



MINUTES OF THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH DEVON RAMBLERS

Held at Churston Golf Club, Dartmouth Road, Churston, TQ5 0LA
on Wednesday 12th November, 2025

Attendance - 46 members

Apologies - 11 members

Minutes signed as read:

.....
Mike Wilkin / Chairman

Date.....

1. Welcome, Apologies and Housekeeping

Mike W, Chairman, welcomed all to the 43rd AGM and read the 11 apologies (appendix i). Details of fire exits were given, and copies of the Summary of Accounts and Agenda were distributed in the room.

Mike W noted the change of venue and that the Committee would appreciate any feedback, after the event, to allow for the 2026 booking to be made. He also thanked Richard B for taking on the audit of the Group Accounts this year. Appreciation was then given for the whole Committee in their sterling work over the past year and it was advised that two members were standing down, Val R and Paddy J and also Jackie M, who has organised the Christmas Party for many years, is not going to continue into 2026.

Members were asked if they had any questions from the 2024 Minutes, that had been distributed recently by Mailchimp. No questions were posed.



2. Matters Arising

Karen H confirmed there were no queries, or matters arising via email. The minutes were, therefore, signed as 'read' by Mike W and duly filed.

3. Officer Reports

Chairman – Mike Wilkin

Mike thanked the Committee for their efforts over 2025, supporting him in his first term in the role and facilitating a full walks programme, together with a varied social programme.

Mike advised that, as usual, each Officer would provide an individual update, but in summary; the financial and membership position remained stable thanks to Linda L, Dorothy W's recordkeeping had ensured all data was accurate. Karen H had kept all on track with admin, paperwork and a social media presence. Nicky W had once again produced, against all odds, two full programmes over 2025.

Mike then asked the membership to offer particular thanks to two Committee Members who would not be standing this year, Val R and Paddy J and also Jackie M who has organised the Christmas party for many years. A round of applause was gladly given by all.

Bob W continued his excellent work on the John Musgrave Trail and footpath issues, as well as the Don't Lose Your Way project. He had also organised two very successful Club Holidays which would be showcased later. Val R, Paddy J, Kate McC and Hilary B were thanked for planning an interesting and well-attended programme of social events, also to be showcased later.

Mike also made mention of the South West Coast Path walks, separate from Rambler's activities; no certificates to award this year, but very likely in 2026.

Before giving a presentation of plans to change our website, Mike advised that we were trialling joint walks with the South Hams Ramblers. Karen H had already led walks for them and Clive H has for SDR, both very successfully. There are two joint walks in the next two months. This will continue where parking is possible



and both groups are happy. It would not be at the detriment of the SD Group. He is aware some leaders do not like larger groups and this remains their prerogative.

At this point a pro-forma of the new website was displayed. It is a format recommended, and provided, by Ramblers, already used by over 100 groups. The saving is substantial as, apart from a small set up fee, there is minimal further cost, compared with £567 presently. Mike believes the site will offer us everything currently available, i.e. location points, walks programme and a gallery. Our current licence expires in April and, unless there are valid objections, we will migrate to this new facility. The Facebook blogs and gallery will continue in their current form, KH to speak on that later.

Treasurer's Report – Linda Lister

Copies of the year end accounts had been distributed via email and hard copy made available on the night. Linda provided this supporting narrative:

“The group accounts are split into 3: Main, Self-Funded & John Musgrave.

The main account is for the day to day running of the group, our main expenses are printing the walks programmes, website renewal & room hire for the committee meetings.

This account is funded quarterly by Ramblers national; the annual amount we receive is based on membership numbers. However, the allowance is never enough to cover our expenses and I submit a budget requesting additional funds.

For the new financial year, we were advised that the basic allowance would be £428 (calculated as £100 plus £1.10 per member based on 298 members.) This highlighted the fact that the cost for the website was equal to the amount that Ramblers believe we need to run the group. This is the reason Mike is looking into the new website, in an effort to reduce our expenditure as we are concerned that the cost for the website may be challenged by Ramblers in future years.

Total funds held as at **30 September £567.42**



The self-funding account is used for the events organised by the social committee and for the club holiday. These events should break even, however a balance has accumulated and the committee decided that some of the funds should be used to subsidise events, for the benefit of our members. The day walk to the Cotswolds in September was the first where we decided to help fund the cost of the coach, which was £850, and contributed £457.75 towards this. We costed the trip at £32.50 per person, and without the support from the social fund, members would have been asked to pay £45.15.

Although the Spanish holiday shows a shortfall of £316.20, we are due to receive £300 from RWH.

Total funds held as at **30 September £380.51**

We receive payments from Ramblers walking partnership, so if you book any holidays with them please remember to nominate us and we receive a nominal sum of £10.

We have a separate working account for the maintenance of the JMHT. There has been an increased cost this year, the main item of expenditure was a supply of 250 trail marker discs which cost £573.

We have £20,200.54 held at Hampshire Trust Bank on a 95-day notice account paying 4.5% this will reduce to 3.95% on 8 April '26. The interest payable in April goes into the working account and should be sufficient to cover this year's costs.

Total funds as at **30 September £22,665.35**



Membership Secretary – Dorothy Webley

Dorothy advised the membership of the latest stats from Central Office;

The membership numbers have averaged 293 during the last year. As at September 2025 the membership stands at 289, this is 51 more than the September 2024 level. In November 2024, 54 members from Teignmouth and Dawlish Group came over to South Devon Group list. 42 are still members of SDR.

Average numbers of members on walks:-

	Oct 24 to Sep 25	Oct 23 to Sep 24
Sunday	14.2	14.0
Thursday	20.4	17.0
OSE	21.3	19.9
TSW	13.2	15.6
Total	<u>17.3</u>	<u>15.9</u>

The average of numbers of walkers in total, is higher this year. The average number of walkers on walks is higher for Sunday, Thursday and OSE and lower for TSW.

A total of 224 individuals walked at some time during the year, of which 120 were associated by Central Office to South Devon Ramblers.

Of the list of members from Central Office, 42% have walked at least once during the last year.

Seven walks were cancelled during the year, for forecasts of heavy rain and wind.



The miles covered by people on all the walks was 14,947. This is the equivalent of walking over half of the way around the equator. Over the 16 years that Dorothy has been collecting the information, the group has collectively walked around the equator over ten times!

Walks Co-ordinator's Report - Nicky Ward

Walks Programme:

The Winter Walks Programme, November 2025 to April 2026 is now complete and in colour at no extra cost as Ramble Worldwide increase sponsorship for colour ads. Nicky thanked all leaders, confirming the club would not survive without them. A special thank you to Janet Evans for helping with the OSE walks. Janet thanked the membership for their support and stressed the value of OSE walks and her hope that they would continue. Nicky will now co-ordinate these.

Walks offered: The number of leaders has increased since winter 24/25, 24 have contributed to this programme - 1 less than when Nicky first started doing the programmes in 2019. On this programme we have 10 coastal walks, 20 moorland walks and 33 countryside walks. There are 63 walks on this programme with a total distance of 461 miles to be covered.

Walk Leaders Training: All walk Leaders on this programme must have completed the walks leader training programme by the end of this year to be able to lead their walk in future. This can be done by either having led 12 walks in the last 3 years, or completing the online training programme, either by yourself or by joining a group session run by The Ramblers. Nicky now has paper copies of the walk leader training programme, some available in the room tonight, which you can work through to complete the training. *It is not a test, more an awareness raising assessment.* If you have completed the training and have not informed Ramblers, ***please let Nicky know so you can be registered as a walks leader.***



Secretary's Report – Karen Howes

Karen confirmed her role as providing admin support to the Committee, distributing information via email, managing incoming queries, and raising our public profile via Facebook page, SDR website, and linking as necessary with Ramblers Association. Also, creating and leading walks with informative history or artefacts and items to find en route. She has also been liaising with the South Hams Group and is leading a joint walk on 20th November, from Stover.

As always, ideas and comments – positive or otherwise – and feedback on the Club or Committee, are welcome via the email address; secretary@southdevonramblers.com, which is checked daily. Karen would particularly like to hear feedback on the AGM venue this year in order to book early for 2026.

FB continues to grow and is a regular source of information for potential members, as well as those thinking of moving to Devon, interested in the outdoors, local history or joining a walking group, and also friends/relatives of current walkers and other walking group members who are simply interested! There are over 1000 followers now, including our walk guides on the Ramblers holiday to Spain and Kate Ashcroft from Ramblers Head Office. It does require regular monitoring, as all FB sites do and she is supported in this by Mike and Lesley W.

JMHT Officer, Footpath Officer & DLYW – Bob Ward

Bob gave this synopsis of his activities and actions over the year:-

DLYW (Don't Lose Your Way)

I am working on getting a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) for a path that connects the SWCP to the Coast View Holiday Park crossing the Shaldon Approach Gold Course, this is illustrated with a map.

JMHT

Most of the sections were checked in this summer's mandatory sweep. A small number of issues have been identified and these will be dealt with over the winter.

I have invested in finger post making equipment i.e. a router and letter stencil set. Have made a number of new finger posts at vastly lower cost than having them custom made. No new monitors needed, all vacancies filled. Hilary B & David L have recently taken on the last one.

Footpath Officer

Brixham Railway Heritage Trail is going ahead with site clearance.

I am now on the Janet's Trail steering committee. Moving forward is complicated by TCCT going into administration, as will be explained in George C's presentation.

Spain 2025

- Went ahead 9th to 16th September.
- Coach to Bristol Airport arrived on time and good run to BRS with only 10 minutes of congestion on the M5. Always a concern.
- Guides were great. Grade 3 and grade 5 walks for 5 days.
- Day off was a guided tour of Granada and tour of the Alhambra.
- Temperature was unseasonably hot. Temperatures well into the 30's.



- Personally, I'm very happy with the way it went. As always, feedback welcome. Slideshow accompanied by Chris B's Poem will illustrate.

Holidays 2026

Next year's mini-break will be in western Cornwall based out of the Haven Riviere Sands Holiday Park near Hayle. Flyers available.

Next year's main holiday is in the Peak district based at the Kenwood Mercure Hotel in Sheffield, reasonably priced. Further details followed later in the meeting. (flyer now available, on walks and website at Events/Holidays)

George Coles' Projects

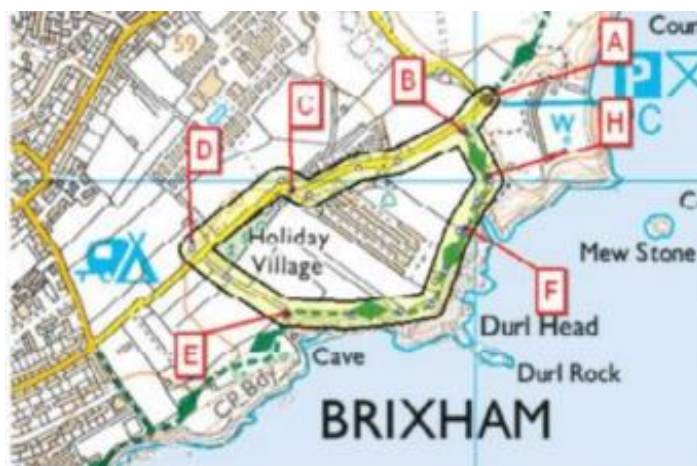
George gave a presentation of his projects, namely Janet's Trail and the Brixham Heritage Railway Trail. He advised that the former was particularly in need of support, now that the Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust had folded. Bob is now on the steering group for that project.

The Brixham Heritage Railway Project is ongoing. Talks are taking place with agents of the Churston Baronery, over the land the track crosses. Some of it has already been covered with residential housing.

His slides were included in the presentation.



Brixham Heritage Trail



Janet's Trail

Social Committee - Val Rose, Paddy Jewry, Kate McCormack, Hilary Bick

Kate McC took the floor and explained her change of role to 'social co-ordinator', with the support of Committee Members. She ran through the successful events of 24/2025, accompanied by Bob's excellent gallery.

2024

Friday, 13 December –Christmas lunch at the Livermead Cliff Hotel. Jackie had organised everything to perfection and will now be standing down as Christmas party planner.

2025

Friday, 14 March – Paddy organised a superb supper at Rockfish restaurant, Brixham. Paddy has been a much valued member of the Social Committee for around 12 years, organising a wealth of events, and will now stand down.

Wednesday, 18 June – Canoeing down the River Dart with Dynamic Adventures. A perfect day greeted 9 keen canoeists as they set off from Totnes for a 3 hour adventure. As others returned to dry land, three intrepid members continued and made it under the bridge and back.

Organised by Val, who, on this occasion, was unable to participate due to a ruptured Achilles tendon.

Sadly, after a good 16 years as a member of the Social Committee, Val is now standing down.

Thursday 15th August – Tessa S organised a very successful trip to The Cotswolds with a very popular meal at the Brent House Carvery.

KH advised that she and Hilary are investigating a similar arrangement, to Bristol, in June 2026, with a meal on return, if interest makes it viable.

Friday, 29 August – 16 SDR tea lovers enjoyed an excellent visit to Dartmoor Estate Tea Gardens near Ashburton. Lunch at Buckfast Abbey completed the outing.



Friday, 12 December – Hilary will be taking over from Jackie M for this year's Christmas lunch and has reserved tables for 40 at the Livermead Cliff Hotel, Torquay (12.30 for 1pm).

A round of applause followed at this point as the audience thanked Val, Paddy and Jackie for their sterling efforts over the years.

Another for Tessa for organising the Cotswolds Coach Trip, assisted on the day by Charley H-MG for leading and doing the recce.

4. Showcase of Trips and Events

Bob W presented a superb slideshow of our trips in 2025, which covered:

Mini-Break to Cornwall – May

Cotswolds Coach Trip - August

Ramble Worldwide Holiday to Andalucia, Spain - September

They were hugely successful trips, enjoying dry and sunny walking weather on both occasions.

Our guides in Spain, Debbie and Ann were mentioned for their excellent leadership and also their friendship and support in the group, joining us for meals out and every evening in the hotel. The pool was especially popular as the temperature exceeded 32 deg.

Chris B then recited his popular poetic synopsis of the holiday, timed with slideshows for each day and event over the week.

5. Election of Officers

Mike took the floor at this point, explaining the more serious issue to attend to being the election of the Committee. He thanked the membership for their support over the year and confirmed he would stand down at this point and hand over to the Secretary to manage proceedings.

Each current Committee Member was asked if they would like to stand for a further 12 months. A proposer and seconder requested followed by a show of hands.

<u>Officer and Role</u>	<u>Standing</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Secunder</u>
Mike Wilkin - Chair	Y	Tessa S	Eric E
Lesley Wilkin – Vice Chair	Y	Kate McC	Bob W
Linda L - Treasurer	Y	Paddy J	George C
Dorothy W - Membership Secretary	Y	Janet E	Lesley W
Karen H - Secretary	Y	Jackie M	Christine C
Kate McC – Social Cordinator	Y	Tessa S	Eric E
Hilary B – General Member	Y	Vicky H	Verity V
Nicky W - Walks Coordinator	Y	Jackie M	Dave L
Bob W - Footpath & JMHT Officer	Y	Bill B	Christine C
Outcome – All current Committee Members were re-elected for 2025/6			

A timely break was then taken, for refreshments.

6. Where Am I – Picture Poser?

Karen H, supported with slides by Bob W, presented a posier that proved to be quite challenging, even for those featured in the images very recently!

The winning teams, scoring just under 50%, were awarded with festive treats.

7. 2026 Holiday Plans – Bob W

Bob presented his plans for 2026; A mini-break at Riviere Sands Holiday Park near Hayle and a 5-day break in the Peak District in September.

Bookings are already being made for the former, at very reasonable cost. Bob aims to offer, with support from leaders in the membership, 3 walks each day and has found an evening venue that can accommodate those who wish to eat out. There is no limit on attendance for this break and no need to book in advance – many have taken advantage of early bird arrangements at the holiday park already.

The Peak District; the name Bob explained comes from an Anglo-Saxon tribe called the Pecsætan (or "Peak Sitters"), who settled in the area, and is not a reference to mountain peaks.

A flyer is available on the website (Events/Holidays), giving full details and provisional reservations are being made. There are only 11 single rooms available at the Kenwood Mercure, Sheffield. Bob invited questions via his email or on walks. £100 deposit required now with the balance due at the end of June '26.

Holiday 2027

Unusually, Bob invited tentative expressions of interest on three options for a European holiday in September 2027. A healthy show of hands was evident for all three options, at this stage.



Flying from Bristol

September

7 Nights. 5 walk days. 1 day off.

- Madeira £1450. Grades 3-5. 3h 40m flight time
- Cinque Terre £1750. Grades 4-6. 2h 5m flight time
- Mallorca £1500. Grades 3-5. 2h 25 flight time

8. A.O.B.

Mike W thanked all who attended and invited feedback on the setting and layout. His view was positive and with the financial saving he felt it likely we would repeat in November 2026.

He mentioned also the John Musgrave Heritage Trail, which we are custodians and managers of, reaches its 20th Anniversary in 2026. It will be marked, details to follow when confirmed.

With no further queries, the meeting closed at 8.50pm

Appendix (i) AGM APOLOGIES

Appendix (ii) YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Appendix (i)

AGM APOLOGIES - 2025

Rowena French

Theresa Code

Charley Haysom-McGhan

Brian Swann

Carol Swann

Gordon Wight

Sandie Deichler

Robert Woolcott

Carol Woolcott

Richard Eastman

Gail Johnson



Appendix (ii)

YEAR END ACCOUNTS

[illegible]

SELF FINANCING		2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£	£
	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure
Balance b/fwd			1027.76		
Christmas lunch 2024	1,281.00	1,281.00		961.00	961.00
Spain holiday 2025	34,851.10	35,167.30	-316.20		
Cotswolds Day Walk	1,256.00	1,713.75	-457.75		
Canoe Adventure	315.00	315.00			
Dartmoor Tea Plantation	210.00	210.00			
Rockfish & Fish market visit	475.00	475.00			
Bank charges		3.30	-3.30		8.40
RWH Reward	140.00		140.00	170.00	
Talk Berry Head Hotel				640.00	688.40
Rosemoor				1,229.35	1,210.81
First Aid Course					102.43
Yorkshire Dales Holiday				23,595.00	23,894.20
Fish Suppers – Rockfish				375.00	375.00
Thank you and retirement gifts		10.00	10.00		193.88
Portugal Sept 2023 RWH Reward				300.00	
	38528.10	39175.35		27,270.35	27,434.12
Balance at Unity Bank			380.51		
					1027.76
Independent Examiners Report					
Having carried out procedures in accordance with the Area and Group independent examination guidelines, I consider the accounts to give a fair representation of the Group's financial activities for the year to 30 September 2025					
R Batchelor					
Independent Examiner					

John Musgrave Legacy	2023					2024		
	£	£	£			£	£	£
	Income	Expenditure	Net			Income	Expenditure	Net
Balance b/fwd t Unity Bank			2,946.00					2,926.25
Balance b/fwd at Hampshire Trust Bank								20,000.00
Sale of books - JMHT	55.00					39.00		
Interest	622.38					400.05		
Initial transfer to 85 day notice a/c							1.00	
Initial transfer into 85 day notice a/c						1.00		
Interest on 120 day notice a/c						199.54		
Secretarays Expenses		23.80					12.00	
Maintenance of trail	677.38	1134.77				639.59	406.30	
		1158.57					419.30	
Balance at Unity Bank			2464.81					2,946.00
Balance at Hampshire Trust Bank			20200.54					20,200.54
TOTAL			22665.35					23,146.54
Combined Balances								
Unity Trust – Main a/c			567.42					765.43
Unity Trust – Self funded a/c			380.51					1027.76
Unity Trust – JMHT			2464.81					2,946.00
Hampshire Trust			20200.54					20200.54
Total funds held			23613.28					24939.73