



THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

GREATER MANCHESTER & HIGH PEAK AREA

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Greater Manchester & High Peak Area

Bolton, Bury, Manchester and Salford, Rochdale, New Mills, Oldham, Stockport, Trafford, Tameside, Wigan, MAD Walkers, Manchester Weekend Walkers, Coach Rambles

AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Barbara Keeley MP

Website Administrator

Brian Coxon

Chair

Margaret Manning

Footpath Co-ordinator

Vacant

Vice Chair

Salle Dare

Walking Environment Officer

Alan Manning

General Secretary

John Ireland

Publicity & Information Officer

Pauline Brooke

Treasurer

Jonathan Buckland

Sunday Walks Officer

Jeff Lewis

Minutes Secretary

Salle Dare

Wednesday Walks Officer

John Rattray

Membership Secretary

Gavin Poulton

Entrust Representative

June Mabon

Elected Members

Andy Barclay
Edgar Ernstbrunner
Andrea Milne
Joyce Tyldesley
Debbie Watson

The views expressed in this report are the responsibility of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of either Greater Manchester and High Peak Ramblers or the Ramblers nationally.

Greater Manchester and High Peak Area Chair's Report

It is good that after two years of lockdowns and restrictions we were able to have a full year of walks. Even when there were some restrictions walking was one of the easiest and safest activities to do on your own or in groups, and again proved a lifeline for many as their main way of socialising. Ramblers' membership has climbed back up to pre pandemic levels in most groups and areas. We now need to capitalise on the general increase in walking and bring more into our organisation.

It has been good to finally be able to hold at least some meeting in person but using online as well allows more to participate in ECs and AGMs. The Area zoom account has continued to be useful for Area and some group meetings.

There are many people in the Area who I want to thank for their work throughout the year. Firstly, Jill Howarth for again collating and laying out the annual report. Also, the other Area officers who have carried out their work diligently and effectively.

Thanks to all group officers who worked hard to keep in touch with their members, organise walks and other activities. Some are now stepping down after many years of taking on various roles and mostly have found replacements, but there will be a few vacancies and I encourage all active members to consider helping out with the running of their groups. Support is always given when needed.

Pauline Brooke has been Publicity Officer for two years and worked hard to involve others as well. Sadly, she is standing down, but she is willing to carry on helping at events when she can. Thanks to her for this and her good work getting the Ramblers' name and activities a higher profile in the area.

Thanks to Brian Coxon who manages and keeps the area website updated, this year with the new branding. He adds information and links on request from the Area and Groups and has created a generic email for the Area which he responds to or passes onto the relevant officers. Nearly all the walks in the Area are now featured on the website where groups use the Ramblers national walks manager which he has linked directly to the Area Website.

We also thank Joyce Davenport for continuing to update and set out the area booklets twice a year. These are useful both for members to refer to and give out to other walkers and potential members.

Thanks to Alan Manning who has continued to represent us on various GM walking bodies, getting The Ramblers voice heard at this level and for making early contact with Dame Sarah Storey and her team. This will increase our involvement in numerous events and projects.

In the absence of an Area Footpath Officer the group officers have maintained contact with Local Authorities, responded to consultations, organised the work of footpath inspectors and worked with our path maintenance teams. Thanks for all their work. During the year this work has had some publicity on local TV.

Lost Ways is a national Ramblers initiative to ensure all paths that rely on historic evidence to prove they should be rights of way are recorded. Even though the 2026 cutoff date has now been removed the work continues. Although we do not have anyone at Area level coordinating this, many footpath

officers and groups have taken up the work in their area, with support from national office when needed.

Area Activities

The Kinder Mass Trespass 90th Anniversary was the big event of the year. Unfortunately, I couldn't go, Covid struck. Pauline has done a full report as Publicity Officer. My thanks to her and all who did make it, ran the stall, and participated. We got TV publicity with Stuart Maconie on the walk organised by Manchester & Salford group from New Mills to Hayfield. Over the 23rd and 24th April MWW and MAD walkers held three other walks to Hayfield and on Kinder.

Increasing Membership and Diversity on a national zoom I attended there were some good examples of attracting younger members and working with various BAME groups. In our Area some groups are also involved in such work but overall, we need to consider how we can grow and become a more diverse organisation. I hope the National Equality and Diversity Officer will work with us on this.

The stalls we had at GM Active events were not as busy as we hoped but it was good to have MAD Walkers members with us as it was mostly younger people around. Many were already keen on walking but had not heard about the Ramblers. They were interested in finding out about new places to walk in the local countryside and the Peak District, hopefully some have joined in our group walks.

Family Walks Pauline Brooke and Pat Reynolds have taken the initiative to organise monthly Area Sunday short walks which would be attractive to children. They have been advertised on the Area Website. We are asking members if they or their friends care for any children/grandchildren to complete a short online survey so we can assess the demand for family walks and the type of walks they would want. So far walks are planned up to December and will be reviewed in the light of turnout and the survey results.

Peak and Northern Footpath Society I have been trying to set up a meeting with some of their officers and our footpath officers. This is to follow up a meeting late in 2019 where Salle Dare and I met with the officers of PNFS to explore working more closely together. So far, we have not been able to fix a date. The new PNFS Chair has been very busy, but we hope to get a date by the end of this year.

Walk Leader Training As previously reported the Area paid for 20 members to do a one-day training course with Pure Outdoor in Bamford. We reviewed the outcomes at the EC. Some of those who had not previously led walks have started to do this, plus it enhanced the skills of some existing leaders. Overall, it did not lead to a great increase in walk leaders for groups and the Area is not in a position to pay for more to do the course. We encourage groups to promote the Ramblers online free walk leader training and where possible and if needed pay for one or more of their walk leaders to go on more advanced training.

Castlefield Viaduct, Sky Park The National Trust and Manchester City Council are proposing to create a permanent public park on the old Castlefield Railway Viaduct. A temporary garden has been built on the viaduct that showcases what is possible and seeks visitors' views on the longer-term plans. Alan Manning met with the NT and discussed how Ramblers could get involved in the pilot. We have argued that there should be a permanent park and the ability to walk through the park from either end to link with other walking and cycling routes. He managed to arrange with them special tours for local Ramblers Groups. To date we have had seven tours involving 150 members. Everyone loved it and are

looking forward to it becoming a permanent feature in the Manchester skyline and an unusual walking opportunity.

Mayfield Park Although a Manchester development this will attract people from all over the region and further afield as it is near to Piccadilly Station. A few members of M&S Ramblers have been in contact with the developers from the beginning and made detailed submissions for public realm and walking infrastructure investment in the approaches to the park to enable more people to access the park on foot, particularly from the local neighbourhoods. This would also enable us to re-route the Manchester Green Trail through it. It is clear that the project team see this as outside their direct remit, so we are pursuing these issues with local councillors. We had a preopening site visit in August and were impressed at the design and layout of the park, including the reopening of a section of the cleaned up River Medlock. The park opened in September. The formal launch will be in May 2023, and we have expressed an interest in being involved in those plans.

The work on these two projects extends Ramblers' work and walking in urban areas and enhances knowledge of us and our reputation. This is replicated where groups have done major path improvement works or are involved in the Bee Network and other Greater Manchester or local initiatives.

Investing in Improving Footpaths As reported last year the Area had accumulated a large amount of money in our funds, mainly from legacies for footpath work and offered all groups up to £5000 for a project or projects to improve footpaths and infrastructure necessary to make the paths accessible. Many groups took up the offer. Some projects have been completed. Others are in progress or yet to start, for a few reasons. We had special signs made to highlight that the work has been done with funding from GM&HP Ramblers. We have already gained good local media publicity for some of the work and hope to hold celebration events on some of the bigger projects.

GM Ringway We were pleased to be told that the project had been granted almost £250,000 from the Lottery Heritage Fund. As our Area has put in £5,000 towards some of the footpath infrastructure, we are formal partners in the project, along with the main organisation CPRE, Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester. We were asked to nominate someone to be on the Project Board and I offered, having been involved in the early discussions of making the Lottery Bid. Mark Chung, one of the Ramblers Trustees is also on the project board on behalf of CPRE but has also helped liaise with The Ramblers nationally.

Andrew Read, a Ramblers member and initiator of the route, has been appointed Project Lead, which is very good. He has started work already. He will give a report each quarter to the Area EC. I will also keep the Area updated on the work and decisions of the board. The Project Officer and Community Engagement Officer are in the process of being appointed.

The publicity for the launch of the project will be in the Autumn and will have a stall at the GM Green City conference in October. Hopefully many groups and members will be actively involved in the work to fully establish the GM Ringway, use it and maintain it over the years.

Carers Walks As last year we have run walks for carers and those they support from Manchester, Salford, Bury and Wigan and Leigh carers organisations. Up to now all the volunteers have come from

M&S group, though we ask other Ramblers groups to see if they have members who would like to support.

Since the last AGM we have held 13 walks, mostly in the five Greater Manchester Boroughs but our big day out this year was in Lyme Park on a very sunny day in June. Attendance on walks varied from 4, on a wet December day for just one group, to 47 in Lyme Park for all four groups. Totaling 250 attending over the year. As well as the joint ones we did one for each group in Carers week and in the winter a couple for individual groups.

As ever the carers were very appreciative of the chance for exercise, to socialise and enjoy the outdoors. They are also very thankful to all our Ramblers volunteers who help lead and support the walks.

We have mainly funded the walks with Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Mental Wellbeing Grants and have been awarded another from October 2022 to June 2023. This has been topped up by funds from Stepping Out nationally and some of the carers organisations have contributed.

Two specific carers groups have started running their own walks, inspired by and in addition to, our joint walks and some of the carers have become keen walk leaders for these groups. We are hoping Stepping Out will put on another walk leader training session so more can become walk leaders.

We would welcome Ramblers members from any group in the area who would like to help on these walks. Volunteers are needed to chat to the carers, lead and back mark the walks. There are two walks each time, an easy wheelchair accessible one for about an hour and quarter. A longer, faster one, not necessarily accessible, for an hour and a half. It is good experience for anyone wanting to get into walk leading. The walks are on weekdays. If anyone is interested, please contact me.

Margaret Manning
Chair

Greater Manchester and High Peak Area General Secretary's Report

As the Coronavirus Pandemic has subsided this year, we have been able to resume meeting in person for Area Executive Meetings and the AGM. We have been able to introduce a 'Hybrid' format to these meetings that still allow online participation for those unable to physically attend and this has been found to be useful.

Many local groups have found it convenient to continue with on-line meetings via the Area Zoom account and this will continue to be provisioned for the foreseeable future.

Finally, this year I also attended the first in-person Ramblers General Council since the end of the pandemic, a one-day event where we were able to debate many subjects, particularly with regards to changes in Risk Assessment requirements for walks, we await the board's response to the range of opinions expressed.

John Ireland
General Secretary

Greater Manchester and High Peak Area Publicity Officers Report

Rebranding

A major development in publicity was the rebranding of the Ramblers with the launch of the new logo and website interface in March 2022. With consistency being the main aim for rebranding, the website comprises the main pages with complementary groups' pages. Walks Manager, a new system to replace GWEM, is still in working progress. All groups' Ramblers websites have completed the rebranding.

90th Anniversary Kinder Mass Trespass

On 23 April 2022 in Hayfield, an event in celebration of the anniversary took place at the Royal Hotel organised by the Kinder Mass Trespass Group.

- Stalls & Exhibitions in the Marquee from 1.00 pm.
- Rally at 2.00 pm. Speakers included: Caroline Lucas (Member of Parliament), Stuart Maconie (President of the Ramblers), Kate Ashbrook (OSS and Ramblers), Yvonne Witter (Mosaic & PDNPA Member).
- Launch of the 200-page full-colour book 'Forbidden Kinder - The 1932 Mass Trespass Re-visited' by Keith Warrender. The fullest and most comprehensive account of the Trespass ever published, with many new details about the protest. The book also looks at many of the issues surrounding the campaign for countryside access and includes a section on the lives of many of the trespassers.
- Music by Brian Peters, ending with 'Manchester Rambler'.
- In the evening, a concert by the excellent Recover rock band.

A Ramblers stall was set up in the grounds of the hotel and it was staffed throughout the day by volunteers - David Jones, Ian Berry, John Ireland, Marie Claude Quieffin-Witcombe and Pauline Brooke. The stall was set up from 10.30am with a display of posters (some memorabilia ones), membership leaflets, the Area booklets Spring/Summer 2022 and Manchester and Salford Group's publicity leaflets. Two banners (a ten-year old tapestry and a modern pull-out stand) provided the backdrop. A steady stream of interested visitors stopped at the stall - from as far as Brighton, Epping, York as well as nearby ones from Sheffield and Cheshire. Some were walkers and members of the Ramblers, and they were pleased to be offered our booklet listing all the groups. We also had a visit from staff from Head Office. Helen joined us at the stall, and she tweeted a photo of us.

Volunteers Feedback

'I really enjoyed having lots of conversations and I made sure to co-opt new recruits.'

'An enjoyable event - I got to talk to quite a few people. I've just got back from a walk onto Kinder on my own. Never seen it so busy.'

'I will come back next year again. I enjoyed my shift with the co volunteer buddy at the stall giving out leaflets. '

Many thanks to John for setting up the stall and for his support – to David, Ian, and Marie Claude, for their time, enthusiasm and their interest shown towards the visitors at the stall. A special thanks to Ian for leading an unofficial Ramblers walk from Dinting to Hayfield with 9 walkers and for making it in time for his shift volunteering at the stall.

Sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped in one way or the other with recruitment of new members and publicity of the GM&HP Ramblers.

Pauline Brooke
Publicity Officer

Greater Manchester and High Peak Area Membership Secretary Report

	2021 Annual Report	2022 Annual Report	Difference (%age of 2021 figure)
Area (MR)	3661	3788	+127 (+3.5%)
Non-group (MR96)	134	191	+57 (+42%)
Bolton (MR01)	308	326	+18 (+5.8%)
Bury (MR02)	191	176	-15 (-7.9%)
Rochdale (MR03)	203	197	-6 (-3.0%)
New Mills (MR04)	229	216	-13 (-5.7%)
Oldham (MR05)	283	267	-16 (-5.7%)
Stockport (MR06)	522	531	+9 (+1.7%)
Wigan & District (MR07)	151	160	+9 (+6.0%)
Manchester & Salford (MR10)	381	371	-10 (-2.6%)
Trafford (MR11)	276	271	-5 (-1.8%)
Tameside (MR12)	217	222	+5 (+2.3%)
Weekend Walkers (MR40)	212	233	+21 (+9.9%)
MAD Walkers (MR50)	428	532	+104 (+24%)
Coach Rambles (MR70)	82	75	-7 (-8.5%)
Others: international members, Awaiting Allocation etc.	44	20	-24 (-54%)

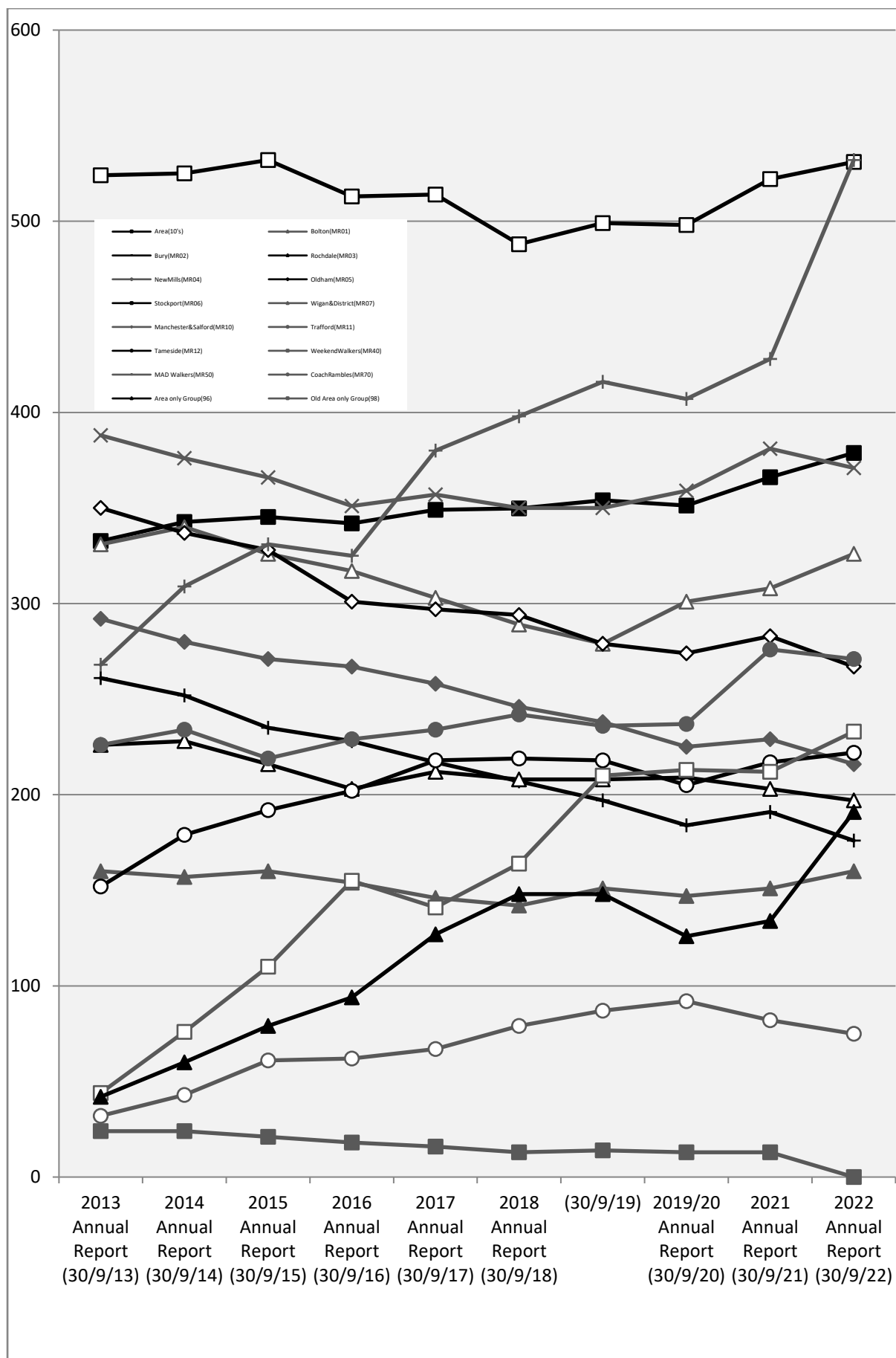
The total Area membership at 30th September 2022 is 3788; total Ramblers' membership is 102,144, an increase of 1.1% from the 100,949 reported at the last AGM.

It's another healthy rise in our area's total, again outgrowing the Ramblers' in general. With the results from September, the MAD Walkers leapt up to become the largest group, so congratulations go to them for their near continuous growth over the years. There have been mixed results from the traditional groups, some dropping and some increasing by small amounts.

The Area has 20 affiliated clubs, so unusually 6 groups have left over the past year. I am in the process of contacting each group to see if this is a permanent change.

There are 2186 members recorded with phone numbers on the membership list (about 56% of the total); for email addresses, there are 2891 on record, or about 74%.

Gavin Poulton
Area Membership Secretary



Greater Manchester and High Peak Area Treasurer's Report Year to 30th September 2022

Main Funds

There has been limited financial activity from the main account over the last 12 months, the main account at 30th September 2022 stood at £9,754.68, this is a similar amount to the previous year.

Restricted Funds

Following the decision by the Area Executive Committee, in 2021, to use the Area's restricted funds to support footpath related work in the Manchester area, to date £55,858 of expenditure has now been approved.

In the last financial year, a total of £22,173 of funding has been provided from the restricted funds, this includes:

- £5,000 of funding for footpath numbers 30 & 31 in the Bury area.
- Installation of 14 stiles and 2 gates in the Oldham area (£4,564).
- 2 x kissing gates in Altrincham (£2,000).
- Work on HOR068 footpath in the Bolton area (£5,000 in addition to £500 funded by the Bolton group).
- £5,000 of funding was provided for the GM Ringway project.

There was a payment from the estate of former Rambler's member Barbara Evans of £5,000 for the Manchester Area. A letter of thanks was sent via Barbara's solicitor to Barbara's family.

The restricted funds are currently held in three different accounts:

Unity - £614 @ 0.00%

NS&I - £65,148 @ 0.01%

M&G - £4,719 (investment)

Budgets

All budget requests submitted by groups and the area request have been approved by Ramblers Head Office.

Additional Comments

At time of writing, the independent examiner had not completed his review. A statement from the independent examiner will be presented at the Area AGM. If any adjustments/corrections are required to the accounts, these will also be presented at the AGM.

In the last few years, there have been a number of fraudulent payment requests received by both groups and area. It is imperative that all Area and Group officers remain vigilant when dealing with payment requests.

Finally, there have been a number of changes in the past twelve months, and I would especially like to thank all the group treasurers, new and old, who have worked so hard to meet the budget and accounting deadlines set by head office.

Jon Buckland
Area Treasurer

Greater Manchester & High Peak Ramblers

Income & Expenditure

At 30th September 2022

Name: Manchester & High Peak
Code: MR

Year ended: 30/09/22

Restricted					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
Internal transfer	-		Internal transfer	-	
Donations	5,000.00		General	22,173.22	
Legacies	-				
Grants	-				
Deposit interest	-				
Investment income	271.76				
Other	846.00				
Total receipts	6,117.76	-	Total payments	22,173.22	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-16,055.46	-			

Main					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
From CO (funding)	7,930.64		To CO	102.03	
From CO (other)	-		To Area	-	
From Area (funding)	-		To Group (funding)	4,430.58	
From Area (other)	-		To Group (other)	-	
From Group	102.03		To S/W Council	-	
From S/W Council	-		Walks programmes	1,102.20	
Tf/r from 'Self-funded'	-		Walks related	-	
Donations	-		Walks leader training	-	
Legacies	-		Newletters/publicity	1,045.00	
Grants	-		Publication/goods costs	-	
Fundraising	-		Campaigns/casework	250.00	
Deposit interest	-		Practical work	-	
Investment income	-		Fundraising costs	-	
Publication/goods sales	-		Meetings (inc. AGM)	835.77	
Advert sales	-		Admin	22.50	
Other	-		Other	32.98	
Total receipts	8,032.67	-	Total payments	7,821.06	-
Surplus/(deficit)	211.61	-			

Self-funded					
Receipts	Current yr	Prior yr	Payments	Current yr	Prior yr
Day walks	-		Day walks	-	
Holidays	-		Holidays	-	
Socials	-		Socials	-	
Deposit interest	-		Tf/r to 'Main'	-	
Other	-		Other	-	
Total receipts	-	-	Total payments	-	-
Surplus/(deficit)	-	-			

Summary	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Total receipts	6,117.76	8,032.67	-	14,150.43
Total payments	22,173.22	7,821.06	-	29,994.28
Surplus/(deficit)	-16,055.46	211.61	-	-15,843.85
Movement in funds	-16,168.58	211.61	-	-16,406.97

Prior yr
-
-
-
-

Greater Manchester & High Peak Area

Balance Sheet

Accounts to 30th September 2022

Name: **Manchester & High Peak**
 Code: **NIR**

Year ended: **30/09/22**

Current yr				
Assets	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-
Investments	69,867.58	-	-	69,867.58
Stock	-	-	-	-
Loans due in	-	-	-	-
Cash & bank	-9,110.44	9,754.68	-30.17	614.07
Total	60,757.14	9,754.68	-30.17	70,481.65
Liabilities	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Loans due out	-	-	-	-
Net assets/ liabilities (funds)	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
	60,757.14	9,754.68	-30.17	70,481.65

[A]

Balance sheet reconciliation	
Movement in funds: balance sheet [A] - [B]	-16,406.97
Movement in funds: R&P	-16,406.97
Variance [C] - [D]	-

[C]

[D]

Prior yr				
Assets	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-
Investments	70,430.70	-	-	70,430.70
Stock	-	-	-	-
Loans due in	-	-	-	-
Cash & bank	6,945.02	9,543.07	-30.17	16,457.92
Total	77,375.72	9,543.07	-30.17	86,888.62
Liabilities	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
Loans due out	-	-	-	-
Net assets/ liabilities (funds)	Restricted	Main	Self-funded	Total
	77,375.72	9,543.07	-30.17	86,888.62

[B]

Greater Manchester and High Peak Area Footpath Officer's Report

As we haven't had an Area Footpath officer for the last two years, I have continued to liaise with the group footpath officers and collate their quarterly reports for the EC meeting. I'd like to thank them and their teams of footpath inspectors for continuing to work so hard to defend and help maintain our Right of Way. We also hope to have a joint meeting with some of the PNFS officers soon to discuss ways we can work together more, as some groups already do.

Tameside and New Mills and District groups do not have footpath officers so have not done much footpath work and have not submitted reports. However, their Chairs have kept an eye on major issues. Also, David Jones has been pursuing the National Trust over the footpath repairs offer in the High Peak.

In my chair's report I have referred to the projects that some groups have taken on using the legacy money from the Area to improve footpath infrastructure. Some of the group reports cover their projects. I hope to produce a report, with photos of the finished projects.

Margaret Manning
Chair

Group Reports

Salford: David Yates

Salford Trail

Waymarkers are beginning to show their age so new wraparounds have been variously applied. Some marker posts on the Moss have wandered and, we are told by SCC, so have walkers. John Lindsay has been in discussion with farmers annoyed by the lack of signage and has agreed to erect new posts. These will be chiefly where we had originally sited waymarkers; the nature of the ground makes for difficulty keeping them stable.

Horses continue to attempt to wreck the railings on the bridge just north of the M62 near Great Woollen Hall. Recent repairs appear to have been successful. Extensive damage to a stile near to Keeper's Cottage has been repaired.

Overall, there has been continued high usage with no adverse reports. Rob Dean is upgrading the generic leaflet prior to reprinting. Individual section leaflets will remain web based only.

Ralli Quays

My earlier optimism for a rational compromise on the Trail's route in central Salford was short lived. The proposal to demolish government buildings at Ralli Quays - near the now closed Mark Addy pub - and build a hotel and office complex on the site involved the closure of a riverside path.

When consulted by Salford City Council, we researched the proposal and the footpath diversion. We found that the riverside path was not a Public Right of Way, was accessed by steep steps, was quite narrow downstream, essentially a dead end and prone to flooding.

We had numerous discussions within Ramblers at Area and Group level, site meetings with Councillors and Lead Officers in the Council and with the developers. Whilst not enthusiastic about the project we concluded that we would not object to the closure of the riverside path. We did, however, object to the route of the proposed replacement upper-level path. This was to be along nearby Stanley Street, which was to become private. We emphasised that any diversion into Stanley Street must become a PRow otherwise we would object to the whole scheme. We now know that the developers are content to support this, and we have been advised that Salford City Council will grant such designation.

A social media campaign, first highlighted by The Guardian, seeks to retain and further develop the low-level path. Local and national Ramblers representatives have met with the campaigners. We share their objective of wanting to retain waterside paths wherever possible. We wrote accordingly to the Salford City Mayor, Paul Dennett who has asked his Officers to look at "development alternatives to stopping up the route". We welcome the mayor's intervention. Like Mr Dennett, we want to open up as much of the riverside as is technically possible to improve the quality of walking along the Salford Trail and for the city as a whole. We look forward to working with him, the City Council and the Our Irwell campaigners to achieve the aspirations of the Irwell City Park and for improvements in walking and cycling along the waterfront.

Stop Press: The developers have just advised SCC (late Sept 22) that they are now proposing to retain public access down the steps to the riverside and to neither physically or legally "stop up" the route. This will be put before Salford Planning Committee when they meet in early October, with the planning officers recommending approval. However, those campaigning for "the retention of the whole riverside route" have requested a postponement, seeking further clarification. I think we all need a bit of that.

Salford City Council initiatives and consultations

A number of planning issues have been addressed. Most are not contentious, but we have made a suggestion that section 106 monies be a condition for approval of an application to further develop land to the north of Vicar's Hall Bridge in Boothstown. This is where W 97 comes down to the canal. The developers make much of the availability of adjacent footpaths and cycle tracks. These are narrow and there is already conflict between users.

The collapse of the Ship Canal embankment near Ordsall Hall has, at long last, been repaired and the route is now open. Access from Ordsall Lane had also been blocked by construction work but this too has been opened recently.

The Swinton Greenway was officially opened on 11th June 2022. However, part of the network, the PRow link to Winchester Road has not been upgraded. Apparently, the adjacent schools are reluctant to release the land necessary for path widening. I understand that SCC continues to push for its inclusion in the wider scheme.

The path along the north bank of the Bridgewater Canal between Worsley and the RHS garden is now open. Embedded solar powered lights along the full length of the path are quite a sight at night! Work

continues on the remaining section linking to Walkden station northwards. The widened path along Leigh Road is attracting less parked vans and more walkers. Work continues further north on the final part of this scheme, the link to Walkden station. Crossing the East Lancs Road has been transformed by the installation of traffic lights.

Further consultation on the DMMO for Eccles 4 at Barton has been launched. Martin Hampar (PNFS) and I are in discussion with John Lindsay on this freight issue. There is a suggestion that Peel will fund the upgrading of the canal-side path behind the stadium (in response to a challenge from an objector in Urmston) to create a permissive path. How to cross the dual carriageway to get to it is another challenge. Dialogue continues; in the meantime, we are still officially objecting to the diversion.

Also at Barton, plans for the railway line to Port Salford are finally moving forward. This impacts on Eccles 28 and an objection has been made because of the long diversion of the Salford Trail which would be required to enable the Trail to continue from the Moss to behind the cemetery and on to Brookhouse.

Still no news on the application to build on the Green Belt adjacent to the RHS. I have objected.

Work has not yet started on the walkway across the Barton aqueduct.

The newly established W 156 at Haddon Road Worsley continues to create internecine warfare in this affluent community. A DMMO has been proposed essentially pushing the woodland path onto adjacent roads. Naturally, everyone is complaining, including Ramblers and PNFS.

A much-delayed consultation on improvements to the path under the Ordsall Chord has just been launched. It proposes a minor realignment and significant upgrade to this long closed short stretch of riverside path. It appears uncontentious and, if approved, will further improve the route of the Salford Trail.

Blocked Paths

W 97. Further delay both with SCC and as a result of the recent transfer of ownership of the landfill site from POS Landscapes to Green Earth Developments Ltd. Martin Hampar of PNFS and I write regularly to John Lindsay demanding progress reports. At last, we have extracted a commitment to visit the site in October.

S&P 22. Still no progress at Langley Road on the removal of large skips blocking this potentially useful link to the river.

John Lindsay. John has just announced that he will be leaving SCC at the end of October to take up a similar role at Cheshire East. I do not know if and when he will be replaced.

Oldham: John Walton

Footpath claim on Brookdale Golf Course

This is still with OMBC and is likely to be processed when Ash Bridge is installed. Ash Bridge across the River Medlock is still closed, and a renewed temporary closure order is in place till 2023. The golf club are not happy as walkers are wandering over the course and they have had to install their own footbridge some 100m downstream to reduce the distance golfers going from one tee to the next!

The replacement Ash Bridge at my costings of £60K is earmarked from the Capital budget in 2022/2023. Still no news of the replacement bridge. Once the bridge is open then the footpath claim, for the section of path 50 Failsworth will be processed not under the WLCA but under the HWA.

Dobcross Footbridge

There has been no progress between the Dobcross Village Community and the Garden Centre Directors. The free steel bridge is still on the table. If there is no progress this year, then local councillors and the press are to be contacted to put further pressure on Newbank. No work is involved from the Garden Centre side but from the Dobcross village side.

Dobcross Footpath Claim

I contacted Eugene of RANO who commented that Ms Greer (the previous ROW Officer) never had the original application in Jan 2020 determined, so he thinks it means that she never formally accepted it. As I have the original documents it could still become a valid application without any adjustment. I had a meeting with Liam Kennedy on 21st June and submitted the original 2020 folder with notes from Eugene. Hopefully the claim and steel footbridge could be in place this year or early next. However, I had a phone call from Liam saying that as the claimed path crosses OMBC land there is a presumption that the As of Right criteria cannot be met. I was mortified. If the council will not process the claim, I may have to appeal to the SOS to force Oldham to process the 2020 claim. To add weight to my argument I have looked at 18 council plots of land where there are def paths and this info has been sent to Liam. To add further evidence, I have gone back through my diary to see what has taken place since Jan 2020 and the sorry state of inaction. This was to be presented to the 6 members of the TRO panel well before the 29th October but will not be sent to Liam. However, Liam said the info I sent on the 18 plots is to be checked with Legal and the next TRO Panel meeting will be in November so round one to me. This saga runs and runs!

Footbridge over the Oldham Bypass carrying footpath 152

The concrete footbridge has been removed as it was unsafe and not high enough for current traffic. It was also in the way of a large development which meant the bypass had to be widened. The continuation of this footpath was on an elevated steel walkway which is over 100 years old. I have suggested that the steel bridge be refurbished and used on path 50 at Ash Bridge in the Tame Valley in Woodhouses which has been closed since 2017.

£4000 Area Legacy donation

I have finally received an invoice from Rowan Atkinson, and they have charged us £2484 at cost. My budgeted cost was £3690 so we still have around £2500 from the original £5000 that the Area was to donate. 8 stiles have been completed and 2 gates have been installed at Well I Hole Farm. There was an article in the Saddleworth Independent this month. Jon the Area Treasurer has paid the invoice electronically.

6 stiles and set of steps in High Crompton

I had a phone call from Rowan Ashworth to say they have completed the works in early July I suggested that the 4 stiles be on one invoice and the stile and steps be on another invoice. I went round all the

sites on 16th July and took photos, added discs, and cut back side veg. I asked Rowan Ashworth for a cost of each stile, but they had not costed each one individually. The cost of the new and repaired stiles was split between the Group and the Area.

New steel steps on Saddleworth 75

This footpath which leaves Ward Lane and heads towards Diggle has been closed for 2 weeks while a new set of steel steps have been installed.

Springfield Farm – Footpath 208

There have been some issues with this footpath and a small diversion and new stiles etc. has now been completed. I had a look at Springfield Farm and the works we agreed with the owner are substantially complete. The bit missing is a second handrail but what they have provided is ok. The steps have mesh on, and a gate has been provided into the lower field. It now needs the waymarkers and presumably there may be some formalities by Liam to complete. Otherwise, the route now exists so I am going to take it off my monitoring list!

Chadderton 26

This footpath at the rear of the Rifle Range has been closed for some time and the new Volvo garage is nearly complete. There is a diversion order around the edge of the site, and it is now in place, and we are satisfied with the new route.

Oldham Way – Footpath 14 in the Medlock Valley

Janet, our secretary, sent me a complaint re the duck boards on the Oldham Way in the Medlock Valley below Alders Farm. Tony Pal had been emailing OMBC about this issue for quite some time now. The tipping by the farmer had created a land slip which had also temporarily blocked a main watercourse (River Medlock) until it found fresh route. Liam had already outlined this fact to the Environment Agency whilst reporting more recent tipping activity taking place in the close vicinity. He contacted the farmer to the possibility of securing some remedial funding from the landowner. I sent Liam some info on a similar incident on tipping which affected Royton 65. The landowner claimed on his insurance to reinstall the riverside footpath. Liam attached a photo extract from Google earth which clearly shows both the land slip and missing / deflected boardwalk / duckboard. Liam had the duckboards replaced in the summer months once the land had stabilised.

Black Pitts and Footpath 17 Chadderton

Earlier this year the ROW Officer has written to the son and daughter of Ben Lancaster to see if they would consider a diversion from the yard where there are vicious dogs to a safer route at the rear of a barn. The Area would fund 2 or 3 stiles and the Group would pay for way markers etc. The council is likely to pay the legal fees of around £2500 in the interests of the public. Any path clearance and fencing would come from the Lancasters. At the time of writing no indication of progress. However, in September, Martin Riley of the P and N has reported: At junction of Footpaths 16-17 & 18 step stiles broken and tree branches placed across line of footpath. Going from broken stiles to farmyard on footpath 17, narrow fenced in section has a large container filled with rubbish placed right online of

path. Footpath 18 from farm entrance towards junction of FPs 16/17 very badly overgrown. This report has been sent to Liam and possible legal action be taken for the 100th time!

New Footbridge over the rail track at Uppermill

The PA for this bridge has been withdrawn whilst other options are being looked at. Possible ramps to suit disabled access. I suggested ramps in the original consultation some time ago. This is the route of path 209 from the centre of Uppermill to the Saddleworth Golf Course. Network Rail carried out a use survey and on average 40 people used it per day.

Oldham 26

There was a diversion to move the riverside path up the hillside, across the link road to the 234 houses site off Knowls Lane, Lees. It meandered down the other side. I did not object to the stepped path as there are similar ones in the vicinity. However, the locals want a less steep path and 26 of them have objected which will lead to a public inquiry!

2 stiles on the border with Chadderton and Middleton

Debbie one of our committee members, found a stile at the end of Chadderton 1 that was in need of repair. On investigation it was on a fence that belong to the farmer of 3 Gates Farm, Middleton and discussing it with him he had agreed to do the repair to the stile plus another one close by as long as the Oldham Group paid for the timbers of £160 which was acceptable by all. I went after and added waymarkers discs and green RA plastic discs plus photos.

Chadderton 43

There was a planning application on the Foxdenton site for another large warehouse where the diversion of path 43 was to be routed around the site which led to objections. The latest proposal is to have a de minimus diversion where the path will be moved 6.5m away from the buildings which is acceptable. A separate PA by the developer to process the de minimus diversion was not objected to and it was a means of recording the small diversion.

Footpath 118 and 185 Dobcross

There was a S119 diversion in 2020 by Jean Greer to close path 118 through an old vicarage. A diverted path through the fields was proposed. However, this order has been withdrawn as there were objections from the P and N. A new S119 was drawn up with path closures around Mount Sorrel farm. There was also a S119 closure order for 60m of path through the old vicarage. I initially objected but have since withdrawn my objections.

Mega housing development at Springhead

A planning application has been lodged for 260 houses on a greenfield site between Oldham and Saddleworth which will affect paths 25, 26 and 27 Oldham. Path 26 runs along Thornily Brook and is not affected except where it crosses the spine road. See previous notes on path 26. Footpaths 25 and 27 presently cross open fields and are to be routed along the estate roads, which is a no-no. I have objected on behalf of Anne Broadbent as she cannot open the large plans and other lengthy documents. There are 2 small valleys running from south to north and I have suggested that path 25

and 27 run parallel to these green corridors with gravel paths so not as to walk along estate roads. After a meeting with the planning officer the diverted routes have been agreed. Will wait for the legal order to see if any comments have been accepted.

Wigan and District: Phil Bullen

Due to the lingering effects of Covid not a lot has happened regarding updating the ROW Footpath Plan or the DMMO Register.

The LAF seems to have folded due to lack of members.

Multiple diversions have taken place due to housing development mostly with minimal problem, although a dispute has arisen with Persimmon Homes on Standish 20 regarding a new alignment that they are proposing. We have the backing of Wigan ROW with our objection.

One path Hindley 45 has been lost due to house building that occurred over 25 years ago.

Two major commercial developments have been proposed which concern footpaths (although one has been rejected by the planning department) with regard to the other one adjacent to jct25 of the M6 we have no objection to the proposed diversions but have requested extra access from a public road.

A planning application by Peel Homes for a plot in Tyldesley affecting various paths has been rejected by the council.

Longstanding Problems

Tyldesley269/270 Rawsons l'th Nook Farm incorporating Whitehead Tip still not resolved.

Golborne 88 Still awaiting answer from Network Rail.

Tyldesley 328 Path blocked for nearly 10 years! I have been on site with Network Rail but no progress. In my opinion the O/S Map has a section of the path in the wrong position, but they will not alter it until it is altered on the Council map-Wigan Council say it is what they received from Lancs County and are unable to alter it. The section involved is about 30 ft in length.

Stockport: Phil Featherstone & Edgar Ernstbrunner

Relations remain constructive. For example, we continue to be consulted on planning applications which may impact Public Rights of Way, before they are considered by the planning committee. However, hardly ever do planning application documents (location/site plans), even at large scale, show any PROWs skirting or crossing the site. We do point this out every time, arguing that such applications are technically deficient and should be revised. In a couple of cases, where a PROW traversed a site, but the application did not specify what would happen to the PROW, we actually entered objections. (No feedback so far).

On one occasion we have asked for a planning condition to be imposed where a footpath along an access track is likely to be impacted by increased vehicular traffic. Again, no feedback so far.

Path Problems

1. No progress has been made regarding the obstruction at the Yew Tree Farm (Offerton) end of 117S (Stockport 117). We, along with the PNFS, are considering what further action to take.
2. Thanks, no doubt to the Letter Before Action (LBA) sent by John Harker (PNFS) and the clear indication that the Society would follow this to its conclusion in the Magistrates Court, the small footbridge along 78HGB that had been missing for some time has now been replaced.
3. On 119S -affected by flooding on a regular basis - John Harker, having had no satisfactory response to his earlier LBA, initiated S.56 proceedings against SMBC.
4. The southernmost section of 105S (the path southwards from Reddish Vale parallel to the railway line) has been blocked by vegetation for well over 20 years, because residents wanted it to be impassable. On several occasions we were promised the Council would clear it. Recently we received a letter from a local ex-councillor asking us to consent to a "diversion" which would have conflicted with highway law. In response we contacted the Rights of Way section and were told that clearance by TLC had been commissioned and was scheduled "within a few weeks".
5. 60 BR remains seriously obstructed. This problem has been reported on numerous occasions over 10 or so years. Although the group is mindful of the financial constraints facing local councils this is potentially a lovely, scenic route - possibly the best in the area. Consequently, we have pre-warned the PROW Officer that we are considering taking action in terms of S56 and S130A.

Stockport Local Access Forum (LAF)

Meetings continue to be held online which is very helpful.

At a previous meeting we had been told that, at last, the thorny problem of the S.53B (PROW claims) Statutory Register was being tackled: A new skeleton web page had been created from which, once the data base was populated, it would be possible to access online.

However, at the most recent meeting we were once again presented with the old useless register, except that this had now been split into the actual S.53B list of claims and a separate register for path orders (diversions and extinguishments). There had been no visible progress at all towards a genuine S.53B register. Harsh criticism of this lack of progress (over more than two years) was expressed. As of 18th September, the position had not changed.

Group Projects

The Cown Edge Way improvement project, for which EC already authorised funding in principle (replacement of stiles by kissing gates etc.) After repeated requests and reminders we are still awaiting a detailed quote from Stockport MBC Rights of Way.

An email to all group members was sent out early on in September asking for volunteers to act as "Path Checkers". Twelve members of the group have come forward which allows us to cover the 5 Stockport parishes.

The role of the path checker is twofold. To assist with the assessment of footpath faults reported to the group from time to time. Secondly, a survey of all paths in our area in order to assist with

consolidating the Definitive Map and Statement and identifying problems such as obstructions, dangerous stiles/ gates etc. and signage problems.

Phase 1 of the survey is now complete from which it will be possible to develop the methodology more fully. SMBC has also been contacted for clarification on a number of issues concerning the Definitive map and Statement. Once we get a reply, a final version of the Survey Sheet and Guidance Notes will be issued probably in time for a face-to-face meeting with volunteers which will be held early November.

Claims

The outstanding DMMO claim for a path alongside Micker Brook in the form of a dedication report, is still being considered.

Nor have any other claims been processed to the Order stage. Some of these are well over ten years old. Because of the inadequacy of the S.53B “register” (see above) it is not possible to identify the applicants and prompt them to make Sch.14 applications to PINS with the purpose of getting PINS to instruct the Council to make a decision.

Group FP Secretary position

Both the Chairman and Secretary have indicated they are not standing for the committee in 2023. In addition, the group is having ongoing problems attracting walks leaders. In view of these problems Phil Featherstone and Edgar Ernstbrunner will continue to cover the Footpath Secretary post.

Bury: Edgar Ernstbrunner

Local Access Forum

One meeting has taken place (June). Another one is scheduled for 7 December. But the June meeting was not particularly successful. It all comes down, we’re told, to lack of resources. Thus, even acknowledged long-standing issues (see below) are not being addressed, but we can no longer simply accept that and are beginning to take action on those issues (again, see below).

Path orders so far this year

There have been two non-controversial diversions, both in fact arguably improvements to the network. On both we were pre-consulted, suggesting minor changes which were accepted.

Importantly, a crucial claim for a new bridleway near Elton Reservoir (also including upgrades of a number of existing footpaths to bridleways) did go forward, strongly supported by BMBC using a barrister at the Public Inquiry. We haven’t had the decision yet, but the applicant is optimistic. The route claimed had actually been shown on the original Draft Map and has been in use for decades.

Assistance with Rights of Way funding

After the successful project assisting the Authority with the steps in Redisher Wood, the Authority proposed an extension of these steps, to cover an additional section of steep ground. Total cost would be £2.1K, which would be shared (one third each) between the authority, the LDWA and the RA, if

everyone agreed. Area EC did agree. But the work has yet to start – “within the next two months”, or so BMBC are hoping.

Proposed ROW Forum

Sadly, at the LAF meeting earlier this year this was again refused. A classic case of false economy, as the minor investment of (say) half an hour’s officer time could have yielded much larger returns in terms of potential funding contributions from stakeholders.

And this takes us to the serious problems we are facing in Bury:

Consolidation of the Definitive Map and Statement

As stated previously, this is 60 years overdue, and thus quite a massive undertaking that we’ve endeavored to assist with our survey. But with existing resources, they say, it is simply not possible. Unfortunately, this is something we have no means to enforce. Not so with:

Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs)

These allow authorities to close PROWs temporarily, primarily in the interest of public safety. The intention is to give authorities time to deal with a particular issue (e.g. an unsafe bridge or an eroded path). The standard TTRO period is 6 months, but they can be extended (by formally applying to the Secretary of State – in practice a pure rubber-stamping procedure) for another 6 months – and another. Stakeholders are not consulted, and there is no objection mechanism. Meanwhile the PROW remains closed, with no legal recourse against the TTRO extensions.

We have such a case in Bury (FP Tottington 19) which was brought to our attention by a local resident, the problem apparently is a collapsed culvert that goes back for over 2 years. Technically, that means that the footpath is “out of repair”. Under current legislation we can therefore only bring a S.56 action against BMBC if they persist. I have written a Letter Before Action (a procedure learned from PNFS) to the Chief Executive, alerting him to our proposed action and hoping that it won’t be necessary. No response so far.

The problem of indefinitely extendable TTROs is a national one. Judicial Review seems to be the only strategic approach but would of course be a risky undertaking. But as it would address such a major gap in current highway law, it must at least be considered.

“Directed Orders”

If an authority fails to decide on a path claim within a year, the applicant can write to the Secretary of State (represented by the Planning Inspectorate) under Sch.14, asking the SoS to instruct the authority to decide (accept or reject) the claim. If the claim is accepted the usual process commences; if rejected, applicant can appeal to the SoS against the rejection, and the SoS can instruct the authority to make the order anyway (who may then oppose their own Order).

So far, so good. But what if the authority fails to comply with the instruction to make a decision? In Bury we have a dozen of such in-limbo applications (supposedly because the ROW Officer has more pressing issues to deal with); nationally it’s a major problem (in Staffs, for example, there are 156 such cases, I’m told). So, I wrote to RACO, specifically to Kate Ashbrook:

“...Now this [state of affairs] cannot go unchallenged. Otherwise, the whole Lost Way project is called into question. How can we ask volunteers to do the research if their claims then moulder, quite likely for decades (given authorities' ever-shrinking resources - that's what this is blamed on when we do get a response from HAs)?

Individual complaints to Councils or LGO have been tried, but all failed to produce any result. In any case, given sheer numbers, a more general strategy is required.

Therefore, if we wish to preserve Lost Ways, we must seek recourse through the courts. In this instance the only option seems to be Judicial Review....”

Kate helpfully replied: “... Ramblers is on the case, with OSS and BHS. Do ask Jack Cornish for an update....”

Thus, we can hope that at least this case (only one example out of many where Authorities can flout with impunity their legal duties) will eventually be resolved.

Summary

Relations with Bury MBC are less positive than over the last few years, The lack of resources is really telling now. Even the ROW officer (David Chadwick) is not as approachable as he used to be. Interesting times ahead.

Rochdale: David Butterworth

Paths Reported to RMBC

1. Broken stile on the Rochdale Way – GR 846 144
2. Broken Bridge – Lydgate Area – SD 953 167 Lit Fp 368
3. Path with large hole in it SD 845 141 – Fp52 (?)
4. Large hole in footpath SD 845 141
5. Report received this week – the repartee prefers to remain anonymous -

Details of Blocked Path

Name: RD:Hey/Fp42

Type: Footpath

Other Info: HeyFp42@482@42@3,0

Distance: 0.299M

First Longitude: -2.25450

First Latitude: 53.61644

Last Longitude: -2.24754

Last Latitude: 53.61518

First Eastings-Northings: 383261,413351 Last Eastings-Northings: 383721,413209

Diversion Orders

Kingsway Ind. Est. – MIL Fp 317 – diversion of footpath to enable further development on the industrial estate.

Footpath Maintenance Team

Although the team did not get started as soon as it wished it nevertheless carried out work on six paths within the RMBC area during the summer in Milnrow, Syke and Buckley areas.

The latest task was in the Rydings area of Buckley and involved the clearance of three stepped footpaths one of which was impassable because of undergrowth invasion across the whole path.

During the teams work on the first path it was visited by the RMBC ROW officer with whom the group have been in communication since before the start of the team formation in February of this year. As a result of this, RMBC sent in contractors to complete the work on other stepped paths in the area and, in addition, carried out repair work on the badly damaged safety railings on the three stepped paths.

This co-operation resulted in approximately 500–600 metres of badly blocked pathway being restored to public use.

Bolton: Ron Thatcher

This is my second report as Footpath Secretary at Bolton. My work is mainly to do with liaising with Bolton Council dealing with the planning department and the Council's PROW Officer on a range of issues concerning PROWs that have arisen during the year.

I feel I have been sent fewer planning applications in the last twelve months. There was a period when the planning system at Bolton was shut down for five or six weeks as a new system was introduced. I was expecting there to be surge in applications when it re-opened but that never happened. The main result of the new system is that it is now much harder and more time consuming to assess the impact of any planning application on the PROW network. There are four proposals for big housing developments that have been in the system since I became Footpath Secretary. These are still not fully resolved and still involve me in a significant amount of work.

The project to improve HOR068, funded by Area together with PNFS and Horwich Council has now been completed and a footpath that was very difficult to walk is now a very good path taking walkers from near High Ridd Reservoir to an area of Bolton called "Bottom o' th' Moor" and on to Rivington Moor. A lady living nearby and owning land adjacent to the work carried out on the footpath has let us know that she is delighted with the result. Moreover, she has told us that the stone slab over the stream at the southern end of the improvement was used to slaughter cattle and the stream it crosses is called locally Devil's Dyke (because of the blood in the stream?). A nice dip into local history.

Footpath maintenance has restarted in Bolton after Covid. It is now managed by two volunteers Sue Gough and Ken Jacobs. They have already worked on a number of paths in Bolton during the summer months. We have been having a problem with footpath maintenance on land owned by the Woodland Trust. There has been one PROW over their land that has remained in a poor state throughout the

Summer with the Woodland Trust refusing to let us trim it but seemingly unwilling to trim it themselves. I am hoping we shall be able to find a way through this problem in the coming months.

We have had a small team working through the potential lost paths in Bolton identified on the DLYW map. We have made a short list of what we think would make useful additions to the network of PROWs. The Ramblers nationally are planning to have a drive to recruit volunteers to do research on potential lost paths which, at the time of writing, is due to be launched at the end of October/beginning of November. We are planning to follow up the national drive to recruit researchers by looking for volunteers to do research on our short-listed paths.

Finally, it is my intention to resign as Footpath Secretary at the AGM in 2023.

Trafford: June Mabon

In the last 12 months, footpath (and bridleway) inspecting, and path maintenance has returned to near normal. A slight end of year reduction in path maintenance due to team leader unavailability. This is a prompt to try to recruit a second path maintenance team leader.

As reported in our last annual report, we inspect some 250 Definitive Rights of Way based on a 1985 Definitive Map and Statement supplemented with DMMOs confirmed since then. On the path maintenance side, we have a regular selection of paths which we revisit to deal with seasonal vegetation, and these are supplemented by occasional requests by local Councillors. All our path work is both authorised and signed off by a Trafford Council representative and the volunteers are registered with the RA. Our path maintenance team includes members of the British Horse Society (BHS).

Trafford Council's highways department (a team of a combined Trafford Council and Amey company), has been very cooperative over signage requests (green, man walking signs) but less so over obstructed paths that require the Council to approach landowners.

Our exercise about cross field definitive paths which are regularly not reinstated after ploughing and cropping (edible crops) has taken an interesting but disappointing turn. Farmers do not reinstate one year and the next leave the field fallow with grass growing. This makes it difficult to claim "repeated" non reinstatement. We have had a few successes though where one of our inspectors approached the farmer and the line of the path was cleared very quickly. If we do actually get to a position where we have evidence of repeated not reinstatement, RACO will approach Trafford Council and discuss legal action. The appropriate legal action would involve magistrate's court action and risk of appropriate costs having to be met. More than individual RA members are expected to bear.

We continue to work in collaboration with the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS) and have helped that society lodge claims for several new bridleways along Brooks Drive in Hale.

My own two outstanding claims for new ROWs (footpaths) in Trafford, one on Carrington Moss the other on the offside of the Bridgewater Canal, continue to languish in the Secretary of State's back log, having been referred to him by the council when objections were not withdrawn.

Area's offer to provide finance for replacing stiles with kissing gates eventually resulted in two replacement kissing gates. Trafford Council was cooperative but the other proposed two kissing gates

on National Trust (NT) land proved too much for the NT administration to manage! NT wanted the kissing gates to be on new permissive paths where no stiles had been! We had proposed replacing two stiles on definitive paths on NT land. NT gave no reason for not accepting our suggestion. I will be reluctant to work with the NT again but may have to since it owns a lot of land in Trafford and the council works closely with the NT.

We continue to benefit from the support of the Ramblers Trafford Group Committee which through its website and weekly walks, encourage walkers to become aware of the behind the scenes work the Group's footpath team and path maintenance teams do.

Manchester: Richard Cleverley and Maggie Walker

The year has seen some progress with Manchester City Council, albeit at a slow pace.

We had presented a list of around 35 paths that historically have had issues with vegetation and/or quality of surface, plus those which are blocked due to obstruction or vegetation overgrown beyond routine maintenance.

Only around 15 have been inspected by a council official, and sadly in three cases a "satisfactory" report was returned when this clearly wasn't the case. In our view this arose because their inspector did not have accurate information on the line of the right of way or had misinterpreted it. At our most recent meeting, no further inspections had been done, due to staff shortage.

There is some progress being made towards a revision of the definitive map, but there is no definite date as to when the work might start.

However, at the most recent meeting with MCC Highways Dept we were told that the council are digitising their PROW records in order to help with their understanding the status of paths and updating the definitive map. This currently covers documents held by Highways and will move on to those held by the Legal Dept. They have new software which will allow the footpaths to be "Assets" and inspections can be entered as they happen with the next inspection date added at the same time. This development should assist both in inspection follow-up and work on the definitive map.

We have observed a number of cases where statutory notices for temporary stopping up or diversions haven't been placed, including FP63 at NMGH, discussed at last year's M&S AGM, where a diverted route was agreed. Work is underway on site and the relevant section of the path closed.

Our request for a meeting with Executive leads at the City Council covering environment, health and neighbourhoods has not been realised. However, there was an initial meeting with Cllr Tracey Rawlins re the proposed Manchester Walking and Cycling Strategy and we now expect to meet with the consultants employed to work on this strategy. We aim to promote the footpath network as a key element in achieving the health and environmental benefits of increasing active travel by walking. We propose that there should be a budget linked to the footpath network's benefits and not leave Highways "firefighting" footpath condition and legal status with no budget.

We continue to work closely with Martin Hampar of the Peak and Northern, who has participated in the M&S Team's meetings with MCC and has raised a number of issues on behalf of his organisation. His expertise has proved very helpful in dealing with the council.

Greater Manchester & High Peak Area ENTRUST (The Environmental Trust Scheme Regulatory Body) Report

There has been no request for support from Entrust by Area or any of the 10 Groups.

June Mabon

Area ENTRUST representative

Greater Manchester & High Peak Area Wednesday Walkers Report Short/Long Walks

We have run a very full programme with both short and long walk groups continuing to attract 30+ and between 15 and 20 respectively. Not all those who have walked with us in the past are out yet, with many being wary of the risks associated with public transport. That said, we are trying to keep all involved with the group by sending out a short report following the walk each week - our contact list currently has about 150 entries.

The groups ethos of using public transport has held, with only a few preferring to use personal transport. There are still some who choose their walks based on where they are prepared to travel - one or two preferring not to travel through the city on public transport.

We continue to operate an 'open' entry to the walks. Over the last few months, we have been welcoming new 'members' - existing Ramblers but coming out on a Wednesday for the first time.

The range of routes continues to find paths we haven't used before, ranging from Clitheroe across to Hebden Bridge, down to Delamere and across to Grindleford, with one leader taking us to Shropshire and the Long Mynd.

This year has also seen several 'new' leaders, all of whom seem to have enjoyed the process even if a little daunted to begin with. So far all are looking to continue with each putting their name down to lead in the winter programme.

John Ratray

Wednesday Walkers

Greater Manchester & High Peak Area Walking Environment Officer Report

Contact with GM Transport Commissioner

We had established a dialogue with the then Travel Commission Chris Boardman and his office, however early in the New Year he was appointed as the National Commissioner to lead the new Active Travel England agency. It wasn't until May that Dame Sarah Storey, the former South Yorkshire Active Travel Commissioner became GM Walking and Cycling Commissioner. Peter Zanzottera, who was the Active Travel Project Director at South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority transferred with her. We sent a welcome letter and expressed the wish to meet in due course. We had a prompt and positive response from Pete on behalf of them both. I had a positive meet with Pete Zanzottera at the end of July and in October was part of small group of active travel representatives who met with Dame Sarah and I was able to stress the importance of footpaths and rights of way. Her priority has been to "Refresh the Mission" and more information will be published in early November and I am due to follow up with Pete Zanzottera.

GM Transport Committee – Active Travel Sub Committee

The GM Transport Committee is a joint committee made-up of the principal transport decision-making bodies – the ten GM Councils, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Mayor of Greater Manchester. It oversees the performance of the transport system and holds rail, tram, and bus operators, TfGM, and highways authorities to account. At its meeting in August, it decided to establish an Active Travel Sub Committee to provide a stronger focus on the active travel agenda and the decisions taken by the GMCA. We will seek to monitor the work of this body.

GM Walking & Cycling Coordination & Advisory Group

A GM Walking and Cycling Coordination and Advisory Group has been established and its terms of reference have been agreed, we have a guaranteed seat and there are members from TfGM, GM Moving, Living Streets, Sustrans, WalkRideGM, Cycling UK and British Cycling. An initial workshop was held to scope of items to work on and a formal meeting with Sarah Storey and Peter Zanzottera. It will establish a regular cycle of meetings and establish the group's role in policy development and priority setting.

GM Walking Voice

This useful body continues to meet and has played a positive role in supporting the inclusion of walking issues in GM wide strategies such as "Streets for All". It was instrumental in getting the Walking and Cycling Coordination and Advisory Group established and is also working on inclusion and diversity. There is a website with extensive resources and a regular Newsletter. All our Ramblers Groups are included in the information on the website.

Local Elections

In May 2022 all the districts in Great Manchester had elections for local councillors, there were no elections this year in High Peak. Nationally Ramblers published a Manifesto and we liaised with central office on media work.

Active Travel Summer Roadshows

TfGM had arranged a series of events in June to promote active travel. There were opportunities for Ramblers to take part in exhibitions and other activities. Details of all events were sent to local groups, and we know that Wigan, Salford and Manchester were able to get involved.

Peak District National Park Local Plan and Management Plan

The Peak District National Park Authority recently approved a revised timetable for the review of the Local Plan. An Issues and Options paper is being developed for consultation from February 2023. There will then be a period of public consultation probably running up to the end of March 2023. It is expected that there will be engagement and information events during that period.

The Authority will then assess the responses received and officers will work on developing the detail of the formal draft plan and a further round of statutory consultation by early 2024 with the aim of presenting the Plan to the Secretary of State by early 2025. We are in touch with colleagues from the neighbouring Ramblers Area to develop a coordinated approach.

National Trust Kinder and High Peak Advisory Committee

The Spirit of Kinder events to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Kinder Mass Trespass have been reported elsewhere. The Advisory Group brings together representatives of recreational interests to advise the National Trust on issues related to their Kinder and High Peak estate. It has recently been expanded and in addition to Ramblers representatives it also now includes, mountaineers, horse riders, mountain bikers and the Woodcraft Folk. Kinder Mountain Rescue has also been invited. The Committee has been chaired from its inception by Terry Howard from the Sheffield Campaign for Access to the Moors and he decided to step down. His replacement is Henry Folkard from the BMC.

Alan Manning

Elected Member and Area EC Lead on GM Walking Issues

Greater Manchester & High Peak Area Group Reports

Bolton Group Report

I was appointed as Chair of the Bolton Group at the 2021 AGM. I was not on the Committee prior to this so this has been a year of observing and learning for me.

It is refreshing to find that Bolton Ramblers is an active group which has lots of enthusiastic walk leaders who continue to provide a variety of walks for our members and local community.

We have introduced a number of Tuesday walks this year which have proved very popular. These walks have complemented our regular programme and I think that we now have an excellent and varied range of walks available for both novice and experienced walkers.

We have been able to provide these walks because of the dedication and hard work of our committee and walk leaders. They continue to provide a fantastic commitment by ensuring that we constantly research and develop walks for the benefit of our members.

So, I would like to give a big thank you to the committee and walk leaders for ensuring that we continue to provide this constant level of quality walks.

There are also a number of committee members who provide important supporting roles for the Bolton Group. Our Treasurer Frank Jones, Footpath Secretary Ron Thatcher, Footpath Maintenance Team Sue Gough and Ken Jacobs, General Secretary Jeanne Lauder, Publicity Person Judith Heale, Excursion Secretary Liz Moxham, Sunday Walks Lou Thompson, 3rd Weekend Walks Keith Bridle and David Clift have all been involved in their various roles and provide essential input and support to the committee.

On a personal note, I would like to thank both Malcolm Deaville, our former Chairperson and Tony Hough, our Walks Co-Ordinator for their continued help and support. Both committee members have provided me with lots of advice and background to how Bolton Ramblers functions and I am most grateful for their assistance and guidance in my first year as Chair of Bolton Ramblers.

We also started a Facebook page on 21st March 2022, and I would encourage our walk leaders to post details of walks whenever possible. Since creating the Facebook group then we now have 114 members in the 7 months since this has been going.

In summary, I feel that we have a vibrant and enthusiastic group at Bolton Ramblers and that we will be able to develop and offer regular walks to a consistent high quality for the benefit of all those participating.

Clive Hilton
Chair

Bury Group

Following the disruption caused by COVID19, 2022 was a year when we returned to “Normal.” However, it was not a “Normal” such as at any time in the past, but rather a “Normal” that was at last not totally dominated by COVID19. This is mainly a result of the vaccination programme, and by acts of voluntary self-isolation, by those who detect symptoms. Therefore, we are now willing to share cars rather than drive on our own, and to hold face-to-face meetings, but we have also to be prepared to remain vigilant, as COVID19 has not gone away.

The reduction in risk has meant that Bury Ramblers has been able to return to a full programme, with walks on most Sundays and walks on some midsummer Wednesday evenings. However, there has not been a return to offering a meet-up point in Bury, but in place of this, an offer that walk leaders will assist to arrange lifts for members without transport.

Previously, members would have been sent, twice a year, a paper programme, showing all the walks for 26 weeks ahead. Now, members would be expected to view the walk programme on the internet, as we are only thus far able to plan a few weeks into the future.

Therefore, our challenge for 2023, other than continuing to offer a full walk programme, is to be able to reach out and to accommodate members and potential members, especially those without cars and the internet, to be able to walk with us again, should they wish to do so.

If you wish to walk with us, but do not have the means to travel to the start point of the walk, please contact the leader to ask if a lift can be arranged so you can get to the start of the walk, and back again afterwards.

Ed Husband
Chairman

Coach Rambles Group

Coach Rambles Group has continued to run coach trips once a month for the last 12 months, supplemented with a monthly local walk.

The Group have had difficulties finding leaders for the three walks we normally run on a coach trip and for this reason our coach trips have remained at one per month. It had initially been hoped that perhaps we could provide the option of two or three walks on the local walks, but this was simply not possible due to the lack of leaders. It was hoped that more people would come forward to lead local walks which are easier to access to survey but that did not prove to be the case. Nevertheless, we have managed to continue to provide three walks on the coaches in a varied programme, as follows (and not in chronological order):

Meerbrook, Hayfield, Gargrave, Baslow, Grasmere, Grassington, Conway, Pateley Bridge, Haworth, Church Stretton and Bakewell.

All were very enjoyable, although Baslow was a very wet day which was more than made up for by the very cozy pub at the end. We did experience traffic delays going to Church Stretton because of extensive roadworks just beyond Altrincham and this is likely to cause problems for quite some time in the future.

Unfortunately, after the lockdown period some of our regular members did not return for various reasons although we have had some newer, younger people join us and it is to be hoped that some may become regulars (and even in the future offer to lead).

We have kept ticket prices deliberately low to encourage new people, but unfortunately, we will not be able to continue with this policy due to rise in the cost of coach hire. Ticket prices will have to be increased considerably for the coaches to remain economically viable.

The local walks have proved to be quite successful with about 15 – 20 walkers during the summer months, the lowest number being about 8 – 10 people. However, they will not continue as Coach Rambles walks into the winter programme as the Area Sunday Walks have been restructured and they have been incorporated into those.

With regard to members, during the last 12 months sadly we lost Dave Carding and Helen McDonald, both long-standing members. David Singleton a long-standing member who was a walk leader and our auditor for some years. Ralph Davenport, a Ramblers member since the early 1970's, walk leader and one of the volunteers who took on the very important role (along with one or two others) of acting as Coach Manager. All were pleasant members of the group and will be sadly missed.

Joyce Davenport
Group Secretary

Manchester and District (MAD)

Walks

Since the 2021 MAD AGM: 202 walks have been listed on the website (100 Sat, 60 Sun, 42 on weekdays including evenings). 52 different leaders including 11 new ones.

Membership

Since October 2021, membership has grown from 447 to 560 (active and payment pending members) This is an increase of 25 per cent.

Age Range

The new members seem to be slightly younger the average age of the group members is 39 (down from 42 previously).

Social Media

Following across all platforms has increased by approximately 67%. We paid for some targeted advertising in January which was successful.

Volunteers

Percentage is down from 13 to 12, however, we have more volunteers in total than last year due to the increase in headcount.

Media

We had media appearances on BBC Radio Manchester, Channel 4, Walk Magazine, and were the focus of a Ramblers case study. We also submitted a number of members stories to Head office at their request.

Collaboration

MAD participated in joint walks with Justicia Hong Kong and Columbia Clothing for the Great Hike 2022.

Add to this busy **weekends** away and **socials** calendar and it has been a brilliant 2021-2022 for MAD.

Oli Fearn

Chair

Manchester and Salford Ramblers

Manchester and Salford Ramblers grew out of a Ramblers project called “Get Walking Keep Walking” (GWKW) which was lottery funded for three years (and I still have the T shirt). We agreed at our first inaugural meeting that we would focus on urban walking and continue the tradition of walking near the places we live. We knew there were many groups offering longer walks for our members, but fewer short walks were available. We have continued that tradition and out of has grown two urban long-distance trails, the first was the Salford Trail, based on a route devised by one of our members Roy Bullock and brought to fruition by a dedicated team in Salford with the support of Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM). The Manchester Green Trail was initially developed by a team of volunteers from GWKW. These two trails link green spaces in our urban areas and provide opportunities for local walks. We are trying hard to be inclusive and are revising the Manchester Green Trail to include accessible options. Thanks to the team of volunteers who check the routes and put up waymarkers.

As part of our commitment to inclusivity, Margaret Manning and Mags Metcalfe, with a group of our members provide a series of walks for carers, funded by Sport England.

We continue with our walks programme (thanks to Maggie Smith) and have a team of walk leaders, that, to borrow a phrase from our prime minister (well at the time of writing), “delivers” a range of walks across both Manchester and Salford. These include short urban walks as well as longer walks in the surrounding countryside.

In both Manchester and Salford, we have footpath officers trying to work with Local Authority to ensure that the footpath network is maintained and that we ensure access to public spaces by campaigning for keeping footpaths open in the face of developments. This can sometimes prove highly controversial as in the case of Ralli Quays. Thanks to David Yates, Richard Cleverley and Maggie Walker.

The group has tried to work with local authorities and TFGM to influence policy and raise the profile of the Ramblers, to ensure that these organisations understand how important walking is, not just as a means of active travel but also as an important element of health and leisure. Alan Manning has been a key player in building these relationships.

Chris Quinn organises a lively and entertaining (and often informative and educational) social programme outside our walks (including a trip to a recycling facility – who knew what happened to the waste in our dustbins?). The highlight is our Christmas walk with mince pies and mulled wine on Tandle Hill. Carol Hibbert books our weekends away to give us an opportunity to walk in new places and to get together socially in the evenings, with a quiz.

The group would not function without our secretary, Janice Kerrigan and treasurer Sean Dunne, who work behind the scenes to keep the group running efficiently. My grateful thanks to everyone who has worked hard to make this all possible.

Salle Dare
Chair

Manchester Weekend Walkers

In 2021-2022 we have experienced steady growth in activity and membership numbers. Our membership is up to around 250, with some of the new joiners having switched to us from MAD now that they are over 40 and thus part of our target demographic group.

We have also been trying to increase the number of walks we put on, especially on a Saturday, from 1 to 2. So far, we have had some success with this, but there is still some way to go before we have 2 walks on every Saturday. We have also had many walks on a Sunday, and the occasional evening walk during the summer. Attendance levels have generally been quite strong, although they have varied throughout the year, with high numbers in spring falling off in the summer. Having two walks seems to boost overall numbers slightly and makes pacing easier as faster walkers will normally go on the longer of the two walks. We have managed to work around rail strikes quite successfully by using trams and buses instead to go to places like Newhey and Rossendale that have these services.

We have had an official weekend away in the Malvern Hills (back in Easter) and are planning another one in Snowdonia during the coming New Year. We have also had a resumption of Group social events in the town centre, with people going to the theatre and music events. There is also plenty of unofficial social activity around the Group, including weekends away, nights out, and of course the stop in the pub at the end of each walk!

We look forward to another successful year of Rambling during 2023.

Matthew Ball

Chair

New Mills & District Group

Membership numbers remain largely as last year. Additionally, we have welcomed new members and occasional visitors onto our walks.

Our walking programme resumed last year following the pandemic although we have found people are less willing to lead walks. We offer walks of 9 – 12 miles on Sundays and shorter walks on alternate Wednesdays for which we continue to use a booking system. We have also started occasional Saturday walks with a length a little shorter than the Sunday ones.

Numbers on Wednesday walks has increased to 15+ on occasion but averaged less for Sunday walks. Car sharing is used for Wednesday walks but not officially for Sunday walks.

Our website remains the major source of information and we now have 70-80% of members' email addresses. Unfortunately, we have not managed to replace our web master, but more recently have had useful input from another member.

Our walks continue to be published on the Ramblers "Walks and Events Manager" system as we await the new system. We use "Assemble" and the "Insight" hub which has full membership details. Data protection is maintained with all communications. The use of a Sunday walkers WhatsApp group has been useful.

Our group has been in existence for 50 years and this will be marked with a combined AGM and Christmas meal in December. Additionally, we are planning a spring break in the Lake District.

However, we now wish to change our name to High Peak Ramblers as we feel this will better reflect our geographical location and attract more walkers.

David Jones

Chair

Oldham Group

Our general activity of varying walks remains high. Finding leaders is proving to be a bit more difficult and seems to fall on a trusty hardcore of regulars, however we are seeing some new people as well. Our footpath clearance team has cleared about 26 paths so far and have also either rebuilt or repaired several stiles. Our HF and YHA breaks are also still popular and quite well supported. Our future walks programme will include more 5-mile walks as there appears to be a lot of interest in them.

John Fordham

Chair

Rochdale Group

The Rochdale Group continues to provide a variety of walks in its three-monthly programme that is available in printed form and online. Walk numbers continue to improve with the Thursday walks proving the most popular. The group has managed to recruit several new walk leaders who are actively leading walks in the existing and future walk programs.

David Butterworth, Greg Goddard and Margaret Haygarth have done a tremendous job in setting up the Groundwork/Path Maintenance Team. A team of volunteers work in partnership with Rochdale M.B.C to identify and clear overgrown rights of way in our district and we have funded essential equipment to support the project.

Social events have increased throughout the year with members enjoying trips to the Trough of Bowland, the Peak District and Jersey. The annual Christmas meal is on 11th December and a night at the theatre is planned for February 2023.

The Committee continues to meet at the Unitarian Church for its regular meetings instead of through Zoom. Roy Thorniley has stepped down from the Footpath/Countryside Secretary position after many years in the role and our gratitude to Roy has been duly recorded. I am also stepping down as Chair of the group at the AGM in November. There will be other changes to the Committee in the near future but with new members I am sure the Committee will continue to provide fantastic support to its membership.

Despite the challenging year the Rochdale Group is thriving, and membership remains steady. I thank the Committee for their support and voluntary work throughout the year.

On a personal note, I have really enjoyed my role as Chair over the past seven years and will continue to walk and lead with the Rochdale Group despite moving “over the hill”. Many thanks to Margaret, John and the Area Committee for their excellent communication and support that I have received throughout my tenure.

Richard Gibbons
Chair

Stockport Group

The past year has generally been good and the numbers on walks has slowly increased as the year has progressed. We are still struggling to cover the walks programme, but so far have managed to fill most walking dates although this has only been on a month-to-month basis, even though requests have gone out asking for walks covering two to three months at a time. From 2019 to present day, the number of active walk leaders for our group has reduced by approximately 50%. However, three new leaders have come forward recently who are all new members to the group.

Social events as usual have been very popular. We had a Christmas meal and a Summer Social evening at local restaurants. We had two walks on a Saturday in January followed by a hotpot and two walks on a Sunday in summer followed by a roast dinner. All these occasions were very well attended. We also had three very successful walking weekends away – Keswick and Skipton in Spring, and Whitby in October.

I will be stepping down as Chairman after our AGM in November, so the role will be vacant unless someone else comes forward. Gwen Sidgwick will also be retiring as Secretary and Marie Gilluley has volunteered to take over the role for 2023-2024. I will continue to co-ordinate the walking programme until a new walks co-ordinator is found, and Gwen Sidgwick will continue to maintain the website and assist Marie with the Walksfinder entries.

We are trying very hard to encourage more members onto the committee as the number of committee members has reduced drastically over the last two years. This year we will be losing five committee members and only gaining two new ones.

We are very grateful to Phil Featherstone and Edgar Ernstbrunner who have continued to cover the footpath officer's role, due to no member coming forward to take up the position.

David Sidgwick
Chair

Tameside Group

We have had a very successful year, with membership numbers rising, following an earlier slight fall, and a full programme of varied walks on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We continued with our Thursday evening walks during the summer and have re-started our monthly shorter walks ending with a pub lunch during the winter months. We were also able to hold our annual BBQ after a two-year absence because of Covid.

At the group's 2021 AGM, it was suggested that some of our members found that our harder, higher-level grade of walks (our B and B+ grades) were generally at too fast a pace for them but that they might like the opportunity to go on those routes but more slowly. So, we introduced the BL (B Leisurely) grade for walks which follow a B grade route but at a slower pace and with more rest stops. We held several of those during the summer and they proved very popular.

In addition to our usual walks, we held a couple of more unusual events too. The first was a visit to Holmfirth Vineyard (preceded by a short walk) with a tour of the vineyard, wine tasting and afternoon tea; and the second was a tour of the Castlefield Viaduct project, followed by a short 'industrial heritage' walk, ending at a city-centre pub for lunch. We are grateful to Alan Manning for the arrangements put in place with the National Trust for Ramblers group visits.

We have held two weekends away this year; Haworth in April and Ironbridge in October and social events are planned for Christmas and New Year. In 2023 it will be the group's tenth anniversary and we are planning a special social event in May, to celebrate.

Our members have embraced technology to the extent that of our total membership of about 230, we now have only 10 addresses to post to, all others being contactable by email. In addition, our private Facebook group (open to any Ramblers member or immediate family of a Tameside Ramblers member) and our WhatsApp group, are both very active.

On the subject of technology, Tameside Ramblers was one of just six groups nationally to be selected to test Ramblers new 'Walks Manager', the replacement for the 'Group Walks and Events Manager' (GWEM). Our Webmaster has been dealing with this but at the time of writing it is too early yet to report on the outcome.

We have been without a Footpaths Officer for about four years, although all other essential committee positions remain filled.

Stewart Ramsden

Chair

Trafford Group

Our group has continued to thrive with a gradually increasing membership and a continued active walks programme. Our Thursday walks are normally within an hour's drive of Trafford reaching the outskirts of Greater Manchester, and the surrounding counties and occasionally North Wales. Several additional walks have been organised on other days of the week as well as more challenging alternative walks on Thursdays. They are well supported and varied. Thanks to our walk leaders in encouraging and supporting members to lead walks we continue to maintain a wide variety in our programme. We are now actively exploring options to offer overnight and/or weekend stays to enable walks in locations such as the Lake District and mid-Wales.

Earlier this year we transferred our website to a Ramblers supported website which has technical support from volunteers at the Ramblers. This was smooth and has proved welcome due to the additional facilities that this has provided. In particular, the ease of posting the walks programme and altering it on rare occasions due to unexpected cancellation. Members have welcomed the ease with which walks details are readily available.

The Saturday Strollers walks of 4-5 miles which are closer to Trafford continue to be very popular and are down to the enthusiasm of the two main leaders, Sheila, and Lesley, who have been leading this for over ten years now. More recently they have added slightly longer walk options.

Since the restrictions of the pandemic and the need for walks booking, leaders have found this useful, and we now request that people book onto walks.

Our Facebook page continues to be popular with many "likes" and the two WhatsApp groups, for social comments and pictures, and walks information, are well used.

I would like to thank the members of our Trafford committee for all their hard work over the last year and the enthusiasm with which they approach their tasks.

Richard Longbottom
Chair

Wigan and District

We continue to visit some lovely places and enjoy our walks together. Coach rambles have started again, and we will use the train, when necessary, as our members enjoy both.

Our membership is slightly up from last year, there are around 160 members, and our finances are healthy.

We are supported financially from the Ramblers Association and are affiliated to Greater Manchester and High Peaks Area.

Our social events, Christmas meal and holiday are back up and running and are well supported. Our group remains strong, and we all make new walkers who turn up for our walks welcome. That is a credit to you all.

Our great committee continue to work behind the scenes is keeping our group running smoothly. Although we need more members to join us. If anyone would like to join us or help in any way, that would be great.

Thanks to our committee, all our walk leaders and our members for your continual support.

David Dalton
Chair