

Godalming & Haslemere Ramblers

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Saturday 15 November 2025, 7pm

Godalming United Church, Bridge Road, GU7 3DT



Present: Committee members

Heather Dillon (Chair), Carol Bateman (Secretary), Jude Beautelement (Treasurer), Jenny Caddy, Janet Cole, Frances Morris, Sheila Myers, Paula Shelley

1 Welcome

Heather welcomed everyone to the meeting. After covering the safety information she noted that 79 people were in attendance.

2 Apologies

Gwyneth & Anthony Brearley, Elaine Briars, John Casey, Zena Chaddock, Jim & Frances Chipchase, Gary Cheng, Ann Clover, Kathryn Clover, Rose & Don Gray, Ann & John Harmes, Alan & Eileen Hines, David Morris, Myra Newnes-Smith, Rosalyn Stubberfield, Vivian Wong (20).

3 Minutes of the AGM 16 November 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Jim Robertson; Seconded by Nick Baxter.

4 Matters arising

There were none.

5 Items for discussion under Any Other Business

There were none.

6 Chair's Report – Heather Dillon

6.1 Introduction

It is said that “a week is a long time in politics”, but I would say that a year is a very, short time in the Ramblers. It seems no time since I was stood up here being elected as Chair of Godalming & Haslemere Ramblers, and a year has passed already in a flash.

6.2 Walks, leading and training

When I was appointed, one of my aims was to help members keep walking for longer, whatever their stage of life or fitness level, and to offer walks of different lengths and speeds so there is something for everyone.

This year we introduced “**ambles**”, gentle walks of around 2-3 miles, on a Wednesday morning. The idea came from Edwina, with the first one led by Rosemary and Nicky, back in March. We have had one a month - 8 so far. The plan is to grow this to at least 2 a month in the next programme, but to do this we need more leaders. Perhaps some of you who don't want to lead a long walk, would be happy to lead an easy 2-3 mile amble?

We have also split the two long **Wednesday all day walks**, into a medium one of 6-8 miles, and a long one of 8 miles plus. Which means on some Wednesdays there is a choice of 4 walks - amble, leisurely, medium and long.

Last year we offered **278 walks**, 9 more than the previous year, but not yet as many as the **289** walks in 2022, when obviously after the lifting of the COVID restrictions, we were all desperate to get walking again.

Of course, all these walks depend on having **leaders** and I'm delighted to say that we have recruited **13 new ones** this year. Thanks to the buddies, who have helped to support them.

Ramblers introduced a new **Walk Leader Training approach** this year, meaning all leaders have to confirm they've led at least 12 walks in the last three years or complete two online training modules. So far, 67 of our 76 walk leaders have done this – this is excellent progress! I know some wondered why this was needed, but in today's world of social media and litigation, it's vital that Ramblers can show that our leaders are well-prepared and confident.

So thank you walk leaders for your support in this.

We also held a **Walk Leader and Navigation Course** in August, led by **Jenny Winter** and **Nick Baxter**, attended by 12 of our members plus some guests from other Surrey groups. And in May, nine members attended a **First Aid Awareness Course** organised by Guildford Ramblers.

6.3 WhatsApp group for car sharing

In April, thanks to **Paula Shelley**, we launched a **WhatsApp car-sharing group** to help reduce our carbon footprint, ease car park pressure, and help those who prefer not to drive. So far, 14 members have joined – but to really make it work, we need more! If you're interested, contact Paula or me.

6.4 National and Surrey Area

1. At national level, Ramblers are currently reviewing their **governance model**, aiming to simplify structures and increase member engagement. For now, local

groups and areas aren't part of this review. If you want to know more, have a look on the Ramblers website.

2. **Our Surrey Area Ramblers AGM** will be hosted by Mole Valley Ramblers on Sat 7 February in East Horsley. This is a good chance to meet fellow walkers and share ideas. All members are welcome.
3. The Area Committee, like ours, depends on volunteers – and currently needs a **webmaster, publicity lead, secretary, and footpath secretary**. If any of these roles interests you, please do have a look at the Surrey Area website for more information.

6.5 Thanks

I'm not going to go through all the events that we have had throughout the year, as these are covered in the AGM reports and the agenda tonight. I am pleased to say that we are a group that has so many activities - related to walking, social events, holidays and footpath work - that it is impossible to do everything. So if I haven't been on the walk you have led or the event you have organised, don't take it personally.

However, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to everyone who gives their time to keep this group thriving. It is incredible how many volunteers we have and it would take too long to thank you all individually. We truly couldn't do without you.

However, I would like to make a few special mentions:

Jean Harker has stepped down from the social committee after many years of dedicated service. Jean, I'm sure you have lost count of the number of dishes you have washed and the number of cups of tea you have served. We are very thankful for all your work over such a long time.

Maureen Holland and Janet Cole have joined the social committee - welcome to you.

Thanks to all our **Committee Members** who have supported me throughout the year, especially those standing down this evening after completing their three year stints - **Frances Morris, Janet Cole, Sheila Myers and Jude Beautelement**. Hopefully we will have replacements after this evening.

I would like to especially mention **Beila Best**, supported by **Julia Evans and Jude Beautelement**. In the same way as it is said "it takes a community to raise a child", it takes a Beila and an army of volunteers to organise coach trips and holidays, which many of us thoroughly enjoy. Beila is already planning for 2027, having secured volunteers for 2026. We are very grateful to you Beila, you too Julia, and Jude, and all the volunteers who have helped you.

Our “**hidden heroes**” also deserve recognition- the footpath secretaries, **Ian Wilks and Margaret France**, our ten footpath wardens, and the Work Party team headed by **John France**, who quietly keep our local path network open and walkable.

I’m also delighted that **Emma Palmer** has volunteered to take on the **Publicity role**, helping to raise our local profile. Thank you, Emma. Emma is a relatively new member of our group, and is probably not known to many of you, so Emma can I ask you to stand, so that people can see who you are.

Frances Morris finished on the social committee after the New Year Lunch and after over 10 years as the Newsletter Editor, she has handed the baton, or should I say, the pen, to **David Hamill**.

On behalf of you all, I would like to express our thanks to **Frances** for her excellent contribution as our Newsletter Editor over such a long time.

Your dedication, reliability, and skill have ensured that the Newsletter was produced on time and to a high standard. The Newsletter is an important link for our members, keeping us informed and connected — and that’s thanks to your hard work behind the scenes, pulling it together.

Frances asked to say a few words – she thanked David Hamill for taking on the editorship of the Newsletter and wished him all the best. She also thanked Cynthia Chard for the very valuable work she does checking the Newsletter and the Programme of Walks.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering with G&H Ramblers, speak to me or one of the Committee, There’s a role for everyone.

6.6 Walk leader champions

When we were checking to see who had led more than 12 walks in the last three years. Three walk leaders (plus one trusty helper) stood head and shoulders above the rest: **Jenny Caddy, Margaret France**, supported by **John France** and **David Hamill**. Each has led over **50 walks** in that time – and that’s not counting the coach trips and holidays. We’ve got a small token of appreciation for you – thank you for your commitment to walk leading.

A couple more topics and then I will be done.

6.7 Losses

Sadly, we lost a few of our members and ex-members this year: **John Lorenz, Bill Monaghan, Roger Chaddock, Carol Austin, Brian Gray, and Charles Cockbill**. We remember them with fondness and gratitude for their contributions to the group.

6.8 Looking ahead

So what of the future?

Next year, 2026, marks the **50th anniversary of Godalming & Haslemere Ramblers!** We'll be holding a celebratory event on Saturday 27 June – details will be in the February Newsletter.

Meanwhile, our regular activities continue at full pace. Our walk compilers are already looking for offers of walks for March–June 2026.

- * **Jim** for Wed longer walks
- * **Mandy** for Wed ambles and leisurely walks
- * **Damian** for Thursdays
- * **Andy** for Friday evenings
- * **Jenny C** for Sundays

The **Winter Walks Programme** runs daily from Christmas Day to 2 January – the perfect excuse to invite a few friends to join you on the walks.

Our October Newsletter is packed with details of social events:

- * the **New Year Lunch** on 11 January
- * the **Surrey Area AGM** on 7 February
- * the **Annual Quiz** on 24 February
- * and the **G&H Travel Show** on 14 March

And then there is the **Spring Break to Kent** at the end of May and the **holiday to Ireland** in September. Booking forms for the **coach trips** for summer 2026 will be in the February Newsletter.

6.9 Finally

As I close my first year as Chair, I just want to say how grateful I am for the support I've received from so many of you.

Thank you all for making this group so lively, friendly and supportive. Many hands make light work, if we all share the load, we can achieve much.

7 Reports

7.1 MEMBERSHIP REPORT – Jenny Caddy

7.1.1 Membership

This report covers the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 (12 months). Last year's figures are in brackets.

New members: 52 (60)

Leavers: 60 (81)

Total members: 435 (443) including Affiliates 14 (16)

7.1.2 Group Emails

Sending emails to the membership (about 390/450) is a lengthy process. The Ramblers provide no email system for volunteers to use. (A motion requesting one at the Ramblers' AGM in April was passed.) The Ramblers expect volunteers to use their personal account or find another one.

In April I opened an account with the email marketing platform Mailchimp. This is a bulk email service recommended by the Ramblers. It is GDPR compliant and free for organisations with up to 500 email addresses; it allows up to 500 emails a day and 1000 a month but does not allow attachments.

I use Mailchimp for bulk emails (for those members who have agreed to receive emails from the Ramblers, about 320), and membership@gandhramblers.org.uk (using BCC) for small groups of contacts.

Currently only seven members are sent the newsletters and programmes by post.

***Extra at the AGM** – Jenny noted that the total membership now stands at 436 and that the main method of recruitment is by word of mouth, others read about the group in the free magazines; Round & About and VantagePoint.*

7.2 SOCIAL EVENTS – Sheila Myers

7.2.1 Events Hosted by the Social Committee

1.1 New Year Lunch 2025 - We welcomed 57 members to Milford Golf Club on the 12th January for a very enjoyable New Year Lunch, held for the second time at Milford Golf Club. Thanks to Frances Morris for organising this event.

1.2 New Year Lunch 2026 - There is a change of venue for January 11th 2026 and we hope to be welcoming many members to Bramley Golf Club. Once again members are offered the choice of two or three courses from the menu as this has proved very popular. Our Chairwoman will be leading a walk prior to the lunch.

1.3 G&H Travel Show - We held our annual Travel Show on Saturday 22nd March which was attended by 56 members. Once again this was a very enjoyable social occasion, with an excellent presentation given by members on a range of fascinating places. Many thanks to our members for the variety of food offerings for the finger buffet. Special thanks go to Jim Robertson who dealt with the technical aspects, Damian who organised the raffle and all who helped out on the evening.

1.4 Skittles Evening - On Friday October 10th we held our Skittles evening at Wonersh Memorial Hall which was once again organised by Jean Harker. Her choice of the supplier of the ever important fish and chips was voted a great success. Many thanks go to John and Margaret France and Jim Robertson for their lively commentary and help with scoring and organising the (competitive) teams. Thanks

too to Ann Clover and Diane and Ray Crouch who guided members back and forth to the parking area.

My very special thanks go to the members of the social committee for their help and advice this past year, and I am delighted to welcome Maureen Holland and Janet Cole who have joined the team of Judith Brignell, Judith Davis, Jean Harker and me.

7.2.2 Other Social Events

2.1 Quiz Evening - Our always enjoyable annual Quiz evening was held on Tuesday 25th February at the Jack Phillips pub in Godalming. Following their pub supper, 58 members organised themselves into 8 teams to face another of Quiz-master Jenny Caddy's wide-ranging and taxing set of questions. Many thanks to Jenny, and to Damian who again organised the evening.

2.2 Bowls Evening - Carol Bateman and Adrian Deuling kindly organised a Bowls Evening at Godalming and Farncombe Bowls Club on the 26th May which was attended by 34 keen participants. With assistance from members of the bowls club we all enjoyed trying to roll the woods (bowls) as close as possible to the jack – not easy since the woods are weighted and do not travel in a straight line! We then enjoyed supper and a drink at the bar in the club house. Thanks to Ann Clover, Judith Davis, Chris Easterling and Linda Rixon for their assistance with the food preparation and to Jenny Caddy for her wonderful cakes. As a result of these bowls evenings six Ramblers have taken up the game of bowls. The season is from April until October – if you are interested contact Carol Bateman (carolbateman59@gmail.com).

7.3 HOLIDAYS & COACH WALKS – Beila Best

7.3.1 Introduction

When I reported to last year's AGM I said that I hoped Coach Walk prices would be set at cost, because we had a small ring-fenced surplus from previous years. The same applied this year, with the result that the Coach Walks broke even with a very small surplus. This means that in 2026 we hope that the same will apply, in the knowledge that the take up for these popular three days is always good.

Not only are Coach Walks popular, but the Spring Break, now an important part of the G & H calendar also had maximum take up, indeed even more than maximum, because sadly there was a waiting list of members who were not able to go, which is always distressing. However, the positive thing is that those members will automatically get a place for next year's break without having to go into a ballot.

7.3.2 Spring Break

This year's break, organised by the indefatigable Frances and David Morris, was to Suffolk, a county that many of us were not too familiar with. The "Team Suffolk"

consisted of Christine Sweeting, Jean Harker, Adrian Deuling and Carol Bateman, who together with Frances and David gave us four days seeing the area at its best in glorious weather. Frances' plans for substitute walks, in case of flooding, which often occurs in the spring, were not needed!

We stayed at The Mill at Sudbury, an attractive hotel set overlooking the pleasant water meadows.

A delightful four days allowed us to see the very best of this unspoiled part of England. We firstly went to Coggeshall, which is actually in Essex, a beautiful Old Cloth town with a 10th century abbey, and extremely attractive buildings, including the National Trust's Paycocke's House. After investigating the area many of us devoured scrumptious cakes and teas at the aptly named "Bakealicious".

John Constable's Dedham, and Flatford Mill was our location on the second day. Many of us commented that we had never before had our picnic lunch sitting on the platform of a working railway station, Manningtree, where their station buffet provided us with goodies to eat. It would be difficult to select a "best day", but medieval Lavenham, where we spent the penultimate day, was a total treat, with its glorious architecture, delightful streets, and a quite spectacular wool church. Indeed, the whole four days introduced us to unspoiled villages and charming market towns.

Long Melford, and the RHS Garden at Hyde Hall were visited on our way back to Milford at the end of a much-enjoyed trip.

Thank you, Frances and David and Team Suffolk, for giving us another memorable short holiday.

And carrying the baton into 2026, Jackie Ring is already well on the way, with "Team Kent" researching and planning our four day trip in May.

7.3.3 Coach Walks 2025

3.1 Isle of Wight - The Coach Walk season started, as usual in June, with Jackie, helped by Judith Davis, Christine Sweeting and Dot Crocombe, taking us to the Isle of Wight. We went over – or nearly didn't – on the ferry from Lymington to Yarmouth. Having left ample time to catch the ferry, an enormous traffic hold up meant we were never going to get to the ferry port in time. However, our coach driver pulled out all the stops, and after some frantic phone calls to the ferry terminal, and our arriving 30 minutes late, the ferry was also running late, and with a big sigh of relief we boarded and settled down for the 40 minute crossing.

Good weather allowed us to enjoy Yarmouth with its attractive harbour, Freshwater Bay, the haunt of writers, poets and artists, and the Needles, with lunch looking out to sea at Colwell Bay.

3.2 Devils Dyke and Brighton - Nick and Janet Baxter, helped by Alison Briscoe and Gill Hillman, made sure we enjoyed the Devils Dyke and Brighton in July.

Beautiful walking along the South Downs Way, cresting the Downs with spectacular views was a highlight. The Jack and Jill windmills were viewed, and at lunch the long walkers even took part in a quiz as we sat eating our picnic – always something different on our Coach Walks! Non walkers spent the day in Brighton.

3.3 New Forest - We ended the season, again blessed by good weather, in the New Forest, where Judith Davis had planned our day. Again, Gill Hillman supported her, assisted by Jenny McAteer and Jean Harker. Beaulieu village (and its famed Motor Museum – visited by some non-walkers) was the starting point, whilst others walked along the Beaulieu River to Bucklers Hard where we stopped in this most interesting village, complete with its museum, for lunch. Everyone gathered towards the end of the day to spend quality time in Exbury Gardens.

Three superb days out, only made possible by the willingness of our members to spend time and energy researching and putting together a programme for long and short walkers, and those members who no longer walk distances.

7.3.4 Coach Walks 2026

Thankfully, I can report that John and Margaret France, Judith Davis, and Adrian Deuling, together with Carol Bateman, have stepped up with plans for Coach Walks 2026, to Sissinghurst, Avebury and St Albans respectively. Thanks are due in enormous measure to all those who have organised these events in 2025 and to those who will do so next year.

Sadly, next year will see us unable to use the excellent free of charge parking facilities at Secretts Farm Shop due to the rebuilding. We are investigating other possible locations and if any member has any ideas of where, particularly for the four-day spring break, we could park, I would be delighted to hear from them.

7.3.5 Holiday to Seefeld Plateau in Austria

Our season ended with a glorious holiday to the Seefeld Plateau in Austria. We stayed in a charming hotel with the most amazing infinity swimming pool on the roof, where after a long day's hiking it was bliss to relax in warm water, chatting to one's friends and to look at the mountains and meadows surrounding us. But it was not all easy – time (and room!) had to be left for afternoon tea and strudel followed by a 6 or 7 course Cordon Bleu dinner in the evening. Life is tough for ramblers!

7.3.6 Thank you and a Request, Please!

I make no apologies for reiterating what I said last year. Breaks, Coach Walks and Holidays are such an important and enjoyable social outlet for us, alongside our main activity, rambling, and give such pleasure to so many. These can only continue with the willingness of members to organise them, and although new members are coming along, it sometimes falls on the shoulders of those who have often done it (and enjoyed it!) in the past.

Let us hope such people, and not always the same ones, will continue to come forward in the years ahead.

Extra at the AGM – Beila expressed a special thank you to Julia Evans who deals with all the forms and paperwork for all the coach walks and holidays – she could not manage without her hard work.

She thanked Jackie Ring and Team Kent for their hard work and noted that there are only a few double/twin rooms left on the Kent Spring Break in May 2026.

Beila is working hard to find alternative car parking for the coach walks and holidays now that Secretts Farm Shop is unable to accommodate us due to rebuilding work. If anyone has any ideas of where we could park please pass them to Beila or any member of the committee. In the absence of an alternative members' driveways will be used.

7.4 WALKS PROGRAMME COORDINATOR –Jenny Caddy

The programme of walks was produced, as usual, every four months. Six walks were cancelled; four of these were replaced. The Festival of Winter Walks ran from 25/12/2024 to 02/01/2025 (the same period as last year). We had three walks in the Haslemere Walking Festival (July 4 – 6).

Monthly Ambles (Ramblers grade Easy) started in March. The Friday evening walks all started at 6.30 pm.

There were three walks with a special feature: a Christmas lunch walk hosted by Jan and Paul Cope in December, an Asian lunch walk organised by Heather Dillon and Sheila Myers in August and a walk in London led by Beila Best and Alison Briscoe in September.

1 October 2024 – 30 September 2025				
	Type of walk	Number of walks	Attendance total	Attendance average
Wednesday	Moderate, all	95 (89)	1010 (1095)	10 (12)
Wednesday	Moderate, long	63	647	10
Wednesday	Moderate, medium	32	363	11
Wednesday	Morning, leisurely	46 (47)	650 (711)	14 (15)
Wednesday	Morning, easy	7	55	8
Thursday	Morning	52 (52)	1038 (930)	20 (18)
Friday	Evening	18 (19)	235 (257)	12 (13)
Saturday	All day	3 (7)	29 (95)	10 (13)
Sunday	All walks	53 (50)	546 (602)	10 (12)
Sunday	All day	21 (21)	138 (180)	6 (8)

Sunday	Morning	32 (29)	408 (422)	13 (14)
FoWW	Morning	9 (8)	149 (80)	16 (10)
FoWW (extra)*	Morning	4 (5)	62 (51)	15 (10)
All walks	Totals	278 (269)	3605 (3720)	13 (14)

The previous year's figures are in brackets.

* Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, i.e. not our usual days for walks. Walks on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday are included in the figures for those days.

The compilers for the programmes for the year were: Alison Briscoe, Jennifer Caddy, Heather Dillon, Margaret France, Mandy Newman, Andy Piercey, Colin Venton, Damian Wheeler.

Cynthia Chard checked each finished programme for mistakes. Celia Woodward printed the seven copies of the programmes and the newsletters that are posted to members. We owe them thanks.

I'd like to thank the leaders for producing the walks, the compilers for collecting them and the members for supporting them.

***Extra at the AGM** – During the year there had been nine walks with more than 28 people. Rosemarie Juliano had the highest number and Judith Davis was 'back-marker supremo' – they were both presented with a small gift. Jenny asked if anyone had an idea for a special walk.*

7.5 PUBLICITY– Janet Cole

Short pieces have been submitted to the local free magazines, Vantage Point and Round & About encouraging people to join G&H Ramblers on our walks. The excellent work of the footpath group is also mentioned and the work of the wider Ramblers organisation in promoting access to the countryside and protecting footpaths.

A piece about the G&H Travel show was published in SE Walker magazine.

***Extra at the AGM** – leaflets had been displayed at the museum as well an article in the Busbridge Church magazine.*

7.6 FOOTPATH WORKING PARTY – John France

I am pleased to report another full year of Work Parties, benefiting footpaths in areas that our group walks regularly and resolving issues highlighted by our members. This year we have started a major project on the infamous footpath that runs between Peperharow Road and Milton Wood. This is likely to keep us busy over the coming years as we can only work there in the drier months. Our working

relationship with SCC Countryside Access, in particular Thomas Chatfield who co-ordinates all Surrey Volunteer Groups, is excellent and he is always very complimentary about the quality of our work and the attitude of our Group.

7.6.1 October 2024

We began the year by fitting thirteen plaques at locations we had worked at in 2023/24. It was interesting to re-visit the sites to see how our work had settled down. These plaques are good publicity for our Group and demonstrate our commitment to keeping the footpath network in our parishes in good condition. Our Work Party for the month was back at Northcote Lane, Wonersh. In September the veg. cutters had revealed two flights of steps in desperate need of attention. We rebuilt one set of four steps from the road and then another set of six steps further up the bank. We also built a revetment high above the lane where the bank was starting to break away. The veg. cutters worked some distance away to clear a path of laurel near the Guildford Road.

7.6.2 November 2024

We were back building more steps, this time at Lower Eashing on a very steep slope. We installed one flight of three steps followed by a second flight of six steps which dramatically improved the ease-of-use of the footpath which had become quite dangerous in wet weather. The veg. cutters cleared brambles alongside the River Wey to allow the footpath to move away from the rivers edge.

7.6.3 December 2024

Ahead of our Christmas Lunch we went back to Horton Farm, Alfold. We completed a major path clearance here in 2019, but since then the landowner had deliberately done little to keep the footpath open. Walkers had been 'escaping' onto the farms drive and this, along with an enforcement notice from SCC, had convinced the landowner to allow the footpath to be re-instated. Two hours of brush cutting and we had made good inroads, but we left the remainder for another time and went off to our very enjoyable Christmas Lunch at The Sun Inn, Dunsfold.

7.6.4 February 2025

Our usual workday is the first Tuesday of the month and this overlaps with the Christmas/New Year Holidays in January, so we have a month off. In February we returned to complete the clearance at Horton Farm and install improved way marking to direct walkers away from the farm.

7.6.5 March 2025

In March we were at Rydinghurst Estate, near Cranleigh. The day was memorable for a number of reasons. Our Chairman Heather joined the Work Party, to better understand what we do, and we thank her for her enthusiastic veg. cutting. It was also Beila's first Work Party and in her usual stylish manner she arrived in a cream fleece which didn't stay cream for long. The estate was previously owned by Ringo Star and is now owned by a security conscious Czech Property Developer so we had to be escorted onto and off the site. The Work Party was quite difficult as we were working in a limited space. However, we successfully replaced a stile with a new

gate, built a bridge to replace a rotting sleeper, removed a redundant stile and our veg cutters widened the approach path.

7.6.6 April 2025

This was our first visit to the footpath at the end of Peperharow Road, much commented on and complained about by our members and local residents. This is a very long path with historically many faults. The restricted access requires all materials to be man-handled into the work site. For our first visit we repaired one set of steps that we had previously installed back in 2018 and built a new set of steps using recycled composite materials which will not rot in this very wet environment. The veg cutters went to FP10 by the river which, having been cleared by contractors back in 2019, needs annual maintenance to keep the brambles at bay.

7.6.7 May 2025

In May we were at the Milton Wood end of the footpath as SCC had negotiated with the owners to kindly allow us to park on their driveway, testing our reversing skills. The work site was a quagmire where walkers had thrown in logs, attempting to stabilise the ground. It had become a safety hazard, and the path was at risk of being closed. The ambitious plan was to build two interconnecting bridges, over four metres long, spanning the water course caused by run-off from Charterhouse Playing Fields. This was our hardest Work Party in years. After six hours of effort a bridge emerged and exhausted, we headed home to tend to our aching muscles and bones. In the meantime, the veg cutters had widened the approach path and cleared vegetation on a section of landslip that will require new revetments to be installed at a future Work Party.

7.6.8 June 2025

June saw us back at the Milton Wood end of the path to install a section of boardwalk and a revetment providing a toe guard on the approach to the bridge we installed in May. We had completed a major veg cut last month, but a section of path had been completely covered by very fast-growing horsetail, and this was cleared.

At the end of June, we were asked by SCC to undertake an additional task at Lower Eashing where we replaced a broken stile with a G&H donated kissing gate at the roadside to complete work on FP 293, we had begun in November 2024.

7.6.9 July 2025

The plan for July was to return to FP 296 at the Peperharow Road end of the path to replace a long section of boardwalk and to finish the veg cut on FP 10. This would have been hot work, and the forecast was for temperatures in excess of 32C with an Amber warning in force for that day. We therefore did the sensible thing and cancelled the Work Party.

7.6.10 August 2025

August saw us going back to School. SCC had been contacted by Cranleigh School to ask for the signage around the site to be improved while the pupils were on their holidays. There are a surprising number of footpaths going through these extensive grounds. We had been asked to check and repair/replace nine finger/waymark posts.

This sounded like an easy morning's work until our teams started trying to dig the ground. It was like concrete. One hole for a finger post took 2 hours to chip out. We replaced three finger posts and one waymark post as well as adding two more waymark posts. Two other posts were in good condition. We also did a veg. cut close to the main road and across a bridge on the golf course.

This was our last Work Party for the Ramblers year as September coincided with the Group Holiday to Austria.

7.6.11 Path Maintenance Impact Log

Ramblers have introduced a six-month trial of a Path Maintenance Impact Log. They want all Work Party organisers, Footpath Wardens or anyone else who carries out footpath improvement to record their work. You can only record one piece of work at a time as it asks for specific location information and encourages you to add photos. This is the first time they have collected such information and hope this will help them obtain more money from Councils and Government to improve the footpath network. We started completing the log after our April Work Party and will continue to do so as part of the post-Work Party administration.

Thank you to everyone who has joined a Work Party this year either as a step/bridge/gate/way marker installer or as a veg cutter. We have an experienced and very hard-working core of volunteers who sadly are getting older. We are looking for new young blood, in the nicest possible way. No experience is necessary just a practical bent, a sense of humour and a willingness to commit four hours on the first Tuesday each month. If you would like to give something back to the footpath network and want to find out more, please contact me.

***Extra at the AGM** - We installed 2 bridges, 1 kissing gate, 1 field gate and 2 boardwalks. We built 25 steps, installed two revetments as well as 2 finger posts and 7 way marker posts. The veg team cleared brambles, pulled nettles and Himalayan balsam, cut back hedges and overhead branches from over a kilometre of footpath.*

In total we contributed 106 volunteer days over the year.

Just imagine what we could have achieved with more volunteers.

7.7 FOOTPATH SECRETARIES – Margaret France & Ian Wilks

Local Footpath Secretary - Haslemere and Chiddingfold Parishes - Margaret France

Local Footpath Secretary – Godalming, Busbridge, Bramley, Dunsfold, Hambledon, Hascombe and Witley Parishes – Ian Wilks

7.7.1 Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's)

The Definitive Map is the legal record of public rights of way in England and Wales. It is kept and updated by each County Council or Unitary Authority. It came into being in 1949 because of concerns that paths were not recorded anywhere. New paths can

be added, but the process is quite arduous and requires significant “evidence” usually involving more than 20 years of uninterrupted use of the path by the public.

In December 2023 I was notified that a claimed footpath at Potato Copse south of Witley Station, submitted in 2019 by a group of dog walkers, was now going to be investigated. A decision was taken by SCC that based on evidence forms submitted, the claimed footpath will be added to the Definitive Map. However, sometimes things don't go quite to plan. A potential DMMO involving a footpath at Pook Hill that had historically passed through a garden is a case in point. A DMMO was submitted in 2024 with evidence, including that from two of our members that a path on the boundary of the property had been in use for the required 20 years. However, the current house owner now wants to divert the path away from the boundary into a nearby field and has blocked the currently used path with barbed wire. Another example is a potential DMMO on the driveway of Close House leading up to the Nature Reserve at Chinthurst Hill. After investigation a DMMO was found to be unnecessary as a deed dated 1961 gave SCC a private right of way up the drive allowing them to license the public to use the drive to access the hill. A further example at Cranleigh by the Wey and Arun Canal saw a DMMO accepted by SCC in 2025, but the landowner and a local houseowner appealed to the Secretary of State and this has led to a Public Enquiry to be held in March 2026.

7.7.2 Interesting Footpath Issue this year

G&H received an email from an ex-member, who now lives in Devon, concerning a blocked path at Beacon Hill.

He had followed the definitive map route on his satnav and met a barbed wire fence. With help from a member who lives locally it emerged that when this footpath was established in 1991 after a DMMO, the walked route and the definitive map route were different. In 2014 the National Trust (NT) enclosed their land with a barbed wire fence and installed a gate. Unfortunately, the NT put this on the walked route and nobody in SCC noticed this error. It was agreed with SCC Countryside Access to leave things alone as this is the first complaint in 10 years. Waymark roundels have been placed at the exact point the definitive map route meets the barbed wire to direct the public towards the gate.

7.7.3 SCC (Surrey County Council) Biannual Footpath Survey

These are carried out by Footpath Secretaries and Volunteer Path Wardens across Surrey in November and May each year. In November 2024 I had six footpaths to survey. Most passed the “Easy to Use” criteria but one was an automatic failure because of a missing roadside fingerpost. In May I only had three to survey and again one was an automatic failure. For the whole of Surrey there were 184 footpaths surveyed in May with a length of 80,000 metres (49 miles) of which 82% were “Easy to Use” which is usual at this time of year and shows that the condition of Surrey footpaths is stable.

7.7.4 Task System on Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)

SCC Countryside Access seem to blow hot and cold on this initiative. I had seven tasks to complete in the latter part of 2024, mostly to do with repairs of stiles by

landowners. Then nothing until August 2025 when I received a task to survey 40 pieces of footpath furniture i.e. stiles/gates/bridges across a network of footpaths in Ewhurst. It had been requested by the owner of Old House who was willing to pay for any repairs/replacements. This was two morning's work as my phone only had power to check my route and take photographs for about 2 hrs. Perhaps time for an upgrade. I was pleasantly surprised that the footpaths were all in good condition and included many gates that G&H had installed. The survey showed five stiles and/or wicket gates that had rotted and needed replacing. It was also an opportunity to renew faded roundels.

7.7.5 Planning Applications of Interest (Includes Ewhurst, Cranleigh, Womersley and Alfold)

One important aspect of the Footpath Secretaries role is to review Planning Applications that could impact local footpaths or bridleways. I received 23 for review during the year compared to 32 last year, with most relating to house or garage extensions with no impact on nearby paths. They tend to cluster around areas that are under development e.g. Alfold and Cranleigh where a lot of new building is taking place. It is interesting to note how developers are now making a feature of any right of way on their site incorporating it into their design as they have on land near Notcutt's in Cranleigh including adding seating along the route. SCC Countryside Access are very quick to respond to anything that is controversial, so most of the time I am only reviewing them for interest.

7.7.6 Ramblers Footpath Forum

These are held roughly quarterly as an on-line meeting and are a very useful way of receiving updates on changes to the law on Rights of Way as well as hearing what projects Ramblers are supporting. In October the guest speaker was Mark Weston the Director of Access for the British Horse Society (BHS). As walkers we are often critical as horses churn up bridleways in winter. However, many of their problems are the same as ours particularly safety where they must use roads between bridleways. The next forum was in April with 80 attendees. Ramblers introduced the Path Maintenance Impact Log that they want all Footpath Work Parties to complete after every task. The speaker was from a Ramblers group in the Peak District who have run a donate-a-gate scheme for 25 years. He offered a couple of gems one being to ask each parish council to direct £750 from their annual precept or received community infrastructure levy to improve the local footpath network and the second a method of overcoming puddling around a gate where cattle tend to congregate by laying a couple of sleepers along the hedge line so that walkers can avoid the mud. In July the speaker was from a Ramblers group who look after the footpaths in 35 parishes (compared to our 13). They had entered a partnership agreement with their Local Authority where they were given work almost like a contractor. Ramblers were promoting this structure to groups who currently have no relationship with their Local Authority or in situations where a Local Authority actively discourages volunteers from working on footpath maintenance as is the case in Devon and Cornwall.

7.7.7 Reporting Faults on Footpaths

You can help keep our footpath network open. A simple way is to take a pair of snips with you on your walks to remove the odd bramble or holly in your way. If you see a more major problem like a broken stile, a path blocked by vegetation or blocked by a farmer, why not report it. Either contact the relevant G&H Footpath Secretary (details at the end of the Walks Programme) or alternatively go to the Surrey County Council website and under Reporting Options, look for Rights of Way and follow the instructions. You will be able to see if the fault has already been reported, but it is still worth adding your own comment as the Council are more likely to take notice if lots of people are commenting and it also allows you to receive an update if action is taken. There are some 2,800 faults reported on Surrey's footpath network each year so let's make sure that our part of the county receives its fair share of attention.

***Extra at the AGM** – Margaret thanked the Footpath Wardens who ensure that there are no problems on the footpaths in their area. **She also encouraged people to report any problems on a footpath such as a broken stile, fallen tree etc.** Go to the Surrey County Council website and under Reporting Options, look for Rights of Way and follow the instructions. Alternatively the SCC Countryside Access initiative makes use of a facility on CAMS where faults can be reported.*

8 Treasurer's Report and Election of Examiner of Accounts for 2025

Year-end 30 September 2025 (the paragraph numbers are referenced in the accounts below)

- 1 Ramblers Allowances:** We did not request any allowances from Ramblers for this financial year.
- 2 Publications/goods sales:** Blackheath Fair, where much of this income comes from, was a more successful event for us this year due to much better weather than in 2024. The last of the walks booklets were sold this year and there are now no publications offered for sale on our website.
- 3 Coach Walks:** Overall the Day Walks were very successful this year, making a surplus of £132.17. This was largely due to the organisers not requiring the full amount of the allocation set aside for their potential expenses.
- 4 Holidays:** Both the Spring Break and the overseas holiday are now accounted for through the G&H bank account. The overseas holiday is a set cost determined by HF Holidays, so this event will always result in a nil balance.

The £7,004.10 reduction in receipts compared to last year is due to the fact that the £7,000 deposit, in respect of the September 2025 holiday to Austria, was collected and paid out in the last financial year.

The £404.79, which is the difference between receipts and payments this year, includes deposits already received for the Spring Break in 2026.

5 Socials: Social events have been well supported and most are very close to being cost neutral. At the time of preparing the accounts we are still holding £330 which is to cover the cost of the fish and chip supper at the Skittles on October 10th.

The self-funded social income is also boosted by the 2 raffles we have each year, which go towards funding such things as the Travel Show, for which no charge is made to members who attend.

We were unable to host the Blind Walkers Event this year due to the extreme heat forecast over that weekend. Money will be set aside to provide refreshments for them next year.

We have also paid a deposit of £150.00 to secure the date for the New Year Lunch in 2026.

A working capital is required in order to be able to make any advanced deposits which may be required and to provide a cushion for events which have to be costed in advance, and may incur unforeseen expenses.

6 Main Other: The £43 shown as income was a Ramblers subscription paid to the G&H account in error. It was refunded and so no income was gained from this amount.

7 & 8 Walks Programmes, Newsletters and Publicity: Walks Programmes and Newsletters are now produced in house and put on the website for members to access directly. Very few are needed to be printed and posted to members which has significantly reduced our costs.

9 Practical Work: Only 2 of the proposed projects were undertaken this year which resulted in a significant underspend of the money set aside to support the Work Party.

10 Deficit/Surplus for year: The Main Account surplus reflects the fact that we have not managed to carry out some of the Practical Work this year which funds were allocated for. No further funding has been requested for this but it is hoped that we will continue to be able to support Practical Work in the next financial year.

Finally

I am now coming to the end of my time as Treasurer so I would like to express my thanks to our Chair, Heather Dillon and to all the other members of the G&H Committee. I have very much enjoyed my time working with you all and thank you for your friendship and support, which has been much appreciated.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisers of the self-funded events. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone concerned and help to provide the very varied social programme which G&H offers to its members.

My thanks also go to Ann Harmes who has acted as the Independent Examiner of the accounts.

Lastly I wish my successor all good wishes for a trouble free Treasurership.

Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers – AGM – November 2025

Accounts and Treasurer's Report - Year-end 30 September 2025

Receipts				Notes	Prior Year
Description	Main	Self-funded	Totals	2024/5	2023/2024
Ramblers Allowances				1	£200.00
Ramblers Other					£128.39
Donations					
Fundraising					
Publications/goods sales	£142.50		£142.50	2	£25.00
Day Walks		£5,447.98	£5,447.98	3	£3,815.00
Holidays		£69,301.40	£69,301.40	4	£76,305.50
Socials		£4,507.35	£4,507.35	5	£4,652.45
Other	£43.00	£363.00	£406	6	£378.50
Totals	£185.50	£79,619.73	£79,805.23		£85,504.84
Payments				Notes	Prior Year
Description	Main	Self-funded	Totals	2024/5	2023/2024
Walks Programmes				7	£97.62
Newsletters/Publicity	£31.67		£31.67	8	£351.05
Publication/goods costs					
Practical Work	£470.26		£470.26	9	£1,538.44
Walk Leader Training	£81.00		£81.00		£48.75
Meetings (AGM)	£84.00		£84.00		£186.39
Admin	£4.40		£4.40		£13.59
Other (Main)	£54.00		£54.00		
Day Walks		£5,315.81	£5,315.81	3	£3,875.39
Holidays		£68,896.61	£68,896.61	4	£76,187.59
Socials		£4,094.82	£4,094.82	5	£5,162.72
Other (Self-funded)		£34.70	£34.70		
Totals	£725.33	£78,341.94	£79,067.27		£87,461.54
Bank Position	Main	Self-funded	Total	Notes	2023/4
Opening cash at bank	£2,732.78	£1,931.61	£4,664.39		£6,621.09
Deficit/Surplus for year	£539.83	£1,277.79	£737.96	10	£1,956.70
Closing cash at bank	£2,192.95	£3209.40	£5,402.35		£4,664.39

Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers – AGM – November 2025

Accounts and Treasurer's Report - Year-end 30 September 2025

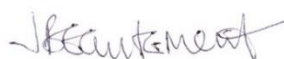
Balance Sheet

Assets	Main	Self-funded	Totals	Notes	2023/2024
Investments	£106.25		£106.25		£105.07
Cash & Bank	£2,192.95	£3,209.40	£5,402.35		£4,664.39
Total	£2,299.20	£3,209.40	£5,508.60		£4,769.46
Liabilities					
Creditors					
Prepaid Income					
Total Liabilities					
Net Assets/liabilities	£2,299.20	£3,209.40	£5,508.60		£4,769.46
Movement in Funds			£738.14		£1,955.13
Receipts & Payments			£737.96		£1,956.70
Variance - Investments			£0.18		£1.57

Jude Beauteament

Date:

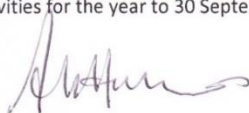
G&H Treasurer



20/10/2025

Independent Examiner's Statement

Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Groups' Examination Guidelines I consider Godalming and Haslemere Accounts to give a fair representation of the Group's financial activities for the year to 30 September 2025.



Ann Harmes

Date: 13/10/2025

The accounts were then accepted as a true record:

Proposed by Paul Cope and seconded by Beila Best. All were in favour.

8.1 ELECTION OF EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2026

Ann Harmes has agreed to be the examiner of accounts for the year ending 30 September 2026. She was proposed by Rosemary Bryant and seconded by Jan Cope. All were in favour.

9 Election of Officers and Committee Members

All on the committee stood down at this point. Jude Beaument, Janet Cole, Frances Morris and Sheila Myers were not eligible for re-election since they have served for the maximum of three years. Another three have agreed to stand again – Carol Bateman, Jenny Caddy and Heather Dillon. Paula Shelley, who was co-opted onto the committee during the year following a vacancy, has also agreed to stand as have three new members – Beila Best, Jim Robertson and Simon Youl. All candidates had been nominated and seconded in advance of the meeting.

Carol presided over the election of the Chair, **Heather Dillon**. She was nominated by Sara Sims and seconded by Catherine Huckle and was unanimously elected. Heather then took over the election of the other six committee members.

Simon Youl, Treasurer, proposed by Jude Beaument, seconded by Carol Bateman

Carol Bateman, Secretary, proposed by John Colligan, seconded by Diana Cook

Jenny Caddy, proposed by Jim Chipchase, seconded by Austin Caffrey

Beila Best, proposed by Judith Brignell, seconded by Frances Chipchase

Jim Robertson, proposed by Philip Watson, seconded by Adrian Deuling

Paula Shelley, proposed by Heather Dillon, seconded by Cynthia Chard

All were elected unanimously.

The roles on the Committee:

Simon Youl will do the Treasurer role.

Carol Bateman will continue as Secretary

Jenny Caddy will be the Walks Programme Coordinator

Paula Shelley will be the Membership Secretary

Beila Best will be the Social Liaison link and

Jim Robertson will be without portfolio

10 Any other business

Copies of the Independent Hostel Guide 2025 were available at the entrance free of charge.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

That is now the end of the business part of the AGM. Before we eat:

- Thanks to the social committee headed by **Sheila Myers** and her helpers for organising the food, especially to **Judith Davis** who coordinated all the food offers
- Thanks to all of you who have provided food for tonight. It is one of the reasons that our AGMs are so popular

- Thanks to **Damian** for organising the raffle and for those who brought raffle prizes
- Thanks to **Jenny Caddy** who welcomed everyone at the door and to those of you who set up the rooms

Food is now served.

Notes

All the reports except the Chair's were sent to the secretary before the AGM. The agenda, reports and treasurer's report were all collated into one document. This document, and the minutes of the AGM 2024 were placed on the G&H web page and then sent to the members two weeks before the AGM via email. The Chair's Report was given at the meeting.

Carol Bateman, Secretary

17 November 2025