



ramblers
at the heart of walking



The Ramblers Volunteer Welcome Booklet

Everything you need to know to start
volunteering with the Ramblers

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Meet our volunteers – Catherine Watt

There are many people who would not consider going out into the wilds on their own. But that's what's great about the Ramblers: they give everyone opportunities to explore different places they might not otherwise go, whether that's a walk around green spaces in Glasgow, or up a mountain.

I think the Ramblers deserve unqualified support. I felt I had the skills and the time to offer so I got involved.

It's brilliant volunteering with the Ramblers. I have the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life. It's so satisfying to watch walkers gain in confidence and get more involved: whether it's climbing their first Munro, offering to lead a walk, or getting involved in some of our more practical work.

Catherine Watt - *Glasgow Ramblers*



Welcome



You and over 25,000 other volunteers give their time, knowledge and skills so that the Ramblers can aspire to create a country where everyone enjoys the outdoors on foot and benefits from the experience.

As a Ramblers volunteer you help the organisation to achieve amazing things across the whole of Great Britain – whether that is inspiring people by leading group walks, or protecting and improving the places we all love to walk, or helping to run the Ramblers.

The Ramblers is a charity whose mission is enacted by its volunteers, supported by its members, enabled by its staff and governed by its trustees. The whole is much greater than the sum of its parts.

I regularly meet Ramblers volunteers and appreciate first-hand your fantastic efforts. There's no doubt that you are right at the heart of the work we do. Thank you for making a difference and for volunteering.

Whether you're just starting your journey as a volunteer or you've been volunteering for many years, this welcome booklet will help you on your way. It contains basic information that will help you to fulfil your volunteer role and have a positive experience with us.

Des Garrahan, Chair

Why volunteer with us?

The Ramblers helps everyone, everywhere, to enjoy walking and protect the places we all love to walk. We're the only charity dedicated to looking after paths and green spaces, opening up new places to explore and encouraging everyone to get outside and discover how walking improves your health and well-being. Without volunteers like you, we just couldn't do it.

Volunteers have been our heart and soul since our foundation in 1935. It's thanks to the many committed people ready to devote their time, skills, local knowledge and enthusiasm to our cause that we've managed to achieve so much – from creating national trails and national parks to gaining the right to roam. Our volunteers lead over 100 000 walks every year. Volunteers remain essential to meeting



new challenges, whether looking after footpaths threatened by local council budget cuts or taking steps to tackle the epidemic of inactivity that's threatening the health of millions.

Today we have over 25,000 volunteers across England, Scotland and Wales. We're entirely governed by volunteers: you decide what we should do and how we should do it. You're the ones who make it all happen.

By volunteering with us, you're helping to make a difference to your community, to the environment and to the health and happiness of countless people. You're also likely to meet some lovely people, have a lot of fun, and enjoy some of the most rewarding experiences of your life.



What you can expect from us



Everyone has their own reasons for volunteering. People have different needs and different expectations. But here are some of the things we think you have a right to expect as a volunteer with the Ramblers:

- **We want you to feel welcomed, respected and valued.**
You should know what the Ramblers is trying to achieve and how your work contributes to this. You should have the opportunity to see the benefits and positive outcomes of your work. Even though you'll probably be working locally, we hope you'll feel proud to be part of a national body that – thanks to you – achieves great things.
- **You know what's expected of you and feel comfortable with it.**
You know what you can expect from us in return. We want you to feel you have the right skills, knowledge, abilities and resources to do the work – but if you need to, you should also have opportunities to improve your skills, knowledge and abilities through training and mentoring.
- **There'll always be someone you can turn to for support.**
You should feel able to turn to them if you are unsure about



anything, or if things go wrong. Every volunteer has a coordinator who's there to help with any issues you have – we'll make sure you know who they are and how you can contact them. You can feel confident we'll do everything we can to look after your health, safety and well-being.

- **Remember, the Ramblers is run by volunteers, and you can contribute to our decision-making.**
You should know how you can have your say, and feel confident to do so if you wish.
- **Your work is important to us, but it shouldn't be burden.**
You should feel confident that you can move on from your role whenever you choose.
- **Ultimately, you should feel rewarded for volunteering.**
Enjoy it and have fun!

What we expect from you

We also have expectations of our volunteers, so we can all work together effectively. We expect you to:

- **work collaboratively with others** to achieve the Ramblers' mission within our agreed strategies and priorities
- **uphold our values** and promote them in all your work, both within the Ramblers and when representing us externally. Challenge attitudes and behaviour which disregard our values
- **be clear about your volunteering commitments** and do your best to keep them – but if you can't you should arrange cover or notify the appropriate person as soon as possible
- **agree to work within the structure, policies, procedures and guidelines** of the Ramblers, including receiving and acting on essential communications
- **strive to contribute to an environment** in which everyone who works or volunteers for us finds what they do rewarding, enjoyable and fun.



Our values

How we go about achieving our mission is important to us. We always strive to work in accordance with our values, which are to be:

- **welcoming** – to all, and particularly to newcomers
- **positive** – looking to have fun and create enjoyment
- **empowering** – helping give people the confidence to help themselves
- **inclusive** – welcoming people from diverse backgrounds, and being sensitive to the needs of different communities
- **ethical** – being respectful of others, honest in what we say, and thinking through the consequences of what we do
- **democratic** – working to deepen and improve democracy within our organisation
- **environmentally responsible** – promoting activities and behaviour which are sustainable and which benefit the environment.

Meet our volunteers - June Mabon

There is more to enjoy about footpaths than simply striding out on them. Keeping them clear of obstructing vegetation, well signposted and easy to walk on can be very satisfying too. I work with fellow local Ramblers in a volunteer path team - we might be clearing nettles and brambles, trimming hedges or spreading bark chippings on muddy paths. Volunteering can be challenging at times and needs all the skills I have learned in life. Sometimes it's hard work but it's always interesting and very satisfying.

June Mabon - Trafford Ramblers



How we make sure everyone has a positive volunteer experience

We're committed to ensuring you have a safe and enjoyable time as a volunteer. We all have a responsibility for our own safety and the safety of others. As part of your induction you'll receive a health, safety and welfare briefing for your role. It's important you follow the information you're given.

We also have a number of policies to help fulfil our legal and moral responsibilities, which we all need to follow to ensure we all have an enjoyable and safe experience.

To find out more visit www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone

Or contact volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

The policies we have are:

Data protection

This sets out how we treat data in line with the data protection act 1988.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of everyone who participates in Ramblers activities and will take every practical step to minimise the risk of harm, paying particular attention to the needs of those who are most vulnerable, including children and vulnerable adults.

Complaints, disputes and feedback

Volunteering for the Ramblers is almost always a positive and enjoyable experience. But we have a disputes and complaints procedure to deal with concerns seriously and in strict confidence.

Insurance

All Ramblers volunteers are covered by our public liability insurance. If you are path maintenance volunteer you are also covered by our personal accident insurance. It's important to let us know if an accident happens during an activity that you are responsible for. More details are in the insurance guide in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Expenses

It's important that you're not left out of pocket. Your volunteer coordinator will outline how you can claim expenses.

Finance

As a charity, our financial affairs are closely monitored, so we have detailed guidance for people, like area and group treasurers, who handle money on behalf of the Ramblers.

Meet our volunteers - Keith Edwards

When I moved to Cardiff and wanted to meet new friends, one of the first things I looked for was a Ramblers group. Tiger Bay Ramblers are a great bunch: being a solid network of friends and welcoming of new members at the same time. It's like the type of friends I had at sixth form and university. There's nothing quite like it.

I found myself walking with the Tiger Bay Ramblers most Sundays, going on weekends away and attending some of the many socials. I soon found myself leading walks as the group gave me the confidence and the belief I could do it.

In 2010 I joined the committee as social secretary. In this role I was able to expand a programme of regular social activities such as the Christmas party, skittles, cycling and karaoke. These events helped to cement friendships, build new ones and ensure that the Tiger Bay Ramblers is a group that everyone wanted to walk and volunteer with.

I became group chair in 2012. I wasn't quite sure what to expect but the committee is a great team. We focussed on encouraging walk leaders and can now boast a full walks programme with a choice of walks many weekends so there's something for everyone.

I'm really proud of the things that I have achieved as part of Tiger Bay Ramblers and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to make a difference in my community. The variety of activities run by the group is best shown by the Tiger Cubs, organised by my wife, Isla, who I met through the group, which are walks for group members with babies and toddlers - the next generation of Ramblers!

Keith Edwards - *Tiger Bay Ramblers*





Helen Todd



For more information about Ramblers Volunteering:

E-mail: Volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

Visit: www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone

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