LWR NEWS & VIEWS

Editor – publicity@lowerwharfedaleramblers.co.uk

SPRING 2026

MIKE BRIERS HEADS TO BIRMINGHAM FOR CRUCIAL RAMBLERS NATIONAL AGM



Mike Briers



Helen Wood

Those of you who attended the LWR AGM last November will remember that former West Riding Area Chair, Steve Rawlings, gave a presentation on proposals by Ramblers leadership team for fundamental changes in the organization at all levels.

These proposals were originally intended to be agreed at a special conference in London during December 2025. However the final decision making was pushed back to the Ramblers national AGM to be held at the NEC in Birmingham on Saturday April 25th.

In the meantime Steve stepped down as Area Chair and was replaced by Helen Woods a member of Leeds Ramblers. Each Area can send 2 delegates to the national AGM. Helen and our Chair, Mike Briers, were selected at the Area AGM to be the West Riding representatives

The fundamental aim of the proposed changes is to reduce bureaucracy and introduce more direct democracy (one member, one vote)

The key proposals in essence are

1 A slimmer Board of Trustees

This will be reduced from 15 members to 8-12

Each member will have a direct vote to select the members

2 General Council Scrapped

This will be replaced by six regional ‘gatherings’ where members can have more direct access to Ramblers leadership

3 Areas Scrapped

The current 50 Areas, including West Riding, will be scrapped. Groups like LWR, will have a direct relationship with the center, including financial issues.

Where local coordination is required (e.g. training, footpaths, local campaigns) groups could form 'hubs' to share resources.

Item 3 (Areas) is the one that will have the most direct impact on LWR members. There will be no immediate changes but a collaborative consultation process will commence in autumn 2026.

Full details of all these proposals can be found on the Ramblers UK website and Mike will provide a summary report in this newsletter, following the national AGM

FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE TEAM BACK WITH A BANG



TEAM A



TEAM B

After a long fallow period with no work, North Yorkshire Council contacted Richard Brook with a long shopping list of jobs for the LWR Footpath Maintenance Team on footpaths between North Rigton and Pannal.

TEAM A - Wednesday 11th March

The team visited Horn Bank Farm, off the A658, to replace a broken wooden gate with a galvanized bridleway gate and repair two gate snecks (a Northern English term for a thumb-operated lever to open a door or gate).

The farmer delivered the materials to the site in advance and towed Richard's tool trailer on the day, behind his £125,000 tractor, saving a lot of heavy lifting.

The sun was shining but the site was on top of a hill and the wind was ferocious. Fortunately the soil was very workable and it only took a few hours to complete the installation despite a constant flow of walkers, joggers and dog walkers on this popular path from Almscliffe Crag.

Team A , led by Richard Brook, comprised Albert Podesta (A group), Roger Bullen (B group), Chris Tye (B group), Antonia Woosnam-Savage (C group) and Geoff Midgley (C group)

TEAM B – Monday 23rd March

The team were fitting a smaller footpath gate in a section of stone wall near Horn Beck farm. Again the path was very busy and the work was constantly interrupted by walkers wanting to get through.

Team B, led by Richard Brook, comprised Steve Hughes , Mike Rogers (B group), Mike Briers (B Group) and Nick Dybeck (Footpath Officer, Bradford Ramblers)

The pipeline of work for the footpath team is building up again. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact Richard Brook on B walks or via LWR website – contacts.

DOG OWNERS FACE UNLIMITED FINES FOR FARM LIVESTOCK ATTACKS

LWR has always had a clear rule that dogs (apart from assistance dogs) are not allowed on their walks. Other groups, like Leeds Ramblers, leave this decision to the discretion of the individual walk leader.

The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Amendment Act 2025 became law on March 18th. The maximum penalty facing owners whose dogs attack or chase livestock rises from £1000 to an unlimited fine. Incidents can be prosecuted if they occur on roads or public paths, not just farmland.

Walk leaders are often approached on this issue by potential new walkers. LWR policy is clear but dog owners may not be aware of the law and question the reasons. Understanding the risks of an unlimited fine and potential seizure of the dog concerned should aid what can be an awkward conversation with the owner.

'ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL' BRING LWR A GROUP WALK TO A HALT



As we are all aware from our recent leader training there are many reasons why a walk can be brought to a halt but straying on to a live film set is not covered in the programme. However this was an unexpected problem the A group had to deal with.

On March 10th, the A group were doing their regular Tuesday walk starting in Kettlewell and progressing through Starbotton, Arncliffe and Hawkswick. On the road from Arncliffe to Kilnsey they were asked to stop as a scene from 'All creatures' great and small' was being filmed and the producers did not want 21st Century Ramblers straying into post-war Skeldale.

The group had to wait around 5 minutes as the production team were using a drone to film some background shots.





The group could clearly see many familiar faces from the show, albeit they were some distance away. The photos taken by Albert Podesta show the red van from the Knackers yard with James car parked in front, with the cast gathering around a gate whilst some crew members (in black) attend to the cattle. Rachel Shenton (Helen Heriot) can be seen walking in front of the gate and what looks like Nicholas Ralph (James Heriot} in a blue pullover coming through.

Are the cattle destined for the Knackers yard? Can James save them from becoming beef burgers? We will have to wait until Series 7 due in the autumn to find out but the A group will sadly be out of shot.

BRADFORD RAMBLERS 70th ANNIVERSARY CLEBRATIONS NEED YOUR HELP.



Bradford Ramblers mark their 70th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion they are planning to recreate their original 1976 summer evening walks programme.

To make this historic celebration a success, they are looking for people to help lead these walks, all of which will be in the Bradford area.

If you are a qualified walk leader and willing to lead a walk, please contact Muriel O'Flaherty, the Walks coordinator for Bradford – walks@bradfordramblers.org.uk

ONCEAYEARDAY FILLING UP FAST

The new venue in Ben Rhydding and the exciting guest speaker have hit the mark with LWR members and the bookings are rolling in.

The date is Tuesday May 5th when all 5 walks that day will end at the Wheatley. The event starts from 3:30pm with guest speaker, Johno Ellison, author of 'Walking the Wharf, looking forward to answering your questions.

We would stress you don't have to be a walker to attend. As long as you are a member of Lower Wharfedale Ramblers, you are very welcome. The venue has a large free car park and is very close to both bus stops and railway station.

Please make your booking by April 20th

Full booking details can be found on all LWR 'Whats App' group pages or contact Amanda on B and C walks or amandasiswick@gmail.com

OTLEY WALKING FESTIVAL BROCHURES NOW AVAILABLE

The brochure containing details of all 7 walks being offered by LWR is now available.

Distribution in Otley, as you would expect, is very comprehensive. However we want to reach as many potential walkers as possible. We will be asking walk leaders to distribute the brochures but if you are happy to put some in your local library, village hall, railway station etc, let us know and we will get them to you. If you walk with other groups, please hand out copies'. You can also suggest people visit the OWF website. Bookings for bookable walks open on May 1st

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS



The Easter edition of the newsletter contained an up to date list of LWR walking groups together with a description of each of them. These descriptions are defined by Ramblers UK and are used in all Ramblers communications and publications.

Unfortunately, I used the wrong definition for the D group and have been asked by Jim Heslop, their walk coordinator, to correct this. My apologies to Jim and the D group for my mistake which I am happy to correct.

The D group were described as providing 'Easy' walks. I should have used the term, 'Leisurely'. For clarification, the Ramblers define both terms as follows:-

EASY	For anyone who does not have a mobility difficulty, a specific health problem or is seriously unfit.
LEISURELY	For reasonably fit people with at least a little country walking experience. They may include unsurfaced rural paths.

Both terms were regularly used in the old printed 'West Riding Area Walks Programme'. The 'Leisurely' description is used on the LWR website and will be used in this newsletter.