

POYNTON RAMBLING CLUB

Guidance & Procedures



Part 1: What the Club does and what Walkers are asked to do.

Walk Organisation

Our Walks Programme & Details

The Club publishes two-monthly schedules of Wednesday and Sunday walks which are circulated by email to all members. An itinerary is provided for each walk which outlines, start point and key landmarks on the route. The start point is always defined with an OS Grid reference. The website Grid Reference Finder (www.gridreferencefinder.com) provides a map of the start point and a postcode. Walk details will also include the Walk Leaders name and contact number(s) and any relevant additional information e.g. Pay and Display charges and payment methods.

The programme is also published in the public area of the Club website and this additionally includes a What 3 Words ('W3W') location.

Walks Grades

The grade of the walk and its distance are quoted separately in the schedule of walks.

- **Easy:** Up to 7 miles, mainly level paths or tracks, minimal uphill sections. Gentle pace, frequent stops possible.
- **Moderate:** 5-10 miles, Good paths or tracks possibly with rough terrain in places but no narrow sections, some hills but not steep or sustained. Faster pace with regular rests.
- **Harder:** 7-12 miles, Established paths but often including rough terrain with steep and/or sustained uphill & downhill sections requiring effort & fitness. Brisk pace required, less frequent rests.
- **Demanding:** 7+ miles, Walks with significant ascent & descent, often steep sections and possibly over rough & rocky terrain with narrow sections and significant exposure. Potential for difficult & changeable weather conditions. Brisk steady pace essential, only suitable for experienced and fit walkers. Maximum group size of 6 suggested to ensure safety.

Walks of any grade are likely to include stiles but the club does not include a stile count in walk details. If you have any queries about the route or doubts about joining a walk, please discuss with the Walk Leader.

Joining a walk.

To join a walk, please contact the Walk Leader by 18:00hr the night before to register, after that time the walk could possibly have been cancelled due to The Rule of 4.

The Walk Leader can advise on additional/updated information on parking etc you may require.

Please provide

Walk Leader with your mobile phone number in case of last-minute issues or emergency.

Car sharing is encouraged on an informal basis on all walks to minimize fuel costs etc. This will not, normally, be coordinated by the Walk Leader.

Minimum group size (The rule of 4)

A minimum of 4 Walkers (Walk Leader + 3 others) is required for any Club walk. If the Walk Leader has not had contact from at least three others before 1800 the night before the walk, the walk **MUST** be cancelled due to Health & Safety requirements. A **cancellation** for any reason will be notified to all Club members by email, by WhatsApp and individually to registered Walkers.

All our walks will be conducted in accordance with the Countryside Code and cause minimum impact on the environment –

'Leave no trace and take your litter home'

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Your Comfort and Safety while walking

The Club is extremely serious about all aspects of Safety and does everything reasonably possible to ensure the safety of all Walkers. However, walking in the open countryside is inherently not without risk and all walkers are advised, ultimately, that they are responsible for their own safety.

Walkers participating in the activities of the Club do so at their own risk.

Occasionally it is necessary to **cancel** a walk. The Walk Leader can trigger a cancellation if they believe there is an unacceptable risk due to bad weather in combination with high or exposed parts of a route the walk, extreme heat or other unexpected conditions. Although there will often be consultation with other experienced walkers the Walk Leader's decision in this regard is final. A **cancellation** for any reason will be notified to all Club members by email, by WhatsApp and individually to registered participants.

All Walkers need to carry sufficient **food & drink** for the length of the walk and prevailing weather conditions. If in doubt take too much – you can always take it home. Bear in mind that winter and summer dehydration can be a significant risk. In line with the Country Code any rubbish should be taken home, including fruit skins and peel etc.

Walkers must wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the season, weather forecast, terrain and grading of the walk. The Walk Leader can decline to take any walker whose clothing or footwear is inadequate and could thereby be a risk to the group.

It is recommended that each Walker should also carry a personal first aid kit, whistle and 'Emergency Information' – see below. Walk Leaders on Club walks are not required to, but may, carry a full First Aid kit so it is important that Walkers carry any specific items they may require for their individual First Aid needs in the event of a minor injury.

An **In Case of Emergency ('ICE')** Card (See Appendix) should be carried by all Walkers to identify their name, emergency contacts and information about any medical conditions e.g. allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, angina etc and/or special medication requirements. The **ICE** should be carried in an obvious & accessible place and adequately protected from adverse weather conditions. This information can also be readily and securely stored on a Smart Phone in 'Emergency Information' which can be accessed for input from the device Settings. If special medication may need to be administered in an emergency e.g. Inhalers, EpiPen or Insulin, these should be carried on all walks and at least one other member of the walking party should be aware and know how to administer this properly.

Dogs may be brought on a walk at the discretion of the Walk Leader who must give permission in advance. Any dog on a walk must be kept under effective control in all circumstances during the walk, in accordance with the Country Code and any exclusion notices.

Accidents and Emergencies

All our safety guidance is designed to minimise risk, but Accidents and Emergencies can happen at any time and in that event the Club's agreed procedures (See Part 4) will be implemented by the Walk Leader. All Walkers should be at least aware of these procedures and how to Contact Emergency Services in case it is the Walk Leader that has the Emergency!

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Part 2 General Walking Etiquette

The guidelines below are second nature to experienced walkers, but the Club's groups will have a range of experience, so it is re-stated here. The list is not exhaustive, and the Club relies on all walkers using their experience and common-sense to keep the group safe.

Walk on paths where available to minimize damage to flora and heed requests from the Walk Leader to walk in single file.

Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls ensuring that walking poles are not a hazard to others. Be prepared to assist others at obstacles such as stiles, which can sometimes be awkward, difficult or broken, and accept assistance wherever appropriate. Please report broken stiles, bridges or other path obstructions & hazards to [PNFS: Path Checkers \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](http://PNFS: Path Checkers (peakandnorthern.org.uk))

Gates should always be left as they were found whether open or closed; by default, the last walker is responsible for leaving gates as they were found unless the Walk Leader instructs somebody to do so.

Communicate your intention to take a 'comfort break' so that the walk Walk Leader and/or back marker can always know the whereabouts of all his/her group. We don't want to leave anyone behind.

Be prepared to go at the pace of the slowest in the party and avoid walking so far in front of the walk Walk Leader that the walk Walk Leader cannot communicate in the prevailing weather conditions. Each Walker must take personal responsibility for staying with the group.

When walking on a road, Walkers should follow the Highway Code:

- i. Where there is a footpath, use it.
- ii. Where there is no footpath, walk on the right-hand side of the road unless it is safer to walk on the left for better visibility at blind corners, Walk Leader to advise in this case.
- iii. Walk in single file especially on narrow roads and in poor light.

If in doubt, follow the guidance of the Walk Leader.

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Part 3: Walk Leaders Responsibilities – in addition to being Walkers

Before a walk

Walk Leaders will plan and recce walks using recognized rights of way, footpaths etc. As part of the route planning and testing process the Walk Leader will consider the availability of sufficient legal parking at the start point, escape routes which could be used in the event of having to abort the walk and all significant Hazards & Risks along the route including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hazards include loose footing, particularly on descents/sloping ground
- Injuries from walls, fences, barbed wire, stiles, cyclists, traffic
- Falling over/falling from height
- Jumping streams, wet areas and losing footing
- Seasonally poor conditions e.g. on wet rock, snow, packed snow, ice, mud, poor visibility, high winds
- Falling rock, golf balls
- Dangerous animals e.g. newly calved cows, bulls, horses etc.
- Road safety on public roads

Walk Leaders will provide the Walks Coordinator with all necessary details for a walk to be published in the schedule. All walk details will be reviewed and approved prior to publication by the Committee which meets on alternate months.

On a walk

Walk Leaders will take mobile contact details from each member registering for a walk, at the time of registration. Communication may be necessary before the walk begins due to unforeseen circumstances. The Walk Leader also needs to be able to call to verify a potential no show.

The Walk Leader will welcome new members and guests, introduce them to the members of the group and identify them clearly in the information provided for Statistics.

Before setting off on the walk the Walk Leader will brief the whole party about the proposed route. Particular attention will be applied to any sections or hazards which may require special care or exertion. The briefing can also cover planned break & lunch locations/times, toilet opportunities and the appointment of a Back Marker if required. A Back Marker will be appointed if the group is larger than 12 and/or for difficult sections. If the Back Marker is changed the whole group needs to be aware.

The Walk Leader will normally lead from the front, but it is important to take time to join and support slower members of the party. The Walk Leader will ensure adequate rest/refreshment and comfort stops particularly at key points like tops of hills, after long or difficult sections or at road crossings. In hot weather, it is essential to have frequent hydration stops. On difficult sections the Walk Leader will ensure slower Walkers have time to catch up and have an adequate rest before the group sets off again.

A walk should not normally deviate significantly from its plan; the Walk Leader may make the decision to shorten a walk and determine a new route if this is required because of bad weather conditions or emergency. The Walk Leader will only make changes to the planned walk (extensions & digressions) with the full understanding of all walkers, ideally with their agreement.

As soon as possible after the walk the Walk Leader should send a full list of Walker's names to the Walk Statistics Coordinator.

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Part 4: Accident Procedure, Reporting & Insurance.

- a) In the case of any emergency or if any Walker decides they cannot continue with the walk by reason of illness, injury or fatigue, the Walk Leader must take the following actions:
 - i. If the casualty cannot be moved; call or text 112 or 999 (it's the same but see below about pre-registering to use 112 by text), ask for police or mountain rescue and give Grid Reference or What3Words location reference. Wait with the casualty until Emergency Services arrive and discuss and agree options with the remainder of the party.
 - ii. If the casualty is mobile and there are fewer than 5 Walkers in the party; abandon the walk and provide assistance as necessary.
 - iii. If the casualty is mobile and there are 5 or more Walkers in the party; the Walk Leader may decide to abandon the walk or to provide an escort for the casualty and continue the walk with a minimum of three Walkers. The Walk Leader's decisions on this are final.
- b) All accidents or close call incidents on a walk will be reported to the Club Secretary, normally within three days of the incident. The Club has an Incident Reporting process which requires that the Walk Leader completes the incident details using a proforma Incident Report which will be provided by the Club Secretary. For more serious accidents (involving any Emergency Services and/or Hospital A&E treatment) it is also relevant that witness statements are made available to the Club Secretary.
- c) The Club carries Public Liability Insurance (PLI) but it should be noted that this is not intended to cover loss or damage to your own property, nor does it cover accidental injury. PLI protects third parties, not Club members.
- d) Any claim concerning travel in a vehicle should be covered by the motor insurance for that vehicle.

Pre-Registering a mobile for 112 texts

To use the text service your mobile phone's number **must** be pre-registered with the emergencySMS services. This is something that is best done before you need their help! Here's how to do it now:

- Send a SMS (text) message, "REGISTER", to 112. (112 is the European emergency number, recognised in hundreds of countries including many outside the EU, however, it is also recognised by GSM mobile cellular networks.)
- Wait a few seconds for the reply.
- Read the reply in full (it isn't very long) and reply with another SMS message, "YES".
- You'll get a final response saying your number is now registered. Don't reply to that one though or else you might find the emergency services swing in to action trying to save you! (And your number will get barred from the service for repeat inappropriate use.)

Now you can use your mobile phone to send SMS messages to 112 in an emergency.

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Appendix – PRC ICE Card

Please Print this page, fill in your personal details and carry with you in transparent & waterproof protection (See Part 1).

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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (ICE)

Please carry on all Club Walks



Contacting Emergency Services

With a Phone Signal: Dial 999 or 112 (same call routing) ask for Police or Mountain Rescue dependent on circumstances. The operator will only connect to Mountain Rescue via the Police.

With a weak signal: Text 999 or 112, requires pre-registration of mobile. All Walk Leaders should pre-register a phone or ensure there is one pre-registered phone in the group

Provide the following information:

Grid Reference or What3Words for location of incident

Name, Gender & DoB of Casualty

Nature of Injuries and/or Accident, known Medical Conditions

Number of people in party

Your Name & Contact number

Distress Signal:

6 short blasts on whistle or 6 flashes with torch repeated at one-minute intervals.

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EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Contact Number:

PRIMARY EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name:

Relationship:

Contact Number:

SECONDARY EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name:

Relationship:

Contact Number:

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Relevant Medical Conditions/Allergies:

Essential Medications & Other Information or Wishes:

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