

## **CHELTENHAM RAMBLING CLUB**

### **GUIDANCE FOR WALK LEADERS**

#### **1. Where?**

Offer your favourite walk; it doesn't matter if the Club did it last year! Your enthusiasm for the walk will be infectious and knowing the route well will make it easier to lead. Travelling time from Cheltenham is a limitation. Walks should only be on public footpaths and bridleways, concessionary paths or on access land unless the landowner's permission has been obtained.

Remember that riverside paths may flood in winter while bridleways become impossibly muddy. Dark woods should be avoided on evening walks early or late in the season.

#### **2. When?**

We have a reciprocal agreement with the Cotswold Club so the basic monthly programme is:-

1st weekend Saturday and Sunday

2nd weekend Saturday only

3rd weekend Saturday and Sunday

4th weekend Saturday only

5th weekend Saturday and Sunday

Evening walks are held weekly from May to August. The time at the meeting point for evening walks should not be earlier than 6-15 pm, so that ramblers in full-time work are not inconvenienced, except at the beginning or end of the season.

#### **3. Planning**

##### **1. How long?**

The Club offers several types of walk of varying length.

Evening: 3 - 5 miles 2 - 3 hours

Half day 6 - 8 miles 3 - 4 hours

Full day 9 - 12 miles 5 - 6 hours

Long full day 13+ miles 6+ hours

These are generally circular walks. Occasionally leaders offer 'Figure of 8' walks i.e. a morning and an afternoon walk starting from the same place. Linear walks are possible with the use of car shuttles or public transport

#### **4. Cheltenham Meeting Point**

The meeting places in Cheltenham are identified in the programme. Car drivers are encouraged to offer lifts. You will need to estimate the distance to the start of the walk to allow adequate time and so that the travel fee can be calculated at the current rate.

### **THE WALKOVER**

#### **5. Equipment**

A 1:25000 map [OS Explorer] is essential as it shows field boundaries. The Club Library is kept by a club member. A compass, some secateurs and a torch might be useful. OS and locator maps on a phone are also useful.

## **6 Deputy Leader/ Backmarker**

Try to do the walkover with a fellow member as this will boost your confidence. He or she could lead the walk if you are unable to do so on the day. Committee members may be able to help. When a large number of ramblers are expected on the programmed day, a backmarker to accompany slower walkers is essential.

## **7. Starting Point**

Walks are usually planned around car parking spaces, so parking for up to 20 cars is necessary for some evening walks. If a pub car park is chosen, the permission of the landlord is obligatory. You should encourage patronage of the pub afterwards. Charges for public car parks must be noted in the programme.

Lay-bys used by HGV's are sometimes occupied overnight so should be avoided. Ramblers should be encouraged to share cars and disperse them around villages.

## **8. En - route**

Make a note of any features which might be important later, e.g.crops, livestock etc. Any problems should be reported to the County Council. Note the terrain so that guidance is given in the programme notes, e.g. 'hilly', or 'could be muddy'. Look out for refreshment and comfort stops.

The final walkover needs to be within a few weeks of the actual walk.

Walks without walkovers should only be contemplated by experienced leaders when a small group is anticipated.

## **9. Timing**

Walkovers sometimes take slightly longer than the actual walk, but stiles cause delays to large groups. You will need to allow 10 to 15 minutes for tea/coffee stops. Evening and half-day walks tend to proceed at 2 m.p.h and full day walks at nearer 2.5 m.p.h. An hour should be added for every 1000 feet to be climbed.

## **10. Lunch**

On full day walks, particularly in winter, many ramblers like to have the opportunity to shelter and eat warm food in a pub. Other ramblers need alternative shelter such as church porches. Inevitably pub lunches, especially on Sundays, are prone to slow service. Whereas a picnic lunch will often last less than 30 minutes, a pub meal usually lasts a full hour. Walk leaders should express their intention clearly in the programme. Should the latter be chosen, the landlord should be contacted to ascertain whether walkers are welcome, the type and price of food available. Landlords appreciate an indication of the numbers of meals wanted. Avoid overestimation! Sometimes a mobile phone call during the walk is helpful.

## **11. Instructions to ramblers in the programme**

Leaders may ask members to phone them should ramblers intend to drive to the start of a walk directly. This is helpful when a walk is a long distance from Cheltenham in case of low numbers or bad weather, so it can be cancelled.

The walk information required by the Programme Secretary is shown on Page 4.

Leaders may stipulate 'No dogs' when they do not want dogs to on the walk. Where dogs are allowed, they should be on short leads at all times.

## **ON THE DAY**

### **12. At the start**

If possible, go to the meeting place in Cheltenham to ensure that everyone who needs a lift has one. If you cannot do so, ask someone else to be there. For safety reasons, count the number of walkers.

Welcome everybody to the walk, especially those new to the club. Give out or ask for any notices. Ramblers often appreciate a few comments about matters of interest.

If you feel that anyone has come inadequately equipped for the walk, you may refuse to allow that person to walk. The same applies to members who bring dogs on 'no dog' walks. The Committee will support you if you have any of these issues.

### **13. During the walk**

When you stop to let the last person catch up, give them awhile to rest too. Don't just power on now that the group is back together.

Stop to admire the view, first of all it's beautiful. Secondly it's a great, subtle way of introducing small breaks if people are getting tired.

The Countryside Code should be respected. Gates should be shut unless previously left open. Ramblers should be encouraged to shout back about this and also about the presence of motor vehicles and bikes.

A backmarker is strongly advised as one can prevent the group becoming split or help a ramble in difficulties. This is particularly important in bad weather or darkness.

Both you and the backmarker should take a whistle. The Club's emergency code is:-

Two blasts - Slow down and make contact, we are losing you.

Four blasts - Stop we have an accident / illness / lost person.

Dogs must be closely controlled; they should be kept on a short lead at all times. Incidents caused by dogs are not covered by the Club's insurance.

### **14. Safety First**

It is a rule of the Club that the Club accepts no liability for member's health or safety, so members walk at their own risk. Most problems can be overcome through common sense!

Thunderstorms can be frightening in open countryside. Do not shelter under trees! It is safer to squat down in the open. In mountainous areas, groups should descend promptly to a safer altitude.

If you do not possess a mobile phone make sure that somebody else on the walk has one. Be aware that mobiles do not work in some remote areas, so you may depend on a whistle!

Should a ramble decide to leave a walk before the end they should inform the leader and the leader should, if possible, advise the person that the Club no longer takes any responsibility for him or her.

Should you have concerns about the desirability or safety of a walk, for example because of extreme weather conditions, you have the right to cancel it or curtail the route.

### **15. After the walk**

CRC is a sociable walking club so if convenient, nominate a pub or tea shop afterwards! Who knows, your fellow ramblers might even treat you!

#### **Remember!**

Without leaders there can be no walks so the Club encourages new leaders. Proposal forms are available from the Programme Secretary. The Club Officers and members of the Committee will be pleased to offer advice.

Alan Skidmore - Revised May2022

## Walk Information Required

Date Meeting time in Cheltenham. Meeting place in Cheltenham.	Name of the walk, type of walk, terrain. Starting time, starting place, map number(s), grid reference. Post code? The walk, refreshments.	Distance. Car share contribution. Leader. Phone numbers.
<b>Sat 5<sup>th</sup></b> <b>08.55</b> <b>Tivoli Road</b>	<b>Cotswold Challenge Full Day /Hilly</b> Start at 09.30 from Woodmancote village, the one near Rendcomb, OL45/LR163/SP004088. Walk: Rendcomb, North Cerney, Bagendon, various Duntisbournes, Burcombe Lane. Picnic lunch.	<b>11 Miles</b> £2.00 Your name 01242 123456 07123 456789