

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Taunton Deane Ramblers held on Friday 21st November 2025 at 7pm at the Hive Cafe, Trull, Taunton.

Present:

Liz Hembrow, Chair, Gill Lee Treasurer, Lynda Kearn Secretary,

Joy Williams, Andrew Norris, Val Norris, Brenda P, Trevor C, Barbara C, Carol Allen, Davina C, Michael B, Richard W, Shirley W, Paul S, Tracy S, Gill E, Wendy M, Charlotte T, Sue J, Peter M, Sue K, Richard H, Yvonne H, Victoria R, Rob H, Diana F. (27 attendees in total)

1. Apologies for absence

Wendy C, Graham R, Sue C-B, Philippa K, Diane S, Tim F.

2. Chair's opening remarks

Liz welcomed everyone to the AGM.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 22nd November 2024.

The Minutes of the 2024 AGM were agreed by those members present.

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Annual Report

Liz reflected on the past year since she became Chair of the group.

There have been several training sessions; one at the beginning of the year included a presentation about OS maps and the Ramblers website. This could have been better attended and it was mostly those who were already walk leaders who were present. More recently there were 2 video sessions for walk leader training which were better attended by both current walk leaders and those who were new to leading walks.

Liz's first coach trip was to Lynmouth and organising it was more complicated than expected with a choice of three walks. It was very successful with 45 members taking part so we organised a second trip in the autumn to Stourhead. Liz thanked Diana and Charlotte, and Yvonne and Richard for leading the two walks on this second trip.

The Wednesday afternoon walks are very well attended, often with 25+ walkers, but there are still not enough walk leaders. There has been a good variety of walks including a walk along the West Somerset railway and a steam train ride back. Liz thanked Trevor for co-ordinating these walks.

The Sunday long walks are co-ordinated by Carol who said that there are walks most Sundays but she is concerned about how many walk leaders there will be from January.

It would be good to get Sunday afternoon walks up and running again for those members who are working during the week.

The Christmas lunch is booked at the Royal Oak in Hillcommon this year. Thanks to Brenda for trying it out on our behalf.

Liz and Brenda attended the Somerset Area AGM this year. Our speaker Les Stather is a big part of this.

Liz said thank you to all the Committee members for their time and effort, it is very much a team effort.

Lynda for being Secretary and handling the IT side of the training sessions.

Gill, a big thank you for being Treasurer for the past 9 – 10 years.

Brenda for being Footpath Officer.

Joy who is responsible for listing the programme of walks.

Barbara who organised the walk leader training sessions.

Andy and Val who are Webmaster and Programme Secretary respectively.

Liz also said a big thank you to the walk leaders for all the effort put into planning and leading the walks.

6. Treasurer's Report

Another good year.

We had a well-supported outing.

The Self-funding account has increased in the amount held at the bank. The committee decided we could put on a second trip at a minimal cost to members. Stourhead was chosen, although these costs will come out of the account in 2025/26 as this event happened (and the invoices paid for) in the next financial year.

The donations received from RWH Travel totalled £130. Many thanks to those who nominate to TDR when booking their holiday.

Waymarkers are being replaced - we pay mileage expenses.

Two training days were put on to cover The Ramblers Association requirement for evidence of walk leader experience and training. This helped members to know what is expected when leading a walk and to ease any worries they might have when offering to lead a walk. The hire of the hall and refreshments were covered by the group funding received from HQ. Look out for more training events in the coming months.

The Accounts for the past year have now been signed off by the Accounts examiner Richard Stone.

7. Committee Members' and Postholders' Reports

The following reports were posted on the website prior to the meeting.

- **Membership Secretary**

The membership report shows that our numbers are slightly lower than last year at 254 members.

Diana F said that she joined the Ramblers via the Health walks and suggested promoting our group with these walkers.

Yvonne mentioned that some members had left the group following the decision to start walks at 1.30pm in the summer months. This decision was taken following a survey by members and the start time is now at the discretion of the walk leader so can be at 2pm.

We do not currently record numbers on our walks and some felt it might be good as a reference to which walks were most popular. This can be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

- **Footpath Secretary**

I have now been Footpath Officer for Taunton Deane Ramblers almost 2 years. I have to say that very little seems to have changed in 40 years since I last took an interest in these matters.

Looking back, I am pleased to say the old Pound Stretchers path by the river Tone is now open. The Town Council decided to 'pause' its application to have the path added to the Definitive map on advice from Rights of Way. I have now persuaded the council to continue this application, even though it may take 25 to 30 years to have it processed.

There continues to be controversies. Rights of Way want to divert a small part of a path in Durston as it runs under a barn. This is because the farmer wants a change of use from agriculture to business. However, as none of the path can be accessed, there seems little point in spending officer time on a planning exercise. We continue discussion to see how this problem can be resolved.

I can report a new bridge at Pitminster! It could not be used in the summer as the field to it was ploughed and cropped, with maze! It's impossible to get through. When I complained about this, Rights of Way told me to go round the edge of the field. I questioned why they were inviting me to trespass and how that impacted their insurance, no answer.

With the expansion of building in general, planning applications come in regularly. They are often modified many times and each time there is a different planning case number. It is time consuming to try to keep up with them all and to see if they interfere with any paths.

Personally, I feel the whole way the Rights of Way department work could do with updating. I have asked for an interview with the councillor who chairs the committee which looks after Rights of Way, I haven't had a response as yet.

Brenda Prentice.

Wendy M suggested that we invite our MP to come on a walk with us.

8. Election of Officers and Members of the Committee

One nomination has been received for Charlotte Tuckett to join the Committee. Wendy M proposed this and it was seconded by Yvonne H. Charlotte was duly elected as a Committee member.

The remaining Committee members have indicated that they are willing to stand again if there are no other nominations. No other nominations had been received. Shirley W proposed that the Committee was re-elected en bloc and Gill E seconded this. This was accepted by the majority of members present.

Chair	Liz Hembrow
Secretary	Lynda Kearns
Treasurer	Gill Lee
Committee member 1	Joy Williams
Committee member 2	Trevor Coombe
Committee member 3	Brenda Prentice
Committee member 4	Barbara Cooper
Committee member 5	Charlotte Tuckett

9. Election to fill non-Committee posts

Non-Committee post holders are willing to continue. The Short Sunday walk co-ordinator post is still vacant and Joy is happy to be contacted if a walk is offered.

Footpath Secretary	Brenda Prentice
Membership Secretary	Val Norris
Website Co-ordinator	Andy Norris
Programme Secretary	Joy Williams
Assistant Programme Secretaries:	
Short Sunday	Vacant
All day Sunday	Carol Allen
Wednesday	Trevor Coombe

10. Appointment of Accounts Examiner

Gill indicated that Richard Stone is happy to continue in this role.

11. Feedback on this year and looking forward to the next year

Feedback on coach trips

Both the coach trips were very popular with good feedback. Trevor is already working on a coach trip to Castle Drogo for next year. Diana and Charlotte have offered to help recce the walks and Paul also volunteered at the meeting.

Weekend trip to the Elan Valley

Liz has been contacted by the Elan Valley lodge in Wales advertising their walking holidays. They have accommodation for up to 36 people, with a minimum number of 15. The cost for a 2 night fully inclusive weekend is £252 with guided walks. Some TDR members have already stayed there

three years ago when West Somerset had spaces on their holiday. There are various dates available. Liz will get an email sent out to members to see whether the trip would be viable.

Note: 10 members registered their interest in the trip at the AGM

First Aid Training

Yvonne has been arranging this but is having trouble getting replies from the various organisations who conduct training.

Is there any other training members would like to see?

Social events

Other groups appear to hold more social events than us. Is there anything we could do? The feedback from members present was that the walks themselves are a social event and a good way of exploring the local area.

Trevor mentioned that he still has In Case of Emergency (ICE) cards available if anyone wanted one, although Yvonne said that the new membership cards have space for ICE details on the reverse but are more flimsy.

Barbara responded by thanking Liz for all her work as Chair which was affirmed by the other members present.

Date of next AGM: Friday 20th November 2026. Venue to be decided.

Meeting closed at 21.00h