

Mid Staffs Ramblers Leaders' Pack

The committee has received concerns from several walk leaders and group members about the management of walks. Following discussion, the committee asks all leaders to follow these guidelines as far as is possible. The committee fully recognise the important and vital contribution that our walk leaders make to the success of our vibrant Mid Staffs Ramblers Group. We realise that most of this is common practice and we hope that they will make your role as leader more comfortable and enjoyable.

Before the walk

- Recce the walk as near as possible to its scheduled date.
- Plan ways that the walk can be shortened if needs be.
- Note the condition of stiles and consider possible hazards such as steep descents. If there are a lot of stiles and a large group is expected, think carefully about group management and the extra time it will take to get over them. This could have implications for the length of the walk if it is to finish at a reasonable time.
- Ensure there is adequate parking at the start. If this is on a pub or privately-owned car park, always contact the owner for permission just before the walk, even if permission has been given in the past.
- Take a map of the walk even if using other means of navigation such as a GPS device or mobile phone. The group has a GPS device for leaders to use. Contact a committee member if required.
- If possible, have a copy of the map route for the backmarker.
- Plan coffee and lunch breaks if applicable.
- Make sure you have a first aid kit and a mask.
- Print off the walk register and risk assessment from the Mid Staffs website and complete as appropriate. Risk assessments should be kept by the leader for three years.

At the meeting point

- Ensure all walkers have signed the register, which you must keep for 21 days, after which it should be destroyed.
- If not already arranged, appoint a backmarker who should agree the number of walkers with the leader.
- Ensure the backmarker knows they should be in contact with the leader using the radios or oral messages in case of a problem.
- If being used, make sure radios are working and that you and the backmarker know how to use them.
- Bring the group together before the start. Outline the route for the day and point out any hazards such as main roads.
- Remind walkers that unless given permission by you, they must not get in front of the leader. The committee has decided that walkers who do not adhere to this will not be considered part of the group walking that day.

On the Walk

- Set a pace at the front that keeps the group together.
- It is imperative that you keep the group together and wait for walkers and the backmarker to catch up at junctions and after stiles.
- Keep in contact with the back marker with radio or by oral message.
- Count numbers regularly.
- If deemed safe, allow walkers to move at their own pace but set a definite point for people to stop and wait for you and/or the others.
- Regularly check that all members are looking well and coping with the walk.
- Do not be afraid to cut the walk short if this is necessary due to poor weather, illness or an accident.
- At the end of the walk, again make sure all walkers are accounted for.

Angie Spencer

Chair Mid Staffs Ramblers, 18th Nov 2021