# LWR NEWS & VIEWS

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**MAY 2026**

## STATUS QUO AT THE NEC

NO – not the band that rocks all over the world!

The Ramblers national AGM took place at the Birmingham NEC on Saturday 25th April. Attending on behalf of the West Riding Area was Helen Wood (WRA Chair from Leeds Ramblers) and Mike Briers (LWR Chair).

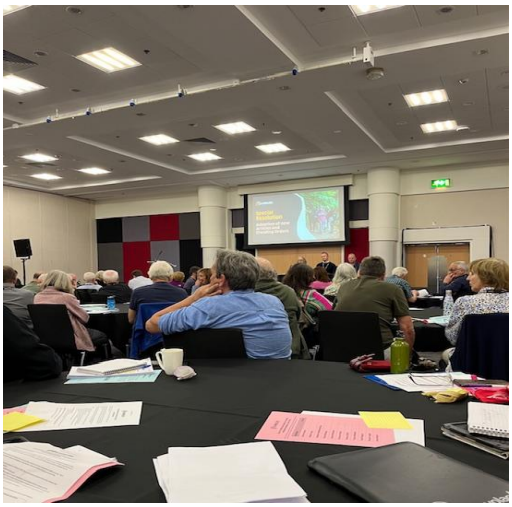
We asked Mike to write a report on the AGM and this is printed in full below;-

**Ramblers General Council**

Arriving at the NEC I saw people ahead of me who looked as if they could be Ramblers as they were wearing rucksacks! However, I saw that they were heading to a different venue albeit not as interesting.




**Wrong venue**



**Right venue**

I eventually found the meeting room which had a about a 100 or so people representing Ramblers from across Britain.

The meeting started with the annual report which revealed the good news that income was greater than expenditure (reverse of the previous year), membership was at 106,095 and 233 miles of footpath had been opened or improved in the last year.

The main part of the meeting was about approving the new governance which has been consulted over the last year. Three main changes were proposed 1) Election of Trustees be on a One Member One Vote basis; 2) General Council to be replaced with regional Forums; 3) Number of Trustees to be reduced to 12 of which 4 to be elected by all members and 2 to be elected by Scotland and Wales. The Chair and Treasurer would be appointed by the Board and but ratified by members and finally 4 trustees to be appointed by Board to fill skills gaps they had identified.

In anticipation of these changes being passed, the Board had had the Articles of Association updated and we were therefore being asked to approve the new Articles of Association as a package. This caused problems as different members object to different parts of the changes.

The motion needed 75% to be approved but only received a vote of 72% and was therefore defeated. The Ramblers Board had no immediate plan B and instead said would go away and consider next steps. So changes to governance rumbles on.

In addition to changes to the governance the meeting debated several issues submitted by Areas and 3 elected new trustees.

Overall, I found the day interesting. During the lunch break many of the ramblers I spoke to had concerns about recruiting new members and a shortage of walk leaders in their groups. Luckily at least for now LWR don't have these problems but we cannot be complacent.

Full details of the meeting including agenda, papers, slide packs and outcomes can be found on the General Council section of the Ramblers website.

General Council - Ramblers

**EDITOR'S COMMENT - OMNISHAMBLES IN CLINK STREET**

Consultations by HQ on proposals to change the national governance structure commenced in 2024 and a decision was to be made at a special conference convened in December 2025. Shortly before this conference, HQ announced that the decision making had been deferred to the national AGM which Helen and Mike attended.

As you will have read the proposals failed to achieve the required 75% approval level. As Mike says there is no Plan B and under the Ramblers Constitution the issue cannot be put to the vote for another two years (2028).

Consultations on proposals to scrap Areas and alter group organization structures were delayed until summer 2026 on the assumption the higher level governance issues had already been agreed at the AGM. This is clearly not the case.

The LWR Committee is awaiting for further information on what is going to happen next. As Mike says in his article, LWR are in a strong position but for many groups this continuing uncertainty will only create more challenges. Again, as Mike says, LWR members cannot be complacent and, as with leader training and footpath maintenance, we will continue to support other local Ramblers Groups whenever we can.

## FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE TEAM TAKE TO THE CREASE



The sun was shining, the mowers were mowing, the rollers were rolling, the farmer was scarifying the outfield and an under pressure plumber was frantically making sure the clubhouse refurbishments were completed in time for the first match of the season. Yes, it was pre-season preparations for Pannal Cricket Club, near Harrogate and in two corners of the ground, LWR Footpath Maintenance Team were also hard at work.

In the aerial picture of the ground, Team A (David Creer, Pete McLoughlin and Chris Tye) were installing a new stile in the top right, near the nets, whilst in the bottom left, just beyond the parked cars, Team B (Gina Brook, Geoff Midgley, Richard Smith, Richard Brook) were repairing a 'dodgy' stile on the popular North Rigton to Pannal footpath.

The fields surrounding the cricket ground are actually part of Horn Bank Farm where, to date, the team have already completed two gates and two stiles on this busy route. There is still one stile and a bridge to go.

The cricket ground is well known for how much interest the cows take in the proceedings and Team B enjoyed an attentive audience throughout who showed their appreciation by doing what cows do best on Pete's Hi Viz coat which was on the ground with some of the tools. Pete really had a S****Y day at work!

**Editor's note**

Thanks to the plumber who gave us a load of screws when we realized we didn't have any!

## BRADFORD RAMBLERS AT 50

Bradford Ramblers only walk in the evening, all year round. To mark their 50th anniversary, they are recreating their initial evening walks from their early days and are inviting fellow Ramblers to join them. They are also looking for qualified leaders to lead the walks. Walks finish around 9:00pm which makes for a nice summer evening stroll with perhaps a visit to the pub at the end.

Their walks on our side of Bradford in areas which most LWR members will be familiar with are:

| LOCATION | DATE | MILES | START |
|---|---|---|---|
| Calverley | Weds July 1st | 4 | 7:00pm |
| Hawksworth/Baildon | Thurs July 23rd | 4 | 7:00pm |
| Nab Wood/Hirst Wood | Thurs August 6th | 4 | 7:00pm |



**Hirst Wood by canal**



**Baildon Moor**

You can find details of the full anniversary walks programme on the Bradford Ramblers website. If you are willing to lead a walk please contact Muriel O'Flaherty the Bradford walks coordinator via Bradford Ramblers website.

| | |
|---|---|
| **"AT THE END OF A WALK WITH NO PICTURES TO SEND,**<br><br>**UPON JIM'S POETIC TALENT YOU CAN DEPEND**<br><br>**WITH PEN IN HAND HE CAN WHIP UP AN ODE,**<br><br>**THE DETAILS OF THEIR WALK TO THE D GROUP UNFOLD ".** |  |

The adoption of What's App has enabled all LWR groups to circulate photos of their latest walk, sometimes even before the walk has been completed. However the D group have gone one better. After each walk, Jim Heslop (D group walk coordinator, center in picture) circulates a description of the walk accompanied by an appropriate poem. We thought you would enjoy a couple of examples:-

| **SPOFFORTH TO WETHERBY** | **STRID WALK TO BARDEN** |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| There was a young lady from Wetherby<br>Who was wondering what would the weather be<br>She thought it a pain<br>To be drowned in the rain<br>But it's Yorkshire and that could never be | We wandered down along the river<br>The chilly wind just made us shiver<br>Then up the hill and to the tower<br>We stopped for lunch for half an hour<br><br>Down by the waterside once more<br>Oyster catchers, gulls galore<br>Spring flowers enjoyed by one and all<br>We even heard the curlew call<br><br>And from the café, with their mams<br>It made our day to watch the lambs |

LWR has so many talented people – musicians, artists, photographers, writers, and ornithologists to name but a few, but now we can add a poet to our ranks. Well done Jim for adding so much colour to a walk description and bringing joy to people.

**Editor's Note**

The heading to this article is mine. My apologies to Jim but I just couldn't resist.

## JOHNO STEALS THE SHOW



**John, Johno & Amanda**



**Q & A**



**A packed house**

A new location and a new format saw a record number of over 80 attend the 2026 ONCEAYEARDAY on Tuesday May 5th.

As always, all LWR groups organized their normal Tuesday walk to end at the same location at the same time to enable members from across the groups to mingle and catch up with each other. This year the 'Wheatley Arms' in Ben Rhydding replaced 'Outside the Box' in Ilkley.

The 'Wheatley Arms' had offered their function room to organizer, Amanda Siswick, free of charge but asked that LWR used the opportunity to raise money for a local charity. Attendees were asked to make a voluntary donation to the 'Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association' and, at time of writing, over £430 had been raised. A presentation to the UWFRA will be made at their Grassington HQ later in the year.

The major change in format was the inclusion of a guest speaker for the first time - Johno Ellison, author of 'Walking the Wharfe – an ode to a Yorkshire River'.

Johno was born in Boston Spa and now lives in Harrogate. His book was first published in 2023 but the inspiration was a book written by Edmund Bogg entitled 'Two Thousand Miles in Wharfedale', published 120 years earlier. Having read the book, Johno decided to retrace his footsteps along the river to see what had changed and what had remained the same. His journey began at Cawood where the Wharfe joins the Ouse and ended at its source in Cam Fell, above Yockenthwaite.

Rather than give a talk, Johno took part in a Q&A session hosted by John Jackson (B group) who confided that it was the promise of the Wharfe which had encouraged him to join LWR in the first place. Amongst the wide range of topics covered were Johno's favourite pub (The George in Hubberholme), Jimi Hendrix's notorious Ilkley concert (10 minutes long), the largest cow in England (The Craven Heifer), walking the Wharfe with Clare Balding (her favourite UK River) and the depth of the 'Strid' (200 ft). Johno commented on how wildlife conservation had improved along the river and how much Edmund Bogg had witnessed still survived. John's interview was followed by questions from the floor.

Mike Briers (LWR Chair) thanked Johno for an entertaining and informative afternoon. Johno sold and signed copies of his book and was very happy to chat informally to members.

Thanks to Amanda Siswick (LWR Social Secretary) for organizing yet another very successful ONCEAYEARDAY and thanks to all those who walked, attended the event and donated to UWFRA.

## PARKING GOOD NEWS

We all know that feeling. You arrive at a car park in the middle of the Dales, ready to start your walk. You go to pay your parking fee and the machine informs you that you need an app to do so. The only problem is that the app on your phone is not the one required by the machine. You frantically start to download the required app only to find the signal is not too healthy and the departure time for your walk is looming. If you are lucky, the app downloads. If you are unlucky you move your car or set off on your walk hoping the parking attendant is somewhere else today.

Well, that's all about to change.

Inundated with complaints, the government will be requiring local authorities to adopt 'The National Parking Platform' (NPT). This will enable drivers to pay using any parking app of their choice. The NPT already exists but there is no compulsion for parking providers to use it. New statutory guidance forming part of the governments 'Better Connected' transport strategy will mean all councils must formally consider signing up to NPT. There's only one flaw.

According to the AA, two thirds of older drivers prefer cash whilst 75% of drivers in their 30's and 40's prefer to use a credit card. We will all have to get used to parking apps but hopefully once you have downloaded the one you like, that's it.

Pity the poor walk leader who not only has to find suitable car parking but may have to advise whether cash, card or app is acceptable, before you set off.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION







Thanks Adrienne Eaton (C Group) for the above.