

# Governance Review:

Plans for 6 December



Thank you to everyone for taking part in the consultation on proposals for modernising and strengthening the Ramblers' governance model. We know that many of you have put a great deal of time, thought and effort into this, for which we are incredibly grateful. We have taken time to review your valuable feedback in detail, both from the online sessions and written responses.

The consultation responses reveal a passionate membership with a diversity of views. Overall, you told us you have 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.

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.

The feedback tells us 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.

Overall then, while there is strong overall support for the kind of democratic reforms which have been shared throughout the year in the three rounds of online engagement and consultation, the Board does not feel there is sufficient consensus on all aspects of the detail of the proposals to enable General Council to consider giving its approval to the proposals at the planned Extraordinary General Meeting on Saturday 6 December 2025.

Sent to: Council members, Area Chairs, Area Secretaries and Area Treasurers (29 October 2025)

The Board remains committed to modernising the governance of the Ramblers to ensure that it remains strong and effective now and in future decades. We want to continue to work together towards reaching an agreement on a package of governance reforms.

We therefore propose a change to the plans for 6 December. Rather than asking General Council to consider giving its approval to the proposals at this stage, we propose to use the day for a General Council Conference where members can work together in person to discuss the areas of contention and work through the detail on those aspects of the proposals where it is felt this is needed. This is with the intention of collaborating with General Council to seek to build consensus that would allow the preparation of a final package of governance reforms, which would be put to General Council for its consideration and decision at the Annual General Meeting on 25 April 2026. We also propose that there should be additional meetings in Scotland and Wales to work up the proposals for these nations.

We hope that these additional steps again demonstrate the Board's firm commitment to working with Council members on developing a package of governance reforms that are fit-for-purpose for the future of the Ramblers and have high levels of support from General Council. We have always known that achieving consensus on the scale of reform needed to achieve the right outcome for the charity would be challenging, and so it feels right to put further effort into this additional step to build that consensus. We really hope and encourage you, as Council members, to be a part of this important step, playing a key role in shaping the future of the charity.

Council members are therefore invited to attend a conference which will take place on Saturday 6 December 2025, 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, who are invited to register at <https://general-council-conference-2025.eventbrite.co.uk> by 14 November 2025. As ever, reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed, and accommodation can be arranged for those who need it.

Supporting documents, including updated draft Articles of Association and Standing Orders, for this meeting will be sent on Friday 14 November 2025 and published on the General Council webpage.

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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:simon.kellas@ramblers.org.uk)).