

CHESTER RAMBLING & HILL WALKING CLUB**GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS****1 PREPARATION**

Club walk routes must be walked over in advance

Consider

- Your own capability: Is your walk comfortably within your physical limits?
Do you have navigational skills appropriate to the grade?
Are you aware of the abilities and expectations of potential participants?
Is the walk over-ambitious?
Are you confident you can control a group?
- Car parking: Is there sufficient space?
Is road access good and possible under most foreseeable weather conditions?
Can any impact on the local community be minimised?
- Grade and length: Can you walk-out before the programme is printed?
If not, can you adapt the walk to the programme grade and length?
If the walk is unavoidably over 3k (2m) longer than advertised or a full grade higher members should be informed by e-mail and before leaving Chester.
- Rights of access: Is your route legal?
Are you using public rights of way, permissive paths, access land, or do you have permission from the landowner?
If using access land have you checked that it will be open on the day of the walk?
- Walking on roads: If there is no pavement or verge, is visibility good and traffic manageable?
Could the road be avoided?
- Stops: Have you identified sheltered food & comfort stops?
- Points of interest: Is your route close to an interesting feature that could be included?
- Short cuts: Are you confident about short cuts or bad weather alternatives?
- Prevailing weather: Is your walk suitable for likely weather conditions at the time?
Will there be sufficient daylight?
- Weather forecast: Are you aware of the probable conditions?
- Drivers' instructions: Can the instructions be followed without an OS map?
Have you included your mobile phone number?
- Emergency Guidelines: Are you familiar with these?
- A+ walks: Are you certain your route is not above Grade 1 scrambling or, in winter conditions, ungraded? Are you familiar with alternative easier routes?

2. UNABLE TO LEAD?

Contact the appropriate Rambles Organiser as soon as possible. Ideally another leader will be able to take over the walk or lead an alternative in the same area. If not another walk may be substituted. If the Rambles Organiser is unavailable contact a member of the General Committee or experienced Committee Member.

If the walk has to be cancelled this must be well publicised and arrangements made for a member to attend the meeting place.

3. LEADING THE WALK

Before leaving Chester

- Are you or another member of the party or all members of the party carrying items from this list appropriate to the grade of walk: mobile phone, first aid kit, torches, extra clothing, extra food and water, survival equipment, crampons, ice axes, OS map, spare maps, compass, GPS, whistle, spectacles, magnifier, sun cream, insect repellent, spare cash?
- Do you have concerns about the equipment or fitness of any of your party? Query any potential participant whose capabilities are unknown to you. Describe the walk accurately. If you are not satisfied encourage the person to try a lower grade of walk and give reasons why you cannot take them.
- Do all drivers have written instructions to the starting point? Ask drivers to remind their passengers to limit noise if near houses.

At the start of the walk

- **Appoint a back-marker.** Ensure this is a conscientious member who can be relied on to watch the back of the party, count the party and close gates. Try not to allow the weakest walker to back-mark.
- Make participants aware of any hazards if appropriate.

During the walk

- **Objective: Always keep in mind this is to give participants an enjoyable day and to return safely.**
- **Control your party:** Set a pace suited to the party.
Keep the party together; with a large party remind members of their own responsibilities to check behind and to keep up if possible.
Ensure gaps are not developing, particularly where there is restricted visibility.
Check often that you can see the back-marker.
Stop at junctions and when changing direction, curb the more impatient!
Allow people to go ahead only with permission and agreement where they will wait.
Do not allow members to damage property by climbing gates or fences.
Enforce single-file on footpaths crossing crops.
Ask the party to walk calmly together across fields with cows or horses, avoiding eye contact. Don't walk between cows and their calves.
On roads, keep to the safest side taking account of verges and visibility.
- Ensure gates are left as you find them. It is best to ask a member to wait with the gate, especially if closure is not straightforward.
- Give priority to other walkers on your route.
- Ask for help wherever necessary to keep the party together, help members in difficulty, gate-mind, for advice on the route, to check numbers, help members cross stiles & streams etc.
- Utilise expertise within the party for example in difficult conditions, to administer first aid, at points of interest, to identify unusual plants etc.
- If a member chooses to leave the party remind them this is at their own risk.

4. AFTER THE WALK

- Inform the Rambles Organiser about any incidents or accidents or causes for concern about any participants.
- Report any obstructions to paths to the Club's Footpath Officer.

5. WALKOUT EXPENSES

- Can be claimed from the Club Treasurer.