

Present were: Nigel Whitlam (Chair), Peter James (Secretary), Gerald Brooker (Walks Co-ordinator), Judith Thomas, Barbara Whitlam, Heidi Elliott

1. Apologies for Absence

Jonathon Wilby, Marita Bulto and Mark Lankester had given their apologies as committee members and Alison Humphries as minute secretary.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held 26th February 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as being correct and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from previous Minutes

- Difficulties in getting walks into the programme (on agenda again).
- 90th anniversary walks and social event (on agenda again).
- Email addresses of walk leaders, Gerald Brooker will provide list to Nigel Whitlam.
- AGM – date and venue to be finalised (on agenda again).

4. Chair's Report

The positives over the past few months have been the two successful away trips to Keswick in May and Salisbury this month. A number of Friday evening walks have also been held, making the most of the lovely late Spring evenings.

Getting walk leaders to enter walks into the programme at an early date is still proving difficult, despite continuing reminders. Hopefully, the proposed training day, to be held in the Autumn, for new and existing walk leaders may enable us to press home this issue (agenda item).

We need to email all walk leaders regarding the new requirements for the training of leaders, which come into force from 2nd July. This is applicable to all new leaders and also includes refresher courses for existing leaders, unless they can demonstrate that they have led at least 12 walks over the last three year period.

Social events appear to be ticking over, including pub visits after the Friday evening walks.

The walks to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Ramblers take place on 29th June, together with the social gathering afterwards, with representatives from 9 groups participating (agenda item).

5. Secretary's Report, including Membership

Currently there are 542 members and 5 affiliates. There have been 31 new members over the past three months.

6. Treasurer's Report

Jonathan had prepared a report to be read in his absence.

The bank balance stands at £1,683.62 and there is a cash balance of £5. This compares with a bank balance at 26th February of £1,015.34. Income has been received in the period of £718.78, consisting of area funding of £638.78 and commission received from RWH Travel in respect of Rambler's holidays of £80. Expenditure in the period was £28 for room hire for the committee meeting and £25.50 in respect of gifts for Ruth, who led some of the walks and hosted the members at her house in Salisbury on the last day of the Wiltshire trip.

There will be forthcoming expenses in respect of the AGM and the 90th anniversary walks and social.

7. Walks Co-ordinator's Report

Gerald Brooker reported that it is always difficult to fill the walks programme at this time of year owing to the trips away and holidays. It is still proving difficult to get walk leaders to enter walks in advance. Nigel Whitlam is to email all walk leaders regarding the new training requirements for new leaders and requirements for existing leaders and also re the need to get walks into the programme. It is hoped that the event to be held in the Autumn for new and existing leaders may enable us to enthuse leaders to enter more walks into the walks programme and to get them entered on a timely basis.

8. Trips Away Review – current situation

Marita had prepared a report to be read in her absence.

2025

Keswick May - was a great success, against all odds, with 66 on the trip! We had 3 WhatsApp groups going, all working pretty well. The fantastic weather was a contributing factor to the success. Sometimes we wonder if people take days off because of bad weather, but people also do their own thing in good weather; some days up to 20 people were not walking with the group! So, the decision not to limit the numbers was risky, but it worked. In contrast, we had 30 people doing a grade 1 on the 1st day, Helvellyn! We decided that for next year we will not have a classic walk on the 1st day, though. Organisers Jane & Jim

Wiltshire June - Unfortunately this trip was too close to Keswick's trip for reasons out of our control, but we still had 30 people coming on it. The idea was for a late June trip, but this clashed with the local leaders' commitments. Organiser Marita. UPDATE: another great success, with Frank and Ruth leading 5 walks & Marita led 3. After discussion with Jonathan, Marita bought flowers & chocolates for Ruth as she hosted cakes & tea on the last day, at a cost of £25 to us.

Dorset September – is ready to go already! Organiser Marita

PD October- as usual, very popular. Organiser Mark

2026

Keswick May – 1st walk on 17th. The dates are on our trips away page already. Bookings should be open by the time of the meeting. Organisers: Jane & Jim



Late June – need volunteer organisers!!!! Talking to Edward about a potential trip to Devon, but will need another organiser with him, if it goes ahead. Location ideas without volunteers does not quite work!

Breacon Beacons September – dates 1st walk 13 Sept 2026. Base: Brecon. Organisers: Mark & Michael D

Peak District October – dates TBC. Organiser: Mark

9. Communications Officer's Report

Marita had prepared a report to be read in her absence.

FACEBOOK – Numbers continue to grow, at 198 members. Good use made of this platform. Easy to run.

MEETUP – Continues to attract new walkers that become members. Some rely totally on Meetup, even if they do not put their name down.

90TH ANNIVERSARY – Marita has suggested on Facebook that people who are planning on attending and do not use Meetup, email her to confirm attendance. So far, she has had one! Should have one volunteer on each group involved on the day to take a register. Marita has much up to date promotional material, as little is being used in the AtoBetter events, so far (see below))

Regarding making the public aware, Marita suggested we deliver flyers to libraries and public places with the choice of walks + party, adding our Norwich Ramblers email address for people to register. In view of the difficulty of having the time to arrange this, it was noted that public awareness would have to come from Meetup and the articles in the Eastern Daily Press and Norwich Evening News, which have already appeared.

ORGANIZATIONS contacting us. As per Marita's emails, she was contacted directly by Norwich City Council's AtoBetter projects for us to promote ourselves in their community events, which requires volunteers. Judith kindly offered to attend the Attleborough event, but the day before Marita found out that another local group was taking 4 volunteers there, so Judith did not need to go. Vicky Hofman did 8 June in Blofield, and Nigel and Enrique have offered to do Wymondham. There are other dates until September. The response from other groups, other than the Attleborough people, has been ZERO!

Marita summarised the venue, date and volunteers for each community event.

PUBLIC CONTACTING NORWICH R – Several people enquire about our group, different versions of the same theme. Marita gives personalised replies, but as she updated our Website Home Page quite recently, she sends them the link. Some of them even reply to Marita's email!

MINUTES ON OUR WEBSITE – Marita would like to have the minutes of each of the committee meetings sent to her once they have been signed off by Nigel, so that she can upload them to the website as soon as possible after they are ready, as we had previously agreed.

10. Training day, including CPR training

Following liaison with Hike Norfolk, it had been agreed that a joint walk leader training day would be held, with the costs being shared equally between Norwich Ramblers and Hike Norfolk. It was agreed that Honingham may be a suitable venue. A date of 11th October had been agreed by the two groups, subject to a hall being available on that date.

Free CPR training, lasting an hour, has also been offered by East Anglian Air Ambulance. This would have a maximum number of 30, unless 2 sessions were booked. 15 spaces would be allocated to each group. It was suggested that the CPR training runs from 10 am to 11 am, with the walk leader training commencing at 11.15.

It was suggested that the walk leader training could include amongst other topics:

- Map reading
- Compiling a short walk on a map
- Explaining the buddy system, to enable new leaders to have someone experienced to help find a route and then reccy and lead the walk with them. A list of potential buddies should be compiled prior to the training day.
- Leading part of a walk in the afternoon, after the theoretical part of the training.
- How to enter a walk into the walks programme
- The need for walks to be entered in the walks programme on a regular and timely basis

11. Social Events

There have been a number of social events continuing to be held. In addition, the short Friday evening walks have often been followed by pub visits etc.

12. Reports on Area

The next Norfolk Area Ramblers Council Meeting takes place on 12th July. Nigel Whitlam will prepare Norwich Group's report in advance of the meeting by 6th July.

13. 90th Anniversary Walks and social gathering

This takes place on 29th June, with a 9 mile walk commencing at 10 am, a 6 mile walk starting at 11 am and a 3 mile walk starting at midday. We have walk leaders for each distance. There is currently approximately 110 people signed up in total. We should have representatives from 9 of the 11 groups in Norfolk in attendance. Reminders have been posted on Facebook and the event has been publicised in the EDP and EEN. We have agreed to share costs with Hike Norfolk for the ingredients of an anniversary cake (cake being made at no cost for the labour) and for some other incidental expenditure. Queen's Hall has now been made available to us from 9.30, to enable any food brought for the party to be dropped off before the walks commence. Peter James confirmed that he will bring the Ramblers Stand.

14. Role shadowing and assisting

It was discussed at the previous meeting, the length of time that committee members and particularly those holding an office, may be available to stay on the committee, subject to re-election. It was discussed as to whether we should look for committee members to shadow and assist those in officer roles, when they are available to do so. It was noted that Marita Bulto in particular, may have to stand back from her role at some point in the future.

Mark Lankester, who is likely to be working less hours in the near future in his employment, has volunteered to assist and shadow both Marita Bulto and Gerald Brooker in their roles.

It was agreed that this was a positive move and Mark will be asked to liaise with Marita and Gerald to take this forward.

15. AGM November 2025 – venue, date and format

Mark Lankester had reported that there were a couple of halls available for hire in Wymonham on 16th November at a cost of approximately £12 to £13 per hour. There are also pubs in the area, if members wanted to socialise afterwards. Mark has volunteered to lead a walk prior to the AGM.

It was agreed that the AGM should start at 2pm, with walkers getting back to the hall by 1.15pm, in order that they can have their lunch before the AGM commences. It was considered that an 8 mile walk, commencing at 10 am was therefore appropriate.

16. Any other business

Peter James asked that an appeal be made for more help to assist with footpath, boardwalk and bridge maintenance.

Marita Bulto had asked that consideration be given to buying walkie talkies for the group for use on away walking trips as well as on local walks. It was highlighted that owing to more than one walk often being offered on certain days on away trips, more than one set would be required. There is also the practical issue where the equipment would be used on local walks, as to how to ensure they were passed to the leader of the next walk on a timely basis and also ensure they were fully charged. There may be significant geographical issues, where the leaders of two successive walks live far apart from each other. Hike Norfolk have walkie talkies, but have not always had them in use. It was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting.

17. Date of next meeting

29th October at 7pm

Signed

Nigel Whitlam: Chair