



Greater Manchester & High Peak Area

Bolton, Bury, Manchester and Salford, Rochdale, High Peak,
Oldham, Stockport, Trafford, Tameside, Wigan, MAD Walkers,
Manchester Weekend Walkers, Coach Rambles

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Cllr Tom Ross, Leader Trafford MBC

Website Administrator

Brian Coxon

Chair

Margaret Manning

Footpath Officer

Chitra Ramachandran

Vice Chair

Salle Dare

Walking Environment Officer

Alan Manning

General Secretary

Alan Manning

Publicity & Information Officer

Vacant

Treasurer

Jacqui Knowles

Sunday Walks Officer

Jeff Lewis

Minutes Secretary

Salle Dare

Wednesday Walks Officer

John Rattray

Membership Secretary

Gavin Poulton

Entrust Representative

John Ireland

Elected Members

Andy Barclay, Edgar Ernstbrunner, John Ireland, Andrew Read, Debbie Watson

The views expressed in this report are the responsibility of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of either Greater Manchester and High Peak Ramblers or the Ramblers nationally.

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I would like to thank all the officers and the EC members for their work and commitment to making our Area function well.

Alan Manning as General Secretary and Walking Environment officer has had double the workload and taken on a lot of the tasks I used to do. In particular he has been the main driver on the consultation on the governance review and has helped us all understand what each stage has meant and drawn up our Area responses.

Tom Ross, a keen walker, Leader of Trafford Council, and Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Green City Lead took on the role of President and has been working in particular with Alan on promoting a Leisure Walking Strategy and other issues promoting walking.

Jacqui Knowles has been a helpful and efficient treasurer. Chitra Ramachandran has taken on more and more responsibility over time as Area FP Officer and liaised with and encouraged our group FP Officers. Salle Dare in her dual role as Vice Chair and Minutes taker carries on being a great support. John Ireland has been very helpful with the technology at EC meetings allowing people to join on zoom if necessary.

Others who have worked well and efficiently more behind the scenes are Brian Coxon, our website manager and Gavin Poulton Membership Secretary. John Rattray and Jeff Lewis have done sterling work in keeping our Wednesday and Sunday Walks running every week. Thanks to Joyce Davenport for continuing to produce the twice-yearly Area Booklets. I'd like to thank Andy Barclay for again compiling this Annual Report. It has also been pleasing that all groups responded to my request for photos for the front page. You may have noticed that some of the photos are from joint walks between two groups, a welcome development, and something other groups might like to consider. It has been good to see all groups very active this year.

Thanks to the group officers and committees for making sure their group thrives, especially where the officers are new to their post.

Walk Leader Training

This has been one of the main issues that has dominated our EC discussions this year and also for groups and their walks organisers. Despite the severe reservations that many of our groups and walk leaders have about the new requirements and the reasons for them, I'm glad that all groups have ensured that their leaders have good access to the new training where necessary. I'd particularly like to thank John Rattray for persisting with National Office to produce training materials that can be used offline for group training sessions. He has also worked with other groups to put on a session for Area Wednesday Walks and Sunday Walks leaders and those from some other groups. Sadly, we are still losing many long standing and experienced walk leaders who do not want to take on the new training requirements. I'd like to thank them for their hard work and commitment over many years.

Carers Walks

I have continued to organise walks with carers on behalf of the Area, helped particularly by Mags Metcalf and also by other volunteers mainly from Manchester and Salford group. Volunteers from other groups would be very welcome. The walks have continued to be very popular with carers from Manchester, Salford, Bury, Wigan and Leigh. As well as the walks the lunch afterwards gives time for carers to relax and socialise with each other and with our volunteers.

From our recent evaluation survey all the comments show the benefit of the walks:

- 'Company, forgetting your worries.'
- 'I feel walking in the fresh air help everybody. Staying indoor for a very long time is not good for health.'
- 'Exercise and catching up with the other carers and ramblers.'
- From a cared for person 'Being able to talk with other people not just my carer. Making new friends and getting re-acquainted with old ones.'

We Ramblers volunteers also enjoy them. We have been funded this year by a National Lottery Community Fund Grant. This money will run out by next Spring. It is increasingly hard to find grants that will fund our walks all year. Mags and I have decided to 'retire' from organising the walks once this grant runs out, having been doing this for 8 years. If another grant can be found and others are willing to take on organising then the walks will continue. If anyone is interested, please contact me. We would of course support anyone who takes over. If they can't continue as joint walks, we hope each group will run their own. Some already do and the others are keen to get walk leader training so they can run them for their carers as the walks are some of their most popular activities. Again, we would offer help and support to them if needed.

General Council

I attended this for the first time as a delegate. It was a fairly interesting day at Birmingham International Convention Centre. As well as the usual reports and motions, which were all carried this time, the main focus was on the Governance Review. As with most of these events the best part was hearing members from around the country talk about their work, experiences and opinions on the review. We will be in London on 6th December to vote on the final governance proposals. Unfortunately, Ken Smith from our Oldham Group was not elected as a trustee.

North and North West Cluster

Along with Alan Manning and John Ireland I have attended these meetings which are about every quarter. They are mainly used to relay information from central office to Area Chairs and Secretaries, give us a chance to discuss issues around their proposals and share updates from the Areas.

The Future

Until recently it seemed that one of the main outcomes would be the abolition of Areas. In which case I thought this would be my last report as Chair. However, as this proposal has been taken out of the mix it may not be.

If someone else would like to stand as Chair this year I would be pleased to stand down. If not then by next year I will have been Chair for 10 years, 8 more than I originally expected, and think it will definitely be time for somebody younger and with fresh ideas to take over.

Margaret Manning

Chair

Area Matters

During the year we held four hybrid meetings of the Area Executive Committee and a special zoom only meeting to discuss the Governance Review.

Two editions of the Area Booklet were produced with over 1,000 copies of each printed and distributed. A PDF copy was also made available for groups to use and it was on the Area Web site.

We have worked on area membership issues having been concerned at the large number of new members who are not allocated to one of our established groups but put in a holding group – MR96. In order to better understand the issues and look at possible solutions we organised a small online workshop with Nicola Fricking, Ramblers Head of Member and Supporter Experience. We followed up that meeting with a number of specific proposals for improvement to the national membership process that were to be considered as part of the coming years budgeting process. However, as a result of the ongoing Governance Review this work nationally is temporarily on hold.

In the coming financial year, we will also receive, for the first time, funding for these members and we are planning to contact them to encourage them to join a group

Ramblers nationally have continued to convene online meetings for area officers in geographical clusters and we have participated in the two meetings of the North and North West cluster. The meetings are useful for receiving updates and exchanging information and views.

General Council

Along with the Area Chair, in April, I attended the annual meeting of the Ramblers General Council. The meeting received a report on the work that had been undertaken nationally, elections also took place for the Board of Trustees. A workshop session was also held as part of the Governance Review.

There is to be an Extraordinary Meeting of the General Council on 6 December to consider the latest position on the Governance Review. Information on the April meeting is on the national web site along with papers on the Review.

Community Engagement Work

Ramblers nationally are seeking to work with community groups to identify their barriers to walking and develop training resources. Three groups were identified in Greater Manchester and colleagues from central office with support from local volunteers have delivered initial training sessions to groups in Bolton, Manchester and Salford.

Ramblers have also developed the “Out there” awards for young people and have run two sessions in our area and it has been agreed that central office will contact the participants with information about our MAD Walkers group.

National River Trails

The Government is committed to establishing a number of new national River Trails and we have expressed support for a Mersey trail. We have suggested a “double Y shaped” trail following the “Mersey Waters” from the Pennine hills through Greater Manchester, then following the river as it joins with the River Irwell and is part of the Manchester Ship Canal and on to the Mersey estuary at Widnes, linking with the TPT and the England Coast path. Ramblers nationally have met with DEFRA officials and we are waiting for a response.

Greater Manchester Nature Recovery Strategy

This was launched in September and sets out priorities for action to reverse the decline in nature. We participated in the consultation supporting the need for green corridors and connected green spaces and we expressed the view that local Ramblers would wish to be involved in discussions about particular routes.

Greater Manchester Leisure Walking Plan

Following the Mayor’s manifesto commitment in 2024, a number of conversations have taken place with partners. Working with the GM Walking Voice a vision statement has been drafted and a proposed matrix has been produced to assess current needs, describe activity already underway and therefore draw out recommendations for priority actions. Work is continuing to progress the commitment.

GM Walking Festival

The festival ran throughout May this year and a number of our groups put walks into the Festival Programme.

East Midlands Mayor Loop Walk

The High Peak part of our area is a part of the East Midlands Combined authority and the Mayor of the East Midlands; Claire Ward recently announced the idea of 150-mile walking trail around the East Midlands. Her aim is to promote the area and see what needs to be done to make the trail permanent and well-marked in the future. She plans to walk the whole route herself over the coming year. I have been in contact with colleagues in Derbyshire and Nottingham Areas and an approach has been made to the Mayor to discuss our involvement in this project. Her response has been positive and when further information is available it will be shared with our High Peak group and circulated.

Kinder Trespass Commemoration Event

This year’s Kinder Trespass commemoration event was held in Hayfield on 26 April. Speakers at the rally included Guy Shrubsole (Right to Roam), Kate Ashbrook (Open Spaces Society) and Imogen Radford (Outdoor Swimming Society). There were also workshops and music. John Ireland coordinated a Ramblers stall at the event and the day was well attended and attracted

a wide range of participants. The 2026 celebration will be held over the weekend of 25 and 26 April.

National Trust Kinder and High Peak Advisory Committee

This group represents recreational users of the National Trust's High Peak Estate and is consulted and offers advice on public access, ensuring that this iconic landscape is safeguarded for the future. John Ireland and I represent the Area and There have been regular meetings during the year. Topics covered included updates on the Derwent and Howden boundary fence which aims to help moorland restoration by managing grazing pressures on the moors and the progress of footpath repair work on Kinder Scout and Mam Tor. There was also a discussion on widening the representation of user groups in the Committee, whilst retaining the focus on access issues and the enjoyment of the countryside.

Trans Pennine Trail Partnership

We are now represented at meetings of the TPT advisory groups for Greater Manchester and the Pennine areas. One item to report is that they are seeking to identify potential circular routes from parts of the trail and groups were asked to think about routes that they regular walk that include a part of the TPT for possible submission.

Calderdale Energy Park

The Area Executive had a lengthy discussion on a proposed wind farm development on Walshaw Moor in neighbouring West Yorkshire and agreed to monitor developments. The company has renamed the project as the Calderdale Energy Park and issued an invitation to a non-statutory consultation. I attended a drop-in session in Hebden Bridge. I asked a series of questions on access and rights of way issues. The company representatives there were keen to stress that these were not the final design proposals and as a consequence many of the questions I wanted to pursue were not able to be answered. We await further developments

Giants Castle Bridge

The National Trust, due to safety concerns have closed a popular footbridge in Styal Woods on the Trust's Quarry Bank estate and that they had said that the cost of replacement would be prohibitive. This meant that a number of popular circular walks would not be possible.

A campaign group has been established to have a new bridge installed. I have been in contact with the group and expressed our support for their efforts, I was also able to obtain detailed advice for them from Ramblers Central Office and I introduced them to East Cheshire Ramblers as it is in their area.

Alan Manning

General Secretary / Walking Environment Officer

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

	2024 Annual Report	2025 Annual Report	Difference (%- age of 2024 figure)
Area (MR)	4096	4149	+53 (+1.3%)
Non-group (MR96)	302	318	+16 (+5.3%)
Bolton (MR01)	310	311	+1 (+0.3%)
Bury (MR02)	181	166	-15 (-8.3%)
Rochdale (MR03)	213	213	+0 (+0%)
High Peak (MR04)	200	195	-5 (-2.5%)
Oldham (MR05)	264	245	-16 (-6.1%)
Stockport (MR06)	511	495	-16 (-3.1%)
Wigan & District (MR07)	183	189	+6 (+3.3%)
Manchester & Salford (MR10)	414	406	-8 (-1.9%)
Trafford (MR11)	287	324	+37 (+13%)
Tameside (MR12)	218	222	+4 (+1.8%)
Weekend Walkers (MR40)	309	329	+20 (+6.5%)
MAD Walkers (MR50)	612	643	+31 (+5.1%)
Coach Rambles (MR70)	71	75	+4 (+5.6%)
Others: International members, Awaiting Allocation etc.	21	18	-3 (-14%)

The total Area membership at 30th Sep 2025 is 4149, a small increase this year. Total Ramblers' membership is 106,091, a 2.2% increase from the last year's 103,808, hence, for the first time in several years, it has grown faster than our Area.

Within the groups, there have been some big gains, notably the Trafford group, Weekend Walkers and MAD Walkers. There are mixed results from the remaining groups. There is a plan to contact the MR96 'non-group group' to see if they ended up here by accident and instead want to join their nearest local group.

The Area is back to 18 affiliated groups.

There are 2655 members recorded with phone numbers on the membership list (about 63% of the total); for email addresses, there are 3475 on record, or about 82%.

Gavin Poulton

Area Membership Secretary

Financial Year to 30th September 2025

The main expenditure on the Area accounts relates to printing and meeting costs. Most of the other payments are typically pass through costs, where head office makes a payment to Area and Area then pay the groups.

Restricted Funds

Area has provided restricted funds to Bolton Council for footpath repairs and to the GM Ringway project. Although the funds have now been transferred from our investment accounts to cover the costs, they had not been on 30th September which accounts for the deficit of £7,150.48.

Our Restricted Funds are held in two investment accounts with NS&I and M&G. At the time of writing, the final statements for these accounts had not been received and therefore cannot be reported. Account balances will be provided in the online version of this report.

Budgets

Area and group budget requests have been approved by head office.

Independent Examination

As agreed at the AGM, Jonathan Buckland has taken over as Independent Examiner. At the time of writing he had not completed his review. A statement from the Independent Examiner will be presented at the Area AGM. If any adjustments/corrections are required to the accounts, these will also be presented at the AGM.

Additional Comments

I would like to thank the group treasurers for submitting their budgets and returns on time, especially those who are new to the role.

Finally, I have received several fraudulent payment requests over the last few months. Can I ask that all Area and Group Officers remain vigilant when dealing with payment requests and keep our funds safe.

Jacqui Knowles

Area Treasurer

GREATER MANCHESTER & HIGH PEAK RAMBLERS - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Name:	Greater Manchester & High Peak			Year ended:	30/09/25
Code:	MR				
Restricted					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
Internal transfer	-		Internal transfer	-	
Donations	-		General	7,470.40	
Legacies	-				
Grants	-				
Deposit interest	-				
Investment income	319.92	297.56			
Other	-				
Total receipts	319.92	297.56	Total payments	7,470.40	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-7,150.48	297.56			
Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	14,694.24	11,850.20	To CO	-	
From CO (other)	-		To Area	-	
From Area (funding)	-		To Group (funding)	10,794.28	8,115.24
From Area (other)	-		To Group (other)	-	
From Group	-		To S/W Council	-	
From S/W Council	-		Walks programmes	2,318.00	2,307.00
Tftr from 'Self-funded'	-		Walks related	-	
Donations	-		Walks leader training	-	
Legacies	-		Newsletters/publicity	-	
Grants	-		Publication/goods costs	-	
Fundraising	-		Campaigns/casework	-	
Deposit interest	-		Practical work	-	192.58
Investment income	-		Fundraising costs	-	
Publication/goods sales	-		Meetings (inc. AGM)	833.92	875.60
Advert sales	-		Admin	321.39	
Other	-		Other	22.50	72.50
Total receipts	14,694.24	11,850.20	Total payments	14,290.09	11,562.92
Surplus/(deficit)	404.15	287.28			

AREA WEDNESDAY WALKS - SHORT/LONG WALKS

We're continuing to run a full programme with both short and long walk groups attracting between 15 and 35 walkers.

Whilst both groups have their regular participants, a few have, for one reason or another, decided the walks are not for them, but still like to keep in touch with the group through our weekly email. Not sure all the leaders welcome their 'homework' but the feedback makes it worthwhile.

We're still operating an 'open' entry to the walks, allowing us to easily accept requests to join a walk, and have seen the group grow with several new members. We do request that all those who join us carry some form of identification, usually the Ramblers ICE card.

We're continuing to explore the countryside all over Derbyshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and a bit of a seaside romp along the coast between Silverdale and Arnsdale.

The groups ethos of using public transport has held, with only a few preferring to use personal transport. Whilst the public transport hasn't been completely reliable, we've survived, worked around issues where needed, and will continue to use as our link to the walks.

We've had one or two leaders drop out over the year but have 'recruited' others into the role, providing guidance and support through the groups existing leaders to supplement the training videos from Ramblers.

Finally, the Christmas meal in 2024 was another success, the venue again proving equal to the job. We are looking to repeat this year but moving to a more central location.

John Rattray

Wednesday Walkers

AREA SUNDAY WALKS - STRENUOUS/SHORT WALKS

In 2024/25 we ran 14 strenuous walks with between 5 and 13 walkers joining us, average turnout of 8. We had good support from a number of regular walkers and this enabled us to use 8 different leaders through the year. Our biggest problem was once again the unreliable train service on Sundays. Half of all walks had to have at least some adjustment in destination from that planned and advertised in the programme and there were additional changes of train times. The efforts of leaders in maintaining a full programme of walks are much appreciated.

In 2024/2025 all the once-a-month moderate walks were run apart from one date in April where no leader could be recruited to lead. Attendance on the walks was between 4-13 walkers. The problem of recruiting leaders still remains.

On 30th March a joint walk was organised with MAD Walkers in Newhey. It was a great walk around the reservoirs on a good early Spring weather day and 51 walkers joined the walk. It was a good opportunity to publicise the Area walks to the walkers on the day. Huge thanks to

James, Leader MAD Walkers, for his patience and skill in keeping the 51 walkers together throughout the walk. It was a big task for the leader and backmarker as the walkers were of a wide range of ages (up to 80 years old) and walking pace - a task so brilliantly executed.

In 2024/2025 all the monthly short walks dates were successfully covered and the walks were led by a handful of leaders who kindly came forward to lead sometimes at short notice. A heartfelt appreciation to the leaders for their time and effort. With the Sunday train service improving in the latter months of the year, we have experienced a good turnout of walkers on some walks. This is encouraging should the Sunday train service keep improving with a complete normal and regular service.

A walk open for families with children was run on 13th April and on 17th August. Unfortunately no families with children joined the walk. The plan is to still put a walk for families with children during the school holidays in 2026.

Jeff Lewis

Sunday Walks Officer supported by

- Simon Cleverley, Strenuous Walks Organiser
- Pauline Brooke, Short Walks Organiser

A good year for Footpath work, overall.

Footpath Officers / Secretaries that joined newly in 2024 in Tameside and Bolton settled into their roles. Vacancies in Trafford and Wigan were filled this year. High Peak, Rochdale and Oldham don't yet have any one dedicated to this role however the Groups manage to cover off key issues arising under this heading.

As before, the FP Officers in Greater Manchester and High Peak met face to face in Feb 2025, followed by virtual meetings in June and Sept 2025. Martin Bennett, FP Officer for Derbyshire Dales presented a slide show and talk on his work at the Feb 2025 meeting. Martin Hampar of PNFS and Ken Smith of Oldham are regular attendees at the Area meetings.

Enquiries received from members of the public and dealt with either directly or through Groups.

Chitra Ramachandran

Area Footpath Officer

GROUP FOOTPATH OFFICERS' REPORTS

BOLTON (JONATHAN LILLIOTT)

- 1) Major issue is that we are taking part in a consultation of the impact on Public Rights of Way of the major Peel Holdings development in the west of Bolton. This is connected to a bid to stage the Ryder Cup.
- 2) There have been concerns over the closure of 2 bridges over a disused railway line in Westhoughton. We now think there will be funding to reopen one of the bridges.
- 3) Because of the dry summer paths generally in good condition. In addition, Bolton Council has had additional funds for vegetation clearance. There has still been some maintenance work done by Ramblers volunteers. We attempt to co-ordinate our activities with Bolton Council who do have a budget for footpath clearance, but which does not cover all paths or takes place too late in the year. We have been able to fund some new equipment in the year to make footpath maintenance more efficient.
- 4) Fly tipping continues to be a problem on certain paths.

BURY (EDGAR ERNSTBRUNNER)

Not a bad year overall. In particular **Tottington 19** came to a positive conclusion. Shortly before this went to Crown Court, BMBC saw sense and managed to restore the path after all in just a couple of weeks in January They paid just under half of our legal costs (I had expected more, but RACO decided that was satisfactory). The path has remained open ever since.

Local Access Forum: Still happening three times a year (February, June, October), also serving as a Rights of Way Forum. That means that in addition to normal strategic LAF issues we also discuss specific PROW affairs such as pre-consultations on particular path proposals, and of course the list of works carried out over each four-month period preceding each LAF meeting. There's a steady, if unspectacular, flow of path improvements (not worth re-reporting here – see regular FP reports to EC meetings) within the Authority's rather limited means. The most recent meeting took place as scheduled on 1 October (via Teams).

Path Orders so far this year

- a) Entered an initial objection to a S.247 closure order on a Metrolink underpass (not on the Definitive Map) in Bury town centre. Further investigation revealed that this was part of a major redevelopment plan (see <https://www.bury.gov.uk/asset-library/bury-town-centre-masterplan-2022.pdf>) which, inter alia, will replace this underpass (often flooded) by a footbridge overpass. The objection was therefore withdrawn.
- b) The authority did make its first PSPO (formerly Gating Order) on an alleyway (again, not Definitive), apparently after a fatal stabbing. We assume that the general policy "No PSPOs/Gating Orders" has not changed and that these were exceptional circumstances.

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs): Still receiving notification of new TTROs and extensions of existing ones, but still no TTRO register. Currently no contentious Orders.

Assistance with Rights of Way funding: No current proposals. But see below

Consolidation of the Definitive Map and Statement: This perennial issue was raised again at the recent October LAF. Again, no progress planned because no resources. Subsequently I queried this: Had resources required ever been identified? If not, their argument was meaningless. In response I was told that they were now going to investigate this and that we could expect a report at the June 2026 LAF. At that point we (the Area) may wish to consider assistance with funding.

The promised Irwell footbridge (at Milltown Street): This rebuild, carrying a footpath (8 St Mary's, Radcliffe), is now underway, funding having been restored. The scheme has progressed as expected although a recent fire at the nearby Pioneer Mill may have created a short delay in the work. Still expected to finish in March 2026.

Other Development Projects:

1. **M60 Simister Island and the Haweswater Aqueduct Subway:** Simister Island is the M60/M62/M66 interchange, whose redesign has been long in planning. Only one existing footpath (9 Whitefield) will probably have to be diverted (no details yet), but more interestingly there is the "Haweswater Tunnel", an underpass (tall and wide) west of the junction. The tunnel was constructed to permit access to the Haweswater Aqueduct (United Utilities [UU]) running underneath it and is regularly used by local residents. It currently has no status (neither definitive nor adopted). We had been approached by local residents who want to secure permanent access. A discussion at the recent LAF revealed that in fact the Simister Island redesign is conditional on a PROW being designated through the Tunnel. This PROW (most likely a bridleway) would have to extend well beyond the tunnel in order to link up (as is required) to other sections of the network. Landownership is not entirely

clear (BMBC, UU and some private land), but we were told that a S.26 Creation Order would be made.

2. **Northern Gateway:** This is a proposed industrial scheme straddling the Bury (Whitefield) /Rochdale (Heywood) boundary. It would affect PROWs in both boroughs, but the application did not address that. We entered appropriate comments. There is opposition to the scheme as it would take some greenbelt land as well as brownfield.

DMMO (S.53) Processing: Again, no Orders were made last year. An Order based on historical evidence was actually refused after objection that, in essence, historical evidence was, by definition, not “new evidence” and therefore the claim was void. Of course, that only works if it can be shown that all the historical evidence now submitted was also considered at the time the DM&S was drawn up. Otherwise, no claim could ever be made on historical evidence. Naturally the applicant appealed to the SoS, and we are hoping for a positive decision shortly. Meanwhile BMBC have suspended processing of historical evidence

Directed Orders: There has been some progress on this issue (an authority failing to decide on a path claim even after having been instructed by the SoS to do so – i.e., to accept or reject the claim). BMBC have undertaken to make a decision on at least one Order within the 9-month period stipulated. A positive straw in the wind?

HIGH PEAK (VACANT ROLE)

Please refer to the Group Report.

MANCHESTER (RICHARD CLEVERLEY)

The focus in the past year has continued to be responding to the ongoing inspections of rights of way being conducted by the City Council. Thanks are due particularly to Martin Hampar of the Peak & Northern, who has compiled detailed written joint responses following our follow up inspections together of each batch of paths. We are about to review the City Council's inspections of Batch 8- these mainly covering the Wythenshawe area.

Thanks are also due to Maggie Walker who has been able to provide information on our own past inspections. Generally, we have discovered that paths already known to us for being obstructed, overgrown or with surface problems remain so, but there have been some welcome surprises e.g. M212, across Withington Golf Course, proved relatively easy to follow though the motorway underpass could well be flooded at other times of year.

We have requested a meeting in person with Glen Quinn who has been our contact at the City Council, and the project lead. We feel a face-to-face meeting is to be preferred so maps and other documents can be easily referred to. We would like to see progress made on more straightforward cases, e.g. stile repair, surface improvements and amendments to the Definitive Statement where descriptions need updating; however, we also need the Council to come up with an approach to dealing with obstructed paths. So far, no date for such a meeting has been forthcoming.

Definitive Map: Our hope/expectation is that when the round of inspections concludes (Ringway and north Manchester remain) the project will inform a much delayed often promised review of the Definitive Map.

GM Mapping: On a related note, it was disappointing that the old “GM-Mapping” site was retired earlier this year, after the end of an arrangement between the Combined Authority and

Salford City Council. A new “GM-Mapping” tool has been constructed but is not yet populated. Disappointingly GMCA are not giving this priority, preferring to concentrate on the layers relevant to their unpopular and misguided “Places for Everyone” scheme. So, we have a situation where I think uniquely within Greater Manchester, Manchester City Council lacks any online version of the Definitive Map.

Alley gating: After several years of quiet on this front, presumably due to financial constraints, a couple of new gating schemes have come forward recently including one near Fog Lane in Burnage. This is one where the proposal would cut off what appears to be a useful through route (though other parts of the scheme would be less controversial).

Regular meetings: We have had one regular meeting with the City Council in the spring. This was relatively brief as the inspection of paths and our responses have been our main focus. I have reported a couple of issues found during the course of the Batch inspections.

Cyan Lines: This new Manchester and Salford City Council initiative was announced in August. Hopefully consideration will be given to the role of existing rights of way in this project to connect “green blue and brown (?) spaces”. I would image that Alan Manning will try to get some Ramblers involvement.

SALFORD (DAVID YATES)

Salford Trail: Alan Manning’s analysis of website hits has again shown continued interest in the Trail. The good news is that the unadopted path which takes the Trail to the north side of the cemetery in Barton and across a very boggy area to reach Chat Moss (at E28), is now being reconstructed and a hard surface applied. This is an expensive project and we are grateful to SCC for pushing ahead with it.

There are a few minor issues

- There appears to have been no progress by Peel on the proposed Port Salford rail link and the associated diversion of E 28 in Barton. However, funding for upgrading the threatened path (which is not a PRoW) along the North side of Peel Green cemetery has been secured through Section 106 monies. The approved cost is £159 000. Work is expected to start this Autumn.
- A new route for E 3 / 4 at Barton is still supported by SCC despite proposed changes in land use; we are hopeful that a new application for development of the site will prompt a new proposal for a traffic free path.
- National Highways continue to resist a DMMO for the link between W 27 and W 29 near Swinton. The path in question is much used and does not appear to be threatened by NH so we have decided to stand back.

Salford City Council initiatives and consultations: Two meetings have been held with Liam Sands at SCC HQ in Swinton. A third has been postponed because of his Jury Service. Many topics have been covered and much achieved. The following are most noteworthy:

W 97 (West Mosslands to Bridgewater Canal): The company developing the adjacent area as a solar farm has agreed that routes within their site can be designated as Bridleways (as proposed by Wigan) to ensure access for cyclists. The gates at Keeper’s cottage are now permanently open and Rawsons’ farmer has reinstated the previously “barb-wired” stile. So, we will have two paths, either side of the stream, following the course of the original paths.

A great achievement, thanks to Rambler and PNFS persistence and a huge effort by SCC. We have moved from denial and hostility to engagement and a determination to open up this important route.

However, whilst W 97 is now open for the adventurous, there is still some way to go to make it safe. A group, accompanied by Mark Clements (SCC Group Engineer, Transportation), walked the route on 30th May and met (cordially!) with the farmer at Rawsons. Extensive notes were taken and the Council has begun the thankless task of urging Peel to upgrade the stiles.

The new route through the Whitehead area will not open for at least a year.

W 51: The closure of this path under the Loopline at Worsley station was required due to a dangerous collapse after flooding. SCC Drainage dept has assessed, General Utilities NW have inspected and the cause of flooding identified. A new concrete path is to be built inside the tunnel (on the left as approached from upstream). However, this is taking much longer than expected and the path is still closed. Once it is completed £3K has been identified for the upgrading paths and stiles in this area.

S & P 22 (Langley Road to river; Brindle Heath): This key path, a short cut to the river, had been blocked for over a year. Valiant work by Liam Sands (SCC PRoW officer) has secured removal of skips and full access. Major housing development is under way nearby; this path will become an important traffic free route.

Cutacre Park (N of Little Hulton): Plans for this extensive site, previously a coal mine, are moving forward. Site clearance has already been achieved; the next stage is the planting of trees and the creation of new PRoWs. This will become a really interesting area for future walks.

S & P 38 / 39: The very overgrown and boggy paths between the East Lancs / Lancaster Road junction and Swinton have now been upgraded. The flood mitigation and drainage system is very impressive. SCC hope to develop this route as a new Folly Brook Greenway, providing access to Salford Royal Hospital.

Risley, Holcroft and Chat Moss National Nature Reserve: On 14th July Mags Metcalf, Veronica Yates and I attended the opening of this, the second NNR in Greater Manchester. (The other one is Wigan / Leigh Flashes.)

To quote from HMG website: "National Nature Reserves were established to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research."

The launch saw an array of local civic dignitaries (including from Manchester & Salford) and national figures from Natural England, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts and Forestry England. All very impressive and informative. It is clear that there is close working between these various agencies and a very active local community group. The venue, the Risley Moss visitor centre, is well worth a visit.

During informal networking we made the case for Rambler involvement and we have started a correspondence with Natural England. The three named Mosses form a rather disparate group and much effort is being made to link them together. They accept that public footpaths would be helpful!

OLDHAM (VACANT ROLE)

Please refer to the Group Report.

ROCHDALE (VACANT ROLE / STUART SMITHIES AND DAVID BUTTERWORTH SUPPORTING)

Please refer to the Group Report.

Again, we continue to have a good working relationship with this Authority, in particular with the ROW Officer as well as officers managing the Local Access Forum (LAF). Both the ROW Forum and the LAF are running quite smoothly.

DMMO Register: The S.53 register is now ‘clean’, in the sense of containing claims only – no other path orders modifying the Definitive Map & Statement (diversions and extinguishments). There are currently nine pending applications, most of which do now include the detailed data statutorily required.

DMMO Progress: (Repeat from last two years:) “It is still the case that many DMMOs on the register have been sitting there for many years, mostly not even decided (or decided to approve more than 5 years ago but still being drafted by Legal. We keep being told that some decisions are imminent, though...”. In fact, we did receive confirmation of the upgrade (footpath to bridleway) of 3OBR (claim originally submitted in 2010, approved by Area Committee in 2015, Order still listed on the Register as being drafted by Legal). But that was the only resolved claim this year. Thus, progress is still unsatisfactory, and we are still awaiting a response to our reform proposal (removing Area Committees from the process, delegating decision to officers).

Path Orders other than S.53: None of the ones previously proposed that we considered objectionable have been taken forward so far. One unobjectionable diversion is being processed.

Ongoing longer-term path problem: Footpath 117 Stockport (off Offerton Road): The resident at Yewtree Farm installed a massive decorative gate across the path, over 2 years ago. We still haven’t had a response whether the gate is licensed, but owing to its design it would be an unlawful obstruction even if it were. Between PNFS and us we’ll have to decide whether to recommend legal action. (Unchanged from last year)

Gating Orders / Public Spaces Protection Orders: There are two Public Footpaths that have been subject to 24/7 closure for many years – at Seal Road, Bramhall (in part) and at Bilson Drive, Edgeley (in its entirety). Our request of a review was noted, and we were told that the intention was to reopen them and see what happens. But at present there has been no change.

Stockport Path Survey: See last year’s report. There has been some fitful progress – long lulls, then a bunch of (actually very useful) reports, followed by more long lulls. A few more volunteers have come forward, so we’re hoping to make more progress. Still, it will take quite a lot longer than originally anticipated.

Definitive Map & Statement reconsolidation: Again, we’ve been told that work on this is ongoing, but haven’t seen a timetable.

Path Volunteers: The Group, at a recent EC meeting discussed the issue of path clearance (litter, vegetation) by volunteers – something the Group had a team for, quite a few years ago. Of course, as before there are the questions of what tools can be used (possibly training), insurance, authorisation from SMB, coordination.

Interaction with members of the public: We have, on a couple of occasions, been asked for advice on specific access issues that we were then able to clarify.

TAMESIDE (ED STACEY)

I represent Tameside on the Public Rights of Way (PROW) quarterly meetings held by Tameside Council. These are also zoom meetings, and I participated in all the meetings – 1st October 2024 and 14th January, 15th April and 8th July in 2025. My main involvement is to raise blockage and maintenance issues on the 270 kilometres of footpaths shown on the definitive map for Tameside; to comment on development and infrastructure plans that impact on walking; and to promote and encourage walking initiatives.

There are currently two major infrastructure developments that involve significant changes and implications for the footpath network. They are the TransPennine rail route upgrade, and the Mottram Bypass/A57 link road upgrades. There are detailed and continuing consultations and discussions on these projects.

The 200-mile Greater Manchester Ringway route was completed in August 2024, and the year has seen the successful establishment of a network of guardians for each of the 20 stages, and the establishment of a charitable status body with a budget and responsibility for maintenance and promotion of the GM Ringway.

The project to have the definitive footpath map for Tameside to be included on Google Maps was proposed last year as a national pilot project for 2 local authorities, the other is Oldham. This is seen as a very positive way to encourage walking and open space access. For a number of reasons, the project stalled but is now under active consideration awaiting decision from Tameside Council.

TRAFFORD (TONY REYNOLDS)

Path Surveys: Recruited ten new footpath inspectors/wardens. All PROW paths in Trafford now allocated to an inspector/warden. September surveys in progress. To create annual summation of results after the Winter survey in March/April next year.

Trafford/Amey: Arranged for regular four monthly meetings with Trafford/Amey.

Amey to regularly report on intended actions on paths. Discovered that inherited paths that Trafford took responsibility for on boundary changes with Manchester, Manchester Ringway and Lymm, were not included on Amey's work programmes. Omission of these paths being addressed by Trafford/Amey.

Path Maintenance Team: Establishing protocols for path maintenance working party. Alongside Amey to jointly prioritise works to be undertaken on failed paths. Hope to be undertaking projects in the next few months, primarily vegetation clearance.

Trafford MBC campaign: To update Definitive map, currently 1984 version. To establish online version of definitive map for general public access.

WIGAN AND DISTRICT (DENISE GLASSBROOK)

Newly appointed to the Role.

BOLTON GROUP

It has been a year of progress for the Bolton Ramblers Group. The Committee has worked hard to keep our aims on track, the walks co-ordinators on providing interesting and varied programmes and the volunteer walk leaders deserve our thanks on what, I consider, has been a good year.

The Group's membership remains just above 300. We have had more than 50 new members in the period but we have also lost a similar number.

Our footpath team secured funding of approximately £10,000 to repair a badly eroded Bolton path that ran down to and across the Middlebrook. Recently there haven't been many reports of footpath problems, so the FPM team have not been as active as in previous years.

We are providing an ever-increasing number of walks that have been popular with our members. The Thursday walks regularly attract more than 30 walkers and for the last five months our coach rambles have had full coaches. We organised "away weeks" in Tenerife, Scotland and the Lake District for which members made their own travel and accommodation arrangements and our leaders provided the walks. Starting in Autumn we are introducing a new programme that will follow the GM Ringway Trails around Greater Manchester that use public transport to access the start and finish points.

We are fortunate to have a good number of committed and experienced walk leaders who make our itinerary possible, but are always keen to recruit, encourage and support new leaders too. There is now a national requirement that all walk leaders, current and new, complete a basic series of modular online training sessions and we have been supporting our leaders to access this, to ensure we are compliant.

The Bolton Ramblers walks booklet is nearing completion and it is hoped that it will be soon available for sale. The booklet will provide a series of walks close to Bolton with maps and detailed descriptions of their routes.

Frank Jones

Chair

BURY GROUP

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Reg Norris, who passed away on Sunday 15th December 2024. All our Sympathy goes to Reg's family and friends.

Membership numbers remain steady at about 170.

Caroline Knights has taken over from Simon Holder as the group membership and minutes secretary. Simon was the club secretary for 15 years. The club thanks him for all his work over the years.

As we have no coach organiser, no trips have been organised since the outbreak of Covid in 2020. Therefore, it has been decided not to organise any more coach trips. The cost of hiring a coach has increased significantly and it is unlikely we would be able to fill the coach as the number of members attending walks has decreased. Also, we don't have enough leaders willing to lead the walks.

Due to the high cost of postage for sending out Area Walk booklets and AGM notifications; all future correspondence will be sent by email for members with email addresses. For members with no email address, they will still continue to receive walk booklets by post. We encourage all members to register an email address with Ramblers to help reduce to cost of postage. For those members who would still like to receive the walk booklet by post please contact the club secretary.

Note that the new venue and day for committee meetings is The Two Tubs public house in Bury, held every 2nd Wednesday of the Month at 8pm. Members are encouraged to attend.

We continue to run a guided walks on most Sundays which are usually attended by about 10 to 12 members with an increasing number coming from other Ramblers clubs. But due to injury the number of walk leaders available to lead walks has fallen. Therefore, it has been decided to run guided walks every two weeks instead of weekly. Hopefully, this is only temporary, and will avoid large gaps in the walks programme and allow the remaining leaders to plan their walks better. We continue to run a rolling programme, which will inevitably lead to gaps in the walks programme.

- On 1st Dec. 2024, 15 walkers met at the Pack Horse Inn at Affetside for a short walk around the Bradshaw area near Bolton. After the walk a total of 25 people enjoyed a Christmas meal at Pack Horse Inn.
- To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bury Ramblers, walk leaders and committee members gathered for a festive lunch at Owen's Restaurant in Ramsbottom. The event was held to celebrate the enduring dedication and contributions of both past and present members, whose commitment has enriched the club over many years.

Footpath News

- A footpath at Bottoms Hall Cottages, Tottington has finally been re-opened after being closed for over 4 years. Public footpath TOT19 was closed by Bury Council in August 2020 due to the collapse of the culvert next to the footpath. After 4 years of fruitless correspondence with Bury Council by Bury Ramblers Footpath Officer, Edgar Ernstbrunner, to re-instate the footpath, the footpath was finally repaired and re-opened after Bury Council were threatened with Court action.

Caroline Knights

Group Secretary, Membership Secretary, Minutes Secretary

COACH RAMBLES GROUP

Coach Excursions (every 2nd Sunday) Nov 24/Oct 25 Destinations:

Matlock, Haworth, Skipton, Holmfirth, Kirkby Lonsdale, Conwy, Keswick, Ashbourne, Church Stretton, Kirkby Stephen, Settle, Ironbridge.

Ticket sales have increased, despite the increase in cost from £15 to £20 per trip. All walks bar one have been oversubscribed. The club is now running at a profit.

The S & W early coach trips starting in Prestwich seem to have been successful.

The Long, Medium and Short seem to have been well attended. We are discussing whether we have the length and level of difficulty correct.

Local public transport walks (Every 4th Sunday)

These have again proved very successful. Walks went to Radcliffe, Edale (twice), Orrel,

Prestwich, Bromley Cross, Quarry Bank, Alderley Edge, New Mills, Hadfield, Dinting to Godley, Hebden Bridge.

Increasing income and ticket sales

The temp partnership with Manchester Weekend Walkers was very successful. They advertised our walks on their MWW website and on Meet Up and did not ask for a contribution for the time we were with them. Our ticket sales increased and new members have stayed.

Membership

Membership increased to 76 from 71 last year. We are aware of members who have been placed in the MR96 Group but who joined as Coach members.

Volunteer Training

Some leaders have completed the Walk Leader training. One leader attended the First Aid session run by Stockport Ramblers.

We have had a very successful year. My thanks to officers, committee members, members, leaders and organisers.

Mary Carr

General Secretary

HIGH PEAK GROUP

High Peak Ramblers continues to provide walks on 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday each month and walks on Sundays when a leader is available. Wednesday walks are moderate 6 to 7 miles and Sunday walks are 8 to 10 miles and more strenuous.

Unfortunately, we are struggling to find leaders willing to lead on Sundays mainly due to a lot of other walking groups in our area offering similar walks. In the summer months we have also had several evening walks of around 5 miles followed by a drink.

We had a well-attended AGM after a 5 mile walk and lunch meal in November, when we are pleased to say we recruited three new committee members. Unfortunately, the footpath officer post remains vacant still.

In May we organised a full day First Aid training course for walkers using will4adventurefirstaid.com. We were very pleased that 16 members attended and all found it very informative and beneficial.

We have had two successful mid-week breaks. In May we went to Cober Hill near Scarborough and we all enjoyed the coastal walks from there.

In October we are staying Barmouth, North Wales and looking forward to walking in that area.

Our website and WhatsApp groups and Facebook work well to advertise our upcoming walks and meeting arrangements. We have welcomed several visitors from around Britain and abroad on our walks, who are on holiday in the Peak District.

The website contains photographs and a short report of our walks, so that members unable to participate in a walk can still get enjoyment from them.

Unfortunately, we still have some difficulty with managing the website but, on the whole, it works well for our members.

My thanks go to our committee members for all the hard work over the past year and to all who lead our enjoyable walks. Also, a thank you to all our members who regularly support the walks.

Catherine Fox

Chair

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD GROUP

It has been pleasing to see the usual array and variety of walks going ahead during the year and I'd want to thank all the walk leaders who continue to arrange and provide the significant numbers of walks that have been available.

During the year, we have continued to provide a series of short walks of around 2 miles entitled slow walks. These have proved popular particularly for new, less confident walkers, those struggling with physical issues and those picking up on walking again after a period of ill health. The problems mentioned last year around low numbers attending walks seems to have been resolved following a number of actions to remedy the situation.

A preference for circular rather than linear walks to facilitate people who come to walks in their cars appeared to be one of the issues deterring people. Whilst we remain keen to plan walks which are accessible via public transport for both environmental reasons and to suit those who do not drive, we will bear this feedback in mind when planning future walks.

We've also had the usual fascinating range of social events during the year, with more planned, so thanks to Chris for planning and co-ordinating these. These have included interesting visits to historic sites and guided tours around parts of Manchester. Attendance at the socials has been strong, following some concerns last year.

Two very successful weekends away have also taken place and thanks to all those who arranged and planned these weekends for their efforts in this regard. We continued with the arrangements whereby people were expected to arrange their own accommodation for the weekend and this seems to have worked well. Thanks also to all those who attended and enjoyed the weekends.

The monthly carers' walks have continued and been very well attended, with carers very appreciative of the regular contact and the support from Ramblers volunteers. A successful bid for funding to support the cost of transport to the walks and the provision of lunch at the end of the walks was made, with other bids for funding for the future being pursued. Many thanks to Margaret for continuing to oversee the arrangements for these walks and to all the volunteers who lead and support them.

Finally, I would wish to record my formal thanks to committee members who continue to undertake voluntary roles to ensure that we continue to function and deliver the aims and objectives of Manchester and Salford ramblers.

Barry Windle

Chair

MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT (MAD) WALKERS GROUP

2024/2025 has flown by and it is strange to think it is November again and time for the AGM. It has been a year, in many ways, of 'business as usual'. Important points for me, as Chair, have been:

- Helping to organise external navigation training for walk leaders
- Helping to contribute to matters in the area committee and Ramblers nationally, such as the update to Ramblers Governance, and sharing the updates to walk leader requirements with my group
- Being the main point of contact for matters in regard to behaviours and code of conduct, and, along with the committee, striving to promote a safe and welcoming environment for all who come along to our walks and events
- Working with others on the committee to organise the Young Ramblers Weekend in Manchester on Friday 24th- Sunday 26th Oct. This has been quite a big task for the committee, but with everything in its final stages we hope it will go off without a hitch!

I have thoroughly enjoyed being Chair this year and supporting the group!

Summary from the committee:

- **Walks:** a total of 170 walks, covering 1,809 miles and an impressive 78,542 meters of ascent - almost 9 ascents of Everest. They have been led by 54 leaders, including 12 people leading for the first time
- **Membership:** 650 members
- **Weekends:** 8 MAD weekends away led by 7 different organisers; 4 hostel weekends and 4 DIY weekends. This year we have travelled to Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland
- **Socials:** 100 socials, hosted by 50 different members, including 9 first-time hosts
- **Social media activity/engagement:**
 Meetup: 3899 members
 Instagram: 2858 followers
 MAD Members feedback survey: 63 responses
 Took over National Young Ramblers Facebook and Instagram profiles, 442 and 222 followers respectively.

Ellie Schenk

Chair

MANCHESTER WEEKEND WALKERS GROUP

Our Group has been running since 2013 and continued to prosper in 2024/25 with a busy and well supported Walks programme and slow and steady growth in paid-up members to around 325.

Walks: One of our continuing problems (a nice problem to have) is large numbers - 40 or more - on walks. As in prior years, we are always trying to mitigate this issue by putting on as many walks as possible, so that people spread themselves out across the weekend, but Saturdays still remain more popular than Sundays. It's been very heartening to see lots going on "at home" even when a lot of people are "away", for example we had 4 walks over the August Bank Holiday even though loads of our regulars were off on holiday. One of our most popular walks has traditionally been the Anniversary walk from Todmorden to Stoodley Pike and back in early January. This remains popular with members and friends of the group, but as it falls into the period of the New Year Resolution Walking Boom it was becoming too popular considering the rough ground and potential for bad weather. This year, after a lot of discussion, we had multiple leaders and back markers trained up on the route and offered three separate groups all walking the same way but catching later trains and leaving half an hour apart from each other. We considered various options for managing this, including telling people to book, but in the end we listed all 3 walks on Walks Manager individually and let people join whichever they wanted. This seemed to work quite well, as there was a natural split between early risers on the first

train and the less organised on the last, so each of the three walking parties contained about 30 people. This staggered departure and staggered arrival also helped spread people across the pubs at the end, so we are looking to try it again in 2026, if the volunteers to run the day can be identified early.

Supporting Walk Leaders & Walk Leader Training: The Walk Leader training hasn't put new people off stepping up, and we've been pleased to welcome several keen new volunteers. We did lose a few long-time leaders, but this was more due to moving away, family circumstances or (sadly) serious health conditions, not because of the two online learning packages. We are seeing steady progress with the training and most leaders are completing it even if they could easily self-certify the 12-walk minimum. We have made a deliberate decision to use our funds to support Walk Leaders and we've increased the amount spent on reimbursing train fares for recces and the cost of maps or mapping subscriptions, which is clearly visible in our accounts this year.

Socials: Highlight of the year was possibly our Jamboree in August, inspired by the success of the 10th Anniversary Party in 2023 we ended up with quite a similar format, but this time starting and finishing a bit later – some people finishing early the next day! We've also seen a very healthy increase in regular attendees at our monthly Evening Drinks on the 1st Tuesday of each month, starting in Rain Bar at 7pm we gradually move across to the Peveril around about 9pm, normally catching a bit of their Tuesday folk night that's been running for decades. Many other ad hoc trips out have been organised but never let it be said that we aren't sociable following each and every walk!

Weekends: Walking Weekends have continued to be very successful. We were in Llanberis, Snowdonia, for New Year 2024 (a repeat visit and a return to the same accommodation after a successful trip there in 2017) where we dodged a storm by going to the windswept coast and climbed up and down the fantastic slate quarries. The Spring weather was far kinder on our Easter trip to Matlock in Derbyshire, we walked some less familiar paths around Middleton Top and Crich and experienced the assault on the senses that is Matlock Bath on a sunny Bank Holiday afternoon. The August Bank Holiday trip to Devon was hugely successful, with a large group spending several days around Lynton and Lynmouth. One issue we've encountered is the question of recces for group weekends away, these are hugely beneficial as it can be difficult leading un-checked walks in unfamiliar areas, and it's always good to check accommodation venues as well as meal and public transport options. We rely a great deal on our volunteer organisers, and if they have time to travel to recces weekends then we can't expect them to be substantially out of pocket when they do, so we will be discussing how to strike the fairest balance when sharing costs between the Group, organisers, and attendees.

Promotion and Social Media: Almost all our walks and events are added to both Facebook and Meetup, and we field regular enquiries from new walkers who often like to chat a bit online before coming along for the first time. Last Autumn and Winter we cross-promoted the Coach Group walks, which seemed to be successful and possibly helped to boost their numbers as after a few months they were running full coaches again and we were stood down.

Andy Barclay

Chair

OLDHAM GROUP

Walks: We continue to have three, well-supported groups with different levels of walks.

The 'B' group has been meeting mainly on Saturdays and Sundays, doing moderate to strenuous walks of 11-12 miles.

The 'C' group still meets on Wednesdays and Sundays and does moderate walks of 5-7 miles. We are managing to recruit leaders for the Wednesday walks but often struggle to find leaders for the Sunday walks.

Another group, led by John Fordham, meets on Fridays and does leisurely 3-mile walks on well-made paths with no stiles.

Approximately once a month, Agnes and Peter Redgrave organise a pub walk, when members complete a leisurely 3-mile walk followed by a pub lunch. A walk to the Pots 'n' Pans Remembrance Sunday outdoor service in Uppermill is planned for 9th November.

Many thanks to all our leaders.

Social Events: Our membership secretary, Marion Shannon, has organised a number of highly successful social events and trips this year. In January there was a Potato Pie walk at the Railway Inn, Royton. Members enjoyed a week-long trip to Weymouth in April, with walks organised every day. Marion organised two well-attended day coach trips, to Haworth in June and to Settle in August. Walks of different levels were led by volunteers. A fancy-dress Halloween walk, with refreshments, is planned for 31st October. An overnight stay at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool for a Freddie Mercury tribute night is booked for Sunday 30th November.

Debbie Duffy organised a successful and enjoyable HF walking weekend in Dolgellau in March.

Our annual Christmas lunch, organised by Agnes and Peter Redgrave, took place at The Roebuck, Moorside, in December 2024 and the same venue is booked again for 10th December 2025. Many thanks to Marion, Debbie, Agnes and Peter for all their hard work in organising these events.

Footpath Clearance: Our hard-working footpath clearance team, led by Ken Smith, have been out regularly clearing local footpaths and this year have also been installing way marker posts on the Oldham Way.

John Walton continues his work on the protection of footpaths and rights of way around Oldham.

The Oldham Way: Members of Oldham Ramblers have continued to survey the Oldham Way, reporting on any issues needing attention. We are grateful for all the hard work done by our members on the footpaths.

Steve Arnold

Chair

ROCHDALE GROUP

Walks Program: Rochdale has continued to provide a full walks program of two walks per week and attendance remains strong with an average of over 20 for our mid-week walk and an average of around 14 for our longer weekend walks. This year we had reciprocal joint-group walks with Stockport group and we are keen to repeat these joint walks.

Our Facebook group is updated most week with new pictures of each walk. The interest shown & generated is on a slow and steady upward trajectory.

Our annual coach trip for 2025 was to Grassington (W. Yorks) with a choice of 3 walks. Each year we designate a midweek walk as our memorial walk and our social secretary spoke about

the members we have lost in the preceding year. We also had our 'potato-pie' walk, this being a shorter walk followed by a potato-pie late lunch at a local bowling club.

Committee: We have a busy and active committee though we still have two vacant positions, these being Footpath Officer and Publicity Officer. We continue to report path issues to our council and undertake path clearance work from time to time.

Path Accessibility Work: Our project to replace stiles with gates (funded by a grant from Area Office) is now well over two years since the project was conceived, due to our council being very un-proactive. However, the project has since moved forward since contacting our MP and our relationship with our council is improving. The project should be complete by the time this report is published.

Walk Leader Training: At the time of writing, I estimate around 85-90% of our active walk-leaders have completed their on-line training/experience declaration. We hope to 'mop up' the remaining few with a group training session. We have worked hard to encourage and assist our leaders to complete their training and feel the hard work has paid off.

I would like to thank all of the Rochdale Committee for their hard work this year and our Area Committee for their work and support.

Stuart Smithies

Chair

STOCKPORT GROUP

We had a change in Chair and Secretary in March 2025, following the announcement at last year's AGM that the previous Chair and Secretary were stepping down. I would like to thank Duncan Challen and Christine Bell for their support during the transition. I would also like to extend a **huge thank you** to the group committee, our walk leaders and all who have supported us over the last 12 months in making 2025 another successful year for the group.

We have run two **Emergency First Aid at Work Training** sessions, facilitated by a local provider. There was a slant towards incidents outdoors. We were able to offer some spaces on both sessions to other ramblers groups in the Manchester Area. The feedback from all the attendees was very positive "Really informative, great content and great delivery"

We have had another very **successful year of walking**, and despite sometimes struggling to find walk leaders we have continued to provide a variety of walks on Saturdays, Sundays and Tuesdays, as well as summer Wednesday evening strolls, including two joint walks with Rochdale Ramblers. The Tuesday pub lunch and Wednesday evening walks were generally the most well attended walks, possibly a reflection on the age profile of the group. There is still a strong demand for longer and more challenging walks and we need to ensure we have sufficient walk leaders to cover this. The new requirement for 2026 that all walk leaders be certified and/or complete the on-line training is a challenge for us. We have a session planned for November to take our existing walk leaders through the on-line training.

To help us identify ways to **encourage new walk leaders** and better support less experienced walk leaders we sent out a questionnaire to all our members asking for feedback on barriers to leading and ways we can provide support. Based on the feedback we are creating a training/resource package and will invite our existing walk leaders and anyone interested in becoming a walk leader to a walk leading workshop early in the New Year.

Our **footpath survey activity** has stepped up this year. Following a request to the group for footpath checkers in the Spring, eight new volunteers came forward and are now up and running.

We maintained a full and varied **social programme** in 2025. We have had a number of evening meals, firstly our Christmas meal early December 2024. In March we organised two walks finishing at a pub in Simmondley. Our mid-summer social was an Italian meal at a restaurant in Hazel Grove, Stockport. We have a Christmas meal arranged for December 2025.

In conjunction with Derbyshire Caving Club, we have arranged two trips down the mines at Alderley Edge, specifically for Stockport Ramblers. These proved to be very popular and we will be arranging similar trips in 2026.

Our **weekends away** this year have been very popular and have filled up quickly. We had a weekend in Morecambe over May Bank Holiday with walks around Silverdale, Arnside and Glasson Dock. We went to Llandudno at the end of August walking in Llandudno and the Conwy Valley. Our 3rd weekend is to Hassness House, Buttermere at the end of October 2025. We have a weekend booked for next April to the Lake District.

Communication is another focus. Internally, we have set up a WhatsApp group for all members and have been sending out Newsletters to keep all members updated on the committee focus and actions. Externally, we now have a public Stockport Ramblers Facebook page, which we hope will help us attract new members going forward and we have created a welcome pack which is now being sent out to all new members.

Lesley Williams

Chair

TAMESIDE GROUP

I begin by thanking the committee members for their hard work over the past year. Many thanks, too, to our walk leaders, as we wouldn't have any group walks without them, and we are all extremely grateful for their time, effort and skill in preparing the walks and leading us on them; a total of 104 walks over the last twelve months. We have been fortunate enough to have recruited three new walk leaders in 2025, although we hope that a few more of our members will volunteer in the future.

Our membership has increased slightly, and stands at 228, at the time of writing, and in addition to walks, our members enjoyed several social events, including meals, theatre trips, a summer barbeque and two excellent weekends away, each providing three walks.

Earlier this year, Ramblers brought in the requirement for all walk leaders to demonstrate their competence to lead walks, by completing some online training modules, or confirming that they have led 12 Ramblers walks over the last three years or confirming that they hold an appropriate qualification e.g. Mountain Leader. I am happy to say that at the time of writing, almost all of our walk leaders have completed this.

Unfortunately, we had a few accidents during our walks in 2024, resulting in injuries requiring medical treatment, so this year our walk leaders were given the opportunity to undertake first aid training and supplied with first aid kits.

Four of our Saturday walks in August covered the whole of the 32-mile Tameside Trail, split into four stages. Following that, our committee, and Tameside Council's Greenspace department, both agreed to my suggestion for our group to 'adopt' the Tameside Trail, in order to ensure that it is kept fully waymarked and that route directions on the TMBC website are kept up to

date. Fourteen of our members responded to my request for volunteers as Footpath Wardens. I informed Ramblers Head Office of this and they immediately responded by adding “Tameside Trail Paths Team” to their volunteer database to which the Footpath Wardens will be registered and I will lead as Footpath Warden Coordinator. (In this context, our Footpath Wardens will have a limited range of duties, specifically on the Tameside Trail paths, unlike the Tameside-wide brief of our Footpath Secretary).

In addition to chairing meetings of our committee, I have attended the quarterly meetings of the Greater Manchester & High Peak Area Executive Committee, in Manchester. I have also participated in some Ramblers training and consultation events, via Zoom and Teams.

Back in 2012, I was invited by Salle Dare, the then Area Chair, to be involved in forming a Ramblers group in Tameside which was, at that time, the only borough in Greater Manchester without its own Ramblers group. Tameside Ramblers was launched in 2013 and I have been its Chair ever since and 2025 is my 13th term as Chair. I shall be standing down at our Group’s AGM in November, as will my wife Prue, who became Group Secretary only a few weeks after the group was formed and later combined that with the role of Membership Secretary. Both of us have found our roles to be interesting, at times frustrating, occasionally stressful but mostly very rewarding and fulfilling. Most rewarding of all, was seeing the group grow and develop into the success that it is today. We are no longer on the Committee, and now, for the first time since it was formed, there are no original members from 2013; Prue and I were the last. But that is as it should be as committees do new ideas and fresh energy in order to progress and not become stale.

Stewart Ramsden

Chair

TRAFFORD GROUP

Our membership at the end of September was 328, which is an increase of over 11% from the previous year.

Our walks programme is varied. Our Thursday walks are usually around 8 to 10 miles, with up to 2000 feet of ascent. We often travel an hour or so to the Peaks, the E Lancs / W Yorks moors, or N Wales. Occasionally we have two walks, especially if one is more strenuous or leisurely than our usual. Our turnout is varied, averaging around 16, but a memorial walk during the summer for one of our members, a leader and friend to many, was attended by 29 people.

We have had 10 evening walks over the spring and summer. These walks were around 5 miles or so, more local to Trafford, and always ended at a pub to enjoy a summer evening drink. We attracted some new members via these walks.

The Saturday Strolls on alternate weeks continue to be very popular, often attracting the largest number of walkers. They are shorter, more leisurely and closer to home than the Thursday walks, and finish with a café or pub stop.

Additionally, some of our leaders also occasionally offer short-notice “pop-up” walks, and both the Thursday and Saturday groups have some social-focused walks.

We had another successful week in Keswick in May with over 30 members, partners and friends from other groups joining the trip. We had 10 walks of various grades from Monday to Thursday. Participants booked their own accommodation, but met up for walking and, almost as importantly, socialising in the various pubs and restaurants in Keswick during the week. In September went to Llanberis for an “overnighter” – a trip where we travel a little further afield

and walk two days with an overnight stay. We hope to have more of these short trips in the future.

Earlier this year we appointed a footpath secretary, a post that had been vacant for over two years. He has recruited nine new inspectors and now has all the footpaths in Trafford allocated to an inspector. We will hopefully be able to reinstate the path maintenance working party in the coming months.

I would like to thank all the committee members and walk leaders for their support and contributions toward the running of our group.

Katharine Thorley

Chair

WIGAN AND DISTRICT GROUP

Welcome everyone. Our group is very friendly and open to anyone who wants to join us. Membership continues to rise well in to the 190s. Our finances are healthy and we continue to attract new members and our coach rambles and local walks are very popular.

Over the last two years we have been getting instructions from Ramblers HQ, London, in particular about walk leader training. To comply with the new rules can be challenging. We do our best to comply and realise that the new training being brought in is for the safety and enjoyment of all our members and to make sure that we have the right skills.

I would like to thank all our walk leaders. New walk leaders have come forward, this has really helped our group and I am very grateful to them.

Our great committee continues to work very hard, giving up their spare time, and without whom we would not have a group.

And finally, to all our members, thank you for your continued support.

David Dalton

Chair