

Member Update - October 2026

GR-MU@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk



Forest of Dean Ramblers eager for the pre-AGM walk.

Group AGMs in November:
Sun 1 Cleeve at Southam
Sat 7 North Cotswold at Blockley
Sun 15 GWG at Shurdington
Sat 21 Forest of Dean at Coleford
Sun 22 Cirencester at Ampney Crucis
Sat 28 South Cots at Frampton Mansell
Mon 30 Gloucester, Upton St. Leonards

Rambling for Health and Purpose

Keeping good health is one reason for going for a walk. However another reason for being part of Ramblers, is the shared sense of purpose. Helping to make sure paths are kept open now and for the future.
A meaningful purpose can keep both body and mind active.

Area Council Meetings
7:30pm via zoom
Wed 25 Nov Intermediate
2027 Sat 16 Jan AGM (Hosts Cleeve Group)
Wed 27 Jan Ordinary
Find us:Meetup, Facebook

November is Group AGM Season!

Members discuss and vote on agenda items at a Group AGM. Usually a morning walk precedes the afternoon business (Cleeve and Gloucester below). Bring your own packed lunch (hot drinks provided). GWG typically opt for a pub lunch. If 1 or 2 new people offer to join a Group's Committee Team each year it helps keep the organisation going locally. An active member can take part as a helper or lend a hand with one of the varied roles. As well as leading walks, local footpaths can be checked or path diversion notices reviewed. Social activities can also be co-ordinated.





(In fond memory of Gerry O'Driscoll & Doug Beaumont)

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The Ramblers, 13 Dirty Ln, London SE1 9PA. Tel: +44 (0)20 3961 3300.

Some Group Activities

One of 59 Ramblers Areas, Gloucestershire has 8 Ramblers Groups: Cirencester, Forest of Dean, South Cotswold, Gloucester, Cleeve, North Cotswold, Gloucestershire Walking Group with its 20s-30s sub-group.

Forest of Dean Ramblers



The Group has recently formed a new Path Maintenance team to build on our strong links with Forestry England maintaining paths in the Forest. The group has cleared restricted sections of the High Meadows Trail and new posts have been installed by Forestry England to better mark the trail, and restored safe walking where the trail crosses the A4136 at the Long Stone. Additional work with the Forestry will also modify the Beechenhurst Trail, to improve walker safety at a crossing near the Speech House Hotel.

We co-sponsor these trails with Forestry England and it's great to see new staff who are becoming more engaged with our group and dedicated to improving the walking experience for locals, visitors and Ramblers alike.



From a walking perspective, the Forest of Dean Ramblers continues to flourish with a full walks programme and with two holidays during 2026, one of those being the Offa's Dyke Project. Starting in 2025, a group of a dozen or so Ramblers have been working our way from Chepstow to Prestatyn on the Offa's Dyke path, having reached Buttington Bridge near Welshpool, well over the half way mark. This has been done by car relays, public transport and now further from home, holidays. We plan to complete the final arduous sections of the trail in 2027.

Rambler Gate

There are many interesting types of stiles in the countryside.



This rare 'Rambler Gate' with chain swung arms was spotted near Newent, on a walk through blackcurrant orchards with views to May Hill and across the Severn. These gates used to be popular as they allow pedestrians to pass but are an effective barrier to livestock. The pivot posts can be swung open and close under the weight of the chains.

Some Group activities continued



North Cotswold Ramblers

Eight Members have completed walk leader training guidance with four leading walks this summer. There have been nine evening walks over the summer which have been well supported. Weekend walks continue every month. This ancient stone boundary stile near Cold Aston gave pause for thought.

Bridges

Local walkers may have noticed new materials being trialled on footbridges around the county.



The picture (right) shows some broken wooden slats on an old footbridge near Dee's Barn on Blockley Footpath 8, which North Cotswold Group reported to the County Council using FixMyStreet. The GCC Works team have now repaired the footbridge as shown below.

The new bridge deck is constructed from Fibre Reinforced Polymer (FRP) mesh grating, or 'mesh'. It's made from glass fibres and resin. Compared with timber decking, mesh does not rot and is significantly less affected by prolonged exposure to water and damp conditions. The open mesh surface allows water and debris to pass through the deck and has an inherent anti split surface built in.



This bridge also incorporates FRP structural beams beneath the deck. These beams perform the same role as traditional timber or steel beams but are resistant to rot and corrosion. They can be installed directly onto wet ground or simple supports. This can help reduce the overall height of bridge to improve accessibility, by reducing the need for steps and steep approaches. If there is a difference in level, the mesh material can also be used to construct access ramps. Where the location permits, the mesh can provide increased width compared to older timber structures, making bridges easier to use for a wider range of path users.

FRP materials have a lifespan of roughly 50 years compared to the average 10 years for timber construction. Assembly time is also reduced.

GCC do try to prioritise repairs to damaged footbridges that present a challenge to walkers. Issues can be reported at https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk

Some Group activities continued



Cirencester Ramblers
The Group continues to enjoy a varied programme, with a number of Members able to lead walks. A publicity event outside Waitrose proved successful in attracting walkers and here are a few outside the church in Turkdean.

South Cotswold Group has been working with Stroud Rambling Club to try to ensure housing developers in Tetbury retain public access to the Wor Well, the historic source of the Tetbury Avon river.



Footpath NTU46 links the Cirencester Road with a bridleway (the Tetbury Trail) and passed alongside the source. The new housing needed the path to relocate and be fenced the other side of an access driveway. We objected as walkers would no longer be able to reach the heritage site. In response, an offer was made to provide a Permissive path across to the well. However since a landowner can close a permissive path at any time, access was not assured. Further negotiations resulted in agreement to make the path over the driveway a new Public Right of Way. This will benefit Tetbury residents and future generations, ensuring public access to the well at all times. Meanwhile effort continues to relocate the electricity pole away from the new route of NTU46.

Ramblers Governance Review
The Ramblers is an Association of 59 Areas across GB. Each Area comprises approximately 10 Groups. General Council this year was held on Sat 25 April 2026 at Birmingham where representatives of each Area get together to discuss topics of interest and vote on motions. A special resolution put forward by the Board of Trustee to change the way the charity is governed did not receive sufficient votes to pass (72.5% rather than 75% required).
As a follow up during the summer the Board carried out a survey of Areas and General Council Reps to see whether some minor changes to the proposals would be sufficient to get the resolution to pass. Amendments include one more Trustee bringing the proposed total to 13 including one each from Wales and Scotland. In England 5 would be voted by Members, the rest appointed by the Board rather than the present system of 8 elected by Area Reps with an overall total about the same, although the Board can appoint up to a max of 15. The downside is that most Members are based in the South East so the geographically spread system of motions representing the countryside would be lost. Proposals can be submitted via Regional forums to the Board. Gloucestershire would be in a South and South-West region so would be unlikely to hear views from other parts of the country.
Gloucestershire Area submitted that it would be good to trial these Member forums within the present system before changing the Governance of the Association. However the Board has decided to try again with the resolution at an Extraordinary General Meeting on Saturday 21 November. Views welcome.