

Walk to Lunch – Guidelines for New Leaders.

Walk Planning

Walks should be circular and able to be completed in 2 – 2.5 hours at a comfortable pace. We find 4 – 5 miles about right. If possible, avoid very steep ascents/descent and large numbers of stiles - this is a mixed ability group and some members find these difficult. All walks should be either very well known to the leader or thoroughly recce'd beforehand. You will need to produce a very short guide to the walk noting terrain, climbs and stiles to go out to the members – on the lines of – ‘approx. 4.5 miles around Grassington, mixed field and wood, several stiles and one longish steady climb’ so that members can decide if the walk is for them.

These are half day walks so be aware of time constraints - remember that it will take a group longer to negotiate stiles, climbs and rough/boggy ground than it will take two people checking the route out. A good guideline is to allow one third more time overall for a group walk than for your recce. Ideally start your walk at the pub you are going to lunch at – it is not possible to allow enough time to change footwear/wet kit and travel back to the lunch venue.

Booking and liaising with the pub is the responsibility of the walk leader. It's best to visit the pub in person beforehand if you are not familiar with the facilities to check they are OK with a large party and whether they want us to pre-order (most do) and when by. Testing the food out is part of the fun.....

Getting info out to the members

This will be done by Jenny or Brigida. You need to get details of walk, meeting place and pub – with menus or a web site link if pre-orders are required – to either Jenny or Brigida by the Saturday prior to the walk at the latest. Earlier is good! Please send files in .pdf format if at all possible so they can be read by both Windows and iPad users. They will collect in names and food orders and e mail them back to you in time for you to e mail or phone the order to the pub. Anyone who has booked and needs to cancel - life happens - will be asked to let you know so you can cancel their order. We find it works best if all pub liaison is done by the walk leader.

On the day

Check you have everyone you are expecting before you set off – Jenny or Brigida will have a register and will tick it off as people arrive. Make everyone is ready to walk before you leave. Ask someone who is familiar with the walk to back mark for you and liaise if the group gets too strung out; the back marker should carry a whistle to contact you in an emergency. Both they – and you – need to keep a discreet watch for anyone who is finding the terrain or stiles difficult and provide help if necessary. Keep an eye on the time and let the pub know well ahead if the group is likely to be late. Take a copy of the food list for the forgetful. Above all, enjoy the walk – and do chat to anyone who has come on their own or hasn't been walking for a while.

Accident Advice

Accidents are rare but they can happen so be prepared by being aware of any possible escape routes or potential short cuts to the walk while doing your recce. If an accident occurs you will need to know your grid location so it is really useful if one of the group has a GPS available or alternatively you can download the OS Locate app to your phone. Either will give the full grid reference. If the casualty cannot continue the walk, firstly ensure the rest of the group is in a safe position and then ask

your back up to take over the lead and continue the walk for the rest of the group. Ask at least two people to remain with you and the casualty. Assess the likely injury. If away from roads and the casualty cannot or should not be moved call 999, ask for the police, they will decide who to dispatch. Give the police a grid reference for your location and details of the suspected injury. If the casualty is capable of walking with support to the nearest road or ambulance accessible location do so but when dialling 999 ask for the ambulance service rather than the police.

While waiting for help keep your casualty as warm and dry as possible but do not give them any food or drinks until they have been medically assessed and you have been advised that it is safe to do so. U3A have an accident form which you will need to fill out so jot down details of how the accident happened (i.e. fell climbing a stile, slipped descending slope etc) if you can and also what steps you took to deal with the situation i.e. called fell rescue who advised a check over in hospital etc.

Don't be put off by this – accidents are rare and are mostly very minor, but it's good to be ready in case. Carry a first aid kit to deal with minor injuries (Jenny and Brigida both have these) and know what to do and who to call out should the need arise.