



Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

Organising your AGM

At your Annual General Meeting (AGM), you carry out the formal business in line with your constitution.

This guide is for Area and Group Chairs and Secretaries, and covers the basics of organising your AGM, whether you choose to do it online or in person. We hope you find it helpful.

1. | The date

- **Area AGMs should be held between 1 October and the end of February** ahead of General Council and Scottish and Welsh Councils.
- **Group AGMs should be held between 1 October and 31 December** before your Area's AGM.

2. | Location: online or in-person?

It's your choice whether to hold AGMs in person or online. However, here are a few points for your Area or Group to consider:

- **Environmental Impact**

We know Areas and Groups cover a large geographical area. If you meet in person, most attendees will end up using public transport or driving, both methods of which have negative impacts on the environment. Does your choice of venue have good links for public transport and parking? Will your meeting have as minimal impact on the environment as possible?

- **Financial Impact**

Venue hire (if needed) and travel costs are likely to result in claims for expenses covered by the local Area or Group. Could the costs saved be better spent on a local project?

- **Accessibility and Inclusivity**

There are individuals who find it difficult to attend meetings in person due to mental or physical health reasons, or equally the simple practicalities of leaving home and accessing transport. From an inclusivity perspective there are individuals who face challenges such as hearing difficulties that are easier to manage online than at a venue.

For those who struggle to manage the digital side of things, we are here to help and can provide you with links to videos you can share which make it easier to both set up, run and attend meetings. There are other positives to managing online sessions such as recording and voting.

- Don't forget you run your AGM when the weather can be at its worst. In the past they have been cancelled due to floods, snow and fog. These months are also short on daylight hours for those who travel long distances.
- If you are holding an in-person AGM, you may need to complete a risk assessment for the venue and provide a copy of our Public Liability cover. Any cancellation costs are not covered by Ramblers insurance.
- We don't recommend hybrid meetings (some people attend in person and others online). While they seem to offer the best of both worlds, they rely on a very good internet connection and can be complicated to manage – especially when it comes to sound.

3. | Inviting a trustee to an Area AGM

- We will do our best to provide you with a Trustee to attend your Area AGM. Please be aware that this is subject to people's availability.
- In England, we will ask you to consider why you would like a Trustee to attend. What value this will bring to the meeting? It's optional rather than compulsory.
- In Scotland, a member of Ramblers Scotland's Strategic Committee and a member of staff will plan to attend your Area AGMs, weather and travel permitting.
- In Wales, one member of the Ramblers Cymru Steering Group and/or one or more members of staff will attend all Area AGMs.

4. | The agenda

- All AGMs must cover the formal business, including:
 - Approval of last year's AGM report and any matters arising.
 - Presentation and approval of Annual Reports and Accounts.
 - Election of committee members and independent examiner.
 - Discussion of motions for General Council/ Scottish Council/ Welsh Council
 - Nomination of General Council Members.

- If a Ramblers Trustee, member of Ramblers Scotland's Strategic Committee, member of the Ramblers Cymru Steering Group, or a member of staff is attending your AGM, please allow time for them in your agenda to speak.
- Alongside formal business, it would be great if you could also organise some informal activities to make your AGM as engaging and enjoyable as possible. This could be a guest speaker, quiz, short video or film, recognition of team or individual contributions, a panel discussion, or a walk. Please let us know what you are doing so we can share this with other Areas and Groups.

There is no rule about the length of time AGMs should be held for. Some Areas choose to hold short AGMs to deal with the formal business and then opt to hold additional activities such as a Members Day later in the summer to involve all members and your local community.

5. | Inviting Members

- Let Members know the date and agenda at least 14 days in advance of your AGM. You could use your website, newsletters, social media, emails, mail outs – whatever you think is the best way to get in touch with all your members.
- Groups should also let their Area know the date of their AGMs.
- Please try to make the AGM as interesting as possible when promoting it to members and other partner organisations.
- You may want people to pre-register for your AGM, so you have an idea of numbers. Eventbrite is an online booking system (free to use) for online or in person events.
- Ahead of the AGM, Areas and Groups should share a written financial report and updates on annual activities with members.
- If you are holding an online meeting, please make sure you follow up with those who are attending to provide clear guidance about how to join the meeting.
- Some Areas invite Affiliate Group reps to their AGMs to make everyone welcome and involved.
- To get as many members as possible to your AGM consider public transport routes and car parking facilities or hold your AGM online.

6. | Housekeeping and notetaking

- If you're holding an online AGM, start the AGM by letting everyone know what functions are available and how to use them e.g., raising your hand, using the chat box for questions and going on mute when not speaking.
- Whether you are holding an online or in-person AGM, you must please keep a record of the meeting. This does not need to be long. It can simply state the decisions taken, the approval of the report and accounts, and the names of newly elected committee members and appointed council members. Please keep it short and simple to make your lives easier!
- Areas must file their Annual Reports with central office by the end of March. Please send it to your relevant regional contact.

7. | Voting

- You can give members the option of voting in advance by post or email using the proxy form. If you choose to give this option, it needs to be offered to all members and include information on who/when/how to return the votes.
- If votes are tied, refer to your constitution. Most state that the Chair has the casting vote.

8. | Actioning the outcomes of voting

Your elected committee members

Once you have elected your committee members, the records need to be updated. This can be done by the outgoing officer, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or main contact.

- **Adding New Volunteers:** Use the form in the [volunteer support section](#) of our website. Volunteers are added within 24 hours.
- **Removing Volunteers:** Email details (First name, Last name, Email, Role, Group) to rolesandtraining@ramblers.zendesk.com. Removal may take up to a month.

General Council

- [General Council](#) takes place in April each year.
- Each Area can appoint up to two Council Members to attend and vote at meetings of the General Council (note: Inner London and Surrey can appoint three Council Members).
- Ensure that Council Members attending are both diverse and properly representative of

the wider Ramblers' membership. We encourage Areas to appoint at least one new Council Member at their AGM.

- Areas should seek nominations from members prior to AGMs. When more than two members are interested or nominated, you'll need to vote on who will be appointed at your AGM.
- If you cannot find members who can attend the General Council, you should still try to appoint Council Members as they can participate and vote by proxy.
- Potential motions for General Council should be presented by members to committees in advance of Area AGMs and have the support of a seconder. At each Area AGM, attendees will vote on the wording of the motion and whether to submit it for debate by the General Council.
- If your Area decides it wants to put forward a motion to General Council, please follow the [motions submissions process](#) on the main Ramblers website. The deadline will be announced on the website.

Scottish Council

- [Scottish Council](#) takes place in March each year.
- Each Area can appoint two delegates and each Group can appoint one delegate to attend and vote at Scottish Council.
- Members can propose a motion for discussion at Scottish Council. These should be submitted by their Area or Group.
- If you think there are topics that would lend themselves to good discussion at Scottish Council, outside of formal motions, you can email topics suggestions to Scotland@ramblers.org.uk—by **31 December**.

Ramblers Cymru AGM (Welsh Council)

- [Welsh Council](#) takes place in March to April each year. Each Group can send one delegate, and each Area can send one delegate plus another for every 500 members they have (for example, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire areas can appoint one delegate, but Glamorgan and North Wales can have more).
- Elections are held for honorary officers (Ramblers Cymru Ambassador & deputy ambassadors) and for members of the Ramblers Cymru Steering Group (RCSG), which includes the Chair of the Group and up to 8 normal members (including up to 2 co-opted members).
- Formal motions on Welsh matters are also discussed and voted on, and these can be submitted via either your Group or Area. Discussion and debate sessions are also organised each year on relevant or interesting topics, as well as guest speakers – please contact Dai Rees if you'd like to propose a topic or speaker for these sessions.