

Governance Review:

Plans for 6 December



Sent to: Council members, Area Chairs, Area Secretaries and Area Treasurers

Hello Simon

I look forward to welcoming Council members to the General Council Conference on 6 December.

At the conference, we will be able to work together in person to explore the outstanding issues of concern, with the aim of reaching consensus on a final package of governance reforms, which could be put to General Council for its consideration and decision at the Annual General Meeting on 25 April 2026.

Summary

As set out in my email of 29 October to Council members and Area leaders (available on the [General Council webpage](#)) we know that there is strong support for democratic reforms, but you have concerns particularly about structural changes, especially those affecting Scotland and Wales, the relationship between members and the Board, and the diversity on the Board, including adequate representation of member interests.

- You support the move to greater democracy, giving all members the right to elect trustees and vote at the Annual General Meeting, and the reform of General Council, including the more informal, inclusive format proposed for Gatherings. However, you wanted more detail about how Annual General Meeting resolutions and Gathering debates would work, with calls for clearer processes and formal feedback mechanisms.
- You broadly support reducing the size of the Board and the greater democracy of one-member-one-vote for trustee elections. Additionally, you told us you recognise the importance of the Ramblers being led by a strong and effective Board with a diverse mix of relevant skills and experience. However, there were some outstanding concerns about the lack of clarity on nomination processes

for trustees, the potential imbalance in representation (especially when looked at through a regional lens) and the make-up of the electorates for trustee positions in the context of the three nations.

- The Board and members alike are keen to emphasise the importance of ensuring there continues to be recognition of the different identities in the three nations that make up the Ramblers, with different and unique political, legal, media, funding and natural landscapes in each. However, there is concern as to whether the proposed changes in Scotland and Wales adequately recognise these differences.

We propose that detailed discussion of the issues directly relating to Ramblers Scotland and Ramblers Cymru will take place at separate meetings early next year in Scotland and Wales, respectively, while the General Council conference will focus on the other two.

However, if Council members wish to suggest other topics that they feel should be explored collectively at the conference, they are invited to share these via <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GCconference/> by **21 November**.

[Register for the conference](#)

Conference arrangements

The conference will take place on Saturday 6 December 2025 in the Beveridge Hall at Senate House, University of London. The conference will start at 11am (refreshments and networking from 10.30am) and finish no later than 4pm.

The conference (which is not a formal General Meeting as defined by our constitution) is open to all Council members. If your Area has not appointed one or all of their allotted Council members, it is still possible to fill a vacancy or to replace an existing Council member by giving notice in writing to Simon Kellas, Head of Governance (simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk).

Thank you to all those who have already registered to attend. If you have not done so, please register your attendance at <https://general-council-conference-2025.eventbrite.co.uk> no later than 21 November so that we can ensure appropriate arrangements are in place at the venue.

Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed, and accommodation can be requested during the registration process for those who need it.

The draft programme and timings are as follows:

10.30am – 11am	Arrival: refreshments and networking
11am – 12.15pm	Plenary session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the case for change, recap progress to date, including areas of contention. • Open debate to share and discuss views together, and for the Board to answer questions / respond.
12.15pm – 1.15pm	Small group workshops (session 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create refinements (or alternatives) to any areas of the proposals where contention remains.
1.15pm – 2pm	Lunch break: Informal discussion and networking
2pm – 3pm	Small group workshops (session 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create refinements (or alternatives) to any areas of the proposals where contention remains.
3pm – 3.45pm	Plenary session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share workshop outcomes and build consensus that will allow preparation of a final package of proposed reforms in the best interests of the whole charity that would have the support of General Council.
3.45pm – 4pm	Next steps and close

Supporting documents

The most recent set of proposed reforms (published on 29 September), which include a cover note summarising the case of change, the review process so far, and feedback received over the last rounds of consultation, are available on the [General Council webpage](#).

We are not sharing a further update of draft Articles of Association and Standing Orders at this stage as we have paused this work for the time being, pending consideration of the outcomes of the conference and the meetings planned in Scotland and Wales.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 6 December in London.

If you have any questions, please contact Simon Kellas, Head of Governance (simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk).

Best wishes

Lucy Robinson

Chair, Board of Trustees

A list of current Council members for 2025/26 is available on the General Council webpage at www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/general-council. A number of Areas did not appoint one or all of their allotted Council members ahead of the April 2025 Annual General Meeting. Should an Area wish to appoint a member to fill a vacancy or to replace an existing Council member can do so by giving notice in writing to the Head of Governance (simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk).
