

**NORTH EAST LONDON GROUP OF THE RAMBLERS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

Time: Monday 24 November 2025 at 7pm

Venue: Quaker Social Action, 17 Old Ford Rd, London E2 9PJ

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair (Susan)
2. Apologies for Absence (Annette)
3. Agree Draft Minutes of the 2024 AGM (Annette) page 2
4. Matters Arising from the 2024 AGM Minutes (Annette) page 4
5. Annual Reports for 2024-25 page 4
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 - b) Secretary page 4
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 - e) Walks Organiser page 7
 - f) Website Manager page 7
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6. Election of Honorary Officers page 9
 - a) Chair
 - b) Secretary
 - c) Membership Secretary
 - d) Treasurer
 - e) Walks Organiser
 - f) London Area Representatives
 - g) Website Manager
 - h) Footpath Officer
 - i) Publicity and Campaigns Officer
 - j) Independent Examiner of the Accounts
7. Booking Pub Lunches (Laura) page 9
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of Next AGM – November 2026 (Annette)

- ITEM 1 Welcome and Introduction from the Chair (Susan)**
- ITEM 2 Apologies for Absence (Annette)**
- ITEM 3 Agree draft minutes of the 2024 AGM (Annette)**

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AGM OF THE NORTH EAST LONDON GROUP OF THE
RAMBLERS HELD ON MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024**

Present

Susan Teece (Chair), Annette Warrick (Secretary), Loraine Meadows (Treasurer), Anna O'Sullivan (Membership Secretary), Laura Jacobs (Walks Organiser) Garry Gerrish (London Area Rep), David Pennington (Deputy London Area Rep), Lucy Robinson, Carrie Thompson, Suzanne Easton, Keith Evans, Tim Sai-Louie (Observer & Chair of Inner London Area)

- 1. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair**
Susan welcomed attendees to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
Alan Lazarus, Mike Atkinson, Angus Andrew and Denise Bertuchi
- 3. Draft Minutes of the 2023 AGM**
Agreed as accurate.
- 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**
The actions from the 2023 minutes were all cleared. Laura mentioned that she had difficulty nominating NELR for Partnership funding when booking a holiday with Ramble Worldwide Holidays (RWH). The Group is listed as The North East London Ramblers, so is shown under "The" in the drop-down menu on the RWH website. Annette advised that she had tried to get this changed, but had failed.
- 5. Annual Reports for 2022-23**
 - a) **Chair**
Susan thanked everyone for their work, including getting the Group used to the new website. She especially thanked Mike Atkinson for all his work as Website Manager over several years. She advised that the Group looks good for the future.
 - b) **Secretary**
Annette provided a written report.
 - c) **Membership Secretary**
Anna provided a written report. It was noted that membership had increased. August had been particularly good for new members, but we don't know why.
 - d) **Treasurer**
Loraine provided written accounts and advised that a draft had been seen by the Treasurer of Inner London Area and Garry. She will not seek re-election. Given some uncertainty during the year, over the future of our website and its possible financial implications, it was agreed that we should accept our Ramblers funding allocation of £486.14 for the year 2024-25. The accounts were approved.

e) **Walks Organiser**

Laura provided a written report. She advised that it had been a better year than 2023-24, with fewer transport disruptions. Leaders had covered illnesses and a full programme of walks had been offered on Saturdays and two Wednesdays a month. Thanks to Lucy for organising a walk with London Blind Ramblers and to everyone who helped on the day. More ideas for weekday walks would be welcome.

f) **Website Manager**

Mike Atkinson submitted a report on 14 November and it was circulated to Members on 15 November. He has advised that he will not seek re-election. The meeting passed a vote of thanks to Mike for providing the Group with a quality website over several years, including adapting it to meet the demands of Covid restrictions.

g) **London Area Representative**

Garry submitted a written report. He noted that there is an increasing number of Ramblers members who are not affiliated to any group, so the increase in NELR membership was remarkable. The meeting expressed concern about the unallocated members, who were missing out on group activities, and this would reduce the pool of people available to lead walks and run groups. Over time, groups could struggle to survive. Previously, every new member was allocated to their local group and they could then change their affiliation if they wanted to.

Tim advised that he had been trying to change the position with Ramblers HQ for a year, without success. Lucy suggested that a forthcoming Ramblers governance review could be an opportunity to raise the issue again.

6. Election of Honorary Officers

The following officers were proposed, seconded and elected unopposed:

Chair: Susan Teece (proposed Loraine, seconded Lucy)

Secretary: Annette Warrick (proposed Laura, seconded Garry)

Membership Secretary: Anna O'Sullivan (proposed Annette, seconded Suzanne)

Treasurer: Alan Lazarus (proposed Annette, seconded Loraine)

Walks Organiser: Laura Jacobs (proposed Lucy, seconded Anna)

Website Content Manager: Vacancy – Annette will cover the role for now

London Area Rep: Garry Gerrish (proposed Laura, seconded Loraine)

Deputy London Area Rep: Carrie Thompson (proposed Annette, seconded Laura)

Footpath Officer and Publicity/Campaigns Officer posts are also vacant, though Garry will cover any footpath issues and publicity will be via the website. It was noted that Capital Ring footpath sections have allocated wardens.

It was agreed that Garry will continue as Independent Examiner of our accounts.

7. Revision of Bank Mandate

Loraine sought and obtained approval to revise the bank mandate, to reflect the change of Treasurer.

8. NELR Website

It was confirmed that the Group will move entirely to the new Ramblers website (<https://northeastlondonramblers.org.uk/>) from 1 January 2025 and walks are

already being posted on it. The current website (<https://www.nelr.org.uk/>) will close on 31 December. Annette will remind members and include a link to the new website when she circulates the minutes.

Annette will seek administrator access to the new website and will edit the contents. Walks leaders are advised to take screen prints of their walk descriptions on the current website, if they wish to keep them for their own records.

Annette advised that the Ramblers Walks App misses out information from walks descriptions posted by leaders on the Ramblers website, so it is best avoided.

9. Any Other Business

Annette advised that she has been trying Plotaroute and had found it useful. It was agreed that she will offer to run awareness sessions for current walks leaders.

Garry proposed a vote of thanks to Loraine, our excellent Treasurer for many years. This was agreed.

10. Date of Next AGM

Monday 24 November 2025 was provisionally agreed, subject to QSA's new lease.

ITEM 4 Matters Arising from the 2024 AGM Minutes (Annette)

a) New website - cleared (Item 8 of the minutes)

b) Plotaroute awareness session – cleared (Item 9 of the minutes)

ITEM 5 Annual Reports for 2024-25

a) Chair (Susan)

Oral report

b) Secretary (Annette)

I drafted and circulated the 2024 AGM minutes and arranged this AGM.

In February I was invited to a Zoom engagement session about the Ramblers Governance Review. My request to see the slides in advance, so I could consult the group, was denied. The session started late. Other participants were also concerned that they were expected to respond to consultation questions without seeing any papers beforehand. The review is to ensure that Ramblers' governance bodies are structured to be effective and comply with Charity Commissioner's requirements. Other participants complained at length about the walks leader changes and I took the opportunity to complain about the freeze in funding allocated to groups, when membership subscriptions have increased.

I provided a draft response in response to HQ's announcement on compulsory training for walks leaders and the poor way that it managed the change. I also drafted a short summary of main points discussed at the walks leaders' meeting on 22 July.

I took on the Secretary role in January 2021 and I will stand down at the AGM.

c) Membership Secretary (Anna)

I have continued to send welcome emails to new members. I have also been able to answer queries and solve little problems they had.

Membership has remained stable reaching 407 in August but with a slight dip to 397 in September.

It was nice to see new members joining our walks.

Membership Numbers for North East London Ramblers 2024/25

<u>Year:</u>	<u>Month:</u>	<u>Numbers:</u>	<u>Joined:</u>	<u>Left:</u>
2024	October	391	7	6
2024	November	396	7	2
2024	December	396	7	7
2025	January	396	7	7
2025	February	391	6	4
2025	March	390	7	2
2025	April	396	8	2
2025	May	399	11	8
2025	June	409	7	3
2025	July	406	9	6
2025	August	407	6	5
2025	September	397	2	9

d) Treasurer (Alan)

Our Annual Accounts for the financial year 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 are below, for your acceptance. A draft has been seen by the Treasurer of London Area Ramblers.

Please note that we made a loss this year of £224.02 due to the exceptional expenditure on the migration of our website. Given we will not be incurring any website costs going forward and in view of the relatively healthy level of our year-end cash position, the Committee agreed we would only ask for 50% of our allocation from Head Office for next year ie. £267.25.

Ramblers' Association: North East London Group
Accounts 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025

2023/24 £		2024/25 £
	Income	
461.63	London Area RA allocation¹	486.14
	Credit from Ramblers Holidays	10.00
£461.63	Total Income	£496.14
	Expenditure	
	NELR website ²:	
200.00	– Hosting and maintenance of website – Transfer to Ramblers platform	500.00
	Annual General Meeting:	
30.00	– Room hire	30.00
19.00	– Copying papers	16.00
85.50	Walkover expenses	174.75
£334.50	Total Expenditure	£720.75
£127.13	Balance of Income over Expenditure	(£224.61)

2023/24 £	Cash in Bank Reconciliation @ 30 September 2025	2024/25 £
693.73	Surplus/deficit brought forward from previous year	820.86
127.13	Surplus/deficit current year	(224.61)
£820.86	Cash in bank at year-end	£596.25

- 1 **We accepted our basic allocation of funding from London Area for 2024/25 of £486.16.**
- 2 **Exceptional costs of £500 were paid in the year respect of the migration of our website to the Ramblers platform; no website costs are expected in future years.**

Alan Lazarus
Treasurer
13/10/2025

e) Walks Organiser (Laura)

Thank you to all our walk leaders for giving us some wonderful days out. Your efforts are much appreciated. We have been able to offer a walk every Saturday including an extra walk led by Lucy Robinson with the London Blind Ramblers. I welcome new leaders and invite anyone interested to get in touch with me.

We also have also provided two Wednesday walks a month. Annette Warrick's highly valued and well-established Coffee & Stroll offers sociable and interesting urban walks of around 5 miles with drop out options. Our other Wednesday walk has its own pool of leaders and we will have completed the Capital Ring in November 2025.

2025 is our first year of using the Ramblers' website. Thankfully, leaders who led this year have all got to grips with posting walks on the Walks Manager platform.

Earlier in the year, Ramblers decided to extend its requirements for new walk leaders to **all** walk leaders. The committee sent Ramblers a robust objection. Now all our leaders are required to read a handbook and either to do online training or certify that they have led at least 12 walks in the last 3 years. Almost all of our active leaders have complied or have told me that they will meet these requirements by the 31st December deadline.

I held an informal walk leaders' meeting in July with the option of an evening stroll on the Heath and thank Annette Warrick for her notes of the discussion.

f) Website Manager (Annette)

I initially took on this role as an interim arrangement, to ensure the group continued to have a website. As nobody wished to take on the role, I have continued in post.

I learnt the Joomla Content Management System (CMS), mainly through forty YouTube lessons. Our website uses the Ramblers' server, Joomla CMS, Ramblers' template and their volunteer technical support team, at no cost to NELR. At the end of 2024 Mike Atkinson (my predecessor) transferred the contents of the group's legacy website and enabled easy access to the legacy site, which has worked well. I created new webpages, structured the layout and added links. By the end of December 2024, the new website was fully operational.

I kept the group informed of the changes and helped some walks leaders to use the Walks Manager platform. During the rest of the year I have made further additions to the website, eg to give more information about discounts on rail tickets in FAQs.

I also set-up a Google Group, so that we could still email members. It currently has over 60 members. Laura (Walks Organiser) is a joint owner of the Google Group; walks leaders and committee members can also use it to send emails.

I usually check the website every day and install any new updates. There were two occasions when I noticed that the website had gone down and I contacted the support team. Service was restored quickly. I have found the technical support team to be prompt and helpful. In the absence of a deputy, I sent the Committee a two-page guide to basic NELR website administration, so it can be kept going if I suddenly become incapacitated.

In December 2024 the Ramblers technical support volunteers asked me about our booking system and I advised that Mike is the technical expert. I provided a paper with details from the user's perspective and the technical team said that they would think about it. The lack of a booking system on the Ramblers website is its main setback. While the ways around it have worked, a booking system would be better.

I am happy to continue in this role, if elected.

g) London Area Representatives (Garry and Carrie)

In 2025 six meetings of the Inner London Group were planned, with five to date, of which all but one were attended by either Carrie or Garry or both. The meetings are attended by between 12 and 15 representatives from the Inner London walking groups and Area officials, such as the Chair (Tim Sai-Louie). The venue for the meetings is near to Angel Underground Station.

Issues covered in the year included the level of Inner London members not allocated to groups, a governance review of areas and financial pressures on group budgets, given the overall Ramblers financial loss of £1m in 2024, down from £2.1m in 2023. The Area has a total budget of £11,671 in 2025/26, compared to £13,400 for the previous year. On 10th June there was an Area Ramble for committee members from the individual groups within Inner London.

The latest quarterly statistics provided for the nine-month period to June 2025 indicate that membership in Inner London as a whole grew by 7% to 5,767. There was continuation in the trend for a significant number of new members not to be affiliated to groups (622 in September 2024 to 794 in June 2025).

It is proposed that the bullet points to be submitted by NELR for the Area annual report will state that:

- The group has continued to provide weekly walks throughout the year;
- We have a monthly programme of shorter walks on Wednesdays; and
- We successfully closed our own standalone IT system, to be replaced by the Rambler's Walks Finder system and associated website.

ITEM 6 Election of Honorary Officers

- a) Chair
- b) Secretary
- c) Membership Secretary
- d) Treasurer
- e) Walks Organiser
- f) London Area Representatives
- g) Website Manager
- h) Footpath Officer
- i) Publicity and Campaigns Officer

- j) Independent Examiner of the Accounts

ITEM 7 Booking Pub Lunches (Laura)

This item is to discuss if there should be a policy on whether walk leaders should book pub lunches. Some leaders normally book a group pub lunch and some do not. It is suggested that there should not be a policy requiring walk leaders to book a pub lunch. However, where a pub lunch fits with the leader's plans for the day, they are encouraged to make arrangements to book a group pub lunch if at all possible.

When the leader does not arrange the group pub lunch they might be happy to let someone else do it.

Here are two suggested ways in which someone other than the walk leader could handle the lunch bookings online.

- i) Another walk leader could create an event on walks manager. The pub lunch 'event' can be linked to the walk and has a separate contact form for replies.

- ii) Walk leaders could include in their website entry the name and email of another person prepared to take on the task and request those wanting lunch to contact them.

Laura Jacobs

ITEM 8 Any Other Business

ITEM 9 Date of Next AGM (Annette)

Monday 23 November 2026 (provisional) is proposed. Venue to be confirmed.