

Guildford Rambling Club - Health and Safety When Walking

When walking with us, you are responsible for your own health and safety and for judging whether you are sufficiently fit to do the walk. You are also responsible for following current government guidance with respect to Covid 19 precautions – see below. The walks generally do not lend themselves to the physical capabilities of small children. If you do bring children you are entirely responsible for them and for ensuring that they keep up with and do not hinder the group.

If you are not a member, please introduce yourself to the leader at the walk start and give your name and address. You are expected to follow advice given by and to stay behind the walk leader throughout the walk. Currently you must also observe social distancing guidelines. You must stay ahead of the back marker.

If you have a recurrent sudden medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy please advise the walk leader on the day, giving advice on any immediate treatment that may be required and whether you carry medication with you. Store an emergency contact in the address book on your mobile under ICE (In Case of Emergency), or on a card.

You should always carry drink with you - with more in hot weather - and also carry a snack. Listen to the area forecast and if rain is expected bring rainwear. In Winter or wet weather, wear boots with at least one pair of thick socks. In Summer strong trainers are acceptable. In hot weather, bring sunhat, sun cream, and insect repellent to prevent burning and bites. It is sensible to carry a few small first aid items for scratches, blisters and insect bites such as antiseptic, plasters and antihistamine cream.

On roads observe the Highway Code. Use a pavement if possible and, if not, walk in single file on the right, except around blind bends before which you should cross to the other side. Be very careful crossing busy roads – find a safe place and take your time, the leader will wait. On railway crossings, look both ways down the track, listen before crossing, and shut gates behind you.

All gates which were closed when the group arrived should be shut by the last person going through. Where there is an electrified fence across the public footpath which needs to be opened, the leader will do this. Our main hazard is occasional wobbly or slippery stiles. These need care, take time and always use your hands as much as possible to support you. Another hazard can be cattle: give bulls a wide berth and don't get between a cow and its calf.

Bring hand sanitiser, other people will have touched gates and stiles. Whenever possible, proper toilets should be used. If not possible, as is often the case, keep well away from streams, and put paper in a plastic bag and carry out.

If having a packed lunch, hand washing facilities are rarely available so you may wish to carry wet wipes.

Walking with a dog needs care. The owner has legal liability. A dog off the lead on a narrow path can get under the feet of walkers and potentially trip them up. On roads, crossing railway lines and in fields with animals, dogs must be on the lead. However, occasionally cattle will try to attack a dog and if, and only if, this happens, it is recommended that the dog be taken off the lead to protect the other walkers from being hurt.

Ticks are endemic in UK and are particularly active in Spring and Summer. They are small, dark and in the spider family. They sometimes transfer to walkers brushing against grass, although their main hosts are deer, cattle and sheep. A proportion of ticks carry infections including lyme disease which is serious. You can reduce the likelihood of a tick attaching by wearing long trousers and shirts, tucking trousers into socks and using a Deet repellent. When showering/bathing after walking, automatically check your skin for ticks. If you do find one firmly attached to your skin, use tweezers or a tick remover very close to the skin, pulling firmly and steadily until it comes out, then wash and disinfect skin. If it breaks, or if you subsequently get a rash round the point of attachment, see your doctor. For further information see <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

At social events and AGM's and other meetings

You are expected to check for yourself on entry where the safety exits are located and take care when handling hot items in confined spaces. Ensure any area under your control is well lit. All members attending social events are expected to behave responsibly with regard to general demeanour and alcohol.

Health and Safety on Club Holidays

You participate in these at your own risk. Please bear in mind that there will usually have been no opportunity to reconnoitre walks and the terrain may be tougher than on our weekly walks. At accommodation, ensure you check fire and assembly procedure in your rooms.

Additional Covid 19 Precautions

Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, we need to emphasise the requirement for adherence to government advice, in particular but certainly not exclusively:

- If you are a visitor, you must prebook and give your contact details. These will be recorded and kept for 21 days for track and trace purposes
- If you have any of the Covid 19 symptoms, please do not join any of the walks
- You must observe the social distancing guidelines when we gather at the walk start, during the walk, at all halts (for whatever reason) and at the close of the walk.
- If you need walking poles, please bring your own. Do not share them.
- Carry a mask to use in toilets and when buying refreshments or snacks.
- If necessary, the walk leader will break the participants up into smaller groups and will require each such group to maintain at least a 50 metre separation from the others throughout the day.