



## MID-YEAR MOTIONS UPDATE (SEPTEMBER 2025)

This report reflects the Board's initial review of the motions passed at the AGM on 26 April. A full report on all open motions will be published in March 2026 in the papers for next year's AGM.

2025 [1]	Resolution to update the Standing Orders for gender neutrality
2025 [2]	Updating Ramblers Articles of Association for full gender neutrality
2025 [3]	Ramblers GB 90th anniversary
2025 [4]	Preventing the loss of footpaths by adding Cycle Tracks to the definitive maps
2025 [5]	Overcoming barriers to access
2025 [6]	Climate emergency action
2025 [7]	Email system for Area and Group officers to contact members

### 2025 [1] RESOLUTION TO UPDATE THE STANDING ORDERS FOR GENDER NEUTRALITY

This General Council resolves to amend the Standing Orders as follows:

Replace all instances of the word "Chairman" with "Chair"

September 2025 update

The Standing Orders were updated and filed with Companies House and the Charity Commission.

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### 2025 [2] UPDATING RAMBLERS ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION FOR FULL GENDER NEUTRALITY

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to prepare and propose special motions to future meetings of General Council to update the Ramblers Articles of Association and those sections of the Standing Orders not already covered by motion 2024[2] so that the entire document will be fully gender neutral.

September 2025 update

This request will be included in the updated governing documents to be presented as part of the governance review proposals.

## **2025 [3] RAMBLERS GB 90th ANNIVERSARY**

The Scottish Council, on behalf of the members in Scotland, sends best wishes and congratulations to their fellow members throughout Great Britain in the Association's 90th anniversary. It is hoped that during the coming 10 years, until the centenary, the Ramblers will be even more successful in all parts of Great Britain.

September 2025 update

No further action is required.

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## **2025 [4] PREVENTING THE LOSS OF FOOTPATHS BY ADDING CYCLE TRACKS TO THE DEFINITIVE MAPS**

This General Council calls upon the Board of Trustees to campaign for legislation to oblige highway authorities to record Cycle Tracks on their Definitive Map and the associated Statements, to prevent footpaths from being deleted from the Definitive Map when they become Cycle Tracks. Meanwhile, the Ramblers should oppose all applications to convert footpaths into cycle tracks and instead seek to retain at least part of the legal width of the way as a footpath.

September 2025 update

While this specific issue will not be a core focus of campaigning activity in the coming year, we are aware of the importance of addressing the inconsistency in law i.e. the effect of removing public footpaths (and other public rights of way) from the Definitive Map (and therefore Ordnance Survey maps) where they are converted into cycle tracks. We are seeking to address this in the following ways:

- Representations to the Active Travel Minister in England (cycling track provision being within their brief) with the Ramblers leading on correspondence in partnership with the Open Spaces Society, British Horse Society, Cycling UK and the Byways and Bridleways Trust.
- This issue was discussed with the Minister responsible for active travel in Wales who was in agreement with the need to protect both footpaths and the integrity of the Definitive Map. Active Travel guidance and delivery approached are under review in Wales and we will continue to monitor and advocate for walkers.
- Further consultation on Active Travel England's Rural Design Guidance has given us the chance to raise this issue once again, and we are conscious that other organisations have also taken the opportunity to do so too. A meeting is being convened by Active Travel England in the next month. Our representations have already resulted in discussions between Active Travel England, Natural England and Defra to explore possible changes to the law.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature have recently undertaken an inquiry supported and facilitated by the Ramblers, the British Mountaineering Council and Paddle UK. Resolving this issue is the subject of one of the recommendations to Government in the inquiry report.
- This issue forms part of our behind-the-scenes advocacy in relation to the Access to Nature Green Paper and a strand of Defra's work is examining how 'legal rights of access can be enhanced'.

Until amendments to existing legislation are achieved, our Shared Use Advice Note (2018) advises that “ *The partial conversion of a footpath to a cycle track is likely to be preferred in most circumstances. The full conversion of a footpath to a cycle track is likely to be appropriate only in exceptional circumstances.* ”

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## **2025 [5] OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACCESS**

This General Council calls on the Board of Trustees to provide guidance for volunteers on how to achieve the most accessible option for structures on public paths. It further calls on the trustees to lobby for legislation which:

- a) creates a presumption that barriers to access on public paths should be adapted or removed unless the landowner can show good reason why they should not be,
- b) gives highway authorities the power to enforce the most accessible option on public paths where a landowner has unreasonably refused permission to remove or adapt existing barriers to access, and
- c) allows for heritage features (such as historic stone boundary-stiles and squeeze stiles) to be retained.

### September 2025 update

We continue to advise volunteers about the most accessible path structures and via the Footpath Forum, a regular webinar for path volunteers. Recent events have covered stile replacement/gate installation (April 2025) and accessible path surfaces (June 2025) – spotlighting good practice to build awareness and provide peer support.

In 2024-25 we also awarded funds to 15 local projects, via the Path Accessibility Fund. This includes the replacement of 17 stiles with pedestrian gates in Orelton, Herefordshire; and the removal of gates and bollards in Tregross Nature Reserve, Cornwall, to enable access for mobility scooters to the reserve.

In 2025-26 we will refresh Ramblers’ guidance for path maintenance teams on accessible structures and how to advocate for these with local authorities. We are also inputting into a review of the British Standard for fences and gates, with stiles to follow.

The need to break down the barriers to accessing nature, including physical structures, is a key element of our argument for new Access to Nature legislation by the end of this parliament. A Freedom of Information request we conducted, sent to all highway authorities and National Park authorities in England and Wales, highlighted the scale of the problem with over 160,000 stiles in place among the half who responded.

In England, our work to influence Defra’s approach to future access policy has already resulted in physical barriers being included in their initial proposals for an Access to Nature Green Paper. We will continue to make the case for the removal of barriers as Defra develops the detail of its Green Paper in advance of its anticipated publication later this year and make the case that new legislation and government guidance is the only way to secure the meaningful, widespread change that is needed.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature inquiry (facilitated and supported by the Ramblers and others) includes a recommendation to Government calling for the repeal of

the effective veto that landowners have on retaining physical barriers by amending s147ZA of the Highways Act.

In Wales, we are working to influence party manifestos for the 2026 Senedd elections and are calling for clear and ambitious targets for removing physical barriers and improving the quality of paths. Our work to influence the new Sustainable Farming Scheme has resulted in an eligibility baseline requirement for landowners to ensure the network is open, accessible, and safe for public use. Enhancing and improving paths by removing physical barriers is also an optional action for which landowners could receive payments. Historic stiles, such as stone stiles, are also protected in the Scheme as heritage features. We also continue to campaign for the value of Welsh Government's Access Improvement Grant to be increased to £6m. This fund has enabled local authorities to make thousands of accessibility improvements, including the removal of hundreds of inaccessible structures.

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## **2025 [6] CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION**

This General Council recognises that climate emergency, environmental and biodiversity degradation threaten the landscapes we cherish. To protect these areas, it is vital that Ramblers takes proactive systemic action on the climate emergency, aligning our mission with efforts to preserve and restore the environment and its natural inhabitants for future generations. Accordingly, this General Council calls on the Board of Trustees to propose amendments to the strategy to address these issues by the 2026 General Council AGM:

1. Acknowledgement and engagement with the Climate Emergency
2. Environmental Stewardship
3. Partnerships with Organisations
4. Visible Action and Advocacy
5. Monitoring and reporting on progress

### September 2025 update

The Board of Trustees discussed the climate emergency action motion at its meeting on 17 June 2025. It reiterated its strategic commitment to making sure the Ramblers plays an active role in tackling the climate emergency. This commitment was strengthened in the strategy document in response to feedback from the General Council at its Extraordinary General Meeting in November 2023.

The Board is clear that the Ramblers are not experts in this field and nor is it our core charitable purpose. Therefore, the majority of our efforts in this space, as indicated in the strategy, need to be made in partnership with organisations with greater expertise and capacity than the Ramblers in relation to these matters.

The Board would like the staff team to focus on making meaningful our existing commitments, rather than making further changes to the strategy document itself. Specifically, the Board asked the staff team to focus on making more visible the actions we are already taking to support this cause and to signpost to further opportunities for members and volunteers to get involved locally.

They have identified three main areas of work to take forward:

- 1) Continuing to seek and take opportunities to make environmental action part of our existing work. This will include working with partner organisations on advocacy initiatives (see appendix for recent examples of our advocacy work in this space) and taking opportunities to build environmental improvements and education into our work with priority communities (as we did in Paths to Wellbeing, at Cotwall End and through our Green Routes work – for example, tree-planting, wildflower sowing, nature talks, using recycled materials).
- 2) Using our communication channels, including Walk magazine, to ensure we highlight the staff-led and member/volunteer-led activities we are already involved in and raise awareness amongst our supporters and the wider public about the climate emergency. This would include sharing ideas for how they can make more environmentally responsible choices, for example using public transport and making informed clothing and equipment choices.
- 3) Refreshing our webpages on the environment (now live at [www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/protecting-environment](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/protecting-environment)), and using our member and volunteer newsletters, to signpost members and volunteers to how they can take action to address the climate and nature emergencies, including by joining actions (such as Citizen Science initiatives) led by other organisations. We will promote these opportunities to members and volunteers more often and invite them to tell us (by means of an online reporting form) about what they have done so that we can share learning and promote opportunities more widely.

#### Appendix: Examples of recent and current advocacy work on the climate emergency

- Signing up to a Scottish Environment letter challenging the Natural Environment Bill (Part 2) giving ministers broad powers to dilute regulations on Environmental Impact Assessments and sites covered by the European Habitats Directive designations.
- Supporting calls for a Bus Bill for Wales (to help promote the use of public transport).
- Contributing to the education, empowerment and skills aspects of the UK government's forthcoming Access to Nature Green Paper before it goes out for consultation.
- Signing a letter (coordinated by the Wildlife and Countryside Link) to the Chancellor in advance of the Spending Review to highlight the importance of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' budget in meeting legally binding nature and climate targets.
- Working with the Better Planning Coalition to influence the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, including a call for new developments to be linked to climate targets.
- Campaigning (successfully) for green routes / greening measures. For example, the Green Link route in London funded by the Greater London Authority climate change fund. This was conceived by the Ramblers in partnership with London Living Streets, Sustrans and CPRE and delivered by Transport for London. We have also had successes in Great Manchester (GM Ringway) and Salford (Salford Trail).
- Advocating for a strategic approach to urban green routes as part of a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's consultation on government's land use framework.
- Responding to the Department for Transport's consultation on its Integrated National Transport Strategy highlighting the importance of the public rights of way network in reducing car use and promoting links with more sustainable transport hubs.
- Societal Forum member of National Energy System Operator (NESO) which is shaping the government's approach to its Clean Power Action Plan (specifically to help ensure the approach by NESO does not undermine existing access opportunities).

- Responding to the Mayor of London's consultation on the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street, highlighting the need for greening and climate change mitigation measures in the regeneration scheme.

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## **2025 [7] EMAIL SYSTEM FOR AREA AND GROUP OFFICERS TO CONTACT MEMBERS**

This General Council is concerned by the lack of an integrated email sending solution for Area and Group officers which makes volunteers work harder and could potentially cause a data breach in the organisation. Council calls on the Board of Trustees to commission a suitable email sending solution as a matter of urgency.

### September 2025 update

Following the June Board meeting, trustees agreed to proceed with a review to seek to arrive at a way forward. The review has now been initiated as a formal business project with the benefit of external professional advice as necessary. Current activity that is underway includes:

- The establishment of a staff and volunteer reference group which would co-develop any system requirements and define the scope of any potential solution.
- Reference is being made to the 2022 survey on member email systems to help define key requirements and potential pain-points along with opportunities.
- Determination of key decisions that need to be taken, such as whether any potential solution should serve only group-to-member communication or also support wider volunteer-to-volunteer emails (e.g. through our Wellbeing Walk groups).
- Active consideration is being given to areas such as data protection, data flows, branding, and ease of use.
- Early market engagement, including conversations with third-party providers plus other charities who have similar needs and have implemented solutions, to understand available options.

Current thinking is that reviews of third-party solutions, end-to-end business solutions and volunteer-led systems will feature as part of arriving at a way forward.