

NDWG Walks Leaders Checklist

Updated Oct 2004

These guidelines have been issued to assist in ensuring our Sunday Day walks run as smooth as possible for both the leader and walkers. These guidelines are really aimed at our standard Sunday low-level walks in the East Midlands and Peak District. If you are leading a high-level mountainous walk then further navigation skills and care must be taken to ensure safety in the mountains. Please do not attempt on any occasion to volunteer to lead a walk on a weekend away in a mountainous or hilly area, where you have no experience of these conditions. Weather changes very quickly in these areas and special care must be taken.

If you require any further information on guidelines for any specific walk, then please speak to one of the walks co-ordinators on the committee.

I hope you will find these guidelines useful. If you have any further ideas, please contact the walks co-ordinators.

Actions before the day of the walk

Thorough preparation of the route – reccie it, ask about pub closing times and dog friendly pubs. Tell the pub when you are coming to give them a warning (if it is a small pub). Look for possible short cuts in bad weather or if a very slow pace.

If you make any major route changes, you may wish to send out a group email. You must keep the start point the same, and your walk must not clash with the other walk on that day. ndwg@yahoogroups.com

Dogs – know your group policy (car sharing not recommended etc)

Liase with the other leader (if one), about getting to the Nottm/Derby Start point

Weather – Watch forecast from about day 3 – especially if high level. If any roads are closed to get to the start location, please send out a group email

Decide whether to lead from the Front, Middle (think about the benefits of each)

Get Ready – Including group first aid kit, sufficient publicity material (Membership applications, Summary Walks Programme, Web Address, etc) and whether there's anything that needs to be publicised to people that day ie socials or bookings open for weekends away

The day of the walk

Final decision of walk route based on weather forecast

Get to the start point (or Nottm/Derby) early. Suggest 10am for start of walk location

If you go to the Nottm/Derby start look for potential gear hazards, ie clothing. If head torch is required mention this at the start, or any other special gear, ie Lots of water in summer if no pub stop.

Ensure people are aware of the number of walks available – give estimated finish time if possible.

Split people into two groups based on which walk they are doing

At the start point of the walk location

Check that all cars from Nottm/Derby have arrived at the walk location

Get your walkers together

Introduce yourself

If you have more than 25 – 30 people on your walk you will need to consider this, if you can see a potential problem, then suggestions should be made about splitting the walk, ie if the other leader has fewer walkers, then suggest the other leader alters their length to make each group more level. **We do not really want more than 30 max per one leader.**

Check for new members, check everyone seems competent and has suitable clothing and gear.

Ask that if anyone has any medical problems, which the leader needs to be aware of, then please speak to the leader in private.

Short Briefing – route, distance, breaks, pub, teastop and pace.

Tell people to ensure all gates are closed if they are at the back and to walk in single file along cropped fields you are aware of any on your route.

Appoint a back marker – suggest one in morning and one in the afternoon

Headcount – to be done by backmarker at start and after any major stops ie pubs, teashops.

On the walk

Check headcount (or is backmarker visible?)

Chat to as many people as possible, Remember, many new people will probably want to talk to you!!

Try not to lead from the front all of the time

Ensure that dogs are under control when livestock are around. You cannot insist the person puts the dog on the lead, but you can make a comment, and ask them to put their dog on a lead if their dog is not under control.

Think about pauses, re-groups, rest stops and meal breaks

Break stops – Give them an idea of what the stop is for, ie snack stop, or lunch and tell them how long they have and time to re-group (if lunchtime at pub or in a village).

Watch pace and check timing

Help at obstructions/difficult stiles

Handle the group closely at road sections

If there is fog, keep the group close together and make sure that people at the back of the group always know who is at the back and not to lose sight of people in front of them (shout up in this case).

Always prepare and have a plan of action for... Getting lost, hazards, blocked paths, deteriorating weather, accidents and illness, people walking in front of the leader or forcing the pace, managing the group, drawing on group expertise and keeping people informed.

At the end

Thank people for coming and supporting the group

Details of important socials coming up in the week

Ensure newcomers get some publicity material or details on how to get it.