

Minutes of Mendip Ramblers Committee Meeting Wednesday October 8th 2025 at The Highwayman

Present: Mike Plaskitt, Connie Moore, Lucy Rowntree, Les Stather, Tony Dyson, Jane Dyson, Claris Brown, Janet Morland

Apologies: Tony Strange

Minutes of last meeting: Accepted

Walking Festival Feedback:

Attendance was low, a fair number from Mendip, but not many from West Wilts despite Mo's publicity. Tony reported an overall 6p loss, but there is still some money to come from sale of gifted honey. Those who attended enjoyed it.

Mo sent a brief report thanking Jen's team for their hard work providing the teas. We discussed location and a volunteer to run next year. Shipham was the best attended festival we have run, possibly because road links and position make it easy for Ramblers from Taunton and Woodspring to join us. Tony agreed to investigate if their hall is available for a reasonable hire fee (we set £400 as a limit) and run next year's festival using the walks from the previous festival in Shipham. This will test the waters to see if enthusiasm for this kind of activity has waned.

Treasurers Report

Tony provided the scrutinised year end accounts. The funds held have gone up:

- We have £500 from book sales, originally reserved in case we need to reprint, but unlikely to be needed.

- The holiday residual is rather high, though some is needed to cover any losses (eg. Last minute cancellation, tips etc). Alice was disappointed with numbers on the Torquay holiday. We may also need to encourage people to step forward and organize holidays if this is what they want.

- The working party fund tends to receive more in expenses than required for tools

- The general fund from Ramblers has very few calls on it now that we aren't paying for a printed program but using email and our website. It is intended to be used for publicity and promotions, so it could be used to underwrite the walking festival, if needed.

Connie proposed the adoption of the year end accounts, seconded by Claris.

Membership

Claris has been notified of one new member in the past few days. We currently have 284 members. Non members who walk with us on more than 3 walks should be asked to join.

Footpaths

Les has been a member of the Local Access Forum, since Right to Roam was established. Its role is to improve access to the countryside, but they appear to have very little power. Path faults are categorized from urgent to little importance

dependent on the nature of the fault and how important the path is considered to be. Les's analysis of path faults shows that there are many outstanding for over a year, including a number marked as urgent. There still over 1000 faults on the system in Mendip.

The work party works where instructed by Somerset, and this bears no relation to the fault category. The 4/5 footpath wardens for Somerset raise requests for work, and those deemed suitable are put on the WP list. Some weeks there is nothing on the list. The WP does guerilla work on clearing paths and a bit of fixing, but if the work requires furniture this must be authorized.

Connie asked how the ordinary walker can report a fault. Despite the backlog, Somerset has one of the best web sites for doing this, googling "how to report a problem on a public footpath" will get you to the website with instructions. Alternatively you can report to the Parish Council responsible. They have the power, and can use money from their precept to fix the problem.

Social Report

There seems to be little appetite for socials at present.

The planned barbecue was cancelled due to lack of attendees.

AGM

Will be the same format as last year as this worked well.

Jane will lead a walk starting and finishing at Holcombe Village Hall for walkers to eat lunch and take part in the AGM.

The hall is booked on 29th January 2026 from 12:30 to 2:30.

We shall do the same for the Area AGM on 21st February 2026. Hall is booked.

Jane will lead a walk for this (possibly the same one)

Publicity

Lucy has been sending stuff out. It would appear that more people are joining West Mendip walks, possibly because they provide more detail and make the walks look more appealing. Can we get our walk leaders to do the same? Also, can we push people to offer walks further ahead so our program looks more exciting?

AOB:

Claris has done the walk leader training, and commented on the need for a first aid kit. This provoked a discussion of whether we should offer a first aid (first response) training for walk leaders – a possible use for some of our funds. Tony will see if he can source one through our friend who used to do first aid training (he is now too ill to run a course himself).

Date of next meeting AGM 29th January 2026 in Holcombe Village Hall

Walk starts 10 am prompt, to arrive back at the hall for lunch meeting at 12:30 (ish)

Les to publicize.