

	STORT VALLEY RAMBLERS 30th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES Sunday 16th November 2025, 1:15 pm The Queens Head, Allens Green	
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Attendance: (in no particular order)

Glyn Beard, Linda Emanuel, Margaret Edwards, Douglas Chester, Geoff Mason, Marjorie Ward, Mike Wagstaff, Dot Wagstaff, Sheila Taylor, Helen Millns, Ginny Scott, Steve Kew, Jo Cleall, Roger Daniels, Gillian Phillips, Chris Gill, Colin Gill, Mark Swainston, Pauline Sulman, Ken Tautz, Sally Naylor, Sue Lyons, Linda Savage. (23 in all).

1) **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Rhonda Murthar, Suzan Tomlinson, Melissa Gurnett, Tony Hyatt and Paul Lenihan.

2) **Minutes:** the minutes of the previous AGM (17th November 2024) were approved.

3) **Matters arising from previous minutes:**

None

4) Officers' reports

4.1. Chair - Margaret Edwards

30 years on, Programme 98.

Massed ranks for our post-Xmas dinner at Thorley.

Surprisingly dry weather for our holiday in The Yorkshire Dales. Oh, those Malham Steps, Ginny's close encounter with the stepping stones, numerous squeeze stiles plus an unforgettable prat-fall by you-know-who AND a full programme of weekend and summer evening walks.

As I'm noticeable by my absence some of the time, I'd like to devote my contribution to those who enable us to keep going:

- . Marjorie, who's out most weeks checking footpaths and helping others to recce walks.
- . Tony - our social wombler.
- . Doug, for keeping the SVR website refreshed.
- . Glyn - our group 'treasure'.

. AND Linda, who says she enjoys it but where would we be without all she does ?

. (Not going to mention Grumpy - he'd grunt!).

Last but not least - all our walks leaders. Now we're FULLY TRAINED there's no stopping us for 2026!

4.2. Secretary - Glyn Beard

In what is now an annual event, 22 of us went for a week's holiday in May.

This year we were in Skipton, Yorkshire. An area I had not visited before.

The weather was very good and the choice of walks was excellent. However, after all those high stone walls with stone steps I shall never complain about Essex styles again. I will also not mention my extreme disappointment in not seeing aDipper!

The video of the holiday is still privately listed on Youtube.

The evening walks programme in the summer was again very well supported. A total of 154 members supported the walks which equates to over 15 per walk. When I first started organising this programme we counted ourselves lucky if 6 members were in attendance.

One of my regular tasks is to answer emails from strangers who want to join one of our walks. They wish to know if they need to book a place and indeed whether they would be welcome.

As a group we have always been very welcome to everyone and I hope this can continue despite our increasing attendance numbers. Robert told me last weekend that he sometimes has 70 or more on his regular walks, and that causes numerous problems. Luckily, we are nowhere near that yet.

4.3. Treasurer - Geoff Mason

The funding formula from centre is not exactly clear but the £182 we received last year is broadly in line with recent receipts. Although our assets are more than 100% of annual expenditure, the limit within which we are not supposed to exceed, it is agreed that we will continue to receive our annual funding.

Despite what will inevitably be increased costs (for us), the centre expects us to maintain our usual parsimonious control. If we have an expected high cost, for example an expensive publicity campaign or safety issues (I hope not) then we need to submit plans by mid-year so that we can request extra funding to be budgeted for 2026-7.

You will note that we actually ran at a mild surplus last year due to nobody claiming expenses for travelling expenses for walk research. Apart from the AGM, the only costs were donations to village halls or similar for parking.

Given the difficulty of finding adequate parking this is a very worthwhile expense.

Thus, for next year, we should have over £400 available. Since expenditure will be about £120 for this AGM, we have a modest amount available for walks research. Other small incidentals can also be afforded but large costs will need planning.

Thanks as ever for our very polite auditor who is used to more professionally produced accounts. As always thanks to those that really do the work for this group - walks and holiday organiser, secretary, web master, chair, social secretary, footpaths coordinator and people who organise interesting and varied walks, i.e. every leader except me.

(Account summary is on page 8 & 9).

4.4. Walks Programme Secretary - Linda Emanuel

Firstly, my thanks to all our SVR Walk Leaders for the work they do in planning and preparing walks for us to enjoy. Secondly, for participating in the Ramblers training programme whether it has been self-assessment, online modules or the group session we held in October. To lead walks people must be registered with Ramblers as volunteers. All training needs to be completed by 31st December.

Attendance on our Sunday walks have been very good this year - averaging 16. On one Sunday back in January Mark led a walk and we had 25! We have also had guests from other ramblers' groups joining us on our walks. Our new website set up in July 2024 has given us more publicity. Our evening walks programme was also very well attended.

We started our 2025 walks programme with torrential rain and flooding in Epping Forest (Tony, who can forget that one!) We also experienced very hot and dry weather. This was evident on our holiday in May to the Yorkshire Dales where rivers and waterfalls were suffering due to total lack of rainfall.

Again, we managed to organise a full programme of varied walks and included a couple of day trips in the summer. Long Melford (Marjorie) and Tollesbury Wick Marshes (Tony).

Our holiday based in Skipton was enjoyed by all and like all our holidays was over too soon. My thanks to the walk leaders and our social secretary and all those who contributed for making it another success.

Our holiday in May 2026 will be the Malvern Hills and there will be a holiday planning meeting in mid-March (date to be confirmed). Again, we will have options/choice of walks so we can be as inclusive as possible for the whole group. Our holiday will be from Monday 11th May to Sunday 17th May. (Arrival on the Monday, walking on Tuesday and Wednesday, day of leisure on the Thursday, walking again on the Friday and Saturday with departure on the Sunday). A holiday WhatsApp group will be created so we are all in

regular contact during the holiday. Remember you are responsible for booking your own accommodation.

Following on from the AGM last year it was agreed we would support the charity ACCURO. This meant on some of our walks we would be requesting a voluntary £2.00 donation. We did four walks - two in April and two in June and we collected £158.06 (not sure where the 0.06p came from?). My thanks to walk leaders Tony, Sue and Marjorie for helping me with this and thanks to our members for their contributions.

Some of our members also supported Raminder on her UK Diabetes walk and very recently Marjorie led a walk in aid of Breast Cancer Awareness raising £122.

As you know I am always on the lookout for potential walk leaders! I understand this can be daunting for some people and time is also a factor. There are other ways to help - being a backmarker on a walk or assisting with a recce.

4.5 Membership Secretary - Linda Emanuel

SVR is 30 years old - formed in 1995! What is good to see is the attendance increasing on our walks with new members continuing to join us. Our current membership is 87 (end Oct 25). Active members (regular walkers) approx. 35.

Ramblers have continued to update the Insight Hub with the Membership Dashboard being far more user friendly. Membership details are only known to me and Glyn (our SVR Secretary).

Recently Ramblers when issuing new annual membership cards have now printed on the back an optional ICE card (In case of emergency contact).

Current individual membership costs £45.00 per year. By logging on to the Ramblers UK website you will have access to 50,000 guided walks. Find a tried and tested route. Find walks near you. Discounts to clothing, walking gear and other vouchers. The Walk magazine. You can also download the Ramblers App. You are also supporting the Ramblers in its work to protect paths, tracks and trails and increase access to green spaces.

Here is just one comment - *What's great about being a member of the Ramblers is that it opens up areas of the countryside that I wouldn't necessarily explore if I wasn't with my Ramblers group.*

4.6. Webmaster/Publicity - Linda Emanuel/Douglas Chester

Our new website was created in July 2024. Douglas continues to upload our walks via the Walks Manager program which links into our SVR website. I maintain the site and add articles/updates etc.

I hope members find it useful as a resource and to keep up to date with what is going on in SVR. When speaking to 'guests' who attend our walks they usually find out about SVR via the website - so that is good news!

Please visit <https://www.stortvalleyramblers.org.uk>



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Once accessed, click on the menu items to see what information you can view.

As well as the website we have our WhatsApp SVR group which was set up back in March 2023 and this has also enabled us to communicate with each other on a regular basis (this is mainly for active members)

4.7. Footpath Officer - Marjorie Ward

As of June 2022 Network Rail received powers to close or modify 'passive' foot-path only level crossings as part of a safety improvement programme in Harlow District.

They are: Camps, Pardon Mill, Sadlers & Old Lane.

The crossing at Camps has been blocked and closed, which compromises access to F/P 74 (north of Cannons Brook Golf Course) and leads onto F/P 72, which runs alongside the River Stort from Harlow Mill to Roydon. There is however, an alternative close by, F/P 75 which leads from the river and that passive footpath over the railway line is still accessible.

There is an ongoing issue with F/P 78 which leads from Harlow Road and adjoins F/P 79, which runs below the railway line towards the boundary with Epping Forest District Footpaths.

Quite a few numbers of the footpaths leading from F/P 72 from the River Stort towards the A414 (the area from Parndon Lock Meadows to Eastwick Mead). These are very boggy and the area is not safe to cross as virtually impassable.

Other footpath issues are mainly from overgrown vegetation which can be easily overcome.

I would like to suggest that we form a 'working party' in the New Year to counter these ongoing issues with the vegetation.

Members who are interested in helping are asked to contact Marjorie.

4.8 Social Secretary - Tony Hyatt

Tony was not able to attend but in his absence, he was thanked for organising the annual dinner in January as well as the social gatherings in Skipton.

5. Election of officers for 2024/2025

The following officers were elected unanimously.
(Proposed by Colin Gill, seconded by Mike Wagstaff)

Chair - Margaret Edwards

Secretary - Glyn Beard

Treasurer - Geoff Mason

Programme Secretary - Linda Emanuel

Membership secretary - Linda Emanuel

Webmaster/Publicity Officer - Linda Emanuel and Douglas Chester

Footpaths Officer - Marjorie Ward

Social Secretary-Tony Hyatt

Auditor - Marjorie Ward

6. Other matters:

6.1 Venue and date for the Annual Meal.

Next year's annual meal will be on Friday evening in January.

Venues suggested were the Coach & Horses as per last year, or the Chandini, an Indian restaurant at High Wych.

Glyn will discuss with Tony, and details will be confirmed.

6.2. Group Holiday 2024

This has been agreed for Sunday 11th May to Saturday 17th.

The base will be Great Malvern, Worcestershire, and participants are asked to book their own accommodation. Many of us are going to stay at The Foley Arms Hotel which is part of the Wetherspoons chain but other local options are available. There is a Premier Inn but this is on the outskirts of the town.

Members interested are advised to book as soon as possible. If using the Wetherspoon or Premier Inn you can make a flexible booking so that you can cancel nearer the date if personal circumstances change.

Some walks in the area can be strenuous so we are aiming to offer a second gentler alternative when possible as we did last year. Fortunately, our ex chair, Robin Waterhouse lives in the area and has offered to help with identifying suitable walks.

However putting a walks programme together will still be a daunting task and Linda would like to set up a small working group to complete this task.

If you are willing to help with this please talk to Linda.

There will be a meeting in March to sort out car sharing and walk leaders etc.

7. Any other business

Linda pointed out that the next walk programme starts in January and she would like walk details by the 2nd week of December at the latest.

Chris thanked the Committee for all the work they do to keep the group functioning.

The meeting closed at 1:45 pm.

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION STORT VALLEY GROUP
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

		£	£	£	2023-24 £
01-Oct-24	<u>OPENING BALANCE</u>			223.53	
	<u>RECEIPTS</u>				
			182.00		<i>182.00</i>
	<u>PAYMENTS</u>				
	<u>ADMIN EXPENSES.</u>				
	Ink, postage, etc.	0.00			
	<u>TRAINING</u>				
	First aid course	0.00			<i>-72.00</i>
	First Aid Supplies	0.00			<i>0.00</i>
	<u>PUBLICITY</u>				
		0.00			<i>0.00</i>
	<u>MEETINGS</u>				
17-Nov-24	AGM costs	-100.00			<i>-110.00</i>
	<u>WALK COSTS</u>				
	Walk research	0.00			<i>0.00</i>
	Walk programmes	0.00			<i>0.00</i>
4 dates	Parking costs	-40.00			<i>0.00</i>
	TOTAL PAYMENTS/RECEIPTS	-140.00	182.00		<i>-182.00</i>
	<u>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</u>			42.00	<i>0.00</i>
30-Sep-25	<u>CLOSING BALANCE</u>			265.53	<i>223.53</i>

[illegible]