

# Footpath Secretary Report

## For AGM on 27 October 2025

### 2025 Overview

Alton Ramblers Group Footpath Maintenance Team (FMT) covers Alton and the surrounding local Parishes of Beech, Bentley, Bentworth, Binsted, Chawton, East and West Tisted, Farringdon, Four Marks, Froyle, Kingsley, Lasham, Medsted, Newton Valance, Ropley, Selborne, Shaldon, Wield and East and West Worldham.

2025 has been a successful year for the Footpath Maintenance Team (FMT) with 946 volunteering hours completed in the year, the recruitment of 7 new members taking our total FMT to 22 members who regularly carry out footpath inspections, vegetation clearance, installation and repairs to steps and handrails, installation of gates and bridges.

The FMT has a 5-Year Plan which outlines our goals and aspirations. The goals identified for 2025 and 2026 have been realised and exceeded.

### The 5-Year Plan identified the following actions in 2025 and 2026

Year	Action	Budget
2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consolidate FMT Leaders Team</li> <li>2. Implement multi leader processes</li> <li>3. Annual training day</li> <li>4. Equipment /Tool hold-all bags</li> <li>5. Brush cutter training for two volunteers</li> <li>6. Recruit new members for the FMT</li> <li>7. Replace One brush cutter (electric)</li> <li>8. Supply and install one kissing gate.</li> </ol>	£2310
2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Annual training day</li> <li>10. Continue to recruit members for the FMT</li> <li>11. Replace One brush cutter (electric)</li> <li>12. Supply and install two kissing gates</li> </ol>	£2550

This year we have accomplished all the actions for 2025 and 2026 with the consolidation of the FMT with three leaders now planning the work parties, the purchase of two electric brushcutters each with two spare batteries, two members of the FMT having completed brushcutter training and the supply and installation of three kissing gates in Selborne.

### Footpath Maintenance Team Activities

The year started with the FMT get together and Working Safely workshop in mid-February and since then we have carried out weekly work parties which will continue until mid-December. The FMT Leaders Team comprises 6 members who meet on a regular basis to discuss and agree the work schedule. We have installed 1 x sleeper bridge, 4 x gates, 10 x finger posts, 21 x way marker posts, repaired or installed 23 x steps, 3 x hand rails and circa 15km of vegetation clearance to footpaths.

Our contribution to the Hampshire Countryside Services (HCS) Access Team was recognised at the recent Volunteer Thank You open days at Old Basing and QEP and we were featured in their June Newsletter.

The FMT has 4 team members trained to use brushcutters and we are looking to increase this number in 2026. Peter Fletcher completed his brushcutter refresher course and Mark Buckwell has completed his first training course, both are now qualified for Petrol and Electric brushcutters with LANDRA certificates which expire in 2030.

### **Hampshire Country Services and Parish Councils**

We have developed a closer working relationship with our new Community Engagement Ranger (CER) Andrew Dawson Northeast Access Team and existing relationship with Megan Cledwyn Southeast Access Team.

This year we have been working directly with several Parishes including Beech, Froyle, Ropley, Selborne, and Worldham.

We assisted HCC on a stiles to gates project in Selborne, for which we have secured funding from EHDC Councillors and The Ramblers Association to replace three stiles.

We are supporting Ropley Parish Council with installation of their stiles to gates programme and we have been assisting Froyle Parish Council in liaising with HCS Access Team for the installation of a new sleeper bridge on St Swithin's Way.

We have been promoting the FMT both through Alton Town Council and support the activities of Walk Alton through our footpath maintenance work.

Our local Hampshire County Council Development Officers Hannah Robins and Lucy Whittle have provided assistance in the communicating our work to the wider community and supported us in applications for local community grants.

### **Footpath matters**

We have completed BVPI Footpath Surveys in May 2025 led by Sue Rogers for Newton Valance and East Tisted.

Arthur Barlow diligently reviews planning applications within our Parishes and submits formal representations to safeguard public access rights across local footpaths.

### **Funding**

Alton Ramblers have been successful in securing grants and donations in the sum of £2,300 to support our FMT activities in the purchase of new equipment, tools and training. In addition we raised a further £1,512 in funding for the stiles for gates project in Selborne.

Grant and donations were received from:

Grant of £600 from County Councillor Mark Kemp Gee for re-energising the team including electric brush cutter.

Donation of £250 from Medstead Fete for new electric brush cutter.

Grant of £950 from District Councillor Suzie Burns for new electric brush cutter.

Grant of £500 from District Councillor Ginny Boxell for spare brush cutter batteries.

Grant of £500 being £250 each from District Councillors Neal Day and Ilena Allsopp as a contribution towards the stiles to gates project in Selborne.

Grant of £1,012 from The Ramblers Association for the stiles to gates project in Selborne.