

Sutton-in-Ashfield & District Rambling Club

Health and Safety guidance for all members

Leaders

Our walk leaders are volunteers and as such are not trained. Their walk descriptions are published in the club programme with additional information about the walk such as; many stiles, varied terrain, steep climb or not walked over etc.

Club Rambles

When rambling the whole party shall follow the guidance of and accept the instructions of the ramble leader and shall observe the Countryside Code. Any member or visitor taking part in any club activity does so at his or her own risk, and the Club and its leaders will not accept liability or responsibility for any injuries which may be received. You should only tackle distances and terrain that you are confident in completing. If you are inadequately equipped for the walk, the leader can refuse to take you. Gates that need to be opened by the group must be closed when the group has passed through. Whilst walking, always maintain visual contact with those in front and those behind. If you wish to fall behind, be sure the backmarker knows what you are doing (or the person at the back).

Walking on roads

Where road walking is necessary, use pavements and safe crossing points. Where there is no pavement walk in single file on the right, facing oncoming traffic. Cross to the other side before sharp right-hand bends when instructed by the walk leader to do so.

Warm weather

Sun hats, sun cream and water will prevent sunburn, windburn and dehydration. More water will be required if walking strenuously and / or in hot weather.

Cold, adverse or extreme weather

Heavy rain, snow and wind chill can seriously deplete a walkers energy leading to exposure and / or hypothermia. All walkers should ensure they have enough warm clothing, food and plenty of water. It is a good idea to carry a warm drink of tea, coffee or soup. Walkers should be able to recognise the signs of hypothermia and how to respond. Consider using pubs, cafes and tea rooms where available for rest breaks or lunch stops.

High-level walking

Be prepared for more challenging weather, especially in winter. Ensure you have warm and waterproof clothing. It is a good idea to carry high-energy rations such as mint cake, chocolate or dried fruit. Leaders should carry a map, compass and be prepared to shorten the walk and have an alternative / escape route planned should conditions deteriorate. Nominate a backmarker to prevent the party becoming split or to halt the group in an emergency - (both the leader and backmarker should carry a whistle and if possible a mobile phone).

Slips, trips and falls

Walking boots are considered appropriate for most walks and offer better traction in muddy / slippery conditions. Boots also support the ankles, lessening the chance and severity of sprains. Walking poles offer added support for those less confident or able. Carry a basic first-aid kit - do not rely on someone else in your party to have one! (Carry a torch if there is any risk that the walk will be delayed into the dark).

Injuries requiring first-aid

Walk leaders are not trained to administer first-aid; therefore all ramblers should carry a basic first-aid kit and include additional items such as blister kits, insect repellent and mild pain killers (for personal use) such as paracetamol or aspirin. Ideally, leaders should have a mobile phone for use in emergencies. In the event of an emergency where there is no mobile phone reception, the leader may need to organise the summoning of help with someone else in the party.

Health and Safety when walking

When walking with us, you are responsible for your own health and safety and for judging whether you are sufficiently fit to do the walk. If you have a recurrent sudden medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy, please advise the walk leader on the day, giving advice on any immediate treatment that may be required and whether you carry medication with you. Store an emergency contact in the address book on your mobile under ICE (In Case of Emergency), or on a card.

Hazards

We identify the following hazards for our members when out walking:

- a) Falling over and breaking or spraining wrists, ankles, etc.
- b) Slipping on muddy paths and hurting themselves on ground impact.
- c) Getting behind on a walk and not knowing where the group is.
- d) Crossing roads and walking on roads.

Another hazard can be cattle; give bulls a wide berth and don't get between a cow and its calf.

Control Measures

- a) All walk leaders receive a guide to safety when out walking.
- b) All new members receive a guide to safety when out with the club.
- c) Walks leaders are instructed to carry charged mobile phones and must be able to give a grid reference to emergency services in the event of a serious accident.
- d) All members must carry a simple first-aid kit to deal with minor accidents.

Additional Control Measures

No unnecessary risks are taken in poor weather conditions. All group leaders are asked to make 'on the spot' assessments and if necessary, they are to cancel, change or alter the advertised walk. All group leaders are given the authority to prevent anyone from walking with them, if the member is unsuitably dressed or shod.

If you wish to leave the walk, the leader must be informed. For your own safety and in case of emergency, it is good practice to carry contact details and where appropriate essential medical information in your rucksack. It is essential that you let the group leader know of any possible medical situations which could arise and what should be done if it does.

- Don't walk on your own, unless you are competent to do so.
- Please don't be late back from the walk, as it affects everyone else on the trip.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or advice. If in doubt - ask.
- Take map and compass if you have them and the knowledge to use them.

Safety Officer. The safety officer will be the walk leader on the day. There may be qualified first-aiders on the walk and knowledge of this may be available.

Mobile phones. Members should request a list of mobile telephone numbers before getting on the bus if they have not already been supplied with them, in case they get parted from the group or going to be late or in an emergency. Obviously it cannot be guaranteed that the phone will work in some of the more remote parts of the countryside.

Date - 31/1/2016