

Covid-19 Coronavirus - Ramblers Activities Stop Start Stop



Cleeve Group Socially Distanced Walk in October

The Covid-19 Coronavirus has taken quite a toll on led walks. In July, at the end of the first lock down, Government had set a top limit of 30 people for walks when classed as a sporting activity. This suited Group walks mostly of about a dozen. With the virus still present though, many people were still wary of taking part. On the hand some were keen to meet up for a walk. October 14th saw a new three tier (medium, high, very high) approach to Covid-19 restrictions. It wasn't enough and on 5th November all outdoor activities were suspended as the virus began to spread again. There was a brief respite at the beginning of December before lock down again on 19th December. The aim of walking again 5th January passed too and now at the end of January only indoors Ramblers activities can take place.

Cotswold Way Celebration Monday 13th – Sunday 19th September 2021

The Cotswold Way looks empty. Sunday 17th May 2020 was the Trail's 50th Anniversary. However the Virus put paid to the planned celebrations. A number of people chose to walk a section of the Way on the day.

The Cotswolds National Landscape manage the Trail and is organising activities for September.



Walking Together September 2021

Following the success of this event in previous years, it seemed a great idea to plan an event this September. What better opportunity than to choose the same week as the Cotswold Way. Hopefully a number of Groups will be able to walk parts of the Way with some arriving at the Market Hall in Chipping Campden. For more details see the June issue of this newsletter.

Diary Dates

Gloucestershire Ramblers Area Council Meetings
Wed 7:30pm with Zoom

31 March - Area Council
To discuss Ramblers
General Council Motions

26 May – Area Council
Ordinary Meeting

Mon 13 - Sun 19 Sept
Cotswold Way Celebration
Walking Together events



Find us in Meetup
and in Facebook

2020 AGM Sat 16th January 2021

Michèle Holden is the new Chair for Gloucestershire Ramblers Area, elected at our Annual General Meeting hosted by GWG using Zoom.

Bernard Gill the previous Chair takes over the role of Secretary and which has been vacant for a few years.

Other posts:-

Charlie Morriss becomes Vice-Chair while Gwen Chaney is the new Minutes Secretary taking over from Geoff Smithdale who has given huge support to the Area in various posts over the years. Gerry O'Driscoll becomes Treasurer while Richard Holmes continues as Footpath Secretary.

The motion to rationalise Area Officer term limits at 4 years didn't reach the necessary 2/3rds majority. However many post holders had entered into the spirit of the motion by swapping roles which allowed the possibility of new faces with fresh ideas.

Michael Penny a volunteer Trustee on the Ramblers Board rounded up the event describing the way new computer systems should be coming through to help with our work.



Michèle Holden

Walking and Countryside Matters



Please walk only on the footpath. We've marked it clearly for you (to slither through the mud).

Please don't walk off the footpath it damages the crop (Wouldn't reinstatement of the path be more useful?)

Many people are going out for exercise walks in the countryside due to Virus constraints on meeting up. Together with wet weather at this time of year it's highlighted a key issue – drainage. Traditionally paths would have been well drained with a raised centre (highway) and if necessary a ditch to either side.

Farmers can plough or otherwise disturb the path surface only if it is not reasonably convenient to avoid doing so. The path must be restored within 24 hours of the disturbance (or within two weeks if it's the first such disturbance for a crop). Unfortunately restoration may be taken to mean just marking the path line.

With care, a walking pole in the right place can help create a drainage channel towards a nearby ditch.



Don't Lose your Way !

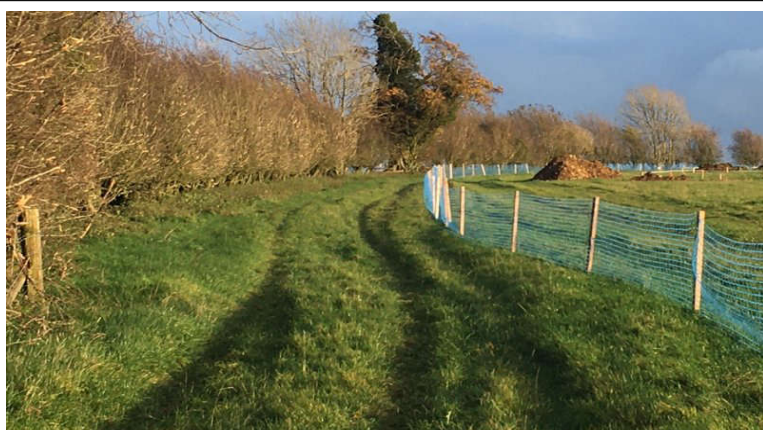
The 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act set a deadline of the beginning of 2026 as a cut off date for registering Footpaths and Bridleways missing from the 1949 Definitive Map. Over the last few months Ramblers has devised a system to highlight the differences between the current OS Map and the 1880 maps on which the Definitive Map was based. Apparently there are 910 miles of possible paths that could be lost forever - see the blue dashes on the map snippet right (courtesy OS and Ramblers). However some could have been legally diverted or extinguished over time. Some paths may have been built over in urban areas.



Our task is to examine the maps and make claims for the paths that appear useful. Looking above there is a minor white road linking the green footpath to the blue dashes. Should that be included too? At the other end of the three blue dashes, there are some faint black dots heading east - what about those?

It's only necessary make sure claims are registered before 2026. A number of years can be spent afterwards determining the merits of the application. One of the uses of a claim is with the vast amount of new housing development being built across the county. Developers are keen to demonstrate their green credentials and are often willing to maintain corridors for walking.

If you're interested in maps or have local knowledge on the ground and feel you can help please contact Charlie Morriss at DLYW@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk or via this newsletter.



A417 Missing Link at the Air Balloon

In November we made our submission to the 2020 supplementary consultation. We've been campaigning for over 20 years now to take through traffic off local roads here so that they can become walkable and crossable again, while trying to retain much of the landscape. Proposals are still being updated.

The route takes in the green track ACY26 shown left with its veteran hedge and trees and is just one of the proposed losses to the wide dual carriageway.

The popular Air Balloon Inn is also set to go unless some sort of tunnelling option can be considered underneath the car park and which could reduce traffic noise at nearby Emma's Grove neolithic site. Ramblers continue to press to retain footpath and other crossings along the route.

Diamond Way

North Cotswold Group devised the Diamond Way in 1995 to celebrate 60 years of the Ramblers Association. The route was specially designed to go through some of the many delightful honey stone villages while tracing the boundary of the North Cotswold group parishes. For the 2000 Millennium celebrations the route was recreated as a series of 30 short circular Sparkling Walks.

When possible over the last 12 months the trail has been re-waymarked using the unobtrusive blue diamonds.

Sue Salmon

www.ramblers.org.uk/north-cotswold



Some Group and Area News

There are seven Ramblers Groups in the Gloucestershire Ramblers Area :- Cirencester, Forest of Dean, South Cotswold, Gloucester, Cleeve, North Cotswold and Gloucestershire Walking Group. GWG also has a 20-30s sub-group. A number of Affiliated Organisations are represented at our Area Council meetings. Some 60 Ramblers Areas join together to form the Ramblers Association.

Cirencester Group

When group walking was allowed within the Covid restrictions, Cirencester Group was able to put together a full programme of weekly walks which proved extremely popular. The walks were widely advertised and attracted a number of new members, as well as regulars and affiliates from other groups. Some of the walks even attracted the maximum number of 30 walkers.



We are extremely grateful to all our walk leaders who have kept the programme going in these difficult times. Overall, membership numbers have remained constant; a few members have left but others have joined the Group. We were able to hold our annual Away Weekend in September, postponed from the spring, enjoying excellent weather and good food in Ilfracombe, and our annual mid-week break 'A Taste of the West Country' in October in Torquay.

Path maintenance continued prior to the second lockdown. A 250m stretch of path in Edgeworth Parish, which had been left almost impassable as a result of timber operations, was cleared. A treacherous site, the work involved cutting back nettles and brambles, moving logs off the path, clearing forestry brash, removing small trees and installing new signage. Many other footpath issues have been identified, and work on these, as well as on the Wysis Way, will resume as soon as guidelines allow.

The Group has also begun revising its *Walks around Cirencester* leaflets and the first of these, *Stratton and Baunton*, is now available on our website. Obviously, under the current restrictions, we are not able to meet for walks or for our normal social events. However, we have set up a Facebook Group and a number of our members have been posting photographs of their own walks. It is one small way of keeping the membership in contact with each other.

Alison Goodall www.cirencesterramblers.org.uk

Gloucester Group

The Group organised a programme of walks subject to Covid social distance restrictions here at Minchinhampton Common.

The final walk on December 17th, before lockdown, was our popular Christmas hats, jumpers and masks (added this year) walk from Painswick Beacon returning past the Rococo Gardens.



Twenty walkers attended and they were split into two groups with separate leaders. Mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed at the break.

Our Group AGM used Zoom on 19 November and was very well attended. We're hoping that we can soon resume a walks programme and other activities but it may not be until early April. For further photos and updates please see our website.

John Bent-Marshall www.gloucester-ramblers.org.uk