

17 September 2015

Sent to: area chairs and secretaries



Dear area chairs and secretaries,

Here is the latest round up of things that are happening that we think you would like to know about.

### **Volunteer Development Days**

To support a variety of volunteer roles, another series of volunteer development days has been organised over the next 12 months. The booking page is now open at <http://ramblersvolunteerdays.eventbrite.co.uk?s=31534915>

They will be advertised through our national communication channels at the end of September. Please have a look at the locations, and promote the one closest to you through your communications channels as soon as you are ready. Ed Wilson, Volunteering coordinator, can provide draft text to go in your newsletter, website or walks programme. He can be contacted at [ed.wilson@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:ed.wilson@ramblers.org.uk).

### **Support to areas**

I'm delighted that our new Area Support Officer, Christine Hathway, has started this week. She will be in post for one year, focusing on providing development support to English area committees, and working closely with staff providing support in Wales and Scotland. She will be starting with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, who are not able to maintain an area committee. If you feel your area committee is struggling and in need of support, please contact [ceo@ramblersceo.zendesk.com](mailto:ceo@ramblersceo.zendesk.com).

### **Volunteer Videos**

A series of videos have been produced highlighting the impact of Ramblers volunteers. They celebrate volunteering and demonstrate what volunteers achieve to help more people enjoy walking. Download them on the following link [www.ramblers.org.uk/celebratevolunteers](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/celebratevolunteers) for use off line. Please use them to highlight the work of our volunteers, for example with local decision makers or at volunteer centres.

### **Path maintenance teams**

Since the launch of The Big Pathwatch, we have heard from people interested in joining a path maintenance team, and some teams have gained new volunteers as a result. We are using this as an opportunity to update our records about teams and to highlight the help that is available to them; including insurance, promoting path successes and practical support.

Please encourage path maintenance teams in your area to get in touch so we can update our records and offer support. This is particularly important for any newly established path maintenance teams we may not be aware of. They can either email [volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com](mailto:volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com) or call 020 7339 8519.

### **Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme**

We are delighted to have become an Approved Activity Provider [AAP] for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

As an approved activity provider we can present opportunities for young people.

Members of the scheme will be able to take part in The Big Pathwatch for the volunteer section of the DofE Bronze Award: -. Participants will need to sign up by the end of October to allow 12 weeks to complete the section. Information is available on the Ramblers' website and on the DofE website. Please follow the below links:

Ramblers' website: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-big-pathwatch/big-pathwatch-is-part-of-the-duke-of-edinburgh-award-scheme.aspx>

DofE website: <http://www.dofe.info/en/content/cms/leaders/approved-providers/Ramblers/>

If you have links with local DofE schemes please make sure they know about this new opportunity. Every opportunity needs to meet the terms of strict criteria agreed nationally between Ramblers and the DofE. If you have an idea for a potential offer please contact Elly Hannigan Popp on [cerddwyr@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:cerddwyr@ramblers.org.uk)

### **Walk magazine**

In our last communication we updated you about the changes we have made to **walk** magazine. To capture members' views about the changes and make improvements, it would be great if you can ask group members to fill out the reader survey. It offers the chance for members to win Jack Wolfskin winter walking gear worth £500. Please complete via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WalkReaderSurveyAutumn2015>

All the best



Benedict.

**PS: The team in London is busy making connections with the new Labour shadow front bench. Please encourage groups to continue to take their MPs on walks. It's the easiest and most enjoyable way to engage with politicians, and makes lobbying on specific things easier. Last year, nearly 50 MPs joined their local Ramblers for a walk and talk. This helped us to make a strong case for walking in Westminster, including saving the England Coast Path, and with lobbying for historic paths in the Deregulation Bill. A Walking with MPs toolkit available on the volunteer zone of the Ramblers' website.**