

Maldon & Dengie Ramblers
Minutes of 26th Annual General Meeting
7.30pm Wednesday 12th November 2025
Purleigh Bell, Purleigh

Committee and Other Post-Holders Present

Graham Rayner	Chair
Jim Roche	Secretary (T)
Jackie Harrop	Treasurer (T)
Graham Rayner	Membership/Communications
Susan Hilton	Ramblers Programmes (Walks)
Alison Taylor	Walks Coordinator 4 (ALL walks' numbers)
Alan Davey	WEBSITE
John Little	WEBSITE Facebook Group
Gerry Burl	Social Events
John-Pierre Dutaut	Litter Picking Group.

Also present: John Mennie, Kirsty Pettinger and Sara Debenham.

1.. Welcome by Chairman

1.1 The Chairman welcomed the attendees to M&D Ramblers 2025 AGM including those who were not M&D post-holders

2.. Apologies for Absence Received.

2.1 Janet & David Tipping, Dennis Miller, Louise Yeates, Sue Edwards, Annie Cook, Andy Hudson, Terence Wood, Russell Griffiths, Linda Dutaut.

3.. Minutes of the AGM 20th November 2024

3.1 Correction – Dates for 2023 should read 2023 **NOT 2024.**

4.. Matters Arising

4.1 No matters arising

5.. Officers' and Post-Holders' Annual Reports

5.1	Chairman	Graham Rayner
5.2	Secretary	Jim Roche
5.3	Treasurer	Jackie Harrop.
5.4	Membership/Communication Officer	Graham Rayner
5.5	Ramblers programmes (Walks)	Susan Hilton
5.6	Footpaths	Terence Wood
5.7	Website	Alan Davey
5.8	Social Events	Gerry Burl
5.9	Website Officer (Facebook Groups)	John Little
5.10	Footpath Working Group Maintenance and Parish Path Adopters	Andy Hudson
5.11	Litter picking group	John-Pierre Dutaut.
5.12	Walks Coordinator (ALL Walks/Walkers Numbers) - (see Item 5.5	Alison Taylor

5.1.1 This year.

Our posting of walks on the main Ramblers Head Office website is proving a benefit; we have attracted walkers from other groups as far afield as Thurrock and Southend. Thank you to the volunteers that upload these walks. But it hasn't resulted in any new leaders - we're still keen to encourage new people to start leading. And of course, many thanks to Susan, JP and Alan D for all their work on the programme and the websites.

In April members of the group again had a good week-long walking trip to Shropshire. Thanks go to the organisers. We also enjoyed our June Cream tea walk although this was poorly supported, hopefully the mince pie walk in December will be better supported?

The third Saltmarsh Coast walking festival was held this year. Reports say some walks sold out rapidly. There was a good selection of walks and evening events, some planned around Maldon's past. Thanks to all our members who led walks over the festival.

Bowling has become a regular monthly fun event for those involved.

Ramblers Head Office. Once again, we find more regulation being handed down from HO for us as volunteers to deal with. In the past it was GDPR, then Data and digital transformation. Then we moved on to volunteer roles with their QR codes

And now the new mandatory requirements for current and new leader training and the associated modules for leading a walk. Although we thought that the small booklet given out would suffice, nope, having thought about it they then produce these. Eventually realising not everyone had or wanted internet access even if it was at the library.

Safeguarding is the buzz word; it allows them to "box tick" and obtain grants from other bodies to support the cause.

I have spent an inordinate amount of time dealing with the above and communicating with recently appointed staff members at HO. To help ourselves as usual, the courses need to be completed, either read or reviewed online or 12 walk leads confirmed. Unfortunately, any leaders not updated by the end of the year 2025 **WILL NOT** be covered by Rambler's insurance and will be dropped from the list to lead Rambler's walks,

I'll appreciate your views on this. It is more tiresome work to do what we have done multiple times; ie lead walks - see Any Other Business.

5.1.2 Next year.

So as our year ends, we look forward to 2026. To hopefully have a full programme of walks, we need leaders. New ones are needed now. Thankfully we have some regular stand ins when it looks like a walk will not happen. Again, "No Ramblers Registered Leader, No Walk" for and in the new year - hopefully we can recruit new leaders.

I'd like to finish with the a thank you. Events and walks do not just happen. We are extremely lucky to have members that devote time to make sure they do. I am sure we are all grateful and it is good to see these events supported. Thank you to all the people involved, they know who they are and the events they have organised, it is appreciated. I'd also like to thank all the Walk Leaders, my fellow committee members, including those stepping down, for their input and work. And not forgetting our Foot Path Working Group members who are out on Fridays improving the Footpaths Network for us and the Public.

5.2.1 Quorate. The Honary Officers of Maldon & Dengie Hundreds Group are a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary. For 2025 and into 2026 M&D have a Chair - Graham Rayner, a Treasurer - Jackie Harrop and a Secretary - Jim Roche and had a Vice Chair for when the post of Chair is shared - Terence Wood (and previously Gerry Burl).

5.2.2 Committe Meetings. At M&D Committee Meetings five members form a quorum. Quorate Committee Meetings were held on 25th November 2024 and 24th March 25 and 4 July 25. Agendas and Minutes of each were drafted, circulated and agreed.

5.2.3 Walk Leaders The primary and secondary problems were and remain: walk leaders and members:

- For the 24 months up to September 2025, the total number of M&D-lead walks was 314.
- For the 12 months up to September 2025, twenty seven (27) individuals lead M&D walks and not all were M&D Members.
- NUMBER of WALKERS PER WALK IS 12 or 13 or 14
- NUMBER OF WALKS PER LEADER PER ANNUM IS SIX (6) APPROX (160 /27) WITH A FEW LEADERS LEADING MANY MORE THAN 6.

5.2.4 In Case of Emergency (ICE) cards. ICE cards are available and ready to reorder. The card is for emergency purpose during a Ramblers' activity. It is lightweight, waterproof and credit-card sized. You can write (with ballpoint pen) your own contact details and any essential medical information. You can provide the name, number and relationship of the person whom you designate to be contacted should there be an accident or you become unwell. Space for ICE details are now included on new Ramblers membership cards.

5.3.. Treasurer**Jackie Harrop****5.3.1 Unity Account**

The income for this account is generated by an annual payment from Ramblers HQ. Allocation based on membership number as of 30 May. 136 Active members as of 30 May 2025 Member funding £149.60 + group funding £100 (standard payment to all groups). Annual Payment £249.60

Payments to group made in two instalments in February and August. Funds are used to pay for meeting costs e.g. room hire, also stationery costs, website licence, awards etc. Balance as of 5 November 2025 £186.26 There is one outstanding payment of £21.00 due from Essex County Council for footpath maintenance work £21.00. On receipt, account balance will be £206.26

5.3.2 Barclays Social Account

This is a “no-income” generating account and used solely for receipt and payment of social events, for example annual lunch..There is some historical funding which is used to pay towards social events, for example strawberry tea and mince pie walks. Balance as of 5 November 2025 £19.97. A payment from the account was made as deposit towards the New Year lunch. On receipt of payments from members for the lunch the final working balance should be £139.97.

Both accounts have been audited for 01 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 and submitted to Ramblers Area Office – **SEE ADDENDUM 1 AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2024-2025.**

5.4 Membership/Communication Officer**Graham Rayner****5.4.1 Overview.**

I now have better access to figures detailing reference numbers and members. We have been reasonably lucky as M&D group to have had a fairly stable number of members. This year, a steady general decline in overall members is being noticed. This seems to have been slowing recently.

However M&D group are losing long standing members, for various reasons. They are being replaced by new members but at a slightly slower rate. We had a number leave during June and July 2025; fortunately about the same number joined-up. Since August 2025 to date, we have gained 7 new members but 4 members have left The Ramblers and some more lapsed (did not renew but still might).

Current group membership is 138, slightly up on last year. I have tried to get better figures. While the system is informative, it has a three-month shelf life then refreshes. Any other data needs to be manually requested which again I am chasing.

It would seem most of the email address issues have been brought up to date, many members contacting Head Office to resolve or update. We reach around 111 of our members through email but some still prefer to communicate by post, hence not receiving by email newsletters etc. I am encouraging walkers from other groups to become affiliates. This means, while members of other groups, they receive our emails. Please spread the word with anyone you know from other groups.

5.4.2 Group numbers at October year by year.

M&D paid up members.	2018/128	2019/136	2020/136	2021/140	2022/138	2023/134	2024/130	2025/136
Declared	Male 31%	Female 35%	Not known 31% .					
Ages	50-59...12%	60-69...16%	70-79...30%	80+...12 %	Not known 40%			
Essex Area Ramblers have 4,258 paid up members. Average age 68								

Nationally there are 105,000+ paid up members. M&D members are asked to review the M&D web page for updates and contacts as this is sometime the only information you can seek. It is constantly updated and shows any location changes or timings.

5.5.. Walks Programme Co-ordinator Report Susan Hilton

The Winter walks programme has now been published. Although there are a few dates which are showing no leader, I am pleased to say that this programme has filled quicker than recent programmes. Unfortunately, we have no 'new' leaders on this programme. If you are new to our group and you think you could lead a walk for us please don't hesitate to speak to one of our experienced leaders or a committee member, who will be happy to assist you.

Alison Taylor has kindly submitted the following data regarding the number of walkers in each group from Oct 2024 to Sep 2025, with a comparison over the previous year.

PERIOD 01ST OCTOBER 2024 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025.

	SUN	TUE	TUE TA	WED	OTHER	TOTAL
No OF WALKERS	517	517	480	12	144	1712
No OF WALKS	45	43	44	1	23	155
AVERAGE	13	12	11	12	6	11
CHANGE	No change	Down 2	Up 1	Up 3	Down 6	Down 1

PERIOD 01ST OCTOBER 2024 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

	SUN	TUE	TUE TA	WED	OTHER	TOTAL
No OF WALKERS	637	600	406	28	172	1834
No OF WALKS	49	43	41	3	23	159
AVERAGE	13	14	10	9	12	12
CHANGE	Up 1	Up 1	No change	Down 1	Up 3	Up 1

You will see that there has been quite a drop in the number of walkers in the ‘Other’ category (down 6 over the last year). This category includes the Thursday evening walks during the Spring and Summer months, which were poorly attended this year.

There are no other real observations except perhaps the continued fall in the total number of walkers in general since post Covid. There seems to be a general downward trend:

	YEAR	TOT No OF WALKERS	CHANGE	
TREND	2021 to 2022	2008		
	2022 to 2023	1860	-148	
	2023 to 2024	1843	- 17	
	2024 to 2025	1712	-131	

Finally, thank you:-

- J-P and Alan for their help in co-ordinating the all-day Tuesday walks and the Thursday evening walks
- Alison for continuing to collate the walks and walkers numbers again.
- Alan for the numerous updates he makes to the websites throughout the year.

5.6.. Footpaths Report (ECC, MDC, Changes,Closures etc) Terence Wood

Comprehensive footpath reports about Essex County Council and Maldon District Council progress or otherwise, on Changes, Closures etc are presented to M&D Committee Meetings. Highlights are recorded in the Minutes of those meetings. The full footpaths reports are available on the M&D website.

SEE ADDENDUM 2 for examples of **the highlights** and the full reports at Oct 2025.

5.7.. WEBSITE Alan Davy.

5.7.1 *No Website report for AGM*

5.8.. Social Events Secretary Secretary pp Gerry Burl

Our programme of social events includes:-

- all day Out of M&D area walks
- a week walking in Shropshire in April
- a Strawberry Cream Tea walk
- Breakfast walks
- a Mince Pie Walk
- a New Year Lunch
- Monthly Bowling afternoons - Wednesdays to Fridays
- M&D were involved in the Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival Sept – Oct 2025

Secretary's Note (ref "Social Events"): We have a Footpath Working Group (FWG) about 10 strong which is open to any member and carries out repairs and improvements footpaths in the M&D area - and, I'm told, may involve Pub Lunches

5.9.. Website Officer Facegroup Groups John Little

5.9.1 The M&D Facebook Account membership remains steady.with some increase from July 2025 to November 2025 (54 to 66).

5.10.1 New initiatives

This year alongside our Footpath Maintenance and Parish Path Adopter Groups we have seen new initiatives:

- Continuation of the Coastal Path
- Ramblers Path Improvement Tracker
- Working with Essex Area Ramblers and Essex Highways

5.10.2 Coastal Path

In our area the Coastal Path from Salcott to Burnham is fully open. The section from Burnham to Battlesbridge is now fully approved and funded and we are awaiting the contractors to start work. Once the contractors have completed the major works our FMG will follow with help on Waymarking and Signage. This will provide us with new paths from Battlesbridge to South Woodham Ferrers, and from South Woodham Ferrers to North Fambridge and should all be complete by March (weather permitting).

5.10.2 Ramblers Path Improvement Tracker

This is a UK wide Ramblers Initiative to identify the work done by Ramblers groups in maintaining our footpaths using a tracking tool. A national target of 2000 miles of improved paths has been set but the main tracking tool, whilst allowing us to record work done, does not give us the ability to then view what has been input. After discussions an alternative spreadsheet approach has also been agreed. We have submitted a report for January to September 2025.

5.10.3 Essex Area Ramblers and Essex Highways.

The emphasis from Essex Area has been to reduce the number of enquiries and defects in the Essex Highways system. In areas such as ours where we have an active PPA and Footpath Maintenance Groups, the numbers remain low and manageable, but this is not true of all areas. A number of these enquiries / defects are old and no longer apply e.g. in June Tendring had 248 defects some dating from 2016. Maldon with 25% more paths than Tendring had only 42 defects. Several meetings have taken place and some also included Essex Highways. Essex Area have developed a Defect Tracker to assist with this, and it is being trialled in 3 areas. Unfortunately, Essex Highways have also improved their mapping and the two are nearly identical except the defect tracker enables you to download a list. We are arranging more meetings with Essex Highways to see what can be done to improve the Essex Highway tools.

5.10.4 Parish Path Adopters Summary

Our year runs from May to April. From April 2025 onwards we have adopters for all our 33 parishes. In the year to April 2025, we had reports from 19 parishes, covering 316 paths. This is nearly a 20% improvement on the previous year. So far in the first 6 months of this year we have reports for 14 parishes and 256 paths. Additionally, we have had a separate exercise on fingerposts to identify the replacements required for the scheduled Essex Highways work in January.

Also, we have been asked to monitor all the bridges in our area, including the dimensions, construction type and handrails. Again, the adopters have responded well and have not only reported on a good number of bridges - they have identified some that Essex Highways were unaware of!

5.10.5 Footpath Maintenance Group

So far this year we have had 44 work parties with 4 weeks being missed due to bad weather or bank holidays. Generally, our work has been in our area but occasionally we work out of area like Tiptree or South Woodham Ferrers. We are planning to help with the Coastal Path on Mersea Island during November. The group has grown to 15 members and on average we have 5 or 6 volunteers in each work party. In 2025 we have so far installed 32 Waymarkers, replaced 18 bridges, and 1 flight of steps. In total we have cleared approx 25 miles of path. This took about 590 hours of work plus 60 hours of planning etc. Also, this year we have had 2 more members trained in the use of brushcutters and 2 in First Aid.

5.10.6 Finally, a quote from a supporter

"I did the Long Distance Walkers Association Blackwater Marathon yesterday, some 27miles from Heybridge passing through Goldhanger, Tollesbury, Tolls D'Arcy, Tolls Major and Little Totham....The footpaths were in excellent condition throughout with just a couple of minor cross-field path issues.... None of the 200 people taking part yesterday will have the slightest idea that a large part of that is down to the work of your group (M&D).....So, on behalf of everyone involved yesterday, I would like to thank you all for what you do every week."

5.10.7 And Finally, Finally

As many of you know What 3 Words has decided to start charging £3.49 / mth for the ability to take photos. I have chased this with W3W support who just said pay. I have also escalated to Ramblers HQ who will see what action they can take as it was featured in their Path Improvement Tracker training. Our Footpath Officer has also escalated to Essex Highways management as this move will reduce the accuracy of reports. You can of course still record the W3W location but you will need to match it with your photos!

5.11.. Litter picking group

John-Pierre Dutaut.

Here is our activity report for the past 12 months (November 24 to October 25).

5.11.1 Team Members.

The group has been relatively stable with a total of 10 members. One Rambler dropped out of the team and a new person joined, albeit not a rambler.

5.11.2 Activities.

We continue to meet on the 2nd Monday of the month from 10am to 12am (Pub). Our equipment is provided by Maldon District Council Waste Services. Once we are finished for the morning, Waste Services will arrange for the collection of the rubbish that we brought together for disposal.

5.11.3 Metrics.

We averaged 5 persons per session and collected a total of 120 bags in a year (10 per session).

A quick comparison with previous years

<i>Period.</i>	<i>Turn Out</i>	<i>Total bags collected</i>	<i>Average bags per session</i>
2022/2023.	6.	104.	8.5
2023/2024.	5 (or 6)	113.	9
2024/2025.	5.	120.	10

As well as the rubbish bags, we continue to collect more exotic items that cannot be bagged such as traffic cones, traffic signs, wheels, furniture, advertising boards.

5.11.4 Additional activities.

In July 2025 we organised two special litter picking days for E.Surv - a company of surveyors. Both days were attended by 10 employees and we collected 12 bags of litter from Wickes Nature Reserve and 11 from Heybridge.

Also, this month we were approached by All Saints Primary School Maldon. The school are planning a litter picking day for their 90 pupils. We put them directly in contact with Maldon District Council Waste Services as we cannot manage such a high number.

5.11.5 Plus.

I would like to thank **Chris Briggs** who has kindly led the litter picking team during my lengthy absence this summer

5.11.6 Going forward.

We anticipate continuing our litter picking work on the current basis.

6.. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE POST-HOLDERS AND APPOINTMENT OF OTHER POST-HOLDERS NOV 2025 TO NOV 2026

POSTS	POST HOLDER	NOMINATED & SECONDED	COMMITTEE POSTS (CP)
Chair	Graham Rayner	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP
Vice Chair	Terry Wood	Graham Rayner & Jackie Harrop	CP
Secretary	Jim Roche (T)	Graham Rayner & Jackie Harrop	CP
Treasurer	Jackie Harrop (T)	Graham Rayner & Jackie Harrop	CP
Membership/Communications Officer	Graham Rayner	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP
Rambles (Walks) Programmes Secretary	Susan Hilton	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP
Social Events Secretary	Gerry Burl	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP
Footpaths - ECC (Changes-Closures-Etc)	Terry Wood	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP
WEB-site Officer (Facebook Groups)	John Little	Susan Hilton & Alan Davey	CP (Co-opted)
Walks Coordinator 1 (Tuesday All-day)	J-P Dutaut	Graham Rayner	
Walks Coordinator 2 (Tuesday TA)	Susan Hilton	Graham Rayner	
Walks Coordinator 3 (Sunday)	Susan Hilton	Graham Rayner	
Walks Coordinator 4 (ALL walks' numbers)	Alison Taylor	Graham Rayner	
Countryside Officer	NOT REQUIRED		
Footpaths - Working Group (Maintainance)	Andy Hudson	Graham Rayner	
Footpaths - Parish Path Adopters (PPA)	Andy Hudson	Graham Rayner	
Footpaths - Litter Picking	J-P Dutaut	Graham Rayner	
Newsletter Editor (Gallery)	Alan Davey	Graham Rayner	
WEB-site Administrator	Alan Davey	Graham Rayner	
Essex Area Rep 1	NOT FILLED	(covered by CHAIR)	
Essex Area Rep 2	NOT FILLED		
Committee Member (Past Chair)	NOT FILLED		
Committee Member (Other)	NOT FILLED		
Auditor	Brenda Neil	(confirmed by JACKIE HARROP)	

NOTES:

- 6.1. The current M&D Authorised Signatories for the Barclay Bank account are Jackie Harrop, Susan Hilton and Alan Davey.
- 6.2. The Litter Picking group has 10 members
- 6.3. The Parish Path Adopters Group has about 33 members.
- 6.4. The Footpath Maintenance Group has grown to 15 members and on average has 5 or 6 volunteers in each work party.
- 6.5. (T) Temporary to end of 2025

7.. Any Other Business

All

The M&D Committee Meeting of Mon 14th July 2025 focused on the number of new “process and procedure” emails received by all Groups from The Ramblers Head Office through Apr, May, Jun and Jul 2025. These additions to “what should happen” were revisited at this M&D AGM:-.

“Walk Leader walks lead update” and “Walk Leader on-line training” and “New Path Improvement Tracker” and “Planning inclusive walks” and “Teaming up with Able2Adventure” and “New Volunteer Guide of 18 Pages” and “In case of emergency (ICE) cards stating “By attending the activity the participant declared themselves fit to participate and agrees they will act responsibly during the activity”” and “First Aid Training with a Group Discount for Groups”.

Secretary's Note. Hardcopies of the new Walk Leaders Handbook were available at the AGM 2025.

The M&D Committee will “go with the flow” but will NOT (cannot) administrate the roll-out and operation of these new processes and procedures

7.2 More recently, and of very much wider than a Rambler's concern, is Safeguarding. **The Ramblers Policy - Safeguarding Procedure** has been published. It is a very detailed, maybe Government endorsed, 32 page document with a 4 page prescribed report form. Prima facie, the occurrence of a “safeguarding incident” occurring during a M&D Ramblers event is a “possibility” rather than a “probability”. Feedback from M&D to Ramblers Head Office is in-hand. Their responses and our concerns will be considered at upcoming M&D Committee Meetings.

7.3 These AGM 2025 minutes record that most of M&D activities are flourishing; see the above officers' reports. The important and becoming urgent concerns look like number of M&D members and number of M&D walk leaders. For 2018 the number of members was 128; for 2025 the number was 136. At the same time, the number of walkers has been about 12 or 13 or 14 per walk. The attendance on our walks has generally been good and sufficient. A more pressing problem is a short-fall of walk leaders whereby we depend on a few leaders leading many more than the 6 walks averaged per leader.

7.4 Tentative solutions were noted:

7.4.1 REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WALKS.

1. NO walks during say January when the weather is bad, maybe NO walks during say July when a good number of walkers are away.

2. Combine the Tuesday All-day and TA walk during January and July into ONE All-DAY FIGURE OF 8 WALK.

7.4.2 RETAIN AND RECRUIT LEADERS BY IMPROVING THE “FIND A WALK TO LEAD AND THE WALKOUT INFORMATION” FOR NEW LEADERS

1. “Rogers Walks”. About 150 or more walks, are listed on a Spreadsheet and copies of marked-up OS Maps are available too (but maybe OS copyright concerns).

2. Perhaps more appropriate:

All walk leaders will be members of The Ramblers (eg for insurance).

To support current leaders and encourage new leaders, The Ramblers publish FOR MEMBERS on their WEBSITE some 4,000 UK walks with full details. Eg MAPS and Difficulty and Distance and Walking time and Type and Start location PLUS Waypoint information.

Secretary's Note. It took me about 15 minutes to copy and paste and edit and printout all the walk information and walk map for one from the WEBSITE. SEE ADDENDUM 3.

7.5 The next committee meeting will be held at 7.30pm Monday 17th November 2025 at 2, Westerlings Purleigh CM3 6PG.

7.6 The minutes of the M&D AGM 2025 will be available on the M&D Ramblers Home Page (Newsletter) after review and agreement

Maldon & Dengie Ramblers Accounts 1 October 2024 – 30 September 2025

Unity Bank Account

Balance carried forward		£302.86
Receipts	Parish Path Grants from ECC	£273.88
	Ramblers – membership	£229.00
Total		£805.74
Payments	Walks related	£4.85
	Publicity/website	£22.00
	Practical work	£490.84
	Meetings	£110.00
	Administration	£31.43
Total		£659.12
Balance carried forward		£146.62
Total		£805.74

Barclays Social Account

Balance carried forward		£206.79
Receipts	Social	£1242.68
	Holidays	£9114.64
Total		£10564.11
Payments	Social	£1309.14
	Holidays	£9115.00
Total		£10424.14
Balance carried forward		£139.97
Total		£10564.11

Jacqueline Harrop
 Treasurer M&D-Ramblers
 Signed & dated

J Harrop 27/10/25

Brenda Neal
 Auditor
 Signed & dated

B Neal 3/11/25

Burnham on Crouch ☒ **Application 24/00901/FULM for a Solar Farm north of Marsh Road, and application 24/00908 for overhead power lines, have been submitted.** These will affect FP 26. In particular, at this point, the official footpath route is blocked and walkers are directed to use a farm track. It appears that this track will also serve as access for traffic to the Solar Farm. I made the usual comments on safety for walkers during and after construction, on the need to maintain connectivity, and on compliance with recommended best practices. I also asked for the original footpath route to be reinstated, so as to keep walkers and site traffic separated. October update: The application has been approved.

NEW: Application 25/00840/OUTM has been submitted proposing an estate of ca. 200 houses to be built on the eastern side of Burnham-on-Crouch. As part of this, a road will cross FP14. Our member Annie Cook has pointed out that this is a particular concern because schoolchildren use this footpath to get to St Mary's Primary School. I have until the end of the month to send in our views, and have asked Andy Hudson and the PPA Rod Eastham for their thoughts first.

Great Totham

☒ **Application 24 00165 to divert FP 4 Gt Totham. The footpath will follow the same line but move 2 metres to the left for some 50 metres where it runs between new housing sites at the Kelvedon Road end.** No objections but asked for walker safety to be maintained during and after the construction work, and for the new stretch of footpath to comply with recommended best practice. October update: The application is still 'pending consideration'.

Heybridge and Langford

☒ **There is a temporary closure of FP 30, from the Langford Road to the junction with FP13, while a new roundabout serving the housing development is built.** This has been extended. Langford Road will be closed to traffic for a new roundabout to be connected. October update: Last time I checked, the path had not yet been reinstated.

Maldon

☒ **Application 25/00578 is an outline application for the Maldon Hall Farm development, to build an estate of 275 houses running south from Maldon Cemetery to Maldon Hall Farm.** I made the usual comments on safety, access and path lengths and connectivity. On enjoyability I said All else being equal, we would expect the number of walkers using the footpaths to increase over the next few years. The District Council has made walking and hiking a part of its tourism strategy, to attract more tourist spending to the area, by setting up a new annual walking festival, the Saltmarsh Coast walking festival, now in its third year. Attractions like Beeleigh Abbey and Beeleigh Mill will be open to visitors more frequently.

Please make sure, through use of landscaping and tree screens, that enjoyment of the walk along the footpath is not substantially impacted by the sight of the new estate, and people are not deterred from walking.

October update: The application is 'pending consideration'. The developers have changed the boundary on Old London Road a bit.

North Fambridge

☒ **Application 25/00015/OUT was submitted in February to build three houses in Rectory Road, potentially affecting FP 17 and its connectivity with footpaths FP 2, 10, 13 and 14.** The developers' appeal was dismissed in 2024. They have now put in a new application. I commented on the need to maintain connectivity and walker safety both during and after the construction period. October update: The appealed against the decision and the appeal is in progress.

Tillingham

☒ **Application 25/00518 is a joint proposal from several farmers to build a large Dengie Marshes onshore wind farm, running down the coast from just south-east of Tillingham to the River Crouch.** I made the usual comments on safety, access and path lengths and connectivity. On enjoyability I referred to the District Council tourism strategy, the new annual walking festival, and the newly-opened King Charles III England Coastal Path which runs along the eastern side of the proposed site. I asked that any development should mitigate the impact of the wind farm on walkers - both the visual impact and the noise of the turbines. October update: The council has decided that an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) is required.

Woodham Mortimer.

☒ **Application 24/00772/FULM was to build six houses in Conduit Lane off Post Office Road. This affects footpaths FP 8, 11, 15 and 25 which all join Conduit Lane.** I replied that Conduit Lane must remain open and safe for walkers, connectivity between footpaths must be maintained, and new stretches must comply with recommended best practices. October update: The application was refused in June. The developer has appealed against the decision and the appeal is in progress.



Ramblers Routes
Find more routes on the Ramblers app and at ramblers.org.uk/routes



SOUTH EAST Selborne, Hampshire

DISTANCE 9KM/5½ MILES **ASCENT** 154M/505FT
TIME 2½ HOURS **TYPE** VILLAGE, WOOD AND FARM

- NAVIGATION LEVEL
EASY
- FITNESS LEVEL
MODERATE
- PERFECT FOR
VIEWS
- NUMBER OF STILES
1



Plan your walk

WHERE Figure-of-eight walk in Selborne, Alton, Hampshire.

START/END Gilbert White's House car park behind the Selborne Arms (SU742335). Patrons get free parking during house's opening hours.

TERRAIN Farm tracks, lanes, footpaths. The Zig-Zag is steep. Terrain can be muddy, especially in wet weather.

MAPS OS Explorer OL33, OS Landranger 186.

GETTING THERE Stagecoach buses to Selborne Arms: 13 from Basingstoke, 38 and 38X from Petersfield, not Sunday (stagecoachbus.com). By car, Selborne is less than 10 minutes from the A3 and A31.

EATING & DRINKING Selborne Arms, High Street, Selborne GU34 3JR (01420 511247, selbornearms.co.uk).

SLEEPING Downlands Farm, Priors Dean, Petersfield GU32 1BP (01730 827666, downlandsfarmholidays.co.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION Gilbert White's House, High Street, Selborne GU34 3JH (pictured above). Closed Monday (01420 511275, gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk).

GUIDEBOOK *The Natural History of Selborne* by Gilbert White (£8.99, Penguin Classics, ISBN 978 0140431124).

A figure-of-eight route within the South Downs National Park, following in the footsteps of celebrated naturalist and author Gilbert White, said to have inspired everyone from Charles Darwin to David Attenborough. This picturesque walk takes in the famous Zig-Zag path, which White built with his brother in 1753 to navigate the steep climb to Selborne Common

ROUTE BY DAVE HAMILTON

1 **START** From the Gilbert White's House car park (behind the car park for the Selborne Arms), walk towards the High Street and turn L. Turn R onto Huckers Lane. Ignore the footpaths off to the L, remaining on the lane. (This eventually becomes the Writers' Way trail.) Emerge onto a farm lane and turn L to Priory Farm.

2 Continue on the lane past the wooden farm building – path veers L over river. Stay on this main path as it heads up into Coombe Wood. Towards the top of the hill, take a L through the pull-gate into the field and follow a grass path through the centre to the far end. You will emerge onto a wide farm track – follow this to another pull-gate into a field. Cross field, through gate and continue to the far end of a small lake.

3 At the top of the lake you will come to a crossroads of paths – take the one R up the hill, past a bench into Long Lythe. At the far end of the Long Lythe there are three paths ahead; take the left-hand path. Head past but not over first footbridge (down to the L). Following

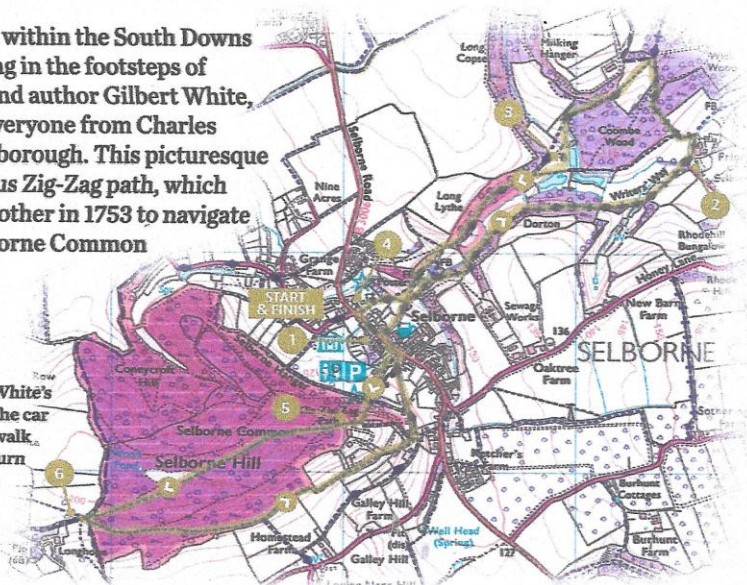
the path straight ahead, cross over next footbridge into open field. You should see St Mary's Church. Head up and R to the churchyard, where Gilbert White is buried.

4 Go through churchyard, L into town, R through Selborne Arms car park, L at toilets towards Zig-Zag path. Through a gate, Zig-Zag path is on the left, zig-zagging up steps.

5 Veer R at top of Zig-Zag (the bench here offers fantastic views). Walk through gate onto common. Keeping to the large path straight ahead (most R path), continue to the gate at the far end of the common.

6 Turn around at gate, take the right-hand path ahead (not the

one you've just been on). Follow this along southern edge of common. It's worth popping out of the woods when you see the stile halfway along this section, as the views are stunning. Go R over stile, then L after small section of hedging to hug top boundary of field. Go through an old kissing gate into woods and through another kissing gate. Path comes out onto a road going down. Follow this back to the car park.



Protect the walking places you love
Your donation will make a difference
ramblers.org.uk/donate