

## **One Step Walkers – A guide for Walk Leaders** – Robin Davison 1-2-17

First & foremost thank you to all our members who volunteer to lead walks for the group, without you we would not have a club & we hope you get satisfaction from being involved. Even if they don't always say so I am sure members on the walks are always thankful of the leader.

This document written to help you with preparation, understanding responsibility, leading, safety, publicity tailored to One Step club walks so you're your walk is a success & members get the best possible enjoyment from your walk. Remember as leader you have a responsibility for the group as a whole & you are leading for all members on the walk be they fast, slow, regular walker or new. The guide is long but much of what is said is common sense & except for safety aspects not always an absolute necessity.

Please do not let any of this put you off leading or deter from the informal approach & fun we all have on our days out.

### **Planning & suitability of the walk**

Walks differ & there are many things to consider: -

**Location** – As a guide evening walks 4 to 6 miles local to Derby / Nottingham. Saturday walks 10 to 14 miles up to 40 miles travelling from Derby, Sunday walks 6 to 8 miles up to 30 miles from Derby.

**Parking** – Allow for parking & include helpful details for OS web & digest note

**Start point** – Ideally with toilets.

**Route** – Normally circular with suitable parking. Follow designated footpaths or concession paths. For high routes plan an alternative easier route in case of extreme weather.

**Length & time** – Allowing for stops & lunch walks plan with an average speed of 2 mph, actual walking pace is normally 3mph.

**Break** – On long walks schedule a 5-minute drink break 1 hour into the walk.

**Stops on route** – Ideally toilets & possibly a café or pub.

**Picnic** – Allow a picnic stop 15 to 30 minutes ideally in a sheltered spot.

**Dogs on walks** – It is Ramblers policy to allow well behaved dogs on walks at the discretion of the leader. If your walk is unsuitable for dogs due to terrain, styles, distance etc. or for any other reason please ask the walk organiser to

make this clear on the website & any in other advertising eg. Digest, Facebook or Meetup.

**End of walk** - Coffee or social drink is often welcome.

**Recce** – Ideally recce a route if you have not walked it before, using a map or GPS on the day is acceptable if you are confident.

**Walk grading** – We have a simple system indicated on the web to help member's understand difficulty.

*Easy - walks for anyone who does not have a mobility difficulty, a specific health problem or is seriously unfit. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn.*

*Leisurely - walks for reasonably fit people with at least a little country walking experience. May include unsurfaced rural paths. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are recommended. Height gain less than 500ft per mile*

*Moderate - walks for people with country walking experience and a good level of fitness. May include some steep paths and open country, and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential. Height gain up to 500 to 800 ft per mile*

*Strenuous - walks for experienced country walkers with an above average fitness level. May include hills and rough country, and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential. People in doubt about their fitness should contact the organiser or leader in advance. Height gain over 800 ft per mile*

*Technical - walks for experienced and very fit walkers with additional technical skills. May require scrambling.*

**Safety & behavior of members** – We understand not all members notably female are comfortable leading walks on their own or with strangers. If this is a concern or you feel threatened by any incident on a walk please report it to a walk organizer.

## **Publicity**

**Web site** – Liaise with long/short or evening walk organiser to provide details for the web programme. They will need date, time, leader name, mobile number, start point location (SK reference if possible or Latitude/Longitude), parking location, walk length, route summary & any special notes eg. cafe stop. If you have a .gpx file of the route the organiser can post it to the website for members to view.

**Digest Note** – This will be written automatically from the web notes but if you wish to add more detail please forward to the Group Communications Officer at least 1 week before the walk date.

**Inviting friends** – invite friends to join & support you as leader via mail.

**Facebook** – If you are a member post interesting or special details prior to the walk on the group Facebook page & invite members to say if they are going or to share transport.

### **Preparation for the walk**

**Carry a first aid kit** - typically “Life Systems Pocket First Aid Kit”, see link <https://www.lifesystems.co.uk/products/first-aid-kits/pocket>.

**Weather** – Check weather forecast the evening before the walk in case of bad weather. In event of extreme weather necessitating cancellation inform relevant Walks Organiser who can update web & arrange a special digest mail.

**To take** - Map, whistle, compass for high level or exposed walks.

**Prepare a briefing** – plan what you want to say.

### **Start Briefing**

Arrive with time in hand!

Count the number on walk, in the event of poor attendance 3 people are necessary for the walk to proceed, leader, back marker & a member.

#### **Points to cover: -**

Introduction - Introduce yourself as the day's volunteer leader, ask for new members to make themselves known so regular members can make them welcome.

Check all members receive weekly digest & remind everyone it is Ramblers & Group policy is to allow 3 tasters walks before becoming a Ramblers member for insurance reasons.

Route – Give a brief description of the route & stop points.

Toilet facilities – Explain where toilets are available on route & if anyone needs to drop off the back for a call of nature please inform the backmarker to take allowance.

Appoint a backmarker exchange mobile numbers.

Encourage walkers to log the leader's mobile number in case they get lost or for an emergency.

**Dogs** – If dogs are present remind the group that well behaved dogs are welcome on walks provided they are kept under close control at all times and must be on a lead through livestock areas, on roads and at any othertime the walk leader requests. The group does not consider dogs running loose under walkers feet on narrow paths or on leads of more than 2 metres long as well behaved.

**Group Activities** – If a committee member is present allow them publicise any other immediate group activities such as social events or walks.

**Leaving the walk** – If member's dropout they must inform the leader or back marker.

**Lateness** – If members have contacted you due to being late & request a delay to the start it is reasonable to wait for up to 5 minutes maximum, beyond this is unfair to wait for those members who made arrangement to arrive on time.

## **On the Walk**

**Cows & dogs** – Avoid fields with cows or bulls if possible. Where this is not possible walk away from animals around side of the field. If walkers have dogs consider asking them to walk away from the main group & remind them to let go of their dog if chased for their own safety.

**Road safety** – On roads in general, walk in single file, and where there is no footpath on the right side of the road to face the oncoming traffic. Cross over the road as necessary so as to walk on the outside of a bend.

**Keep the group together** - Gather up & re-group regularly, especially at turn points. Regularly count the number in the group.

**Breaks** – Be aware of the fitness of members on the walk and allow short breaks as necessary if members are struggling. Especially take note of first time walkers who may have underestimated their fitness.

**Backmarker** – Always keep backmarker in sight, part way around the walk change the backmarker if they want a break.

**Feedback** - Ask for feedback on the walk & on the group. There is a feedback mail address to the committee on the walks programme page if anyone wishes to use it.

**New Members** – Explain some background to the group. Enquire how they became aware of the group and make them aware of the webpage if they have not seen it.

**At the end** – Thank everyone & give instructions if you are going for a social drink.

## **Insurance**

All walks organised by Ramblers Areas and Groups automatically receive civil liability insurance cover through the Association's national policy. The only requirement is that the designated Leader(s) is a Ramblers member. This is designed to protect leaders against claims for damage to property and for injury or death which might have happened on the walk. Please note that the policy does not provide personal accident cover. Non-members on walks are only covered by 3<sup>rd</sup> party liability insurance for 3 walks before becoming a member. Further information <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/technical-pages/searchresults.aspx?keywords=insurance>

## **In the event of**

Hopefully your walk will go without problem however always remember to remain calm & do not be afraid to ask for help from fellow walkers if you need it. As a guide to possible problems: -

**In the event of an accident** - Administer basic first aid as necessary (See Ramblers guide to leading) & call for emergency assistance if required (Dial 999 or 112 for general emergency, 101 for Police or 111 for NHS advice). Help injured party to end of route if necessary or if unable to continue help them arrange safe transport back to start point & home. This may involve taxi or someone waiting & collecting them after returning to the start. Abandon the walk if necessary. Please report the incident to your walk organiser (see below for download link). As a Ramblers group we have a responsibility to report all injuries to head office via a standard reporting form for monitoring and insurance reasons.

**Lost person or group** – Stop walk & enquire if anyone has contact details for lost person(s). If you are unable to contact them establish last time & place lost person(s) seen. Re-trace steps to last contact point & search for a small distance any alternative routes or places they may have gone. If they are un-

traceable complete the walk and if their car is still present when the walk is complete notify local police.

**Bad Weather** – If weather is extreme at start of walk or becomes extreme (eg. heavy snow or high winds) consider a safer alternative route if suitable or abandon walk & take safest return route to start. Be aware of member's safety and any possibility of the effects of exposure.

**Member Disputes** – Ask members involved to remain calm and take time out for a moment. Remind them to be respectful of other walk members and the leader. If necessary away from the group briefly mediate the points of view so the walk can continue, agreement cannot be reached then agree to differ but be civil & sensible. Report details of the incident to your walk organiser and the Group Chairman.

### **For Further Guidance**

#### **Ramblers Guide for Walk Leaders**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/group-finder/areas/devon/groups/totnes/guide-to-leading-walks.aspx>

#### **Walk Leader Toolkit – Role, Checklist, FAQ, Remote Walks**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits-alphabetically-sorted/walk-leader-toolkit.aspx>

#### **Walk Leader Training Guides**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits-alphabetically-sorted/walk-leader-training.aspx>

#### **First Aid Tips for a Walking**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/introduction-to-first-aid/first-aid-tips-for-walkers-how-to-deal-with-situations-you-might-encounter-on-a-walk.aspx>

#### **Ramblers Incident Reporting Form**

[www.ramblers.org.uk/~media/Resources/.../Incident%20report%20form.doc](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/~media/Resources/.../Incident%20report%20form.doc)

#### **Dog Waking Code**

[www.ramblers.org.uk/~media/Files/Advice/thedogwalkingcode.pdf](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/~media/Files/Advice/thedogwalkingcode.pdf)

