

STONE GROUP STAFFORDSHIRE AREA RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION STONE RAMBLERS GUIDANCE

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY

All participants in a walking group owe each other a 'duty of care'.

All participants should, to the best of their ability, act in such a way so as not to cause, or allow through neglect, foreseeable damage to befall others or their property.

Every care is taken in planning walks, events and work parties, but no responsibility is accepted by the Group, organisers or leaders for any form of accident or liability, however caused. Participation in any event is entirely at an individual's risk.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Footpath Secretaries

We are always looking for people who would like to help in these roles which affect the quality of our walking experience. If you are interested in helping, please contact the club Footpath Secretary who will explain what could be involved and where we need help.

Footpath Maintenance

If you do not choose to walk with us it does not prevent you getting involved with footpath maintenance. It does mean that you can contribute to the maintenance of the essential footpath network which you use. Contact Derek Sweet for details of how you can help by joining our working parties. 07905 077 077

Maps

Why not bring your own map?

They are especially useful if you need to meet the leader at the starting point, and will enhance your appreciation of the walk and might help in an emergency.

Ordnance Survey Explorer maps, 243,244,258,259,OL24 will be useful to start with. They provide easy-to-follow detail and are ideal for planning walks. OS Explorers are the maps quoted for Grid References in the programme.

Committee

You are always welcome to attend any of our committee meetings which are held 3 or 4 times a year. Please contact the Group Secretary for details of dates.

Any committee member would be happy to receive your ideas for the future and comments on our current programmes. We are always looking for new ideas and volunteers to help us.

Emails and Group Website

Let us have your Email address. It will help rapid, cheap communication, and make sure you are up to date with the programme. You can contact Group Officers through the links on the Group website.

www.stoneramblers.com

EVERYONE CAN LEAD A WALK

The quality of the programme depends on the number of leaders we have. Stone Ramblers is a members' group and you will feel more involved and have a greater sense of ownership by making an input to the walk programme. We need a wide variety of walks and associated activities to keep people interested. You do not have to invent walks. You can use a walking guide book; many are available for our area or as a member of the RA you can use Ramblers Routes on the Ramblers website, www.ramblers.org.uk . If you walk it out beforehand, you will feel more confident. If you feel uncertain about leading a walk on your own contact the Programme Secretary of Stone Ramblers, who will assist you to find a suitable walking partner.

WALKERS GUIDANCE

Please help the leader to make the day enjoyable and safe.

Post publication changes to the programme and further details are available on www.stoneramblers.com

As walks might be changed if the leader is indisposed or the weather is unsuitable, please tell the leader if you intend to go directly to the start point.

Walk descriptions

Each walk entry in the programme has four columns.

- the first column gives the day and the date.
- the second column gives the title of the walk, the departure time from the Scout Hut car park, Westbridge Park, and a map reference for the starting point of the walk of the walk.
- the third column indicates the crow-flight distance from Westbridge Park to the start of the walk (A=6, B=12miles etc.), the length of the walk, its degree of difficulty (grade E, L, M, S), and an **indication of lunch arrangements**. If a Pub stop is indicated this means that lunch would be available. If you wish to eat a picnic you might have to eat it outside the pub. If you use the facilities, please purchase something, at least a coffee!
- The fourth column gives contact details of the leader.
- Variations from the normal 9.30a.m. leaving time from Westbridge Park are shown in *italic bold print*.
- Grid references indicate the location of the start of the walk for those who wish to travel there directly.

Shared transport

Travel is usually by private car, **non-drivers are always welcome**, and sharing of cars is encouraged. We suggest that each passenger voluntarily contributes towards the cost of the journey. Currently this contribution is £1 for each 6-mile crow-flight band this is **subject to review as fuel prices change**.

A=£1, B=£2, C=£3, D=£4, E=£5, etc. This is a contribution to the running cost of the vehicle, petrol plus some overheads. This guidance applies to all club activities.

What to wear

Remember to wear or bring clothing and footwear which is appropriate for the weather and the terrain you are likely to encounter. Conditions can vary widely between sheltered valleys and windswept moorland. It can be wet and cold even on summer days. Leaders have discretion to decline to take inadequately prepared walkers.

Walk Grades

The walk grade which describes the degree of difficulty is indicated by:

E= Easy. These are walks for anyone who does not have a mobility difficulty or a specific health problem or is seriously unfit. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn.

L= Leisurely. These include some modest hills and possibly some rough ground. They are walks for reasonably fit people. They might include un-surfaced rural paths and some modest hills. Walking boots or shoes are recommended.

M=Moderate. These can include a substantial steep hill or a lot of hills usually less than 600m in total. They are walks for people with country walking experience and a good level of fitness. They might include some steep paths and open country and be at a moderate pace. Boots and warm, waterproof clothing are needed.

S= Strenuous. These have some challenging hills/mountains and usually involve more than 600m of climbing. They are walks for experienced walkers with an above average fitness level, Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential. **BOOKING WITH THE LEADER AT LEAST A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE WALK IS ESSENTIAL** because the weather might dictate a last-minute change.

Important Advice

These grades are provided as a general guide. If you have any doubt about your fitness for a particular walk please contact the leader in advance. Leaders may decline to take participants who in their opinion are inadequately equipped or unfit. Bear in mind, the distance of the walk; differences in terrain and the possibility of bad weather, can make a walk more difficult than planned. If you're unsure of your fitness level, try a short and easy walk first: it's much better to find a walk a little too slow and easy than to make yourself miserable and exhausted. Please telephone the leader if you are unsure of details, such as walk difficulty, timing, lifts, lunch arrangements, etc.

Keep with the group

On walks, keep with the group unless you have agreed otherwise with the leader.

Emergency kit

We advise all walkers to carry, written emergency details, a whistle, first aid kit, torch and spare clothing for emergencies and to keep spare clothing/shoes in the car to change into if necessary, when they return. A survival bag and emergency rations should be carried on challenging, **S**, walks.

Food

For most walks it is advisable to carry sufficient food and drink for the duration of the walk. **If in doubt, contact the leader.**

Dogs

Dogs may be allowed on walks at the leader's discretion. Please seek the leader's agreement **before** the day of the walk. **Always ensure that your dog can be easily restrained, particularly on farmland.**

EVENTS YOU MAY NEED TO BOOK

We often need to confirm arrangements well before the actual event! Please help the organiser by **BOOKING EARLY**. Places will always be allocated on a first come first served basis. Group holidays and events will give priority to paid up members of our group. Cancellation may occur if numbers are not viable.

Further details can be obtained from the organiser.

Payments by electronic transfer are preferred. Contact Treasurer Dave Franklin for details.

t_@stoneramblers.com Alternatively use cheques made out to RA Stone Group unless otherwise specified by the event organiser. Ramblers require that 30p charge must be added to each cheque to cover the cost of processing transactions.

WALK LEADERS' GUIDANCE

Choose the Route

- ◆ Estimate the length, height gain, type of terrain, season, strength of party for the grade.
- ◆ Use map or guidebook, research points of interest, parking, breaks, lunch, bad-weather alternatives and escape routes.

Recce

- ◆ Preferably prewalk the route together with your backmarker, perhaps write a route card including timings.
- ◆ Check timings and assess risks and how to avoid, including stiles.
- ◆ Locate possible toilets.

Day Before

- ◆ Check weather forecasts, personal gear, warn the pub, check public transport.

On the Day

- ◆ Keep in contact with back marker, set appropriate pace, watch-out for stragglers.
- ◆ Concentrate on navigation and check timings as you progress.
- ◆ Manage regrouping, countryside impact.
- ◆ Be alert to potential problems, hazards, traffic, road walking
- ◆ **Involve others as necessary.**
- ◆ **Enjoy the Walk**

1. As a Group we wish to create and encourage a good social atmosphere as well as have “good walks”. At the start of your walk please give a general description of the proposed route and stops, and what might be expected in terms of risks, hills, mud, animals, etc. Walkers should be made to feel welcome.
2. If you are not present at the meeting place (normally Westbridge Park) you must make arrangements for walkers to be guided to the actual start of the walk. This has caused problems in the past.
3. It would be helpful to the organisation of Stone Ramblers if you could identify any “new walkers” and take their names and addresses. These should be passed on to the Group Membership Secretary for information.
4. You are responsible for trying to reduce the number of cars proceeding to and parking at the actual start by encouraging sharing. Please also encourage respect of the parking area. Ask for donations if you use a village hall car park.
5. You are in charge and the walk is your responsibility. You should be familiar with the route. It would be advantageous to have walked the route recently.
6. Individuals are responsible for their own behaviour. If walkers behave inappropriately please speak to them and if necessary, draw this to the attention of the Chairman or one of the Group Committee Members
7. Individuals are responsible for their own safety. You should however draw attention to potential hazards or unsafe behaviour. Without appearing officious, make sure that all party members are suitably equipped to cope with terrain and prevailing weather conditions. It might also be pertinent to discuss fitness for the walk. These will have to be subjective judgements, but in extreme circumstances you would be justified in advising someone not to come if lack of proper equipment or fitness for the walk could put that person at risk, or might endanger the safety of others.
8. How to survive a heart attack: see www.stoneramblers.com/SRInfo_HeartAttack.htm for more information:

WALKING IN STONE & AROUND

Stone offers a variety of opportunities for walkers. Tuesdays Stone Health Walks, Wednesdays U3A walking Group, Thursdays and Sundays Stone Ramblers

Many other websites give access to walk descriptions, maps and lists of available guidebooks. These include www.walkinginstaffs.co.uk, www.go4awalk.com, www.walkingpages.co.uk, www.thisisstaffordshire.co.uk, www.walkingworld.com, www.ramblers.org.uk

Walk programmes for groups in the Staffordshire area can be found on the Staffordshire Area website the area website link is on our website. www.stoneramblers.com,

HEALTH WALKS

This is a regular programme of walks that provide a friendly, safe environment to encourage people to walk to improve their health. It is designed to encourage walking for beginners, people recovering from operations, people who have difficulty with longer distances, and those who want a very supportive group to walk with. The Stone group meets on Tuesday at 10.15am at Westbridge Park.

All walks have a qualified leader and others in a supporting role. The average number of people attending is 20. Walks are designed to suit the needs of the walkers. The longer walks take less than two hours and the shorter ones between 45mins and 1 hour. All the walks are 'local', most starting at Westbridge Park and others at Trentham, Barlaston, etc.

Can you help? More people are needed to train as leaders. . Each walk needs a trained leader and a back marker. With current numbers the commitment to be a volunteer means that you may be asked to accompany a walk twice in two months. Dates are negotiated to suit you. If you would like to help in any capacity, contact 01785 813 604 or 01785 811 227.

INSURANCE FOR THE LEADER AND FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE PARTY

The Ramblers hold at central level a general public liability policy covering legal liability for injury to persons and damage to property caused by negligent acts.

It applies to all groups automatically and you should note that it covers:

- (i) Claims against leaders of Ramblers walks (or Ramblers, or area, or group committees) by a member or members of the party who may have suffered injury on the walk arising out of an alleged negligent act or acts of the leader; or claims by the representatives of the deceased in the event of someone being killed or dying on a walk;
- (ii) Claims against the Ramblers by a landowner whose property has allegedly been damaged by a party of ramblers or by a footpath working party;
- (iii) Claims against organisers of Ramblers social events, indoor meetings, etc, provided the grounds for the claim is negligence on the part of the organisers;
- (iv) The policy will cover use of equipment normally carried in winter hill conditions (ice-axe, crampons), but does not cover mountain climbing involving the use of ropes, etc.

- (v) The policy does not cover the legal liability of persons who are not fully paid-up members of the Ramblers. It is therefore essential that group committees do not allow non-Ramblers members to lead walks.

The Ramblers policy is NOT a personal accident policy and individual members are advised, should they wish to be covered, to take out their own policy to cover themselves for personal injury.

The detail may be updated whenever any change is made to the insurance policy. These changes are all recorded on the Ramblers website. They also contain details on the reporting of accidents and incidents. www.ramblers.org.uk

Ramblers members may occasionally be asked to lead a walk for another organisation. They should make sure they are covered by that organisation's own public liability insurance policy.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY ADVICE

Mountain walking in Britain becomes ever more popular and certainly our group is running many more mountain days.

Mountains can also be very dangerous and sometimes unforgiving if things go wrong. Too many accidents occur because people have not taken sensible precautions.

All of our walks entail moving as a group. In addition to promoting friendship (mountain friendships are special because of a shared sense of challenges faced), the group also provides your main safety net in the event of mishaps.

Stone Ramblers is very keen that more of its members are able to enjoy the very special thrills of the mountains and would ask members to bear in mind the following principles:

It's not a good idea to tackle our 2500 feet plus mountains if you are not fit enough. If in doubt do things gradually and get fit on lower hills first.

Sometimes the leader might advise you not to go if they have doubts.

Remember that for most of us it doesn't take very long to gain reasonable fitness.

Come prepared. Bring at least a spare set of clothing, survival bag or blanket, emergency food and water, whistle and compass. Your mobile phone might well be useful in an emergency.

It's fun to show off your fitness, but it is a really bad idea to distance yourself from the party by going too far ahead, and sometimes out of sight. Then you create unnecessary concern for the leader and demoralize slower walkers. Most importantly, you might not be noticed if injured, and equally you might not be there to help someone in distress behind you. Have a thought too about quality time. The head down, rush up, rush down approach adds little to your understanding of the mountains. Have a look around. Live and Learn.

Appreciate too those good leaders are not always at the front of the group. They will vary their position, so as to be sensitive to the needs of everyone.

Leaders will also have different leadership styles. One thing, however, is essential. If a leader asks you to do

something for safety reasons, you must do it. Some things or options might well be discussed and you must speak up if you think there is real danger in an action - **but once a decision has been made by the leader you must, for the safety of the group, abide by it.**

Any member wishing to undertake any S grade walk must contact the leader at least a few days before the event so that the leader can assess and be confident of the ability of all the party to complete the walk in a safe manner.

Enjoy the mountains. They are a precious asset - but also look after yourself and your companions.

COSTS

Reducing costs

The information in our programme is available on our website www.stoneramblers.com and can be printed off. This site also gives access to the Staffordshire Area website and the Ramblers website that list more walks available to all members.

Not all our members walk with our Group, but thankfully they support the work of Ramblers.

If you need a paper copy of the programme let the Group Programme Secretary know.

Event finances

All events organised by Group Members should be self-financing. (i.e. paid for by those participating)

Event leaders should ensure participants are fully aware of all costs at the time of booking. In the unlikely event that a leader is not sure about covering costs, the leader should clear any possible expenses with the treasurer and, if necessary, the Group Committee, at an early stage.

The Group Treasurer is responsible for authorising normal expenses but will refer any abnormal costs to the committee for approval. The finances of all events, other than normal weekly walks, must go through the club accounts unless agreed otherwise by the Group Treasurer.