds. Farmer wins. No consideration of safety or usefulness of the path. The path is now blocked and unusable and I advise everyone to walk elsewhere.

Minor outstanding path order progressing: a) Binsted 37- deviate path round a stable block, the Order is made, the work will be completes by year end, I imagine. b) Clays farm- long-standing DMMO that seems to be stuck in HCC, but has come to the top of their list. It might get dealt with soon. Glaciers might move faster….

8. Election of Officers

1. Chairman ---new
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Programme Secretary
5. Website Officer
6. Membership Secretary
7. Walking Environment Officer
8. Footpath Secretary
9. Publicity Officer ---- new
10. Social Secretary

Chairman, Patrick Giles stood down, as did Publicity Officer, Ann McKee. Both were thanked for their service. In order for the Group to function at all, Louise Fletcher agreed to stand as Chair, ( with Mark Buckwell agreed as Vice Chair). Arthur (AJ) Barlow, agreed to stand as Secretary, for ONE more year only. He will now stand down at the AGM 2027.

Louise Fletcher was voted in unanimously as Chair of the Group, and Mark Buckwell as Vice Chair, vote proposed by John Jones and seconded by Paul Naish.

Given that all the other committee positions had candidates, and only one candidate in each case, the Committee was voted for “en bloc”. Proposed by John Jones for a vote, seconded by Penny Varnam, vote on the floor was unanimous. All officers are duly voted into positions, as follows:

1. Chairman Louise Fletcher
2. Vice Chair Mark Buckwell
3. Secretary AJ Barlow
4. Treasurer Linda Naish
5. Programme Secretary Paul Naish
6. Website Officer Mark Bucknell
7. Membership Secretary Louise Fletcher
8. Walking Environment Officer AJ Barlow
9. Footpath Secretary Paul Naish
10. Publicity Officer ---- VACANCY
11. Social Secretary Maxine Dalton

9. Any other business - Top walker and leader results/ICE - LF

Louise presented the best walker award to Linda Naish, and best leader also to Linda..

John Jones, stepping down from the committee in 2026 after many many years of service, was recognised with a gift from the Alton Ramblers Group.

Patrick Giles was recognised with a gift from the Alton Ramblers Group.

Ann McKee was recognised with a gift from the Alton Ramblers Group.

It was requested to thank all our Members (particularly Tim, and Cathy Turton) for all their efforts and work to arrange holidays for Ramblers to attend.

Q & A to Chairman (10 mins) NONE

Meeting concluded with refreshments for all. Thanks to Maxine and Linda for organizing this, and for Patrick bringing the beer—something of a tradition, I believe.

## MINUTES APPROVED

**Signed: Louise Fletcher, Chairman**_____Louise Fletcher_____ **Date____20/10/2026___**

**Secretary**_____*A J Barlow* _____ **Date____20/10/2026___**