KINGSTON GROUP OF THE RAMBLERS
Annual Report for 2025/26

Executive Committee

Chair	Barbara Crow
Secretary	Brenda Horwill
Treasurer	Calli Scott
Membership Secretary	Janet Mackay
Compiler/checker	Brenda Horwill
Website Manager/checker	Paul Draper
Kingston Footpath Secretary	David Cooper (Retiring)
Committee Member	John Dixon
Committee Member	Steve Ransome

Resignations

Our thanks are extended to David Cooper who has been on the Committee as our Footpath Officer since 2009 who is stepping down. For over 15 years, David has been keeping abreast of applications that affect footpaths, challenging them, attending meetings when necessary and ensuring the Area Footpath Secretary is aware of any major challenges. We are currently looking for a replacement for him. The role profile can be found here.

Some statistics

According to the Walks Manager system, we have led 141 walks this year, 22 Ambles, 15 Balsam bashes, 5 Neurodiverse walks, 3 walks on the Canterbury Walking Weekend, and 95 normal weekly walks. Of the 8 walks that were cancelled, 6 were because of the high temperatures experienced this summer. That equates to 1.8 walks every week. We couldn't do any of this without our Walk Leaders, and I extend a heartfelt thank you to all of them.

Lyme Disease

A reminder that we do need to take care to check ourselves over after going on a walk. Ticks are fairly common, and we have received information about one member contracting Lyme Disease and needing to be hospitalised for a while. After a walk, check yourself in the shower/getting changed - see this article for more information.

Thanks to

Brenda Horwill and Paul Draper for checking the walks and publishing them
Janet Mackay for keeping our new members informed about what we do.
Maureen Munday for organising our Christmas do and cakes for the picnic and AGM.
Thanks too to Calli Scott for preparing our accounts, and to George Strang for vetting them.

Membership

	At 30/09/2023	As at 30/9/2024	As at 30/9/2025	As at 30/9/2026
Kingston Group	545	551	582	554
Surrey Area	6,530	6,489	7,173	7,241
Ramblers UK	104,487	103,465	105,819	107,297

2025 Kingston Group AGM

The 62nd AGM was held on Saturday 1st November at Kingston Quaker Centre attended by 52 Kingston members and one guest.

Surrey Area, how we vote for Trustees and the start of 'Forums'

Kingston is one of 16 Groups within Surrey Area. Head Office is reviewing Governance of Ramblers which may affect the way the Board of Trustees are voted in. The proposal is for everyone to have an opportunity to vote, potentially from the next round of Trustee voting, expected to be around April 2027. Currently, Surrey Area has an AGM in February 2027 and there could be an opportunity to attend what are being called Forums to replace the current General Council meetings held most often in Birmingham. An Extraordinary General Meeting EGM is being held this month to vote for these proposals and as we almost reached approval last time, it is likely these proposals will be approved. No doubt Head Office will circulate more information after the EGM especially if these proposals are approved. (Barbara is attending this EGM)

Interesting facts - the 16 Groups that make up the Surrey Area, have the most members compared to all other areas in the UK. There are over 7,000 members in Surrey and the closest Area behind us is Inner London with over 6,000. The average age of Kingston Members is 72 years old.

2024/5 Joint Walk with London Blind Rambling Club (LBRC)

David Cooper organised Sunday walks with the LBRC in 2024 and 2025. The hope is that the organisation of these walks will be managed by someone new in 2027.

Balsam Bashing

Big thanks go to David Cooper's team of balsam bashers: Gordon Bell, Sylvia Cherry, Bill Chilcott, David Cooper, Milly Luin, and Nurny Wanady. The heavy rain in February 2026 caused high germination rates. Himalayan Balsam appeared in places where we had not seen it for years. Queen Elizabeth Field (QEF) in Petersham is where Gordon Bell started work on his own years ago. The group worked to prevent seeds from flowing downstream and germinating elsewhere. Six Acre Meadow by the Hogsmill, and Southwood Local Nature Reserve are now largely free of Balsam. In July a team from Lateral (a health insurance company) took to boats and waders to remove inaccessible balsam, an article in Walk magazine was printed. The team is seeking volunteers to join them in 2027!

Festivals - Surbiton and Celebrating Communities Awards

Kingston group held stalls at the very busy Surbiton Festival. Thanks very much to the volunteers who chatted to passers-by.

Publicity & Recruitment

FaceBook is used to advertise walks in Kingston Group. KR would like to create an Instagram account and advertise there too. If anyone is a keen Instagrammer and would like to get involved in helping with Kingston becoming one, can you please get in touch with Barbara.

Thanks to members for sending photos taken on rambles and thanks to Steve Ransome and David Cooper, who convert these photos into posts on FB. Many photo albums now exist; you can see these here. This means we have a great record of walks for prosperity.

Thanks primarily to Brenda Horwill, Kingston group has had at least one article in every edition of South East Walker for a number of years.

WhatsApp groups

The WhatsApp 'Community' which started at the end of 2024, is going well, with the Social Group still the most popular one to post in. Following some feedback, the request to share photos on WhatsApp without having a desire to have these photos saved in FB or elsewhere, one further WhatsApp Group has been created in the WhatsApp Community.

This group allows up to 3 photos per person to be shared, and these will then be automatically deleted after 7 days. Whilst it is impossible to please everyone, this is an attempt at a compromise, but your feedback is as ever welcomed!

Kingston Group Social Events

A Summer picnic and walk was held in September at Canbury Pavilion in Kingston with walkers from Kingston and other groups in attendance. Maureen Munday coordinated cakes for the summer picnic, for this AGM today and is organising the Christmas lunch on Friday 18th December. Big thanks to all those who made cakes for the Picnic and the AGM today - I'm looking forward to enjoying a slice or two!

Kingston Group Walking Holidays

There were 27 attendees on the Canterbury walking weekend. This was sadly the last holiday that David and Brenda will be organising and leading. **Our thanks to Brenda and David for the 7 trips they have organised**. The baton has been handed on and Steve Ransome with Neil and Maureen Taylor will be organising our **next weekend trip on Fri 14 - Sun 17 May 2027** - keep the dates free! The venue will be announced in early 2027.

Can you help us?

As always, there is more to do than there are hours in the day. A small group is volunteering their time on the Committee to keep the group going. It is an indication that things are apparently going well, that despite this small group on the committee, no emails at all were sent as 'issues or concerns' to the Chair even though there was a specific request to do so as part of the call to this AGM.

There are still 2 vacant roles to be filled for Surrey Area: Area Secretary, and Area Publicity Officer. As well as the vacant Footpath officer post already mentioned. Click on the roles to find out what's involved and speak to Barbara if you would like to help with these roles.

Internet Sites: For up-to-date news and changes to walks

Website: www.kingston-ramblers.org.uk
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/kingstonramblers/