



ALTRINCHAM & DISTRICT RAMBLING CLUB
GUIDELINES
FOR LEADERS OF CLUB WALKS

It is the sole responsibility of each Leader of Altrincham and District Rambling Club to become fully conversant with this document.

Qualifications

All Altrincham and District Rambling Club's walks leaders are volunteers. There is no warranty that any have received any form of training in Outdoor Pursuits, or Leadership, or other formal training of any sort.

Planning the Walk - Basic Guidelines

In planning a walk, you should think carefully about the following:-

- Available Paths or Open Country:- stay off roads as much as possible; metalled surfaces are hard on feet and the constant wariness of traffic will diminish your enjoyment
- Start and Finish Points:- are they convenient and easy to find? Are public toilets nearby?
- Backmarkers: - the need for a backmarker depends on many aspects of the walk that the Leader should assess, including number of participants and walk terrain. Ideally the backmarker should be familiar with the route and known to the party. Where necessary the backmarker should close gates and ensure no walker falls behind unseen. The Leader should ensure that contact is maintained with the rear of the walking party.
- Parking:- there should be somewhere to park vehicles safely and without causing annoyance or obstruction to others. Make sure there are a suitable number of parking spaces available.
- Lunchtime Halt:- it should be recognised that lunch and other stops will normally be taken in the open.
- Mobile Phone:- carrying a mobile phone may be useful, but should not be relied on in an emergency.
- Prevailing conditions will affect walking speed; for walks in upland country you should add about 30 minutes for every 300m/1000ft of ascent. More time may need to be added if muddy, windy or other adverse conditions are anticipated.
- Reconoite the walk prior to the walking day to ensure familiarity with the route, terrain and general conditions. Complete the Club's Hazard Appraisal form recording all necessary aspects (keep for one year), as this is a mandatory requirement of the Club's Insurance provider.

Walk Description

Clarity in walk descriptions is important in order for members to understand what to expect on the walk. Your walk description should be fully set out on the Club's walk submission online form so that it appears succinctly in the Monthly Circular.

The normal meet up is at Altrincham Railway Station prior to the stated time. If the Leader is not intending to be there this should be clearly stated in the walk description. A deputy can be asked to attend at the station.

Potential or Existing Club Members

The Club uses a walk booking system. All prospective walkers should contact the Leader, prior 6 pm the day before the walk, to request acceptance on the walk as there may be a limit on the number of walkers. Make a list of names and phone numbers to take with you on the walk.

If you are contacted by a potential new Club member to join a walk, particularly if it is their first walk with the Club, please ask about their walking experience and CURRENT fitness levels.

Feel free to ask the person to join an easier walk on this occasion if you are not satisfied they are sufficiently capable for your walk. If you are undecided, please contact the Membership Secretary to ask for their opinion and help. If required, the Membership Secretary will speak to the individual on the Leader's behalf, either to establish more details or to request them to try an easier walk.

If you are asked by a potential participant for agreement to bring a dog on the walk, try to discourage this and remember that the final decision is yours.

If you are contacted by an existing member of the Club whose level of fitness for your walk you are unsure of, or a person you don't know, please ask what walks they normally do and discuss the challenges of your walk with them. If you are still uncertain of their ability, do not feel you need to take the decision alone. You may contact either the relevant Walks Organiser, or any member of the Committee, who would know the individual in question.

Walk Briefing

Before setting off introduce yourself in a friendly manner as the Leader of the walk and any new members, give a brief description of the route together with potential hazard information, details of the lunchtime break and other occasional stops, and estimated finishing time. If there are a number of new members or visitors, remind them of the countryside code. Make sure that cars are parked responsibly. Check the identity and number of walkers against your list of names booked.

If there is much road walking involved, remind the group that we generally walk in single file on the right side of the road to face the oncoming traffic, crossing over when about to approach the inside of a sharp bend.

Advise the party not to walk more than two abreast when crossing fields that are ploughed or in crop and stick strictly to the public right of way. If sheep and cattle are likely to be encountered, dog-owners, who must have previously obtained permission from the leader(s) for the dog to be on the walk, should be advised at this stage, and reminded that Club Rules require dogs to be on a lead at all times.

Finally, make sure the backmarker is known to the party, and their function is clearly understood.

On the Walk

The party will soon become spread out. In many respects this is preferable to having everyone bunched together, but try to avoid large gaps occurring by slowing down the pace and making frequent stops to allow those at the rear to catch up. Don't move on just as the back-markers appear since their need for a short rest will be, if anything, greater than those at the front. In addition, close up the party for complicated turnings, poor visibility, or in woods.

In reasonable weather, lunch should not be rushed, for many eating outdoors is one of the most enjoyable aspects of open-air recreation. 30 minutes should prove ample but in good weather, why not linger longer? Use the lunch break to give out information such as details of future walks and events. Before leaving your lunch site make sure all litter is cleared up and check that nothing has been left behind.

After the Walk

- Check that everyone is accounted for.
- On your return home, inform the Webmaster of the number on your walk and the names of all participants plus brief details of any unusual incidents which the Walks Organiser may need to be aware.
- Should any incident occur during the walk which could have repercussions, such as damage to property or an injury that requires medical attention, either immediately or within a few days of the incident, then this must be reported to the Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible.