



Annual Report May 2025 - April 2026

for the Capital Ring, London Loop,
Green Chain Walk and Green Link Walk Project

Introduction

The Capital Ring, London Loop and Green Chain Walk continue to benefit from the hard work of volunteers in improving the waymarking and direction finding of these iconic routes. A big thank you to the many volunteers who support this project.

We are committed to keeping up to date walk guidance for the Capital Ring, London Loop, Green Chain Walk and Green Link Walk – and the PDFs for these walks are published on our website.

Full audits of outstanding problems on each of the routes were compiled into borough by borough improvements lists in 2024. We are now engaging in the process of contacting councils to press them to carry out the necessary works. The improvements required range from minor but important, such as realigning signs to point the right way, to more major reroutings, road crossings, speed limit adjustments and so on. Inevitably even getting in touch with councils to try and progress this is proving a long and painful process, but we'll keep trying as this is a key part of our work to improve the London Loop, Capital Ring, Green Chain Walk and Green Link Walk for all to enjoy.

Last May we held our annual meeting for all of the volunteers on the project. This was an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other and the project coordination team. After hearing about what we have achieved together in the previous year volunteers split into groups to discuss ideas for future improvements. A consensus about our priorities emerged – replacing stiles and signage from stations.

We've been compiling data on the 40 remaining stiles on the London Loop, including logging their condition and difficulty of use as well as location. We would like to prioritise replacing the most difficult to use first. We have funding to start replacing some of these with gates (and believe we can raise more) – however at the moment we are struggling with the mechanisms to get this work done. Some Ramblers groups and areas, but not all, have path maintenance groups with whom we've been trying to make contact.



When originally waymarked, the routes all had good signage linking from stations, but in the two decades since, many stations and council-run spaces in front of stations have undergone upgrades of one form or another, meaning that the key signage, which sets walkers off in the right direction at the very outset of their walk, has been lost. As that signage is really fundamental to enjoyment of a day's walking, our plan is to survey each station, recommend where signage could most usefully or easily be added, to ascertain who owns that land and then to try and get it installed. We have almost finished collecting the data on the stations which have information about the Capital Ring and London Loop and those which do not.

Signage at Finsbury Park Station

As well as the on-going support of The Ramblers national charity - which has approved all of Inner London Area's budget requests for our project since inception - we have been grateful to receive a number of donations to the project from some London Ramblers groups, from individuals and two donations from the London Group of the Long Distance Walkers Association.

We are once again well stocked up with Ramblers' hi-vis vests for those who want them, waymarks discs and stickers, and with vinyl overlays (both the rectangular straight on ones, and finger / arrow) and with a new order of posts. Having our own posts has enabled us to start conversations with landowners and managers about replacing missing posts, which in some instances has led to them using their own – making our stocks go further and last longer.

We're delighted to have recruited Nik Mortimer to help us promote the routes and our work in the media and on social media.

Capital Ring

All sections of the Capital Ring are regularly monitored and the waymarking is in good order. There are certain exceptions such as Clissold Park, which we anticipate will be sign posted in the coming year thanks to a generous donation from Inner London Ramblers and a positive contact made with Hackney Parks Development Officer. Improved signage is also needed in Beckenham Place Park, where an afternoon's working party would suffice to sort the signage out. All sections remained walkable despite the exceptionally wet winter although inevitably there were some muddy stretches.

The remaining waymarking problems require attention from local councils as they need specialist equipment and expertise, for example for the realignment of misaligned signposts. Local Improvement Plan (LIP) funding can now be spent on leisure walking, which removes one barrier to improvements taking place. A very useful contact has been established with Richmond Council resulting in agreement that leaflets advising how to get from the station to join the Capital Ring at the Thames riverside are available at the tourist information desk at Richmond station. Contact has also been made with Barnet's Green Spaces Development Officer and a new post has improved the way marking in Northway Gardens.



New vinyl overlay on section 6 of the Capital Ring, Wimbledon Park to Richmond.

The new rectangular vinyl stickers have been used to replace badly faded signs on lampposts in the Wimbledon Park area and in Hampstead garden Suburb.

Volunteers are working with the Brent River & Canal Society to ensure that proposals for a West London Regional Park lead to an improved walking environment for established paths like the Capital Ring. Path improvements are underway in Crystal Palace Park.

Albert Island in section 15 continues to be a difficult area to navigate as repairs to the enormous George V lock gates took much longer than expected, however the path should now be open.

This is probably not the end of difficulties walking the Capital Ring path on Albert Island. On December 3, 2025, Albert Island at the Royal Docks was announced as the new preferred site to co-locate Smithfield and Billingsgate Markets. These markets will become known as New Smithfield and New Billingsgate Markets.

The move is subject to the successful passage of the Parliamentary Bill to provide for the cessation of the markets at their current sites. Planning permission from the London Borough of Newham will also be needed to enable the markets to operate on the new site.

Other issues affecting the Capital Ring have been the closures of both the Parkland Walk and the Greenway for bridge works and the disruption in Crystal Palace Park while work is carried out to restore the dinosaurs.

London Loop

Volunteers regularly monitor the paths in all sections of the London Loop. Signs have been cleaned and vinyl overlays have replaced faded signage in sections 8 to 12. Flooding is a big problem in the winter and several paths became impossible to walk in January and February. Fallen trees have become a more frequent problem but reporting these incidents to the local council via their websites has resulted in their relatively swift removal meaning paths can be kept open. Thanks to Ramblers Inner London Area and the London Long Distance Walkers Association, we been able to order another 20 posts for delivery to two different ends of Greater London, having now used our initial purchase of posts.

There is a vacancy for volunteers on section 5.

Section Reports

Section 1

Thanks to the persistence of local volunteers, Bexley Council have now installed handrails on both sides of the steps up from Hall Place to the A2 – without rails, and with a steep drop, the steps were previously dangerous and had forced some walkers to turn back. Our volunteers have since added waymark discs to the rails to make the route clear.

Meetings have been held with the Bexley team organising the renovation and relandscaping of Erith Riverside gardens. Relocation of the Loop Section 1 information board was agreed, moving it from site fronting the High Street to the entrance to the Gardens.

Also the repositioning of another sign relating to the journey of Alexander Selkirk (Robinson Crusoe) from Erith to the new world has been agreed.

Section 2

Regular monitoring carried out by the two long standing section volunteers, George and Ketta. New posts have been erected in conjunction with Friends of Cray Riverway through the River Cray meadows.



Section 3

New post replacing a rotted old post (out of the ground) installed and additional discs fitted to recently erected steps up to field alongside the route following Bogey Lane - in conjunction with Bromley RoW Officer- installation carried out by Keith and George.

Section 4

New directional post agreed and installed by Bromley Council RoW maintenance staff at entrance to the woods from Sparrows Den - discs added.

Following meetings held with Croydon RoW Officer- sites agreed for installation of additional posts on Shirley Heath and through Kennel Wood and out onto Shirley Church Road. Work carried out by Croydon grounds maintenance staff. New discs fitted to posts with help from Chris and Dave from Croydon ramblers

Agreement also reached with Croydon RoW officer for additional posts to be erected in Addington Hills on the section leading to Coombe Lane tram stop. Installation carried out and discs fitted on four additional posts installed in total by Chris, Dave and Keith.

Section 5

Recent meeting held with Croydon RoW officer at Kenley Old Lodge Lane- with a view to initiating the replacement of two stiles with gates. Awaiting further advice (and/or permission to carry out) from Croydon. One stile is on Old Lodge Lane boundary - the other on private land but both on public foot paths.

New post erected in Addington Hills

Section 8

Some volunteers have recently undertaken litter-picks on the London Loop. In March, Barbara Crowe organised a Kingston Ramblers group litter-pick from Berrylands station supported by Kingston Council as part of the Great British Spring Clean .

Section 9

And new project volunteer Neil Maitland-Walker, an award-winning litter-picker, has already been out on Section 9 with Alan Parry, one of our project coordinators – they found the route had remarkably little litter except for a build-up along the A30 towards the end of the section at Hatton Cross. They'll be out on more sections of the Loop throughout the year.

Loop volunteers are hoping to change the first part of this section to avoid the shopping area of Kingston. A new route has been proposed but we need the permission of Kingston Council. One of the volunteers has agreed to contact them.



*Neil Maitland-Walker
and Alan Parry litter
picking on section 9
in March*



Section 14

Improvements have been reported to the path from Nairn Green that make it less muddy. The stile between the path from the access drive to Pinnerwood Farm and field remains broken and needs to be replaced or repaired urgently, as it could cause injury.

Section 15

The previously overgrown path to Sylvia Avenue has been cleared, as has the one off Warren Lane.

Section 17

A stretch of the LOOP has been unilaterally rerouted (by Enfield Council presumably) at Hilly Fields so that the LOOP now forms part of the new path under Rendlesham Viaduct. This shortens the route by about 0.5 miles but is probably an improvement as it now avoids a muddy stretch.

Substantial work has been done to the signage, new signs have been set up at the cemetery off Sewardstone Road, and a stretch of bank has been repaired (Section 18).

Section 20

Consent secured from landowner to replace stile.

Section 21

Consent secured from landowner for new post installation. Landowner permissions still present the biggest problem. The two worst stiles on the Loop are in section 21, but it is a continuous struggle to get any response out of the landowners.



Section 23

The single most notable improvement this year was probably the long overdue addition of direction signs to Ingrebourne Hill. Chris installed these in July.

Green Chain Walk

All sections are monitored. Ian and volunteers began re-surveying the GCW for defects late last year. They resumed after a winter break and sections 1, 2, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 8A, 11 and part of section 8 have been surveyed.

All sections are walkable in summer and winter excepting a short part of section 3 which is always very muddy and sometimes impassible early in the year. A boardwalk would be the best solution.

Fallen trees are dealt with promptly by the local councils and path improvements are currently underway in Crystal Palace Park.

The highest GCW asset at 429 feet in the Eaglesfield Recreation Ground on Shooters Hill



At the end of July 2025, Clare walked the missing Section 12 of the Green Chain Walk from Eltham to Greenwich with two officers from Greenwich Council. This was as a direct result of our Green Chain Walking festival in 2024 which provided the opportunity for us to engage some local councillors and interest them in the missing section 12. The Greenwich staff appeared very interested in the route, including the owners and managers of different sections of land and the street furniture where signage might be required.

Staff thought they had located the signage for this section – which had been manufactured but never installed in the 90s – in a lock-up – but that lockup was instead found to contain deteriorating wooded signage for other sections of the route. Ian Bull was able to track down another lock-up location via Mark Budd the Green Chain's last project officer, and the section 12 signage has now been found. The council officers are drawing up an inventory of left and right arrows etc so that they can see what they have as opposed to what is now required – and they say that what's been found appears to be intended for parks rather than for highways.

Clare has previously been in touch with other stakeholders including Lewisham Council, who manage Blackheath, The Royal Parks and the World Heritage Site about the new signage, all of whom have been supportive – of course a cost would be attached to making the additional signage required, as well as to getting it installed. But it does not seem beyond the bounds of possibility that getting Section 12 of the Green Chain walk waymarked could actually happen.



the last surviving 1977 waymarking post on the GCW in Downham, section 8

Green Link Walk

Ian Bull and Andrew Hunt produced and published detailed maps and guidance PDFs to London's newest walking route, the Green Link Walk, which opened in March 2025. They worked with Go Jauntly, who also have directions on their app, to split the route into four easily walkable sections. The PDFs are available free for download on the Inner London Ramblers website. The Green Link Walk is the eighth walk in TfL's Walk London network and is the first of the new Greenways to be implemented. This walk is not monitored currently but there are no reports of problems with the route.

Social media

Nik has been doing sterling work growing our reach Instagram, *Inner London Ramblers'* Facebook and Bluesky. Please send him a few words and photos or videos from your walks and any practical work you're doing on your sections.

Facebook

We've seen strong growth since the start of the year, these stats are from 1st January until yesterday:

- 66,737 visits (+77% compared to the same period last year)
- 224 new followers (+93% compared to the same period last year)
 - 1,225 followers in total.
- 905 interactions with our content (+73% compared to the same period last year)

Posts about the work our volunteers are doing (litter picking), historical facts (GCW posts) anything community focused (weekly walks) are what drive the most engagement, more content like this is required if we want to see sustained growth.

Instagram

Launched in January 2026. Slower growth but good engagement and collaboration from other brands like GoJauntly and London National Parks City:

- 24 posts
- 8,569 views
- 144 followers
- 501 interactions

The Capital Ring series has performed very well on Instagram, as has highlighting the work our volunteers are doing. Nik has also been proactively sharing London Loop and Capital Ring content he finds on Instagram as there is a lot of very good video content on the platform.

Online walking guidance

People show great interest in these four London walks and come to our website to find out more about them. There is particular interest in the Capital Ring and the Loop and the Capital Ring seems particularly attractive.

Inner London Ramblers PDFs: Capital ring and London Loop

We last published updated guidance for the Capital Ring in December 2024 and for the London Loop in February 2025. Since then we have been keeping a record of the changes that will need to be made in a future revision but we did not publish revised versions of our guidance in the last year.

Go Jauntly

We continue to be responsible for the guide to all sections of the London Loop in the Go Jauntly app. All sections were revised and updated at the start of 2025. During the last year, some sections have been further updated because of changes to the route. An example is the rerouting of Section 17 along the attractive extension of the new footpath by the Salmon's Brook in Enfield between Rectory Farm Road, under the Rendlesham Viaduct, to Hilly Fields.

Green Chain Walk

The Project Team would like to update the GCW's route guidance. Many of the maps will be modified and there'll also be minor modifications to the text. This should be underway by the spring.

Green Link Walk

We published walk guidance on the four sections of the Green Link Walk in June 2024.

Web site

Feedback from walkers

Andrew Hunt works tirelessly on co-ordinating information about the four routes on our website and keeping it up to date. He responds to walkers messages, liaises with co-ordinators and quickly updates the website when walkers send us feedback on their walking experiences, especially when they encounter problems on the way. Many walkers end their messages about issues with grateful thanks for our walk guidance and news items.

For example, this message in November 2025:

"I finished walking the London Loop last week, and would like to thank the efforts of your volunteers in preparing the route guidance. The walk would have been difficult to complete without it."

Also this message in January 2026:

"May I just say first that the Capital Ring guidance on your website is truly excellent. We have so far undertaken 7 of the 15 sections and have found it invaluable. We would definitely have missed the turn off Biggin Hill into Biggin Woods on section 4 without it, and also have done the Greenway in section 14 early thanks to your tip off about its closure."

February 2026

I love your Capital Ring resources - thanks for maintaining them.

Web site activity

The (rounded) cumulative hits (ie visits and not downloads) on the pages for downloading PDFs since publication are as follows:

- GLW: 28 028
- GCW:71 242
- London Loop: 292 180
- Capital Ring: 666 8906

Since January I have published new news items on the web site as follows:

- Capital Ring, 1 news items
- London Loop, 6 news items
- GCW, 1 news item
- GLW, 0 news item

Several of the news items have been updated.



Happy Valley January 2026