

Report RWP (Ramblers Work Party) 2023

The RWP has now completed twenty years of Rights of Way maintenance in West Berkshire. All sixty-one parishes have been walked four times with many issues being eliminated or reported. Also, three hundred and twenty-five stiles have been replaced by gates greatly improving access. Over the years a large number of members have contributed time and effort to preserving our valuable network of paths.

In the past year we have lost three sessions to bad weather and three to holiday commitments. The average number on members on each work party is nine which is lower than in past years. We do need more volunteers for the RWP. As one member said recently ' walking our lovely countryside, good company, a pub lunch and actually doing something useful, what's not to like'. Come and join us.

There are 740 miles of RoW in West Berkshire and only three Rangers who physically work on the RoW. One of the functions of the RWP is to help to keep the data base held by the Rights of Way department as up to date as possible, increasing the efficiency of the rangers. Another important activity is the low-level maintenance we carry out clearing vegetation from the RoW 'furniture', putting up the useful waymarks and picking up litter.

The gate group has continued its work putting in eleven gates since the last AGM. The gates put in recently are, in the main, all metal gates which last longer than the wooden gates of previous years. Wooden gates are more pleasing to the eye, but we have been disappointed to find that some gates have only lasted ten years.

The Power Tool Group was set up to help with the seasonal vegetation but has only managed two sessions this autumn. The Ranger responsible for this group is very keen to recruit more volunteers and to set up training courses.

Fiona Walker