



Scottish Council 2026

Annual General Meeting
and
Member Event

Saturday 14 March 2026
John McIntyre Conference Centre,
Edinburgh

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Scottish Council 2026

SC26 00a

Ramblers Scotland Scottish Council
Programme of

The Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting

John McIntyre Conference Centre, Edinburgh

Saturday 14 March 2026

	Registration opens. Tea / coffee on arrival	9:30am	45 mins
1.	Welcome	10:15am	10 mins
2.	Recreational access: where are we in 2026? (Panel discussion) Start of a call to action (what groups can do)	10:25am	60 mins
	Walk – join the walk you were assigned at registration	11:25am	130 mins
	Lunch	1:35pm	40 mins
3.	Guest speaker: Tom Bowser, Argaty Red Kites	2:15pm	40 mins
4.	AGM Formal Business RSSC & Motions Committee election arrangements Open voting (ballot paper) SC26 01a RSSC nominees SC26 01b Motions Committee nominees	2:55pm	15 mins
5.	Motions Committee SC26 02 Note and adopt motions order paper	3:10pm	15 mins
	Break	3:25pm	15 mins
6.	AGM formal business cont'd: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC26 03 Approval of draft minute of Scottish Council 2025 • SC26 04 Update on Motion of SC2025 • SC26 05 Annual Report 2024/25 • Adoption of Annual Report • SC26 06a Statement of Scottish Council Accounts • SC26 06b Statement of Scottish Gathering Accounts • Questions and adoption of accounts • SC26 07 Summary of Ramblers Scotland finances 2024/25 • Questions on the finances • SC26 08 Independent Examiners, Hon Officers, RSSC 	3:40pm	25 mins
7.	Election Results & close AGM	4:05pm	15 mins
8.	Closing remarks/ close Scottish Council Malcolm Dingwall Smith, Convener, RS	4:20pm	10 mins

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers of Edinburgh Ramblers Group and Edinburgh Young Walkers who generously dedicated their time and effort to make our event successful.

Thank you!

Recreational access: where are we in 2026?

Today’s panel discussion will explore the state of access in Scotland today and relate this to the condition of the greenspaces nearest where most people live and the restoration of landscapes further afield.

What are the practical barriers people face to enjoying greenspaces and the great outdoors and do they affect all of us equally? Are there common challenges encountered by those looking to promote recreational access and those focused primarily on protecting and restoring the places people love to visit? And how should we understand the conflicts we are sometimes told exist between public access and nature restoration?

Panel Member	Role
Alison Johnstone MSP	Chair of today’s discussion
Charlie Cumming	Chief Executive of Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust
Charlotte Maddix	Advocacy Co-ordinator, the Scottish Rewilding Alliance
Eleisha Fahy	Senior Access Officer, Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)
Gavin Corbett	Policy Manager, Ramblers Scotland

Walk Programme for Scottish Council AGM & Event 2026

We're really delighted that Edinburgh Ramblers have kindly pulled together a lovely programme of walks to show you a bit of Edinburgh. We hope you enjoy them and a huge thank you to Edinburgh Ramblers for kindly leading them.

Delegates to Scottish Council 2026 will be assigned to a group walk at registration.

You will be allocated at registration to the Green, Red, Yellow or Blue walk. If you have a preferred route or less ascent just let the reception desk volunteers know so that they assign you appropriately.

All walks will take just under 2 hours. This can depend on weather conditions, speed of walkers or how many photos are taken!

Remember to dress appropriately – it is March after all! Walking boots advised.

<p>Walk 1 – Green Walk: Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crag 4.8km 290m ascent Pollock Halls, Holyrood Park and a steep ascent of Arthur's Seat, initially many steps and then steep slippery rock to the top. All round views extending to Ben Lomond in the west, Fife and the higher Perthshire hills to the north, the Moorfoots and North Berwick to the south and east. Descend over rough path to St Margaret's Loch and return over Salisbury Crag if time permits. The top of Arthur's Seat is polished rock and great care is needed to avoid trips and slips. It will be crowded. The paths are rough and narrow in places. It is not an easy climb. Dave Powell & Rachel Palmer</p>
<p>Walk 2 – Red Walk: Whinney Hill 4.9km 180m ascent. Pollock Halls, Holyrood park, loop round to the north of Arthur's Seat on a narrow path (not climbing Arthur's seat) to Whinney Hill. Descend to St Margaret's Loch, return via Hunter's Bog. Whinney Hill is a great viewpoint and the paths are much easier than on Arthur's Seat. Jess Lightfoot & Joyce Leong</p>
<p>Walk 3 – Yellow Walk: Salisbury Crag 4.5km 160m ascent. Pollock Halls, Holyrood park, head down to St Margaret's Loch via Hunter's Bog and return over Salisbury Crag. The paths over the crags are rough with a few steep sections. There are clear views to the north and west over the city to Fife and beyond. You will be walking above the Radical Road - sadly closed at present. Christine Dykes & Penny Forster</p>
<p>Walk 4 – Blue Walk Dr Neil's Garden and the Innocent railway 5km 90m ascent Pollock Halls, Duddingston Low Road to Duddingston Village, Dr Neil's Garden, Duddingston Road West, Innocent Railway path to Pollock Halls. This is an easy walk with a short road section but mainly on closed road/mixed use path. There is usually a large variety of wildfowl on Duddingston Loch but this cannot be guaranteed. John Phillips & Alison Stevenson</p>

Guest Speaker

Tom Bowser



From their central Scotland farm, Tom and his family run Argaty Red Kites, a pioneering conservation initiative that played a key role in the successful reintroduction of red kites to central Scotland.

Through Argaty, Tom combines wildlife conservation, community engagement, and sustainable land management.

He has also been closely involved in the return of beavers to Scotland; the family were the first landowners to provide a home to beavers that needed to be relocated within the country. He shares practical experience of living alongside them, exploring how their presence can benefit nature, landscapes, and people.

Tom is widely recognised for his work in promoting coexistence between people, nature, and the countryside.

This work also resonates with the wider interest in nature recovery across Scotland. Ramblers Scotland supports efforts to restore landscapes in ways that enhance biodiversity while ensuring people can continue to enjoy and experience the outdoors. The organisation recognises that healthier, more dynamic ecosystems enrich the landscapes people walk through — highlighting the close connection between conservation, access, and the shared enjoyment of Scotland's natural heritage.

Nominations and Biographies

SC26 01a

for

Honorary Officers & Ordinary Members to Scottish Council 2026

RAMBLERS SCOTLAND STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

Role	Nominee	Proposer 1	Proposer 2
PRESIDENT	CHRIS PAUL LAWLOR	BETH DICKSON	MALCOLM DINGWALL SMITH
CONVENER	ROBIN MCLAREN	MALCOLM DINGWALL SMITH	MIKE GRAY
VICE CONVENER	JACQUI THOMSON	JOSEPHINE BISACRE	HAMISH CLARK
ORDINARY MEMBER	JOHN RUSSELL	FIONA TAYLOR	Na
ORDINARY MEMBER	JACK BONNAMY	BETH DICKSON	Na
ORDINARY MEMBER	NAVID FOROUTAN	MIKE GRAY	Na
ORDINARY MEMBER	ADRIENN HORTOBAGYI	GORDON STEWART tbc	Na
ORDINARY MEMBER	Vacancy		Na
ORDINARY MEMBER	Vacancy		Na
VICE PRESIDENT	ZAHRAH MAHMOOD	JACQUI THOMSON	MALCOLM DINGWALL SMITH
VICE PRESIDENT	ALISON MITCHELL	BETH DICKSON	KATE ASHBROOK

CHRIS PAUL LAWLOR - PRESIDENT



I am an app developer and social media content creator from Motherwell. My content creation work focuses on promoting experiences in Scotland, especially in the outdoors. Across my channels including Instagram, TikTok and Facebook I have over 2 million followers, and I am best known for a series of videos: “Did you know that in Scotland ...”. Promoting responsible tourism and outdoors access is important to me, so when featuring locations and attractions in my videos I always think about the potential impact on local residents and the environment. Although I

have had many opportunities to monetise my online presence, I am very selective about the partners I choose to work with which have included VisitScotland, National Trust for Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful. I was honoured to be approached by Ramblers Scotland to be your new President because it is a significant opportunity for us to work together to encourage everyone to get outdoors in a responsible way.

ROBIN MCLAREN - CONVENER



Robin McLaren is a lifelong hiker and explorer, with a love of mountains that began in the Scouts in 1968 on a visit to the Polish and Czech Tatras. Since then, he has built up decades of walking experience across Scotland and mainland Europe, including many Alpine hikes and hut-to-hut trips. Highlights include a 55-day trek on the GR5 from Lake Geneva to Nice, a through-hike from Munich to Venice, and numerous ski-mountaineering adventures in the Austrian Alps. Based in Edinburgh, he continues to explore Scotland regularly on foot.

Robin’s motivation to join the RSSC comes from a renewed appreciation of what walking groups offer beyond the route itself. After attending the Kendal Mountain Festival this year—alongside inspiring talks from leading mountaineers—he was especially struck by

sessions exploring why people value walking groups: companionship, friendship, belonging, and the tangible benefits for both physical and mental health. Those themes resonate strongly with him and are the core reason he wants to contribute to the committee's work.

Professionally, Robin is a geospatial information management specialist and an international expert in land governance and land reform—experience that reinforces his commitment to responsible access, good stewardship, and well-run organisations. He also brings significant governance experience, having served as a board member and Chair of Hockey Scotland, a 10,000-member organisation, for seven years. He is keen to apply that blend of enthusiasm, practical experience, and governance capability to support the Ramblers' work through the RSSC.

JACQUI THOMSON – VICE CONVENER



I joined Ramblers in 2021 and have since been actively involved at group, area and national level. For the past three years I have been a member of the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee, attending Area AGMs and contributing to committee discussions and decision-making. I have also supported a number of sub-committees, including the organising group for the Ramblers Scottish Gathering 2024, charring preparations for our Diamond Jubilee in 2025, and contributing to preparations for the 2026 Scottish Council.

At group level, I have been closely involved with Balerno Group, undertaking a range of roles including Covid Officer, Walk Programme Convener and Walk Leader. I am currently Chair of the group and acting as temporary Treasurer, giving me practical experience of leadership, governance and financial responsibility within Ramblers.

More widely, I have contributed to Ramblers Scotland training and promotional activity. This includes being filmed to promote the benefits of leading walks and introductory walks, sharing best practice drawn from my own experience. I have also been interviewed for the Ramblers newsletter to share my personal story of why I joined Ramblers. At GB level, I am a member of the Special Interest Group on the Future of Group Walks.

My primary concern is the long-term sustainability of Ramblers. I believe we must address challenges around diversity and engagement if we are to encourage more members to step into committee roles.

Alongside my Ramblers experience, I bring senior leadership experience from a global corporate organisation, with a strong background in strategy and change management, as well as current experience working within the charity sector. I believe these skills would add value to the Strategic Committee, and I would welcome the opportunity to serve as Vice Convener at this important time.

JOHN RUSSELL – ORDINARY MEMBER



As a retired academic, I now lead walks, serve as minute secretary for the Bearsden Group, and am a recent appointee to the Area. Beyond rambling I participate in local history groups, and especially to Unite the Union's West of Scotland Community Branch. I wish to join the RSSC for two reasons. First, with the passage of time and extensive administrative experience, I like to envisage, and perhaps be able to shape, the "big picture", rather than solely administer execution of another's vision. Second, the roots of the Rambler's in Kinder Scout, and Scotland's quest to engage the wider community with such activities as the Out There Award, outreach to less well-off communities, and seeking to uphold access rights, largely mesh with my world view.

The current focus on the constitution, thus provides a particularly opportune time for me to join, learn and contribute to the RSSC. In this regard, informed by walk leadership, group and area participation, I envisage contributing possibly to; (a) pilot projects extending the Out There Award to a younger age group, (b) outreach to groups facing additional barriers to walking in general, and perhaps abused women in particular, (c) upholding access rights.

JACK BONNAMY – ORDINARY MEMBER

By way of a brief introduction, my name is Jack, I'm 31, and I've lived in Scotland for nine years now. I am originally from London, and moved up here for a masters at the University of St Andrews. I ended up staying at St Andrews for my PhD and then later for work. During this time, I've lived in St Andrews, Dundee, and now Edinburgh. I've always been a keen walker, but during my studies it became a way for me to escape both St Andrews and my research. Living in St Andrews, I was incredibly lucky to have the Fife coastal path and other scenic walks right on my doorstep. I've grown more adventurous over the years, casting my eyes further north to the hills. I still walk regularly, but trail running has become the main way I experience the benefits of the outdoors now.

I wish to stand for the RSSC because I am passionate about the benefits of walking and about ensuring that it is accessible for all. Over the nine years I have lived in Scotland, I have benefited from the land access laws here and learned a lot about my rights and responsibilities as a walker. I am keen to give back to walking community by volunteering my time and efforts to the committee. In particular, I would like to be able to help give others the support they need to foster confidence when exploring the outdoors. I believe that my background as a researcher means I can bring some unique skills and insights as well.

NAVID FOROUTAN -ORDINARY MEMBER

I'm a walk leader with Ramblers and am standing for RSSC because I'm interested in the wider role walking can play in people's lives and in our communities.

Through my involvement in my local Ramblers group, I've seen first-hand how walking helps people in very real ways. Not just physically, but by building confidence, routine, connection and a sense of belonging. People turn up for a walk, have a chat, spend time outdoors, and over time you can see the difference it makes. That experience has really shaped how I think about the value of Ramblers and what it already does so well.

Professionally, I work in public health, where I focus on prevention, inequalities and systems change. I'm particularly interested in walking as part of holistic health and wellbeing, and in the role it plays in shaping healthier, more liveable places. I see walking as social infrastructure,

something that quietly supports connection, mental wellbeing and community life.

Alongside this, I bring experience from board and governance roles in the voluntary and public sectors. I'm comfortable working at a strategic level, listening to different perspectives, and helping link national priorities with what's actually happening on the ground. I'm keen to support volunteers and local groups, while also helping Ramblers think about future relevance and impact.

If elected, I'd aim to be a constructive, pragmatic member of RSSC, bringing local experience, a public health and place-based perspective, and a strong commitment to collaboration and good governance.

ADRIENNE HORTOBAGYI – ORDINARY MEMBER

I joined the Ramblers shortly after moving to Scotland in 2015, when I was looking for a walking and hiking community. I am passionate about walking, and I firmly believe that everyone should have the opportunity to access and enjoy the great outdoors. As I became more involved and walked regularly with Ramblers groups, I learned more about the organisation's campaigns, its commitment to access rights, and the work it undertakes to support walkers across Scotland. This inspired me to volunteer in a range of roles and contribute more actively to the organisation.

When the opportunity arose last year to join the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee as a co-opted member, I was keen to volunteer for it because I wanted to support the organisation's impact at a strategic level. I hope to draw on the experience I have gained through my professional background to contribute to the

work Ramblers Scotland does to protect access rights, engage local communities, and help more people experience the benefits of walking.

I would also like to bring to the Committee the insight I have gained from being directly involved with local groups as well as areas. Additionally, I am motivated by Ramblers Scotland's commitment to improving diversity in the outdoors and making walking more accessible and inclusive thus I would like to support the delivery of the strategy that focuses on these priorities.

ZAHRAH MAHMOOD – VICE PRESIDENT



As my Presidency comes to a conclusion, I am honoured to be nominated for the role of Vice President of Ramblers Scotland.

I am widely known as *the Hillwalking Hijabi*, and my journey into hillwalking has shaped my commitment to breaking down barriers to participation in the outdoors. I am passionate about ensuring that Scotland's paths, hills, and landscapes feel welcoming and accessible to everyone, particularly those from communities that have traditionally felt excluded from outdoor spaces.

As President, I have worked to use my visibility and lived experience to encourage greater inclusion, representation, and confidence in walking and hillwalking. I believe strongly in the physical, mental, and social benefits of walking, and in its power to

connect people to nature, to each other, and to their local environments.

I was deeply honoured to receive an **MBE**, recognising my contribution to promoting inclusion and access in the outdoors, including my work with Ramblers Scotland. This has strengthened my determination to continue advocating for positive change and to support organisations that share these values.

As Vice President, I would be proud to act as an ambassador for Ramblers Scotland, supporting its strategic aims and strengthening its voice and presence.

ALISON MITCHELL – VICE PRESIDENT



Taken outdoors from an early age and taught to take care of the countryside and understand the beauty of nature in Scotland especially in the Cairngorms. Member from 1983 when Aberdeen Group was formed, Grampian Area Chairman and Ramblers Scotland Chairman/Convener during the formative years of Ramblers in Scotland. Walk Leader for many years now doing easy walks and stroller outings. Joined Scottish Council Executive Committee (RSSC) in 1986 and have served as member and Convener/ Vice Convener over the last 30 years. Attended all Scottish Council meetings during this period. Elected to Ramblers GB Executive Committee now Board of Trustees in 2000 and have served either as representative for Ramblers Scotland and also as an elected Board member

until 2023. Wide range of outdoor interests from National Trust for Scotland, North East Mountain Trust, John Muir Trust, SYHA (Hostelling Scotland) and currently Chair of Aberdeen City Outdoor Access Forum. Founded in 1987 along with others the successful Scottish Ramblers Gathering, annual weekend of walking and social events, now in its 35th year! Recently headed up group organising celebrations of Ramblers Scotland 60th anniversary including a civic reception in Edinburgh for volunteers. During the King Charles III Coronation year, 2023, I was awarded a Coronation Champion for volunteering. Bringing people together, supporting volunteers, and promoting walking have been a central part of my life and I remain motivated by Ramblers' mission.

**MOTIONS COMMITTEE
NOMINATIONS & BIOGRAPHIES**

Nominee	Proposer
KARINE DAVISON	ADRIENN HORTOBAGYI
ALISON MITCHELL	ANNE MACDONALD
Vacancy	

Karine Davison



I wish to be considered for nomination to the Motions Committee and believe my extensive experience at both Group and Area level would enable me to contribute effectively. I joined the Ramblers Bearsden & Milngavie Group in 2004 and became a Walk Leader and Coordinator in 2017, supporting a group that now includes around 74 walkers. Since joining the Group Committee in 2013, I have served as Minute Secretary, Group Secretary (May 2021–December 2025), and currently as Social Events Coordinator. I have represented the Group on the North Strathclyde Area since 2013 and, in 2024, took on the role of Area Footpath & Countryside Officer, being re-elected in February 2026. I have attended most Scottish Council meetings since 2013 and many General Councils, giving me a sound understanding of governance and motion procedure. I hope to contribute positively to the Committee while acknowledging the depth of experience and careful judgement long provided by Barry Pottle

Alison Mitchell



With a wealth of experience of attending Scottish Council meetings either as a delegate or office bearer and listening to debates I feel I have the knowledge to add value to the Motions committee deliberations. Working with others on framing motions and understanding our current constitution I can offer advice on constitutional and procedural matters, to ensure motions are competent, clear and focused.



RAMBLERS SCOTLAND SCOTTISH COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

MOTIONS ORDER PAPER

(for approval by the Meeting under Standing Order B6.5)

Note: This Motions Order Paper refers only to the Agenda item “Debate/Vote on motions received”. It will be updated, if any request for a late motion to be considered by the Meeting, is received by 12 noon on 14 March 2026.

Membership of the Motions Committee

In terms of Standing Order A2.3, the Motions Committee comprises the Scottish Council Convener, one further member appointed by Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee (RSSC), and three members elected by and from Scottish Council.

The current Convener of Scottish Council is Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, and the further RSSC appointee for 2025 is Mike Gray. Scottish Council 2025 elected Liz Hunt, Alison Mitchell and Barry Pottle to the Motions Committee for 2026.

The Motions Committee elected Alison Mitchell as Interim Convener for 2026.

Motions submitted for Scottish Council 2026

No motions were received at Ramblers Scotland office by the deadline of midnight on 10th February, 2026.

Disclosure under Standing Order A2.4

As no member of the Motions Committee is the submitter of any Motion, no disclosure is required.

Order of motions

As no motions have been submitted, the Motions Committee does not require to recommend the order in which motions are to be discussed.

Late motions or amendments.

In terms of Standing Order B4, business not affecting the Constitution may be moved by a Council member as a matter of urgency with the agreement of two thirds of those present and voting.

In the event of any requests for late motions or amendments being notified up to 12 noon on the date of the Scottish Council meeting, they will be notified verbally to the meeting by the Convener of Scottish Council and may only be accepted for discussion with the agreement of two thirds of those present and voting.

Undisposed of motions

Standing Order B6.2 requires this Motions Order Paper to indicate that day and time at which, in the view of the Motions Committee, all motions and amendments that have not been disposed of by the AGM should be remitted to the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee with power to take decisions on the matters contained in them, except that any Constitutional amendments not disposed of by the AGM shall be deemed to have fallen.

The Motions Committee recommends that, in the event of, the day and time, when undisposed of motions (including any late motion, accepted by Scottish Council for discussion with the agreement of two thirds of those present and voting, to be dealt with as stated above), should be 15:45 on Saturday, 14th March, 2026.

Motions Committee 2026:

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, Mike Gray, Liz Hunt, Alison Mitchell (Interim Convener), Barry Pottle

**Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting
Of the
Scottish Council of Ramblers Scotland 2025**

1. Welcome

The Convener, Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, welcomed delegates to Glasgow and to Scottish Council 2025.

He outlined the business for the day. He highlighted Ramblers' values which are inclusive, inspiring, empowering and responsible, with special emphasis on inclusivity for today.

He also introduced staff, the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee (RSSC), Vice Presidents Kate Ashbrook and Alastair Cant and from Ramblers GB, Board of Trustee's chair Lucy Robinson and CEO Ross Maloney.

Mal noted his pride in our 60th year, the 6 per cent growth in membership and 2,300 led walks. He also noted the sad passing of former Vice President John Holms.

He paid tribute to all volunteers, staff and trustees.

2. AGM formal business:**• RSSC election arrangements**

The Convener set out the arrangements for nominations and elections to RSSC.

• SC25 01 Approval of draft minute of Scottish Council 2024

Approval was proposed by Terry Robinson and seconded by Karine Davison. There were no amendments. The minute was approved by delegates.

• SC25 02 Update on Motion at SC2024

Alastair Cant asked for an update on the motion from last year on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. Some information was in the AGM pack but Gavin Corbett added further details:

Stage 1 report likely to be issued on 20 March with stage 1 debate likely on 27 March

Stage 2 (detailed amendments) is likely from late April. Ramblers Scotland had been working with Revive and Community Land Scotland on amendments to reflect the motion for Scottish Council in 2024. The Scottish Land Commission had made similar recommendations in its advice to ministers.

Barry Pottle asked that a further update be given next year.

• SC25 03 Annual Report 2023/24

Annual report adopted by AGM

• SC25 04 Statement on Scottish Council and Gathering Accounts

Mike Gray outlined accounts. There were no questions. Proposed by Sue Thomas; seconded by Andrew Bachell. The Scottish Council & Gathering Accounts were adopted by the AGM.

• SC25 05 Summary of Ramblers Scotland finances 2023/24

No questions were raised.

- **SC25 06 Appointment of Independent Examiners, Hon Officers, RSSC**

Anne Macdonald for Gathering and Charles Harris for Scottish Council were approved

3. SC25 07 Nominee introductions

There were no further nominations from the floor

4. SC25 08 Announce Motions Committee

Barry Pottle outlined membership of motions committee and its role in overseeing the preparation and debate of motions.

SC25 09 Note and adopt motions order paper & vote on any motions received

This year there were 3 motions: 2 for Scottish Council and 1 to be submitted to General Council by RSSC, pending endorsement or amendment by Scottish Council.

All 3 motions were judged competent with 1 amendment accepted as competent.

There were no amendments to the Motions report. The motions order paper was adopted unanimously by Scottish Council

Motion 1

RS Diamond Jubilee. Alison Mitchell introduced the motion on behalf of Grampian Area and 60th anniversary committee.

“Scottish Council notes that this year marks our Diamond Jubilee, having been constituted as the Scottish Area in 1965, it also notes that the inaugural Scottish Council was held on Saturday 23rd February 1985 in Stirling. Working with environmental organisations and other recreational bodies and for the benefit of its members it has enhanced walking possibilities for all. It is hoped that this will continue to the Platinum Jubilee in 2035 and beyond.

Scottish Council further agrees to send, on behalf of the members in Scotland, 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.”

There was a motion to Ramblers General Council in Liverpool in April 1965 to set up Ramblers Scotland as an area. Alison praised key volunteers and directors of these earlier years and noted that the bedrock of RS was its members.

Alison spoke to the motion and asked for it to be taken to General Council. It was seconded formally. No-one wished to speak against the motion, and it was passed without dissent

Motion 2

The Climate emergency motion plus amendment were taken together so debate was on amended version. Agreed by Scottish Council to take amended version

“This Scottish Council recognises that climate change, environmental and biodiversity degradation threaten the landscapes we cherish. To protect these areas, it is vital that Ramblers Scotland 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 Scottish Council calls on the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee to adopt policies which support climate action for members and staff activities addressing:

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

Sue Thomas spoke to the motion as amended.

Sue urged Ramblers Scotland members to engage with climate and nature emergencies, working with others, recognising that the environment is where our activity takes place. Sue argued that we have a duty to leave that environment for future generations and therefore will present Ramblers Scotland as relevant to younger people.

In open debate:

David Kennedy spoke to the motion and the importance of carbon sinks, and the nature of tree planting.

There was a further question on what was meant by monitoring in the 5th point. In her right of reply, Sue said that the intention is to produce an impact report detailing some of our activity to address nature and climate emergencies.

Motion passed overwhelmingly

Motion 3

If passed RSSC will take it to General Council

Amended version being taken –

“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

Sue Thomas spoke briefly to the motion. There were no other speakers. The motion passed overwhelmingly

5. Election / voting RSSC and MC

The elections were not contested

Treasurer re-appointed: Mike Gray

Motions Committee: Barry Pottle, Liz Hunt, Alison Mitchell

AGM formally closed at 11.17am

Appendix – Voting delegates in attendance at Scottish Council 2025

Name		Representing
Trevor	Abell	Perth Ramblers
Kate	Ashbrook	Vice President
Andrew	Bachell	RSSC
Margaret	Baillie	Dunfermline & West Fife Ramblers
Evelyn	Batchen	Inverurie Ramblers
Ruth	Beddall	Kirkcaldy Ramblers
Edna	Burnett	Kinross & Ochil
Terry	Callow	Livingston Ramblers
Alistair	Cant	Vice President
David	Clark	Helensburgh & West Dunbartonshire Ramblers
Karine	Davison	Bearsden & Milngavie Ramblers
Beth	Dickson	RSSC
Malcolm	Dingwall-Smith	Convener, RSSC
Allan	Drew	Forth Valley Ramblers
Yvonne	Flynn	Glasgow Ramblers/ Volunteer helper
Gary	Gibson	Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Ramblers
Annelie	Graham	Inverness Ramblers
Mike	Gray	RSSC
Jongky	Harlim	Balerno Ramblers
Liz	Hunt	Motions Committee
Claire	Hunter	Wigtownshire Ramblers
Lynn	Hyams	Edinburgh Ramblers
Ruth	Kerr	Eildon Ramblers
Arek	Kraszewski	Aberdeen Young Walkers
Liz	Lawlie	North Strathclyde Area
James	Lawson	Strathkelvin Ramblers
Alastair	Leaver	Biggar Ramblers
Anne	MacDonald	Grampian Area
Alison	Mitchell	Motions Committee
Barry	Pottle	Motions Committee
Jarka	Polednova	RSSC
Jim	Riddell	North Strathclyde Area
Barbara	Rimmington	Isle of Bute
Kate	Robertson	Midlothian Ramblers
Terry	Robinson	RSSC
Gordon	Stewart	Glasgow Young Walkers
Linda	Storie	Cunninghame Ramblers
Sue	Thomas	RSSC
Jacqui	Thomson	RSSC
Sheila	Wallace	Dundee Ramblers
Leen	Wallace-Vlaminck	Kilmarnock Ramblers
Alice	Wilson	Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers
Karl-Erik	Wilson	RSSC

Motions from Scottish Council 2025- Update

Motion 1

Ramblers Scotland's Diamond Jubilee

Scottish Council notes that this year marks our Diamond Jubilee, having been constituted as the Scottish Area in 1965, it also notes that the inaugural Scottish Council was held on Saturday 23rd February 1985 in Stirling.

Working with environmental organisations and other recreational bodies and for the benefit of its members it has enhanced walking possibilities for all. It is hoped that this will continue to the Platinum Jubilee in 2035 and beyond.

Scottish Council further agrees to send, on behalf of the members in Scotland, 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

Motion submitted by:

Grampian Area

Update on the Motion

Motion passed without dissent

Scottish Council has formally recognised the Diamond Jubilee and the historical milestones noted in the motion. Best wishes and congratulations have been sent on behalf of members in Scotland to Ramblers colleagues across Great Britain to mark the Association's 90th anniversary.

We will continue to promote partnership working to support and enhance walking opportunities.

We will look ahead to future milestone celebrations, including the Platinum Jubilee in 2035.

Motion 2 with amendment

Climate Emergency Action

This Scottish Council recognises that climate change, environmental and biodiversity degradation threaten the landscapes we cherish. To protect these areas, it is vital that Ramblers Scotland 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.

This Scottish Council resolves as follows:

This motion ensures that our charity is a key player in environmental protection in Scotland, working to safeguard and restore the environment and inhabitants of where we walk and live. It offers our current and future membership an engaged holistic experience of the environment. By addressing the climate emergency and the degradation of biodiversity, and forming key partnerships, we can make a meaningful difference for now, and for the future.

Accordingly, this Scottish Council calls on the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee to adopt policies which support climate action for members and staff activities addressing:

- 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*

Motion submitted by:

Dr Sue Thomas and Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, both members of Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee

Motion passed overwhelmingly

Update on Motion

Ramblers Scotland has continued to support broader environmental action primarily by working with partners, including particularly Scottish Environment Link (ScotLink) of which we are an active member. We have also endeavoured to ensure our programme and advocacy work to promote walking and access rights is undertaken in such a way as to support broader environmental goals. We have continued to liaise with our GB colleagues regarding any new initiatives to increase member involvement in environmental actions - see response to motion 3 below.

Specific examples of Scottish actions that have been undertaken in addition to what is mentioned in the general update include:

- Fed into ScotLink response to the UK Planning and Infrastructure Bill
- Led on organising a Scottish Outdoor Access Network training day on climate resilient paths
- Responded to the Natural Environment Bill which sets nature targets and builds in climate as a priority for our National Parks
- Took part in ScotLink strategy session for the next parliament on how to prioritise climate and nature, with all the major NGOs
- Played lead role in managing coalition at stage 2 of Land Reform Bill on how it better reflect climate and nature
- Signed joint letter from ScotLink to planning minister to uphold Loch Lomond and Trossachs rejection of Lomond Banks 'Flamingo Land' project
- Hosted stall at ScotLink Nature Champions event at Parliament
- Over the dry spring and heatwaves Ramblers Scotland regularly amplified messages about fire risk based on changing weather patterns
- Took part in session on redesign of ScotLink Nature Champions programme
- Participated in ministerial summit on wildfires in light of climate risk and impact on nature
- Participated in Revive conference on real land reform and nature restoration
- Through ScotLink food and farming group protested lack of progress on climate / nature / access in Rural Support Plan

Motion 3

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*

Motion submitted by:

Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee

Update on the Motion

This Motion was submitted to General Council

Motion carried, full update will be available in the published papers for General Council on 27 March 2026.

The mid year motions update was published in September 2025:

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, treeplanting, 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/aboutus/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.*



Ramblers Scotland Annual Report 2024-25

(October 2024 – September 2025)

Our vision is a future where anyone can enjoy walking outdoors.

Ramblers Scotland

The Melting Pot, Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL

01313575850 | scotland@ramblers.org.uk | ramblers.org.uk

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no 1093577, Scotland no SC039799) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales (no 4458492). Registered office: 1 Clink Street, 3rd Floor, London, SE1 9DG.



Who we are
(as of 30 September 2025)

Honorary officers:

President	Zahrah Mahmood
Vice Presidents	Dennis Canavan, Ben Dolphin, Andrew Murray, Alistair Cant, Kate Ashbrook, Lucy Wallace
Convener	Malcolm Dingwall-Smith
Vice Convener	Beth Dickson
Honorary Treasurer	Mike Gray

Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee:

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith* (convener)	Convener
Mike Gray (treasurer)	Treasurer
Beth Dickson (vice-convener)	Vice Convener
Terry Robinson	Ordinary Member
Sue Thomas	Ordinary Member (resigned Sept 2025)
Andrew Bachell	Ordinary Member
Jacqui Thomson	Ordinary Member
Mike Dales	Ordinary member
Jarka Polednova	Ordinary Member
Karl Erik Wilson	Ordinary Member
Adrienn Hortobagyi	Co-opted Member (appointed June 2025)
John Russell	Co-opted Member (appointed August 2025)
Navid Foroutan	Co-opted Member (appointed August 2025)
*Also on GB Board of Trustees	

Motions committee:

Alison Mitchell
Liz Hunt
Barry Pottle
Malcolm Dingwall-Smith (Ex officio)
Mike Gray (RSSC representative)

Members of staff:

Director	Brendan Paddy
Policy & Public Affairs Manager	Gavin Corbett
Communications Manager	Danny Carden
Community Development Officer	Jeannie Cranfield
Support Co-ordinator	Claire Exley
Community Outreach Officer	Angela James
Community Outreach Trainee	Min Leng

Our groups:

Clydesdale to Solway area* Biggar Clyde Valley Dumfries and District South Lanarkshire Walkers	South West Scotland area* Cunninghame Kilmarnock & Loudoun Wigtownshire	Highland & Islands area* Badenoch & Strathspey Inverness Inverness Young Walkers Lochaber & Lorn
Lothian & Borders area* Balerno Edinburgh Edinburgh Young Walkers Eildon Linlithgow Livingston Midlothian East Lothian Ramblers and Hillwalkers Tweeddale	Forth Valley, Fife & Tayside area Blairgowrie & District Brechin Dalgety Bay & District Dundee & District Dunfermline & West Fife Fife Young Walkers Forfar & District Forth Valley Ramblers Forth Valley Young Walkers Glenrothes Kinross & Ochil Kirkcaldy Perth & District St Andrews & North East Fife Strathtay Tayside Young Walkers	Renfrewshire, Cowal & Bute area* Eastwood Inverclyde Isle of Bute Paisley
Grampian area Aberdeen Aberdeen Young Walkers Inverurie Moray Stonehaven		North Strathclyde area Bearsden & Milngavie Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Glasgow Glasgow Young Walkers Helensburgh & West Dunbartonshire Mid Argyll & Kintyre Monklands Strathkelvin

*Indicates areas in abeyance during the period

Organisations affiliated to Scottish Council:

Red Rope Scotland
 Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society (SCOTWAYS)

Organisations Ramblers Scotland is affiliated to:

Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland	Scotland's Landscape Alliance
Scottish Outdoor Access Network	Cairngorms Campaign
Scottish Campaign for National Parks	Transform Scotland
Scottish Environment LINK	Voluntary Health Scotland
Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance	North East Mountain Trust
Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society	Hostelling Scotland
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	
Who Owns Scotland	

Convener's Foreword

This year Ramblers Scotland celebrated its 60th year. It is my privilege to serve as Convener as we reach this milestone, which reminds us of both our proud history and the thousands of people whose lives have been enriched through walking, learning, campaigning and volunteering with the Ramblers. As we look ahead, I hope you share my pride in being part of such a passionate and purposeful community.

This report highlights our achievements in 2024–25 - a year in which our movement continued to grow stronger. Our membership has continued to grow, reflecting the value people place on being welcomed into supportive walking communities and on standing together for Scotland's world-renowned access rights.

Across Scotland, our 53 groups delivered a remarkable programme of led walks, supported entirely by the commitment, expertise and kindness of our volunteers. Whether leading walks, supporting new members, improving local access, or representing walkers' interests, volunteers remain the beating heart of everything we do. My sincere thanks go to every one of you.

Our staff-led programmes have also continued to flourish. The Out There Award remains an inspiring entry point for young adults in Scotland, equipping 18 to 26-year olds with the skills and confidence to enjoy the outdoors independently. The Equalities Outreach Programme - now securely funded by the Scottish Government - continues to build confidence among walkers from communities traditionally underrepresented outdoors, and it is encouraging to see more participants beginning to make the transition into our groups.

We also strengthened our campaigning voice, continuing to emphasise that Scotland's world-leading access rights must be properly supported. Investment in access officers, active local access forums, well-maintained paths, clear signage and knowledgeable on-the-ground staff remains essential. We will keep making this case, constructively and persistently, on behalf of all who enjoy Scotland's paths, hills and wild places.

This is my third and final foreword to a Ramblers Scotland annual report, as my term as Convener comes to an end in March 2026. I am immensely grateful for the commitment and enthusiasm I have witnessed across our membership, volunteer network and staff team. Everything we achieve, we achieve together. And together, we enable people to live healthier, more connected and more fulfilling lives through walking.

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith

Convener, Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee



Access & Paths

Changing policy and law

As part of a progressive coalition on the **Land Reform (Scotland) Bill** we successfully lobbied for amendments to the Bill to ensure that new Land Management Plans will have to be prepared by more landowners. This is important as these plans will require landowners to show how they uphold our access rights and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

It's been a busy year for legislation with evidence submitted to the National Environment Bill on changing the aims and some powers of the national parks and to the Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill on shifting access cases from Sheriff Court to Land Court.

Ramblers Scotland is an active participant in the National Access Forum, this year, chairing the resources sub-group, contributing to a refresh of access guidance and, most significantly, playing a key role in drafting a new agreement between Network Rail and access authorities on the use of private level crossings.

The prolonged dry weather of much of 2025 meant that camping in hotspots and wildfires have been frequent topics. We attended the wildfires summit and took part in the fire messaging framework and play an active role in the Visitor Management groups convened by Visit Scotland NatureScot.

Making access rights a priority

With Scottish Parliament elections in 2026 and local authorities in 2027, it is time to get walking up the political agenda. Over the last year we have led a coalition of outdoor recreation organisations in preparing a **manifesto for 2026** and beyond. At its heart is the case for £50m investment in paths, with other actions on local authority capacity, education on access rights and responsibilities, mapping, and help to ensure access is a reality for everyone. As part of the roll out of those messages we have been attending political party conferences and engaging with individual elected representatives.

Through the Scottish Outdoor Access Network (SOAN) we have led on auditing where local authorities are placed with capacity, funding and use of powers.

Intervening in high profile areas

Daily we provide advice to members and the public on tackling problems they encounter, with some instances gaining higher profile. We are guided by the experience and insight of our Access Sub Committee (ASC) who both bring cases to our attention and provide feedback on how to address issues raised. These include longstanding cases like Radical Road in Edinburgh (inching towards partial re-opening in early 2026) and Dalwhinnie level crossing (within our wider work in NAF above). New or resurgent cases include Centerparcs near Hawick with potential gains for walking in the area and North Chesthill Estate in Glen Lyon. A big disappointment this year was the shelving of plans for a Galloway National Park and we have fed that experience into our lobbying on the Natural Environment Bill (above). ASC members also gave valuable feedback to the National Lynx discussion report published in May 2025.

Confidence & knowledge to walk outdoors

Scottish Walk Leadership Project

Our *Next Steps* training offer continues to provide new and experienced walk leaders the chance to refresh and enhance their skills through practical, in-person sessions delivered by our dedicated volunteer trainers. This year we delivered 16 courses across Scotland for 58 walk leaders. We also recruited and inducted three excellent new volunteer walk leadership trainers to expand our reach and capacity.

As a result of our training 72% of participants felt they would lead more walks and 95% would recommend the course to others. Overall course rating by participants of 4.8 out of 5.

"I thought Stewart delivered a brilliant course. He is what I would consider to be a role model in every respect. I've been involved in training delivery for the vast majority of my working life and his

demeanour of calm collectedness, professional knowledge, simplicity of explanation and accurately responding to student queries were some of the things that stood out to me as exemplary. Great course, much appreciated.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed the entire day, George was friendly and welcoming. The content and level was appropriate for someone new to walk leadership, navigation etc . A very informative and educational day all round. I will certainly recommend it to my fellow walkers.”

“Jim Donaldson was a great instructor and made sure to cover all aspects of walk leading. He gave great advice/tips on leading groups based on his own experience as an outdoor instructor.”

Our *Next Steps* offer has been designed to sit alongside the excellent online training package that in recent years has been made available to all Ramblers walk leaders. These online courses and resources were built with support from Ramblers Scotland, based on our years of experience working with and learning from our walk leaders. Completing this online training, or demonstrating an equivalent level of experience or training, has now been made a requirement for all Ramblers walk leaders. Due to our years of investment in training, Ramblers Scotland volunteers have had a considerable headstart in this process, and a substantial majority of our active walk leaders have already completed the training, well ahead of the deadline on 31 December.

Together, these initiatives will ensure that all our walk leaders continue to have the skills and confidence to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for everyone joining our walks.

Participation of communities with least access to the outdoors

Community Outreach Project

We have worked with over 100 participants from six new community groups — Care for Calais, Edinburgh City Mission, Refugee Sanctuary Glasgow, Yahyah’s Hub Aberdeen, Inverness Refugee Resettlement, and Pilton Community Health Project — while deepening relationships with three existing partners: The Welcoming, Connect Outdoors, and the Scottish Refugee Council. We held nine introductory partnership meetings and led 20 inspirational local walks in lowland and parkland environments.

Through the pilot Community Champion Scheme, three aspiring leaders from two community groups gained skills, confidence, and formal qualifications, completing Outdoor First Aid and Lowland Leader Training and leading their own community walks. The scheme’s success inspired the creation of a paid Community Outreach Trainee role, filled by a Community Champion graduate, who has been developing new partnerships and leading walks across west Edinburgh. The intention behind the creation of the trainee role is not just to increase our capacity and engagement with communities but also to develop a pathway into careers in the outdoor sector for people from under-represented communities.

“It helped me discover new places, engage in meaningful conversation and feel more rooted in the local community.

Most importantly, it reminds me of home. The walking routes and scenery are often like those in my home country, providing me with a comforting sense of belonging. I hope to help others stay active through my role as a Community Champion, and I am so grateful for this opportunity to give back to my local community.”

Polly, Ramblers Scotland Community Champion

Engaging less well-off communities

Our area of focus for the last year has been Greater Glasgow and Clyde. We have developed relationships with 15 community-based organisations to start to understand community needs and aspirations, and to begin to explore how these could be addressed and realised. Six community

activities were delivered, including three community walks, two community surveys and the creation of a community walking offer, in partnership with Inverclyde Ramblers, for Oak Tree Housing Association in Greenock. Partnership developed with Drumchapel Community Council to explore development of adventure walking group in Drumchapel.

We've also developed a partnership with a wide range of stakeholders across Glasgow City Council to improve a community route in Drumchapel in the northwest of Glasgow and are currently exploring funding opportunities to support the development of the route.

Young Adult Development Project

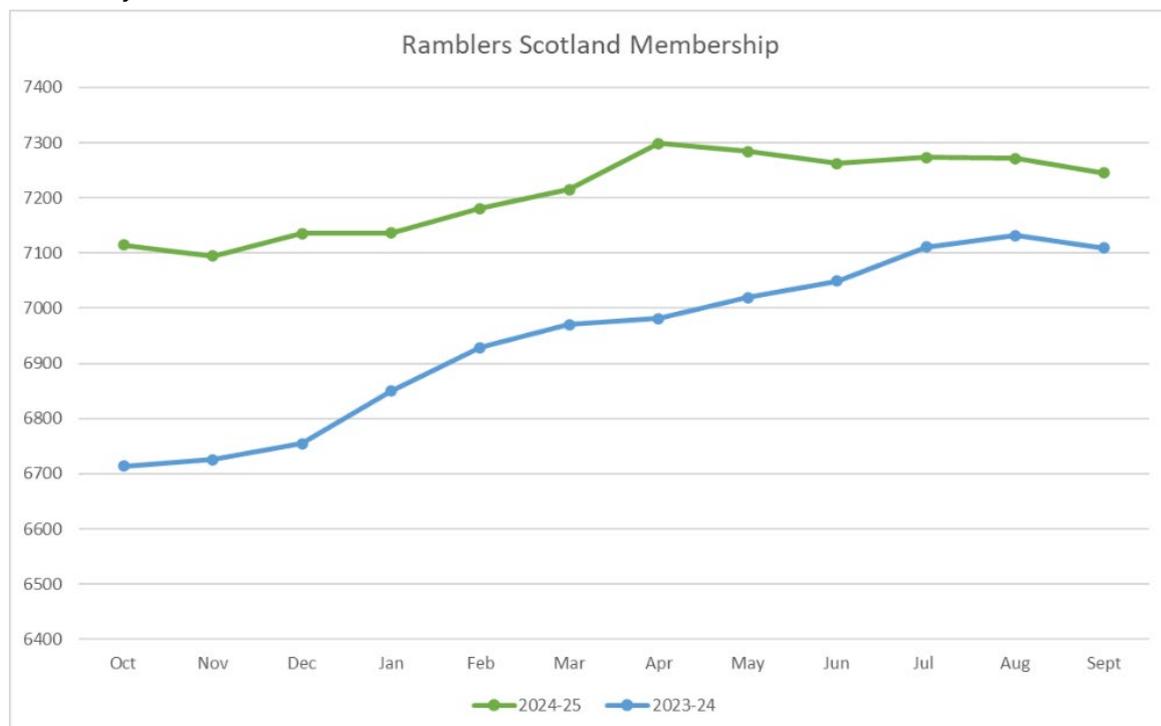
In 2025 we ran 10 Out There Award courses in five cities across Scotland for 41 participants. We unfortunately had to cancel six further courses that would have included two further locations due to extreme weather or low sign-ups or high withdrawals. The Award continues to engage a wide variety of participants, helping us meet our project KPIs for participation:

- 100% of participants said they enjoyed the course, that it increased their skills and that they now wanted to plan more walks with friends
- 22% came from global majority background
- 31% were LBGTQI+,
- 19% consider themselves to have a disability,
- 36% from 1-5 SIMD
- 61% female

Support for the Ramblers

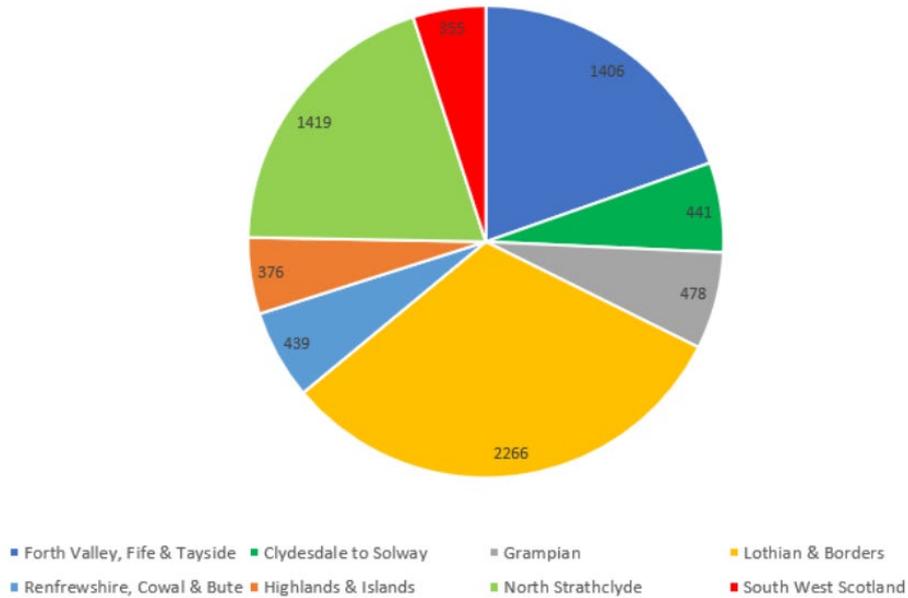
Membership

Ramblers Scotland's membership grew by 2% in the year, standing at 7,245 by the end of September 2025. Although detailed membership figures are not easily available for earlier years, we are confident that this is the highest figure for at least 15 years, although we could not match the very strong growth seen last year.



Although the majority of areas saw reported membership growth, including strong growth in some areas such as Grampian we did see small drops in others.

Area Membership 2025



Group Updates

Thank you to everyone who helped make 2025 a special year!

Across the country, groups marked Ramblers Scotland's diamond jubilee in a variety of wonderful ways – from themed walks and litter picks to social gatherings and dances that celebrated friendship and community. Many also enjoyed delicious creative cakes that helped them mark the milestone and share in the celebrations.

We love hearing about your group's successes and activities, but we can only share them if you let us know! Please do keep us updated by emailing scotland@ramblers.org.uk – we're always delighted to hear what you've been up to.

Cunninghame Ramblers

The Group Access Officer successfully persuaded the local council and a local landowner to repair stiles and secure a gate, improving safety and access. They are now leading a joint initiative with several public and private organisations to map and improve extensive deer fencing that impacts local walking routes.

The group also provides opportunities for volunteers to shadow more experienced members, which is proving highly effective in developing and sustaining future Walk Leaders.

Well done, Cunninghame Ramblers!

Kilmarnock & Loudoun Ramblers

In September, the group marked its 35th anniversary in style, celebrating with laughter, friendship, and a lively ceilidh. They also retraced the route of their very first walk from all those years ago – a wonderful way to honour their beginnings. Congratulations to everyone involved!

East Lothian Ramblers

The East Lothian Ramblers have been busy and made a big impact at this year's East Lothian Walkfest with their five-day, 50-mile cross-county challenge from the Firth of Forth to the Lammermuir Hills—one of the first events to fully book up. Designed to be inclusive and showcase the areas stunning variety of landscapes, it was a true highlight of the festival. In addition, several members of the group have been helping with the Marine Conservation beach clean and funded signage for a local route, activities that go above and beyond.

Balerno Ramblers

In January 2025, the group hosted the second Members Day for members across the Lothian and Borders area. The event featured a full day of walks and talks, including a post-lunch presentation by

Andrew Marsden, Chair of Friends of the Pentlands. The day was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Walking Events

The Gathering 2025

Made up of volunteers from across Scotland, the Gathering Committee did a superb job organising the 2025 Gathering in Rhu this April. Over 100 people attended, and 10 organised walks took place over the weekend. A big thank you goes to the committee and to all the volunteers who helped recce and lead walks, making the event such a success despite the weather.

This year's Gathering also featured a celebratory cake marking Ramblers Scotland's Diamond Jubilee, adding a special touch to the occasion.

Anyone interested in finding out more or getting involved in future Gatherings is warmly invited to email rscotgathering@gmail.com.

Online engagement

We have seen a 3% increase in Facebook followers and 25% increase in Instagram followers. The demise of Twitter/X has led us to diversify our platforms, making more use of LinkedIn and launching a presence on Threads and – most successfully – Bluesky, where we now have 2,200 followers. Thanks to this diversification, we gained 1.7million impressions of our unpaid social media content during the year.

Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee (RSSC)

The Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee (RSSC) provides oversight and governance for our work in Scotland, ensuring that our strategy is delivered effectively and that our vision for walking—accessible, enjoyable, and open to all—remains central to everything we do. The committee helps keep our long-term priorities on course, rather than focusing on day to day operations.

At their quarterly meetings, the committee considers key issues, while more detailed work is carried out by our sub-committees and working groups - which focus on issues and activities including access, succession planning and the Gathering. RSSC have also played an important role in the recent governance review for the charity.

We'd like to express our sincere thanks to the members of the committee who are standing down for their dedicated service and valuable contributions to our shared mission.

We are now seeking new members to join the RSSC in 2026. If you're passionate about walking, access, and supporting the delivery of our strategic ambitions, we'd love to hear from you at scotland@ramblers.org.uk

Scottish Council 2025

The Scottish Council 2025 took place at The Merchant's House of Glasgow, where volunteers from the Glasgow Group and Glasgow Young Walkers helped make the event a great success, including organising an excellent programme of local walks. Director Brendan Paddy reflected on the past year, and delegates joined in celebrating 60 years of Ramblers Scotland — complete with a special anniversary cake!

The AGM business was successfully concluded before delegates enjoyed our Group Success sessions, featuring Irene McGugan (Brechin Ramblers) on local access forums, David Czechowski (Aberdeen Young Walkers) on fundraising, and Natalie Corner (Livingston Ramblers) on running successful evening walks. We then welcomed guest speakers Chris Paul Lawler and Alan Rowan, rounding off a truly inspiring and enjoyable event.

This ends the annual report.



Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee

Statement of Income and Expenditure To 30 September 2025

	Accumulated Fund at 01 October 2024	1079.65		
Plus Income	£		<i>Budget 2024_25</i>	<i>Prev. Year 2023_24</i>
Ramblers' Allocation	3840.00		3840.00	3000.00
Ramblers' Other	0.00		0.00	0.00
Affiliation	0.00		0.00	0.00
Donations	0.00		0.00	0.00
Grants	0.00		0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	0.00		0.00	0.00
Events	0.00		0.00	0.00
Other	0.00		0.00	0.00
	<u>3840.00</u>	3840.00	<u>3840.00</u>	<u>3000.00</u>
		4919.65		
Less Expenditure				
Meetings	3021.98		2700.00	2604.61
Event Attendance	75.30		100.00	62.45
Training	200.00		200.00	20.00
Other	0.00		135.00	0.00
	<u>3297.28</u>	3297.28	<u>3135.00</u>	<u>2687.06</u>
		1622.37		
	Accumulated Fund at 30 September 2025	1622.37		
Represented By:				
	Cash Float	0.00		
	Bank Balance	1622.37		
	Less unrepresented cheques	0.00		
	Plus uncleared deposits	0.00		
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>		
		1622.37		

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the guidelines for independent examination I consider the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee accounts to have been properly prepared and to give a true and fair view of the finances for the year to 30th September 2025

<p>C Harris Independent Examiner</p> <p>Date: 20/10/25.</p>	<p>M Gray Treasurer</p> <p>Date: 05 October 2025</p>
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Scottish Ramblers' Gathering

Statement of Income and Expenditure To 30 September 2025

	Accumulated Fund at 01 October 2024	5934.16	
Plus	£		<i>Prev. Year</i>
Income			<i>2023_24</i>
Registrations	2725.00		3200.00
Raffle Income	325.00		336.00
Bank Interest	0.00		0.00
Donations	50.00		15.00
	3100.00	3100.00	3551.00
Total Available Funds Before Expenditure		9034.16	
Less			
Expenditure			
Hire of Band	506.00		505.00
Coach Hire	980.00		780.00
Recce Expenses	320.50		0.00
Speaker's expenses	0.00		68.00
Hire of Rooms	0.00		18.00
Deposit on Hall for 2026	150.00		0.00
Gratuity	0.00		33.85
Donation to Charity	325.00		340.00
Meetings	69.80		0.00
Admin costs	127.71		6.39
Bank Charges	5.20		8.60
Refunds	100.00		75.00
Purchase of branded clothing	0.00		238.44
Purchase of Cake (Gathering)	85.00		0.00
Purchase of Cake (Scottish Council 2025)	130.00		0.00
	2799.21	2799.21	2073.28
Accumulated Fund at 30 September 2025		6234.95	
Represented By:	Cash Float	0.00	
	Bank Balance	6234.95	
	Less unrepresented cheques	0.00	
	Plus uncleared deposits	0.00	
		0.00	
		6234.95	

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Ramblers' Independent Examination guidelines I consider the Scottish Ramblers' Gathering accounts to have been properly prepared and to give a true and fair view of the finances for the year to 30th September 2025

<p>Independent Examiner</p> <p>Signed: </p> <p>Date: 24/10/25</p>	<p>Alison Mitchell Treasurer</p> <p>Signed: </p> <p>Date: 24/10/25</p>
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Scottish Council 2026

SC26 07

A summary of the finances of Ramblers Scotland for 2024/25

Ramblers Scotland Activities

	2024/25 £000's	2023/24 £000's	Variance £000's
Income			
Membership	250	230	20
Donations	29	27	2
Gift aid	50	46	4
Project income	81	73	8
Miscellaneous	3	3	0
Total	412	378	34
Expenditure			
Office (Salaries)	272	244	28
Office (Overheads, etc.)	35	31	4
Project costs	67	258	(191)
Area/Group costs	48	35	13
Scottish Council/RSSC	9	13	(4)
Total	431	581	(150)
Net position	(19)	(203)	184

The net position shows that expenditure on activities in Scotland was £19,000 more than the income related to Scotland. In 2023/24, expenditure was £203,000 greater than income.

Income

Membership and fundraising are GB-led activities under the Directorate of Income & Marketing. The level of membership increased from 7,116 to 7,245.

General project income increased year on year due to an increase in the funding received from the Scottish Government for our Community Engagement work.

Expenditure

Office salaries were slightly higher than last year due to inflationary increases.

The decrease in project costs was due to the Out There Awards becoming a GB-wide project in 2024/25 following its success in Scotland and the ending of active development of the Mapping Scotland's Paths project.

Funds transferred to Areas and Groups increased in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, following increased requests.

Scottish Council related costs were paid in part from Scottish Office Overheads budget lines in 2024/25, so the total expenditure on Scottish Council remain flat overall.

Funds Balance

The closing project fund balance for Scotland at the end of the year was £44,000 attributable to the Community Outreach project, which has a different year end to our other work because it is funded by Scottish Government.

Allocation of Central Costs

Ramblers GB is one organisation and Ramblers Scotland, and Ramblers Cymru are constituent parts (Nations) of that body. Direct spend for Scotland is included in the analysis above. However, there is income generated and costs incurred by the GB-wide organisation which cover the wide range of general activities including membership, fundraising, governance, and administration. There is a base level of GB-wide organisational resources allocated to Ramblers Scotland to deliver programmes of work, the methodology of which is stated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramblers' Association, board of trustees and Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee.

The allocation of income has been included in the summary report above but not the allocated costs. The allocated costs for 2024/25 attributable to Scotland amounted to £369,000 (2024: £418,000).

Total Ramblers Financial Performance (for the year ended 30 Sep 2025)

A summary of the financial performance of Ramblers GB is shown in the table below. The financial results provided are based on the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Ramblers' Association, that will be formally approved by the Board in February and presented at General Council in April.

Ramblers GB Activities (unaudited)			
	2024/25	2023/24	Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Income			
Membership Income	3,677	3,368	309
Legacies	1,766	1,068	698
Donations	3,015	3,147	(132)
Gift aid	759	748	11
Grants	682	859	(177)
Activities generating funds	344	418	(74)
Investment income	151	84	67
Charitable work income	2,818	2,463	355
Total	13,212	12,155	1,057
Expenditure			
Rights of way	1,808	1,987	179
Countryside protection	1,540	1,517	(23)
Freedom to roam	1,514	1,658	144
Promoting walking	5,766	6,015	249
Raising funds	1,723	2,023	300
Total	12,351	13,200	849
(Losses)/Gains on investment	(10)	36	(46)
Net position	851	(1,009)	1,860

The Ramblers generated an operating surplus of £0.8m in the year ended September 2025, compared to a £1.0m deficit in the previous year. There was an increase in total income of £1m due to a combination of increased membership income and an increase in legacy income received during the year. Expenditure reduced by £0.8m during the same period. Overall, the Ramblers remains in a strong financial position resulting from prudent management of our funds, with total net assets of £8.3m including cash balances of £5.4m.

Prepared by: Stephen Davidson (Head of Finance)

Date: 13/02/2026

**Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee
Motions Committee
And
Independent Examiners
(as at 20/02/26)**

Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee

Position Held	Name	Notes for SC2026	Post up for (re) election
Honorary President	Zahrah Mahmood		SC2026
Convener	Malcolm Dingwall Smith		SC2026
Treasurer	Mike Gray		SC2028
Vice Convener	Beth Dickson		SC2026
Ordinary member	Jacqui Thomson		SC2027
Ordinary member	Terry Robinson		SC2027
Ordinary member	Karl Erik Wilson		SC2026
Ordinary member	Andrew Bachell		SC2026
Ordinary member	Mike Dales		SC2026
Ordinary member	Sue Thomas	Resigned Sept 2025	SC2026
Ordinary member	Jarka Polednova		SC2026
Coopted	John Russell	2026 nominee	SC2026
Coopted	Adrienn Hortobagyi	2026 nominee	SC2026
Coopted	Navid Foroutan	2026 nominee	SC2026
Honorary Vice President	Ben Dolphin		
Honorary Vice President	Dennis Canavan		
Honorary Vice President	Alistair Cant		
Honorary Vice President	Lucy Wallace		
Honorary Vice President	Kate Ashbrook		
Honorary Vice President	Andrew Murray	Resigned Dec 2025	

Independent Examiners

Independent Examiner	Independent Examiner
Scottish Ramblers Gathering	Anne MacDonald
Scottish Council Accounts	Charles Harris

Motions Committee

Position Held	Name
Convener	Barry Pottle
Ordinary Member	Liz Hunt
Ordinary Member/ Interim Convener	Alison Mitchell
Ex officio	Malcolm Dingwall Smith
Ordinary Member	Mike Gray

Volunteer Helpers

From
 The Edinburgh Group
 And
 Edinburgh Young Walkers

Huge thanks go to the volunteers of Edinburgh Ramblers and Edinburgh Young Walkers
 for all their help and support with this year's event!!

Name	Group
Darren Jeffery	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Hilary Smith	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Amina Kudrati-Plummer	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Lynn Hyams	Edinburgh Group
Irene Lowe	Edinburgh Group
John Phillips	Edinburgh Group
Hester Innes	Edinburgh Group
Stefania Greci	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Alessandra Eleuteri	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Esme Callander	Edinburgh Young Walkers
Rachel Palmer	Edinburgh Group
Dave Powell	Edinburgh Group
Jessica Lightfoot	Edinburgh Group
Joyce Leong	Edinburgh Group
Penny Forster	Edinburgh Group
Christine Dykes	Edinburgh Group
Alison Stevenson	Edinburgh Group

Support from Ramblers Scotland staff



Brendan Paddy, Ramblers Scotland Director

Brendan leads the Scottish staff team and works with the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee to set our overall direction. He ensures the headline strategic goals set by Ramblers GB are translated into effective action in a Scottish context. He also reports to the Committee at all their meetings.

brendan.paddy@ramblers.org.uk



Jeannie Cranfield, Development Officer

Jeannie plays a central role in bringing the Ramblers strategy to life by building local partnerships in less affluent communities and working alongside community groups and volunteers to support more people to go walking.

jeannie.cranfield@ramblers.org.uk



Claire Exley Support Co-Ordinator

Claire is your main contact for at Ramblers Scotland. She provides administrative support to the Ramblers Scotland Strategic Committee, helps with Ramblers Scotland events, and manages group enquiries and support requests.

claire.exley@ramblers.org.uk



Angela Musk, Equity Outreach Officer

Angela is the main point of contact for the Equalities Outreach Program (Scotland), which is an initiative to develop the skills and confidence of walkers who are underrepresented in the outdoors, specifically with global majority communities and refugees and asylum seekers. She collaborates with community groups across Scotland to create tailored, sustainable walking programs and mentors aspiring community leaders. She also connects these groups with local Ramblers groups.

angela.musk@ramblers.org.uk



Gavin Corbett, Policy & Public Affairs Manager

Gavin is responsible for co-ordinating Ramblers Scotland's policy position on topical issues, engaging with government and parliament and is the first port of call for groups and members with access queries.

gavin.corbett@ramblers.org.uk



Danny Carden, Communications Manager

Danny is responsible for managing The Ramblers' communications - especially in Scotland - to ensure that we engage target audiences with our campaigns, projects and member activities, including via the press, social media and email.

danny.carden@ramblers.org.uk

SCOTTISH COUNCIL 2026 EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

Date incurred	Brief description of type and reason for expense	Journey from and destination	Travel	Amount claimed
			miles @ 45p per mile	
			Bus/train/taxi	
			Other expenses: (e.g. food, accommodation)	
			Total claimed	

Any comments from person claiming:

Please include scans / photos of receipts. Train fares reimbursed will be the standard class rail fare (or less if railcard or discount fare is used). Expenses are paid out in the name of the person claiming, unless otherwise requested.

I confirm that the above expenses are correct and were incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in attending Scottish Council 2026.

Signed: *(please enter email address and membership number if relevant)*

Date:

Name *(please print):*

Please provide bank details for every claim for payment direct to your account. Please note we are unable to send cheques.

Name(s) of account holder *(as displayed on your bank account statement):*

Account number *(eight digits):*

Sort code *(xx-xx-xx):*

Please return this form with receipts by email to the Council Secretary, Claire Exley scotland@ramblers.org.uk

For official use

Claim authorised by:

Signed:

Date:

Ramblers Scotland, Scottish Council, Sat 14 March 2026

Where: Pentland Suite, John McIntyre Conference Centre, The University of Edinburgh,
Holyrood Park Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5AY

Directions: [Getting here](#)

Transport Information

Parking

We strongly recommend public transport where possible. There is limited complimentary parking available on a first come, first basis at the Pollock Halls Campus. There are 12 electric charging points from [Charge Place Scotland](#) on the campus. Delegates **will need to collect a permit** from the security gate or from our reception to display on their vehicle whilst onsite.

Low Emission Zone

Please be aware that from 1st June 2024 Edinburgh operates a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) to improve air quality in the city centre. This zone covers much of the city centre.

You can quickly check if your vehicle meets the LEZ standards using the online tool provided by the City of Edinburgh Council [<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/lowemissionzone>]

Some vehicles, such as those with disabled badges or blue badges, may be exempt. We recommend checking your vehicle's compliance before your stay to avoid any penalties.

For further information, please visit the City of Edinburgh Council [website](#).

Bus

The City of Edinburgh has an extensive and [accessible](#) bus network. Bus information for visitors to Edinburgh can be found [here](#).

You can pay for your ticket on the bus, either with exact change or contactless debit and credit card, or Google Pay, Apple Pay etc. A single ticket for travel within the city is £2.20 and the fee is automatically capped at £5.50 if you pay with the same card more than twice on the same day. If you take the [AirLink](#) bus from the Airport to the centre (100) the fare will be £5.50 for a single journey £8.00 for an open return.

When [planning your bus journey](#) to the conference centre, enter Pollock Halls (Higher Education) as your destination.

Travelling from the airport to the city centre and vice versa is quick and easy on the [bus](#) or [tram](#) (information on tram accessibility can be found [here](#)).

Taxi Rank

There is a taxi rank outside the Pollock Halls main reception and there is a taxi free phone inside the reception. Alternatively, you can order a black cab (City Cabs or Central Taxis) or an Uber taxi using their app on your phone.

The entire fleets of Edinburgh's two main black cab firms are wheelchair accessible, with over 900 taxis between them.