



**MINUTES OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL
HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2023 AT THE SMITHFIELD SUITE, CROWNE PLAZA
MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE, 70 SHUDEHILL, MANCHESTER AT 2PM**

Introduction

Rebecca Dawson, chair of the board of trustees, welcomed members of General Council to the Crowne Plaza Hotel and thanked everyone for making the journey to Manchester for the extraordinary general meeting (EGM). The meeting had been called by the board of trustees to ask General Council to endorse the draft strategic plan which sets out the refreshed ambitions of the Ramblers as a charity over the next decade.

Rebecca thanked Greater Manchester and High Peak Area for moving their Area AGM to the morning to allow their Council members to attend the EGM.

Presentation

Rebecca Dawson and Ross Maloney, chief executive officer, gave a presentation to the meeting on the background, development and purpose of the refreshed strategic plan.

Discussion, comments and questions

Following the presentation, the floor was opened for further discussion, comments and questions, with members expressing a variety of views, both for and against elements of the strategic plan. These centred around several themes:

- Building on our unique history of campaigning for access to the outdoors for all ensures we can remain relevant.
- An inclusive culture and becoming an explicitly anti-racist charity are essential to address the barriers to participation which may not always be obvious.
- The importance of considering the potential impact of new programmes of work on volunteers, many of whom are already working at full capacity to deliver our existing activities.
- The need to find new and alternative ways for people to support us, but increasing our supporter base should not be to the detriment of our current membership activities.

- A large and active membership gives us the authority and status we need to continue to engage with external partners and influence at all levels of local and national government.
- The lack of specific reference to climate change is a conspicuous absence even noting that we are not an organisation focused on this area.
- Although the strategic plan is aimed at an external as well as internal audience, some of language could be perceived as being “management speak” and would benefit from a review and rewording in plainer English.

At the end of the discussion session, Ross thanked members for their contributions and summarised what he had heard as the main themes that had emerged in the discussion.

Ross said that that the strategic plan, if endorsed by the General Council, will be properly designed to produce a more visually appealing, public-facing version which will incorporate pictures, photographs, and graphics. The language in the plan will be reviewed as suggested to ensure it is appropriate for both internal and external audiences. Recognising the strength of feeling in the room, reference to climate change and our environmental policy will be added.

Decision

Rebecca reminded members that Approval of the refreshed strategic plan requires a simple majority (i.e. over 50%) of members present at the EGM in person or by proxy. Twenty-seven Council members had appointed a proxy.

Although a decision could be taken by a show of hands, Rebecca, as chair of the meeting, called a poll to ensure that an accurate tally of votes could be recorded.

The poll was held with Council members invited to vote on the board’s recommendation to endorse the strategic plan and its ambitions, with 79.8% of votes in favour.

The votes cast were:

For	79
Against	11
Abstain	9
Total	99

Closing remarks

Ross thanked Council for endorsing the strategic plan and its ambitions for the next ten years.

Rebecca brought proceedings to a close by thanking members and wished everyone a safe journey home.

The meeting ended at 4.55pm.