

HAMPSHIRE RAMBLERS FPAWE BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE NUMBER 9

RECORDING VOLUNTEER HOURS

BACKGROUND

1. Best Practice Guidelines

1.1 The Hampshire Ramblers FPAWE Committee has produced a series of Best Practice Guidelines that it encourages Groups to adopt. However, Groups are free to adapt the Guidelines in order to meet local circumstances and restrictions. If any Group has suggestions to improve the Guidelines they should send them to the FPAWE Secretariat.

2. Recording Volunteer Hours

2.1 Hampshire Ramblers members carry out many hours of voluntary work, all of it with the aim of protecting and enhancing opportunities for walking in the countryside of Hampshire. The Hampshire Area Footpaths, Access and Walking Environment Committee encourages its members to record the hours of voluntary work carried out by group members with three aims:

2.1.1 To record work carried out on behalf of the Highway Authorities in Hampshire. These are Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council. Hampshire County Council encourages and supports the work of the Ramblers in path inspections and works to maintain and improve public rights of way.

2.1.2 To record other work carried out as part of the Ramblers' charitable objectives related to Rights of Way and the Countryside (see Appendix 2). This involves, among other things: researching unclaimed rights of way; responding to path change orders; checking and responding to planning applications that affect public paths and the walking environment; work associated with the FPAWE committee, briefing Ramblers groups and committees and responding to major initiatives such as the England Coast path.

2.1.3 Representing the Ramblers on other bodies, eg Local Access Forums.

At present, volunteer hours concerning non-rights of way objectives, e.g. group walks, and group and area committees, are not being recorded.

2.2 The hours should reflect the total person-hours involved in the task. However, if path inspections are carried out during a walk involving more than one person on the same path, it is suggested that no more than two people's time should be recorded. Generally, hours should cover all activities involved, e.g. preparation time, travel time, direct activity time, refreshment breaks, reporting time etc. Work on policy matters should be recorded under the appropriate activity heading relating to that policy. Time should be recorded to the nearest hour.

3. Categories of Volunteer Work to be recorded

3.1 Categories

The categories to be recorded are:

Vegetation clearance
Path Furniture and Surface Work
Waymarking
Path Inspections
BVPI and Furniture Surveys
Lost Ways and Claims
Planning Applications, Path Orders and Legal Work
Representing the Ramblers on other bodies
FPAWE and General RoW Group Work
England Coast Path

3.2 Vegetation Clearance

This concerns clearing paths to make them convenient for users. In all but a few cases this is work being carried out for the Highway Authority as it relates to their statutory duties.

3.3 Path Furniture and Surface Work

This concerns practical work in installing and maintenance of path furniture which includes, among other things: Gates, Stiles, Bridges, Barriers, Signposts, Waymarker Posts. It also includes work in improving the surface of paths and their drainage. In all but a few cases this is work being carried out for the Highway Authority as it relates to their statutory duties.

3.4 Waymarking

This involves the fixing of new and replacement waymark discs on paths. The installation of waymarker posts should be recorded under Path Furniture. This is normally work being carried out for the Highway Authority. Exceptions would be when waymarking long distance routes that are being promoted by the Ramblers and other organisations.

3.5 Path Inspections

This involves deliberate checking of paths to identify problems, but not the county-wide biannual BVPI surveys. This work is mostly carried out as a service to the Highway Authority.

3.6 BVPI and Furniture Surveys.

The BVPI survey is a county-wide biannual survey of selected whole parish path networks. BVPI is Best Value Performance Indicator 178. It was originally a government requirement on Highway Authorities but is being continued in a modified form by Hampshire County Council Countryside Service, with Hampshire Area Ramblers providing the surveyors. Furniture Surveys are also done for Hampshire County Council.

3.7 Lost Ways and Claims.

This is all work involved in claiming new rights of way with the aim of convincing the Highway Authority to make a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO), including research, site surveys, requesting and gathering evidence from witnesses, preparing documentation, submitting claims, and preparing for and attending public inquiries.

3.8 Planning Applications, Path Orders and Legal Work

This involves all work: checking and responding to Planning Applications that affect paths and the walking environment; processing Path Orders; and other legal activity.

3.9 Representing the Ramblers on Other Bodies

Ramblers' volunteers regularly represent the interests of walkers on other bodies. This includes bodies such as Local Access Forums.

3.10 FPAWE and General RoW Group Work

This covers work associated with the FPAWE meetings, including attendance, preparing and reading reports and other papers, Secretariat work, and work carried out as a result of the instructions of FPAWE or undertakings given at the meeting that do not fall under any other heading. It also covers preparation of FPAWE reports to Area Council and FPAWE reports for the Area Annual report and time spent reporting back or briefing Group and Area meetings and other general RoW orientated Group work.

3.11 England Coast Path

Natural England (NE) is currently (2018) carrying out preparation work for the England Coast Path through Hampshire. This involves meetings with NE representatives, reading NE documentation, site visits, Ramblers meetings to discuss the path, communication between groups and with Area, and drafting and agreeing the Ramblers' representations concerning the NE proposals to the Secretary of State.

4. Group Reporting of Volunteer Hours

A form (See Appendix 1) will be circulated by email together with the agenda for the quarterly FPAWE meetings. The hours are being collected for each quarter as a whole, eg January to March, and monthly breakdowns are not required. Responses should be to the FPAWE secretary, fairly soon after the end of each quarter. The most convenient form in which to receive the data is in electronic form as an attachment to an email. Direct means of entering the data onto a jointly accessible spreadsheet are being investigated.

5. Area Reporting of Volunteer Hours

The total volunteer hours reported to date for the area should be reported at each FPAWE meeting. A spreadsheet should be included with the papers circulated before each meeting.

APPENDIX 1 – THE FORM TO BE USED

**Form for submitting group volunteer hours to be updated and submitted as soon as possible at the end of each quarter to Stuart Shurlock by email to
stushurlock@hotmail.com**

Please give the document a title following the following example to assist in file storage
e.g EastleighVolunteerHours2017-8

Volunteer Hours

Ramblers Hampshire Area

GROUP					
RAMBLERS' ACCOUNTING YEAR					

Quarter	October to December	January to March	April to June	July to September	Total
Work assisting the Highway Authority					
Vegetation Clearance					
Path Furniture & Surface Work					
Waymarking					
Path Inspections					
BVPI and furniture surveys					
Sub Total					
Work for the Ramblers					
Lost Ways and Claims					
Planning Applications, Path Orders and Legal Work					
Representing Ramblers on other bodies					
FPAWE and General RoW Orientated Group Work					
England Coast Path					
Sub Total					
TOTAL					

APPENDIX 2 – RAMBLERS CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES RELATED TO RIGHTS OF WAY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

The objectives of the Ramblers are to promote, encourage or assist in:

- The provision and protection of foot paths and other ways over which the public have a right of way or access on foot, including the prevention of obstruction of public rights of way.
- The protection and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the beauty of the countryside and other areas by such lawful means as the trustees think fit, including by encouraging the provision, preservation and extension of public access to land on foot.