

Dorset Footnotes

May 2026

Dorset Area AGM

Please make a note in your diaries of the arrangements for the Dorset Area AGM 2026. East Dorset Group has kindly agreed to host the event and it will be held on Saturday 28th November at the Moordown Community Centre, 21 Coronation Avenue, Bournemouth, BH19 1TW. More details will be provided nearer the time but we already have a guest speaker confirmed from Butterfly Conservation Dorset. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

Ramblers General Council 2026

The Ramblers General Council (the national AGM) took place on 25th April at the NEC in Birmingham. Our delegates were the Area Secretary, and a delegate from North Dorset Group. This was an important meeting because there was a key 'special resolution' on changing our governance arrangements. The proposal put forward was to move to a system of 'one-member-one-vote' for elections to the Board of Trustees (under the existing arrangements, Board members are elected by members of General Council who in turn have been appointed by Ramblers Areas). The number of elected Board members was to be reduced with more appointees made by the Board to meet particular skill needs (although the overall number of Board members was to be reduced). General Council itself was to be replaced by an online AGM which all members could attend but which would only deal with company business, such as approving the annual report and accounts. Debates on policy motions would be replaced with six (four in England and one each in Wales and Scotland) forums at which all Areas and Groups would have guaranteed places. These would be events for debate, education and celebration, attended by Board members and by members of staff.

After a full debate, during which opinions for and against the resolution were aired, a secret ballot was conducted. The votes were 74 in favour (72.5 %), 28 against (27.5 %) and three abstentions. Since, in accordance

with Article 42.1 of the Articles of Association, at least 75% of those council members voting must be in favour of a Special Resolution, the resolution was not carried.

The vote was close and the Board will now have to consider what, if any, changes to governance should be further considered. They will also be reconsidering the changes to Area and Group organisation which were not pursued following the debates which took place over the course of last year.

'Access Denied'

This is the title of a new Ramblers campaign which is highlighting the years of political and financial neglect which have taken their toll on the state of the path network and is stopping people being able to access nature close to home. You can read more about it here: [Access Denied: fighting for fair access to nature - Ramblers.](#)

King Charles III England Coast Path

Designation of the path is approaching completion, although sadly here in Dorset there are still some missing stretches. Central office is encouraging coastal Groups to organise walks in July and August to celebrate the opening of the path. We'll try to provide details on the Area website. So far we know that there will be a Wessex Wanderers Railway Walk around Portland on 15th July. (Meet Weymouth Station at 10.34.)

Area vacancies

*In addition to needing an **editor for Footnotes**, there are also vacancies on **Area Council** for a **publicity officer** and for **three independent members**. These independent member places are open to all Ramblers members in Dorset. Please do think about joining us – we need new ideas and projects to help us protect our paths and encourage walking across Dorset and BCP. Area Council only meets four times a year and all the meetings are held by Zoom. Our Area Secretary*, can provide details of meetings: the next one is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday 28th July. Sadly, we also now need an **Access Officer**. The Access Officer keeps an eye on both coastal access issues and those relating to open access land inland (here in Dorset this is chalk downland and heathland). Anyone interested in this role is welcome to have a chat with the Area Footpath Secretary*. Finally, our **webmaster**, is also stepping down so we are looking for someone who can take on that task. This is a job which can*

be done from the comfort of your own home and the current post holder will be happy to explain what needs to be done.

Area Walks Library

This is the legacy of our 50th anniversary project which has been curated by our Webmaster. You will recall that we hoped to collect 50 favourite walks during our anniversary year. Sadly, we didn't reach that target but nevertheless our webmaster has put together an excellent library of the walks we did receive. Many thanks are due to our webmaster for all her work on this, and to everyone who contributed. Please have a look at the walks here: [Walks – Dorset Area of the Ramblers](#). You are very welcome to contribute additional walks. There are details of how to do so on the page.

Britain's Favourite Path

The search is again on for Britain's favourite path. See here for details: [Britain's Favourite Path - Ramblers](#). We understand that input from volunteers is welcome. So Jubilee Trail monitors, and White Hart Link monitors, think about your stretches. Is there a special part of the route you would like to nominate?

Lyme Disease

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. As you know, Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by ticks. It's endemic in many parts of the United Kingdom, particularly in woodland or heathland areas of which we have much here in Dorset. You can read more about the campaign and disease prevention here: [Take part in our Be Tick Aware Campaign 2026 - Lyme Disease UK](#).

Reporting path problems

If you encounter any path problems when you are out walking please make sure that you report them to Dorset Council. There is an easy-to-use online system here: [Report a problem on a public right of way - Dorset Council](#) which you can access on your smart phone while you're on site.

Changes to rights of way

Confirmed Orders since February Footnotes

Bradford Abbas FP9#: Modification to add footpath.

Buckhorn Weston FP18 (part) and FP40 (part): Stopping Up and Diversion (S257 TCPA 1990) \$

Sturminster Newton FP46 (part): Diversion (S257 TCPA 1990) \$

Symondsburry FPs 2 & 5: and Bridport FPs 98, 99 (part), 100, 101 (parts), 102 (part) & 108 (part): (Vearse Farm/Foundry Lea): Diversions ((S257 TCPA 1990) \$

Weymouth FP131(part): Special Extinguishment Order (S118B, HAct 1980)

Weymouth FP62 (part): Special Diversion Order (S119B, HAct 1980)

New number

\$ Whilst these Orders are confirmed they are not yet operational, by virtue of Article 2 of the order.

[If you have any queries about these changes please contact Jan Wardell, Area Footpath Secretary]

Message from the Great Chalk Way Group

My name is Doug Landman and I am a member of the Great Chalk Way group, set up to re-create the oldest prehistoric coast to coast walk in Britain, comprising the Wessex Ridgeway, the Ridgeway, the Ickniel Way, and the Peddars Way, which stretches 375 miles between Lyme Regis in Dorset and Holme-Next-The-Sea in Norfolk. The [Wessex Ridgeway](#) is a 136-mile long-distance walking and riding route between Lyme Regis and Marlborough. Unlike the other sections of the Great Chalk Way, the Wessex Ridgeway doesn't have a volunteer group to champion the route. We are therefore seeking to form a group of volunteers who can help to maintain and promote the Wessex Ridgeway working in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, including Dorset Council, Wiltshire Council, Ramblers, BHS, Forestry England, National Trust, etc.

The volunteers may be involved in walking/checking the route, updating the guides, waymarking the route and/or working with stakeholders to improve the accessibility. So, within the group there will be a range of desk-based activities and field-based activities. To express an interest or find out more contact Doug Landman at doug.landman@ntlworld.com (with a copy to the Dorset Area Chairman) by the end of July.*

Next issue of Footnotes

Please can you send items for the next issue of Footnotes to me by the 21st August. Have a happy summer of walking.

Janet Davis*

Area Chair

*Please see our website for officer contact details <https://www.dorset-ramblers.org.uk/contact/>

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