



## 5. LEADING A WALK

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We hope you find the following information to be a useful complement to **3. Notes for Walk Leaders** and **4. Posting a Walk Description**. These documents can be found under the Walk Leaders tab on the ECR website, together with **1. What a volunteer needs to do before leading walks**. You can also find national guidance for walk leaders on the Ramblers' website.

#### BEFORE BECOMING A WALK LEADER

##### 1. I would like to find out more about leading a walk. Who do I contact?

In the first instance you can contact the ECR or the Membership secretary. They will put you in touch with the walk coordinator for the type of walk you would like to lead. The coordinators would be more than happy to tell you what's involved in leading walks.

##### 2. Do I need to complete any training before I lead my first walk?

Before you can start leading Ramblers walks you need to be registered as a volunteer and then complete some online leadership training modules. These are designed to give you information to help you lead a walk, and volunteers have found these to be interesting and useful. The Membership Secretary (Anne Ball) can arrange registration and provide you with details of how to access the training modules online. New leaders must complete these requirements before they lead any walks

#### PLANNING TO LEAD A WALK

##### 3. How do I offer a date for a walk when the Walk Coordinator requests leaders?

When you feel ready to lead please contact the coordinator who arranges the walks for your preferred length of walk. Contact details are listed in the Notes for Walk Leaders document. The Walk Coordinator can add you to their email list of leaders. You will then receive the emails which Walk Coordinators send out with available walk dates. You can then offer a date when you are available.

##### 4. Where do I find a walk/s?

On the Cheshire East Ramblers website, under the **Walks Planner** tab, you will find a link called **A Collection of Walks** where there are a number of ideas for walks. Plus there are lots of books and resources online.

##### 5. Do I need to be able to read maps?

Being able to read a map is useful but not essential. There are lots of walks online or in books which provide pictures and descriptions of walks which are a useful resource for walk leaders. The Ramblers do provide Map Reading training if you wish to attend. This is advertised on the website and via email.

### **6. Do I need to take a map with me on my walk?**

You must take a paper copy of your map on your walk even if you have the map downloaded on an electronic device. You might lose the signal, your phone might run out of battery, or you may need someone else to take over your walk in an emergency.

### **7. How do I measure the length and elevation of my walk?**

The walks on the ECR website, under Walks Planner - A Collection of Walks – all show the length of walks. You can also plot the length of walks using the Walks Planner on the ECR website, or use Walking Apps, for example the Ordnance Survey (OS) or OutdoorActive (OA) Apps; the basic versions of these can be downloaded for free. You can also measure the length of the walk when you do the recce using a Garmin or your Health App on your phone.

### **8. Where do I find information about identifying the start of a walk?**

You can find information about starting points for walks on the ECR website under the 'Start Points' tab on the home page. In your walk description you only need provide the grid reference, ECR's webmaster will always check/add the additional formats, e.g. What3Word, for identifying the start point.

### **9. Can I suggest people use public transport for my walk?**

Yes. Walks can also involve trains, buses and or trams. Include the information in your walk description and suggest that walkers bring money, bus passes, and railcards. We also encourage walkers to car share.

### **10. Will anyone help me with my first walk?**

ECR have a number of volunteers who would be happy to work with you on your first walk. Please contact the Chair and who will put you in touch with an experienced walk leader

### **11. Do I need to recce my walk?**

Yes, this is important. It's a good idea to ask a buddy to go with you. It gives you the opportunity to check parking availability, the accuracy of the walk description, spot any potential risks/hazards, timings and distance.

### **12. How do I advertise my walk and what information do I include?**

You post details of your walk description on the ECR website, preferably two weeks before your walk.

You can find details of how to do this and what to include in the "Posting a Walk Description" document. ECR has a volunteer who receives an alert as soon as you post your walk on our website. They post the walk for you on the main Ramblers site.

### **13. What equipment should I take on my walk?**

You must take a first aid kit (details of what to include can be found here, click [First Aid Kits](#), a whistle, water, a snack/chocolate, phone and emergency services' contact numbers, walk instructions and a map. If you use an electronic map you should also take a paper map in case your phone fails. A back up battery for your phone is a useful addition. There is more advice on the Ramblers website, click [Recommended Kit for Leading Group Walks](#)

### **14. Do people take refreshments on a walk?**

See **3. Notes for Walk Leaders** section 2.

#### **15. What happens if I have to change the walk?**

It may be necessary to change the details of an already posted walk. This may be due to snowfall, making road travel risky, or because the leader is ill and someone else has agreed to lead the walk. In this case a new message should be posted on the notice board making it clear that it replaces the original posting for that walk.

#### **16. What happens if I have to cancel the walk?**

See Notes for Walk Leaders section 7.

#### **17. Who is insured on the walk?**

For detailed information about insurance please see the Ramblers website. Click [‘Insurance’](#)

### **AT THE WALK**

#### **18. Should I have emergency contact numbers for all the walkers?**

You should check before you set off on the walk whether all the walkers have In Case of Emergency (ICE) information with them. Walkers are encouraged to complete a card and carry it with them on their walks. ECR can provide a set of these cards for you to give out at the beginning of your walks. Some walkers may carry ICE information on their phones.

#### **19. Do I need to know everyone’s name?**

We do not require leaders to take a written register. You may know the names of most of the walkers on your walk but please make sure you introduce yourself at the beginning of the walk and make a special note of the names of visitors or new members.

#### **20. Do walkers need to be members?**

We don’t check membership cards. Members may bring a friend to try a walk or they can bring a visitor. The rule is new walkers can try three walks before they join.

#### **21. Do I need a backmarker?**

Yes you do. You must have someone to walk at the back of the walk to make sure no one in the group gets lost. It’s a good idea to share phone numbers with the back markers/middle markers if you can. When you’re walking you need to keep the backmarker in sight. You may need to stop until they come into view. It’s essential to make sure the backmarker knows when you turn off the path or cross a road. If you have a large group 30+ it’s a good idea to have a middle marker too.

#### **22. Who do I ask to be a backmarker?**

If the person who reced the walk with you is walking they are an ideal backmarker. If not then ask for a volunteer at the start of your walk. The backmarker/middle marker must be a Ramblers member and someone who is a strong walker who is willing to volunteer. It’s also possible to change the backmarker at break times

#### **23. What do I do if someone turns up who hasn’t walked with ECR before?**

It’s always helpful to ask at the beginning of the walk if there are any walkers new to ECR. Please ask them to introduce themselves to the group and give them a warm welcome. It’s worth checking in with them when you stop at any point. At the end of the walk ask them how they are

and that you hope they'd like to come on more ECR walks.

#### **24. What happens if no one turns up?**

You can go home. Let the walk coordinator for the walks know.

#### **25. What happens if one or two people turn up?**

You do the walk unless everyone else wants to go home. If only one person turns up and you do not feel comfortable please don't feel you need to do the walk. If you don't walk let the walk coordinator know.

#### **26. Can people bring dogs on the walk?**

It is the decision of the walk leader. If you feel that it is safe for people to do so, for example if there is no livestock in the fields, indicate this in your information. If you feel it would be a risk, and you don't want people to bring dogs, then state this clearly when you post your walk description on the notice board.

### **DURING AND AFTER THE WALK**

#### **27. What happens if someone needs a comfort break?**

If a walker needs a comfort break they need to let the backmarker or leader know when they step off the walk and return to the walk. The back marker will ensure no one is left behind.

#### **28. What happens if someone has an accident on my walk?**

You must notify the ECR Secretary and ECR Chair as soon as possible and complete an Incident Report Form within a maximum of 10 days. (See **3. Notes for Walk Leaders** section 6. for further details.)

#### **29. What happens if I am ill on the walk?**

You will have many experienced walkers on your walk who would be willing to lead the rest of the walk for you if they have your map and or written directions. Failing that the walkers can walk back to the start. Someone must walk back with you to the car or, in the event of a serious illness someone must call the emergency services. If emergency services are called, notify the ECR Secretary and ECR Chair as soon as possible and complete an Incident Report Form within 10 days (See **3. Notes for Walk Leaders** section 6)

#### **30. What happens if someone else is ill on the walk?**

If the person feels able to walk back to the beginning ask another member of the group to go with them and ask them to call you when they get back to the car. If someone is seriously ill contact the emergency services and use first aid if required. Remember you are not on your own. There will be experienced walkers with you who can help. Report back to the walk co-ordinator and Chair and complete an incident form if emergency services were called (see **3. Notes for Walk Leaders** Section 6)

#### **31. What do I do if someone leaves the walk?**

Occasionally walkers may wish to leave the walk. They must let the walk leader know. If there is any indication they are not well they should be accompanied. If they walk on ahead of the leader they may also be deemed to have left the walk.

### 32. What do I do if I lose someone?

It is very rare to lose someone on a walk. The requirement to have a backmarker, and middle marker for a large group, should ensure that no one gets lost. If you do lose a member of your group you could ask for volunteers to walk back to the start to try to find the individual while you stay with the main party and continue with the walk. Ensure you have shared mobile numbers with the individuals who have agreed to walk back. Report back to the coordinator and complete an incident report.

### 33. What do I do if there are cattle in a field?

Ramblers have provided 'Top Tips' for walk leaders who may encounter cattle on a walk. Click this link to access the information. [Cattle 'Top Tips' for Walk Leaders](#)

### 34. Can people take photos on a walk?

Yes but if they include walkers always ensure that everyone is aware that they are having a photo taken and the photo may appear on ECR website and or social media. Always give walkers the option to 'opt out'.

### 35. What do I do at the end of my walk?

Ensure everyone gets to the end, check all is well and thank people for coming. You could let them know where to find details of the next walk. Text/email the walk co-ordinator the number of people, including yourself, who attended your walk.

### 36. Can I share my walk experience with anyone?

Send photos to [webmaster@ramblerseastcheshire.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@ramblerseastcheshire.org.uk) so they can be posted on 'Walks of The Past'. You can also add photos on the East Cheshire Ramblers Facebook page with a short post about where you've walked, the distance walked and any interesting details about the area you've visited.

You can send them to Jennie Mellor [mellorjennefer@gmail.com](mailto:mellorjennefer@gmail.com) or Maggie Swindells [maggieswindells@gmail.com](mailto:maggieswindells@gmail.com) who are the administrators for the ECR Facebook page.

### 37. Are there any other resources for Walk Leaders?

Other 'Walk Leader Resources' are also available on Ramblers website. Route: Ramblers > Sign In > Support Us > Volunteering > Walk Leadership

ECR also has a dedicated Tab '**Walk Leaders**' on the website where you will find further resources

ECR WEBSITE <https://ramblerseastcheshire.org.uk>

RAMBLERS <https://www.ramblers.org.uk>

APPS for MOBILE PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

ORDNANCE SURVEY [Ordnance Survey Maps](#) You can register by click 'Log in' or 'Sign up now'

OUTDOORACTIVE [OutdoorActive](#) click 'Sign up or Login'

RAMBLERS APP Download your free members' app by going to the [Apple's App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) on your phone and searching for Ramblers. You'll need your membership number and to sign up on first use. To use the app, you need a smartphone running Apple iOS 8.0 or later, or Android

version 5 or later.