

	East Cheshire Ramblers
	Date of Meeting – 06 th October 2023

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Appendix 1 Chair Report prepared by Maggie Swindells

CHAIR'S REPORT 11 th August 2023

As always, I'd like to thank all the members of the committee for your support and advice. We are almost nearing the end of the 50 th Anniversary year with only few more events to go. I'm very grateful to you all for the extra time you've given to ensure the events have been so successful.

WALKS MANAGER

Thanks to everyone who has attempted to publish a walk on Walks Manager. The process seems fairly straight forward, and we seem to have had a few none ECR walkers who have joined our walks as a result. Melanie, Jane, Jennie and I met on the 20 th September to review progress to date. Melanie has produced an excellent instruction list which certainly helps, and Jennie is in touch with Ramblers HQ to sort out the process for uploading ECR walks, on mass, to the Ramblers Website.

We all agree that our main aim is to get to the same position we were in prior to the introduction of Walks Manager. ECR Walk Leaders post their walks on the ECR website, and a volunteer uploads them, on mass, to the Ramblers site.

If Walk Leaders wish to post their walks individually on both sites, they are very welcome to use Melanie's instructions. However, I would like to stress there is no obligation to do both.

INTRODUCTION TO MANAGING SAFETY ON GROUP WALKS PROJECT

I 'attended' a Ramblers Zoom session in August. The main outcome was that work on Managing Safety on Group Walks is behind schedule and there is unlikely to be any change to Risk Assessments this October.

Ramblers Update 31st August 2023

The Volunteer Working Group has 15 members who are meeting on a regular basis to share their local practices and give feedback on content for the new walk leader resources. They will be testing the draft resources later this year.

The group have had four meetings so far. The first meeting was very much a welcome meeting, and then over the next three sessions the group have delved into a variety of topics that will feed into the writing of the draft resources, from dynamic risk assessments to first aid, walk leader to walker ratios, booking systems and registration. We have discussed what works and what doesn't work for different groups, walk grading and for Ramblers Wellbeing Walks, sharing ideas and reaching consensus on the different elements being discussed. One of the biggest conversations the group continue to have is how to make the resources available and accessible for everyone.



The next stage of the project is to write the first draft of the walk leader guide and other supporting resources, which will then be shared with the group for feedback and testing with their local groups. The group are taking a short break over the next month while the first drafts of the resources are written. In the meantime, as Alan Hancox from Merthyr Valley Group says, “we are putting together a walk-leaders guide that we want to make as useful, informative and easy to use as we can. To this end, we want to tap into the vast wealth of knowledge that the walk-leaders have, to create a handbook or reference manual that is useful to both new and experienced walk-leaders.” We want to pull all the great practice already happening together rather than re-invent the wheel. So, if you have a walk leader guide, checklist or other resource that you would like to share with us, please send it to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com.

As we go into the autumn, we will be sharing drafts on Assemble, as well as scheduling in ‘In Conversation’ events with the working group so you can give feedback and discuss the drafts with the group. We will share more information on this in the next Volunteer Update.

WELLBEING WALKS

In addition to East Cheshire Ramblers Stroller Walks, which are usually about 3-4 miles in length and aim to be relatively flat with few stiles, Ramblers offer Wellbeing walks in our area.

Everybody Health & **amp**; Leisure works with trained volunteers to provide weekly short walks in the town centres and rural areas of Cheshire East. The aim is to help local residents get out, increase activity levels and socialise in a safe environment.

These FREE short walks are accessible to all, particularly people who are looking to increase their activity. Pre-booking using Eventbrite is essential and must be completed prior to attendance. For any questions, please contact sport@everybody.org.uk or visit Ramblers Wellbeing Walks on the Ramblers website.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE WALKERS

In September I met with the coordinators of the Long Walk programme and a very experienced long walker who has been offering a great deal of support for one of our ‘vulnerable’ members. Our aim was to try to formulate a protocol to support the inclusion of vulnerable walkers on ECR walks. The draft document has been circulated with your papers. Before we publish the protocol, we will share it with all Walk Coordinators at their meeting in October. We will also share it with Ramblers Head Office.

TRAINING - BASIC MAP READING AND WALK LEADER TRAINING

The Training session we ran in August was well attended and a follow up session is planned for the 10th November. The focus for this training will be leading walks using walking apps. Training will be on the agenda at the Walks Coordinators meeting where we will confirm the training programme for 2024.



50 TH ANNIVERSARY

The 50 th Anniversary afternoon tea for volunteers was very well received! Many thanks must go to the 50 th Anniversary group for all the work they put in to make the event such a success.

I have used Alan Pedlar's presentation, with his permission, to compile a short history of the group for ECR archives, please see below. To date I can't find anyone who can tell me when Macclesfield Ramblers Association became East Cheshire Ramblers! I'd be grateful to hear from anyone who could enlighten me!

Early History of East Cheshire Ramblers

The inaugural meeting of what was to become East Cheshire Ramblers was held at Roe Street Sunday School in Macclesfield on the 4 th October 1973. It was organised by Lesley Meadowcroft from Manchester Ramblers Association and about fifty people attended the first meeting.

The meeting covered Rights of Way and the need for a definitive map for Cheshire.

Some of those present at the meeting expressed some concern about potential confusion with Macclesfield Rambling Club and not everyone was keen on the idea of public rights of way! Concerns were raised about walkers leaving gates open, climbing walls, letting dogs loose and "How would you like people walking through your garden?" One person was particularly vocal about walkers trespassing on Big Low, Rainow.

Despite the views aired, twenty people were keen to start Macclesfield Ramblers Association and a committee of ten was established. It was made up of Chair Tom Chalmers, Secretary David Hughes, Footpath Secretary Pat Bowyer, Treasurer Alan Pedlar, Publicity Pauline Pedlar and committee members Sid Forse, Henry Trufit, Mike Corfield and Margaret Oldfield. Later Marjorie Cooper became Chair and Anne Court became the Secretary.

One of the first tasks was to create a copy of the Definitive Map of Cheshire showing the Public Rights of Way in the Macclesfield area. The only maps, available at six inches to the mile, were held in the Cheshire County Council Offices in Chester and the Macclesfield library. The committee spent hours creating maps with a scale of 2.5 inches to the mile with each footpath drawn in by hand. These maps still exist today. Routes were colour coded: Purple (Footpaths) Green (Bridleways), Yellow (Parish Boundary). They created a "real treasure trove of footpaths". In addition, a great deal of time and effort was spent to ensure that every right of way was inspected annually. In order to achieve this, footpaths were divided into Parishes and each member agreed to inspect the footpaths in two Parishes. As we do today, the data was collated centrally. In the early days it was sent through annual reports to Pat Bowyer, the Footpath Secretary. Complaints about 'obstructions' were passed to Cheshire County Council who, it has to be said, at that time, 'moved very slowly.



in the plains! The Committee achieved more progress in Peak Park area where the support of the Countryside Rangers was invaluable. Pat Bowyer also had great support from Donald Lee of Peak and Northern Footpaths Society.

The Committee faced a constant battle to prevent developers building over footpaths, particularly on new housing estates. In addition, major issues arose over the proposed route of the Silk Road through Dumbah Hollow. Over the years careful negotiation was required when farms were converted into private residences. No one wanted a public right of way through their new back garden. Paths were moved away illegally from farms and often via unsuitable diversions.

The group gained publicity and increased members through Pauline's articles in the Macclesfield Express, where they allowed her a 'few inches' each week. A particularly difficult confrontation with a farmer on a footpath in Wincle required the intervention of the local police. Fortunately, the constable was familiar with the Definitive Map and the walkers were allowed to proceed. This resulted in some welcome but unexpected publicity! The Macclesfield Express ran with the headline:

"POLICE CALLED IN OVER FOOTPATH DISPUTE". Numbers in Macclesfield Ramblers doubled as a result! The path in question now has a stile, gate and footpath. The group also offered support to Chris Bamsey, one of the Countryside Rangers. Together they put in stiles, improved muddy paths and helped install the bridge over Shell Brook. Another major legacy is the work the group did to secure the Gritstone Trail.

Initially the route was to be called the Cheshire Ridgeway as Derbyshire Ramblers were setting up the Gritstone Way. It was eventually agreed to call the route the Gritstone Trail to match and complement the Sandstone Trail in the West of Cheshire. It's proved to be a great success and has certainly increased footfall over the years. Forty miles of the trail were walked in the 40th Anniversary year and this year fifty miles were walked to celebrate our Golden Anniversary year.

With grateful thanks to Alan Pedlar

NEWS

I'm delighted to report that Brian Richardson has completed the Spanish Three Peaks Trek Challenge in the Sierra Nevada National Park. A gruelling trek which involved participants covering almost 50km and taking on three peaks, including mainland Spain's highest peak Mulhacen at 3,482m in just three days. I believe Brian is one of the oldest people to take on this challenge! He has raised £7221 for the

Christie Hospital.

At the beginning of September Colin Finlyson kindly sent me an article about another success involving an East Cheshire Rambler. In 2015 June Maybon applied for a well-used path, running from the back of Timperley

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Metrolink tram station to the Bridgewater Canal, to be added to the Definitive Map. This was not an easy objective to achieve, especially when Railway and Canal Traffic Acts are involved.

On this occasion neither the Canal and Riverside Trust nor Metrolink objected so an attractive off-road route, in a busy area, is now preserved for ever. Many thanks June.

Maggie Swindells 6 th October 2023



**Appendix 2 Treasurers Report
prepared by Colin Finlayson**

Bank Balance : At 22/09/23 our balance stood at £8305.77

Annual Return :

The papers have now been received from RA Finance for the 2022/23 Annual Return exercise (Year Ending Accounts) requesting that ECR Annual Return be submitted by 16th October 2023.

Preparation is currently underway to meet this deadline date.

Any Other business (Ongoing from 20th Jan meeting) :

Item 7.3 Survey of Walkers

CF will give verbal update on the progress of this item at the meeting.

Report Ends

**Appendix 3 Footpath Secretaries Report**

Prepared by Neil Collie

Annual Survey of Paths.

The annual survey of the 1295 rights-of-way in the ECR area is nearing completion with a full complement of about 40 inspectors. A new inspector has been recruited to replace the inspector who has had to withdraw due to injury. The deadline for completion of the survey remains as 29 September 2023. Currently (12 September 2023) 66% of the path inspections have been entered into the database and of these 8.3% of the paths are either 'usable with difficulty' or 'obstructed'.

Adhesive Waymarks.

Dave Barraclough is preparing a report for the Footpaths Committee on the trial we have undertaken using adhesive waymarking arrows.

Footpaths database.

Ramblers Central Office have expressed interest in the database, and I have advocated that development of local databases for other Groups would be an excellent way for CO to support volunteer footpath wardens.

Footpaths Committee.

The project to improve the signage along the permissive path on North Rode FP 2 has been completed. Many thanks to Brian Richardson and his team. Six rot-proof recycled plastic waymarker posts have been purchased as a trial to determine the advantages and disadvantages of using recycled plastic (e.g., can they be sawn, will they accept nails and screws).

Louise Whittaker has volunteered to take over liaison with CEC PROW Unit and Nick Brearley has volunteered to analyse the footpath survey results and liaise with the Projects Team.

CEC Public Rights of Way Unit.

Recruitment for an additional ROW Maintenance Officer has commenced. There has also been an increase in the annual maintenance budget for 2023/24. However, the business case for capital expenditure on replacing structures was rejected and damaged footbridges remain closed.

Neil Collie

Footpaths Secretary. 13.09 23



Appendix 4 Membership Report prepared by Sue Munslow

Some of the tasks of the membership secretary

1. Log on to ramblers' insight hub as ECR membership secretary. I do this every one or two months and have access to the latest full list together and info on lapsed and new members etc. There are other lists available such as a Mailable list which can be used for emailing info to those members who have given us permission.
2. Send out welcome letters to new members.
3. Edit the full list and put in surname order for mailing. I send this to S H . Steve uses his own system to email members.
4. I check for lapsed members. Occasionally a regular walker has been on this list because their direct debit hasn't gone through, and I usually get in touch with the member as some have been upset when they have unknowingly shown up as having lapsed. When this happens, the Ramblers Office try and rectify it immediately.
5. Although I contact the Central Office occasionally to asked them to correct members details such as a change of email address and to remove or add permission to receive emails, I usually ask the member to contact the Central Office directly.
6. The membership secretary is the only person to have access to the members information for data protection purposes and the information is only shared for membership reasons.
7. In the past I have been able to access this information easily but this year I have been having problems accessing the data and sometimes have to wait 10 minutes for it to load down. I have been in touch with the Central Office, and they suggested to change my browser, but this doesn't seem to have made it any easier.
8. This year S H is also picking up many issues with the members showing they have removed permissions when they haven't or have given permission when they haven't. Again, I am unsure why this is. If there are many errors such as these, I phone the central office and just ask them to be changed.
9. Very occasionally I am asked to check that people walking with us are members of ECR or another group or have renewed their membership.
During July our total membership is now 591. Membership numbers seem to have reached a plateau having been very slowly increasing for a few years. The monthly figures as shown in the graph look very different from each other but don't necessarily show a trend as the in individual monthly numbers are very small.

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Most of the members who have left the group are shown as lapsed and most of the names I don't recognise. I think they are walkers who have joined us but not walked with us or done so infrequently. Others have moved areas.

**Appendix 5 Social Secretary Report
prepared by Gina Thompson****REPORT ON PAST EVENTS****12TH August Volunteers Afternoon Tea at Mottram Village Hall**

Overall, a very successful event with 68 volunteers from past and present attending. The feedback I had from invitees was very positive the food was enjoyed, and people found the Speaker from Buxton Mountain Rescues talk very informative. A collection was given to Buxton Mountain Rescue at present we don't know how much that was. However, the subcommittee who did the main work for this event did agree that if doing a similar event, we would look around for possibly a better venue as the kitchen wasn't very clean, not enough parking and the charges were high.

24th August Walk Leaders Training at Macclesfield Tennis Club. Organised by Jane and Frank Gay, Gillian Kay, Michael Murphy and Maggie Swindells.

This was a full day training session with 14 attendees. The day started with the paperwork side of leading a walk, Insurance, liability, Risk Assessments etc then went on to map reading. The afternoon session was taking small groups out to take turns in walk leading using the map. Whilst the feedback from the attendees was positive the trainers have thought that they will change future training to focus more on the practical at the start of the day with the paperwork being saved for the afternoon. I took the register but have suggested that in future this is done by one of the Trainers as it isn't a Social Event, and it would be easier for the trainers to contact people directly.

22nd September Live Music Night Hosted by John Galligan at Macclesfield Tennis Club

I have around 40 people signed up for this, so more about it in the next report.

29th September - 2nd October Elan Valley Weekend Away. Organised by Ann Thompson**7th October 2023 50th Anniversary Luncheon at Davenport Golf Club Speaker Peter Slack**

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EAST CHESHIRE RAMBLERS SOCIAL CALENDAR 2023



Please see below our Social Events for the remainder of the year are shown below. Very many thanks to everyone who has and is contributing to our events, without you this would not be possible. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to help or have an idea for an event.

Gina Thompson gthompemail@gmail.com M 07843 914886

Friday 22nd September 2023	Live Music Night songs from the 60's and 70's to sing. -along with Organised by John Galligan
Friday 29th September to Monday 2nd October	Elan Valley near Rhayader Organised by Ann Thompson
Saturday October 7th 2023	50th Anniversary Lunch organised by Gina Thompson and Maggie Swindells
Saturday November 11th 2023	Ceilidh Mottram Village Hall organised by Ann Thompson and Toni Battilana
Saturday 25th November 2023	East Cheshire Ramblers AGM
November 2023	Cheshire East Area AGM
Saturday 2nd or 9th December 2023	Christmas Carol Short Walk organised Jenny Bordoli
December 2023	Mid-Week Christmas Meal organised by Andy Davies
Saturday 9th December 2023	Weekend Christmas Meal organised by Maggie Swindells
December 2023	Long Walkers Christmas Meal organised by TBC



**Appendix 6 Lost Ways Report
prepared by Keith Anderson**

1. I have not heard any further from Roy Hodgkinson who expressed an interest in the DLYW and he has not signed up on Assemble
2. I have emailed the other 3 researchers and await a reply from 2 of them. Ed Pellow has replied saying that he has been ill of late but is still committed to the project . I have also sent them a very useful Directory of Information on Assemble which pulls together where you can find things .
3. I am unable to come to the October meeting as I will be on holiday in USA. I will speak to Neil before I go to get an update on the views of the Footpath Committee.
4. At the moment no new volunteers have come forward. I'm afraid I have been very busy following my house move to follow up on the idea of emailing all ECR members, but today agreed a "mailshot" to all CER members with Maggie. She is going to ask Steve Hull to send it out. I will let the Committee know what sort of response there is before I go to the USA

Keith Anderson 22/9/23

Appendix 7 Social Media Report prepared by Jennie Mellor

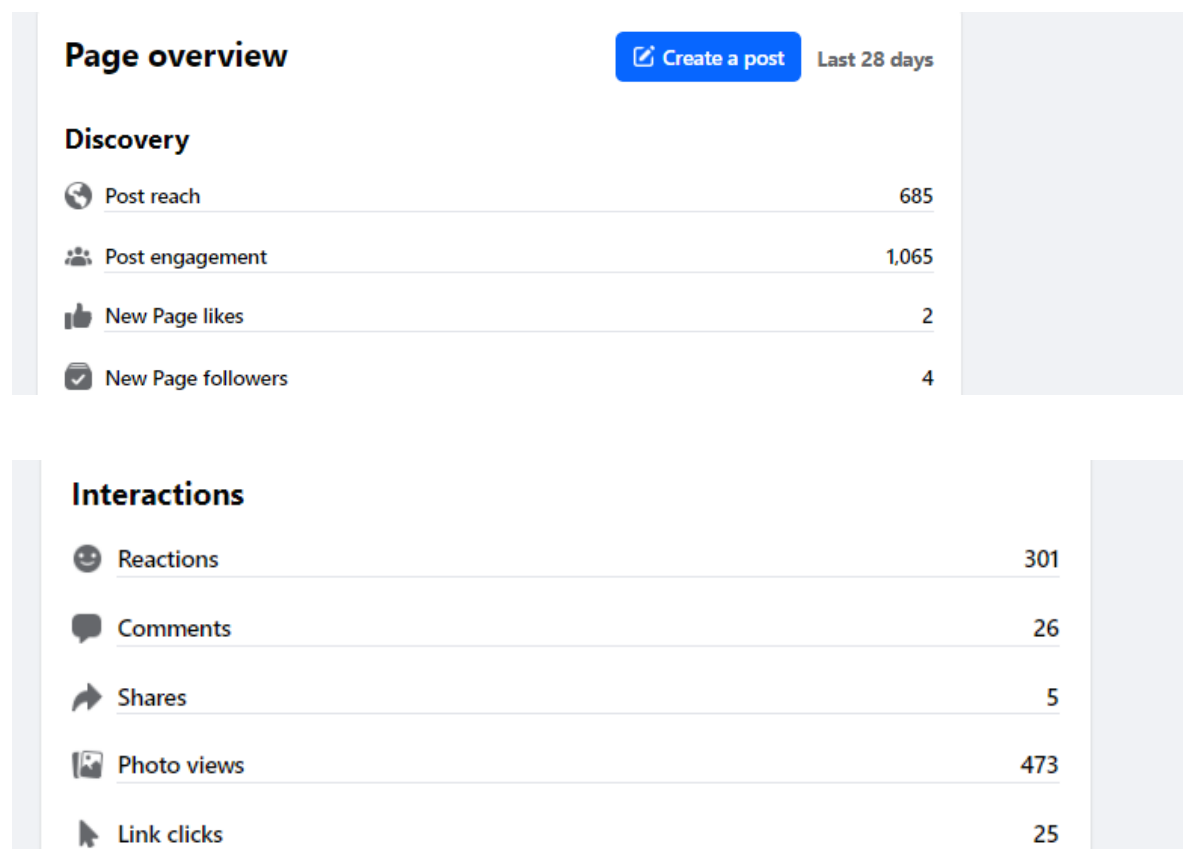
FACEBOOK UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2023 – Jennie Mellor

Post reach (number of people viewing the page) has dropped significantly, possibly because of holidays etc. Post engagement (number of actions e.g. liking/reacting, commenting, sharing has risen slightly.

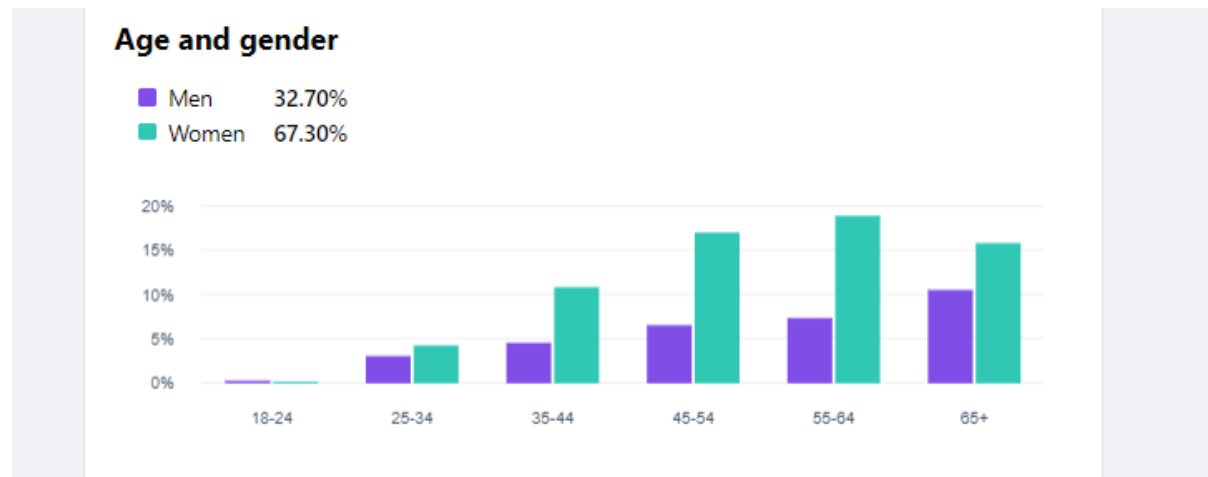
Interesting geographic demographic.

ACTIVITY OVER THE LAST 28 DAYS TO 22 ND SEPTEMBER 2023

Professional Dashboard



BREAKDOWN OF AUDIENCE BY AGE AND GENDER



BREAKDOWN OF AUDIENCE BY AREA

Location		Towns/cities	Countries
Macclesfield	146		
Stockport	42		
Wilmslow	38		
Crewe	34		
Manchester	34		

Appendix 8 Protocol for Vulnerable Walkers

PRINCIPLES

1. A group walk needs to be safe, enjoyable, and inclusive for everyone.
2. Walks are planned and led by volunteers
3. We need to understand the individual needs of a walker to plan for a good walking experience for all
4. East Cheshire Ramblers will do its best to support full participation of everyone.
However, there may be circumstances when walkers with disabilities/specific needs may not be accommodated due to the type of walk or a lack of appropriate and reasonable support available. Sometimes we have to say a walk is not suitable, but this does not necessarily mean every walk is unsuitable
5. The key is for both sides to consider what can be reasonably expected

PROTOCOLS

In order to secure these principles East Cheshire Ramblers has agreed a set of protocols to secure both inclusion and enjoyment for ALL walkers.

1. East Cheshire Ramblers has a bank of experienced Walk Leaders and a varied walk programme. The walker or carer will need to contact the relevant Walk Coordinator to establish the suitability of each walk
2. Disabled/vulnerable walkers can bring someone along to support them on the walk, when it's appropriate and safe to do so. Please note that ECR may not be able to provide a buddy on every walk.
3. It is reasonable for ECR not to offer additional support if they choose not to do so. However, if walks can accommodate a person with specific needs then this is also great!
4. Local Wellbeing Walks, where such walks are available, might be more suitable. Again, this needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis

If additional support is required, the disabled/vulnerable person/carers should be able to identify this from other sources e.g. a social worker or specific charities.

THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT/CARER/PARTNER MUST:

1. Provide a contact number and an emergency contact number.
2. Receive confirmation from responsible adult/carer/partner that the vulnerable person is capable of coping with the normal conditions of a walk with a walking buddy for additional support.
3. Ensure that any prescription medication is taken before and after the walk.
4. Ensure the vulnerable person has sufficient food, drinks and clothing for the length of walk and weather conditions.
5. Ensure they are contactable during the day if the Walk Leader has to contact them for any reason.
6. Arrive on time to collect the vulnerable person at the end of the walk.
7. If a friend or adult accompanies the vulnerable person they must ensure they comply with the above and walk under the direction of the Walk Leader at all times.
8. Be aware that if the vulnerable person needs somebody to be responsible for them, then they must provide a Carer to walk with them.

BEFORE THE WALK (DO WE STIPULATE THE NUMBER OF DAYS BEFORE THE WALK?)

1. Walks are posted on the East Cheshire Website at least a week before the walk date.
2. The responsible adult/carer/partner identifies a walk on ECR website.
3. The responsible adult/carer/partner contacts the Walk Coordinator.

Long Walks Weekend	John Galligan	email	phone
Long Walks Midweek	Anne Ball	email	phone
Medium Walks Weekend	Paul Higinbotham	email	phone
Medium Walks Midweek	Andy Davies	email	phone
Short Walks Weekend	Jane Gay	email	phone
Short Walks Midweek	Dave Collorick	email	phone

4. The Walk Coordinator contacts the relevant walk leader and explains that the vulnerable adult wishes to join their walk. They explain the support the individual requires. Individual support for the vulnerable person should be agreed in advance with a volunteer and the vulnerable person's partner/carer.
5. The walk Leader and Walk Coordinator seek a member of the group who is prepared to act as the vulnerable walker's 'buddy'. This must not be the Walk Leader or Back Marker.
6. **The Walking Buddy's role is to provide an appropriate level of support for the vulnerable person during the walk. It would be helpful to agree this with the walker.**
7. The Walk Leader's responsibilities remain the same and are clearly defined in the Ramblers Walk Leaders' Checklist. [Walk Leaders' Check List](#). The Walk Leader is covered by Ramblers Insurance as long as a risk assessment has been undertaken.

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8. It is the Walk Leader's right, as a volunteer, to have the final decision as to who can attend their walks.
9. The Walk Leader provides a short feedback email/phone call to the Walk Coordinator after the walk which identifies any issues experienced on the walk.