



Year in Review

2021/22

ramblers.org.uk

Introduction



Ross Maloney
CEO, The Ramblers

Welcome to our 2021/22 Year in Review.

I became CEO in July 2022 and it was an honour to join a charity with such a wonderfully rich history and an incredible commitment to protecting everyone's right to enjoy the outdoors.

The summer was a particularly exciting time to join the Ramblers. We had finally shaken off the restrictions of coronavirus, and two years of interrupted walking, and were able to start looking forward again.

Our activities across England, Scotland and Wales had restarted in earnest and our new branding, which represents a more open and outward looking Ramblers, had been launched.

As the stories in this review show, everyone has their own reason for becoming a supporter of the Ramblers. Whether it's to fight for everyone's right to enjoy the outdoors, for health, for friendship, or to use their skills to improve our paths, tracks and trails. We exist for everyone who loves to get outside and feels passionately about protecting the places we all love to walk, so this mix of motivations makes me very proud.

I'm looking forward to working with members and supporters – new and existing – in the years ahead. It takes all of us, working together, to keep the outdoors open for all. Together, we are the Ramblers.

**Thank you to everyone who
has supported the Ramblers
in the past year.**

Highlights from the year

102,000
members

across England, Scotland and
Wales supported our work –
and we're welcoming more
all the time



25,000
volunteers

helped protect where we
all love to walk and gave
people the opportunity
to get outside

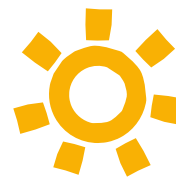
£11.9 million

was raised thanks to you –
our supporters, members,
donors and partners



40,000 group walks

took place, from leisurely urban strolls to scrambles on the hills



30,000
Ramblers
Wellbeing Walks

were organised, our friendly
short walks with new friends



154

path maintenance teams

protected and improved paths for everyone to enjoy



Volunteer researchers
began working to save

49,000

miles of lost paths
across England and Wales

4,000

tried-and-tested
Ramblers Routes

inspired walkers to get out and explore



Protecting places we love to walk

Our green spaces and networks of paths across England, Scotland and Wales are some of our greatest treasures. A lot of work goes into making sure they are protected and can be enjoyed by walkers everywhere.

What's involved in protecting the places we walk?

From campaigning for policy change to getting out the pruning shears, we work to make sure nothing stops walkers in their tracks: path closures and diversions, overgrown routes, land that's off limits, misplaced 'no trespassing' signs, broken gates. It's a massive team effort that involves volunteers, partners, local authorities and the public. Thank you to everyone involved!

- In the past year, **more than 150 volunteer path maintenance teams** chopped back overgrowth, replaced stiles with gates, repaired bridges and installed signs to make sure walkers could find their way.
- In England and Wales, hundreds of volunteer researchers started working to save the 49,000 miles of paths discovered by Ramblers supporters and the public as part of our **Don't Lose Your Way campaign**. These are paths that are currently not legally recognised and therefore don't have protection.

Thanks to Ramblers supporters, the campaign had a major win when the UK government followed in the footsteps of the Welsh government and committed to abolishing the 2026 deadline for saving paths in England.

How do you 'save' a path?

The next phase of Don't Lose Your Way is saving the lost paths and this is done in England and Wales by getting them added to the definitive maps of local highway authorities.

Anyone can do this by applying for a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO). Old maps, records and books can be used to make the case as can witness statements and recent evidence of usage. We're lucky to have hundreds of volunteer researchers making this happen – but we always need more.

- Thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, we were able to launch our **Path Accessibility Fund** to support projects with ambitious aims to make more routes open to all. This could mean replacing a stile with a gate or levelling the surface of a path, while always being sensitive to the beauty of the route. Our first two projects are almost complete – more news on this in 2023.

- Our **award-winning Scottish Paths Map** has been viewed more than 60,000 times since its launch in autumn 2021, giving walkers more confidence to explore. In the past year, more than 300 volunteers have checked 10,000 miles of the total 42,000 on the map.
- Our Paths to Wellbeing project put walking at the heart of 18 communities in Wales. Volunteers gave more than 7,500 hours to create **145 new walking routes**, clear vegetation, install 50 new accessible gates and plant over 2,633 trees as well as wildflower meadows.
- We took action to prevent Network Rail destroying much-loved walking routes and community connections. The work of **volunteers saved 12 level crossings** in Essex that Network Rail had threatened with closure, while **9,000 supporters signed our petition** calling for the reopening of the Dalwhinnie level crossing in the Cairngorms. The campaign for Dalwhinnie continues.
- Our Paths Team responded to **1,600 enquiries from the public**, who report threats and challenges on the path networks that may hamper the rights of us all to enjoy walking.

- **Local groups created amazing new walking routes for everyone to enjoy.** A great example is the Magnificent 11 created by Glasgow Ramblers and partners. This four-part circular walk links seven green spaces on Glasgow's Southside.
- In addition to waymarking the entire route of **The Cambrian Way**, start, end and mid-point markers have been installed. This 298-mile route, which runs the length of Wales, will now also be featured on Ordnance Survey maps, opening it up to more walkers.

- We campaigned for **Green Routes** in towns and cities and worked with Transport for London to get the first ever Leisure Walking Plan for the city published. We'll be working with our volunteers to encourage other towns and cities to follow London's lead.

Walks for everyone

Everyone has a different reason to walk. Whether it's for health, friendship, community or adventure. Over the past year, our projects and activities have supported everyone's way of walking from thousands of group walks organised by experienced walk leaders to sharing tried-and-tested routes for everyone to enjoy.

In the past year, we delivered **more than 30,000 Ramblers Wellbeing Walks** through more than **155 amazing partners**. These are free short walks that give those who are new to walking a chance to try it in a friendly, supportive environment. These walks are prescribed by doctors for their wide-ranging health benefits, which not only help physical conditions, but also loneliness and social isolation.



Being outside and feeling euphoric

"It might be surprising to people, as I'm quite outgoing, but I suffer with anxiety. Ramblers Wellbeing Walks really help me. After a walk, I just feel euphoric. Joining Ramblers Wellbeing Walks is one of the best things I've done for a long time, it's just so beneficial for your whole body and mind."

Joy
Ramblers Wellbeing Walker

Almost **40,000 Ramblers group walks** gave the public the choice of a wide variety of walks right across England, Scotland and Wales, thanks to more than 14,000 experienced walk leaders who volunteer their time. These walks range from a leisurely stroll in the park to adventurous scrambles up craggy mountains.



New city, new adventures

"In 2021, I got a new job which meant a move to Manchester. I didn't know anyone and being new in a big city can be a bit daunting. I did some research into ways to meet new people and came across the Ramblers MAD (Manchester and District) Walkers.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I turned up for my first Saturday walk, but I was so excited when I got to Manchester Piccadilly train station and found about 40 people all of my age ready and waiting with their walking boots on!"

Luke
Ramblers member

For those who prefer a walk to be just them and the wide-open road, we continued to expand our Ramblers Routes, a library of more than **4,000 tried and tested routes**. The time and research that our volunteers put into creating these routes inspires walkers to set out and enjoy their walk with confidence.

Our **Out There Award**, which helps 18 to 26-year-olds develop skills for the outdoors has flourished this year. Participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and most have faced additional barriers to getting outdoors. They report improved skills, confidence and a network of friends as a result of the award. We also launched the Out There Award Plus, which focuses on volunteering and responsible camping skills.



Opening up the world of walking

“My son, Eddie, is mostly non-verbal, and his world became increasingly small in recent years. First with COVID-19 lockdowns, then with the end of his course at college. But now, with Ramblers Routes, Sundays are pretty much given over to a ‘Big Walk’ by Eddie and me.

Signposts and waymarkers are a favourite topic for him. And he often seems interested in ‘non-standard’ views. For example, he seems fascinated by the bright green of moss covering old trees.”

Alan
Ramblers member

Our members and supporters

However you choose to support the Ramblers, thank you for treasuring the outdoors and helping protect the places we all walk, explore and escape.

Our members, volunteers, donors, partners, trusts, those of you who have pledged a gift in your will and those of you who read Walk magazine. We’re constantly inspired by the generosity and commitment of our supporters.

- **In the past year, the Ramblers raised £11.9 million**, which helped us protect access to green spaces and the paths, tracks and trails that lead us to them, as well as making sure everyone can enjoy the benefits of walking.
- Our **Coast Path Countdown** started looking forward to the completion of the England Coast Path, which will become the world’s longest coast path. In response to our fundraising appeal, our supporters generously donated £69,000 to help us open up more places to walk and enjoy.

- Our membership is growing. We now have more than **102,000 members**. We’re looking forward to welcoming even more new members in the year ahead.
- **Our network of more than 25,000 volunteers** makes a huge contribution to the Ramblers. With their vast expertise and knowledge, they make a difference both locally and nationally. Their dedication to the cause is incredible.

What do our volunteers do?

The question really should be, “what don’t they do?” There’s a role for everyone at the Ramblers. Whether it’s running a Ramblers group, leading walks, digging through historical rights of way records, lobbying councils, clearing paths or putting your digital skills to good use by managing your group’s social media. The opportunities are endless.

The path ahead

**Thank you for all your support.
Here's to another great year ahead.**

We will continue to fight for the rights of ordinary people to enjoy beautiful landscapes and the joy of walking.

Where land is out of bounds, we will fight for access. Where paths or places are under threat, we will work to protect them. When someone wants to walk, we'll help them find their way.

We've taken great strides in making sure the Ramblers is truly a charity for everyone and we can't wait to continue that journey.

So, lace up your boots and get ready to roam far and wide with the Ramblers.

- **We partner with fantastic organisations** who share our ambitions to make sure everyone can enjoy the outdoors. With their support, we raise awareness of our work, fund vital new initiatives and provide discounts and offers to our members. A special thank you to the following organisations: who recognise and support the work of the Ramblers.

- Cotswold Outdoor
- HF Holidays
- Kusuma Trust
- Paths for All
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Pilgrim Trust
- Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust
- Scottish Government
- Sport England
- sportscotland
- Welsh Government



A special thank you

We're very grateful to the players of the People's Postcode Lottery who raised **£5 million** for the Ramblers, helping inspire more people to take up walking and protecting the places we all love to walk.

Love the outdoors? Support the Ramblers

Whether you're a wild-weather wanderer, a solitary stroller, a hardcore hiker or a weekend walk-and-talker, there's no one way to ramble.

And there's no one way to support our work. Donate to fund action on the ground, use your voice to campaign for change, or volunteer to help others enjoy the outdoors.

Donate. Campaign. Volunteer. Join.

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