Walk to Lunch – Guidelines for Walk 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 reccied 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 reccie. Ideally start your walk at the pub you are going to lunch at – it this is not possible 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. Its 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 – they take turns doing walk administration. 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 easily 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 Jenny or Brigida know so their order can be cancelled. We find its works best if all pub liaison is done by the walk administrator.

On the day

Check you have everyone you are expecting before you set off – Jenny or Brigida will have a register and will tick if 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. If you have a really large group it may be sensible to ask someone to ‘middle mark’ as well.

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 reccie. If an accident occurs you will need to know your grid location and ideally your WhatThreeWords location . Please do download the WhatThree Words app as it is used my the emergency services. it is really useful if one of the group has a GPS available or has the OS Locator app on their phone - either will give the full grid reference as a useful back up to WhatThreeWords. If the casualty cannot continue the walk, firstly ensure the rest of the group is 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 the casualty cannot or should not be moved call 999, ask for the police and they will call out fell rescue. Give the police the WhatThreeWords details and 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.