**So you want to lead a walk – a guide for leaders; August 2020**

This guidance has been comprehensively reviewed in the light of Covid-19 and the Government guidance published in July 2020 relating to the broad ‘recreational team sport’ sector. We are indebted to the Ramblers Association, the national body for walking to whom the CRC is affiliated, for getting official recognition of the value of our more gentle physical activity for organized groups. However, in order to provide Club walks for between 6 and 30 people – the maximum allowed – we have to operate in a very different way from the past. The Ramblers website provides a comprehensive guide ‘How to return to group walks in a Covid-secure way’.

**Planning a walk**

* Where to walk? In the current climate, where official guidance recommends avoiding public transport and opportunities for car-sharing are limited to household and ‘social bubble’ members, it is a good idea to keep fairly close to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
* Circular walks and ‘figure of eight’ walks are recommended. The latter may be especially welcomed by people who may not have been walking much since March.
* The route can be taken from a book of walks, downloaded from the internet or planned using a map. The OS Explorer (1:25,000) maps and online downloads, which show all rights of way, are ideal. However, also note that there are many permissive paths on the ground which aren’t shown on OS maps. For example, Trumpington Farm Estates and the Countryside Restoration Trust at Lark Rise Farm Barton offer many paths very close to Cambridge. The Coton Nature Reserve, Wandlebury and Gog Magog Trust lands also offer many paths, with online maps of walking routes available.
* The length of the walk depends on the group you are leading for – if you have any queries, please contact the relevant Programme Secretary. Please ensure that the distance advertised in advance of the walk is accurate; mapping apps can help, but so can a length of non-stretchy string!
* Car parking may be a particular problem whilst car sharing is so limited. However, many village halls welcome visitors who are willing to make a donation. Some groups like to use pubs as they have large car parks – but this may not be as easy as in the past.
* If you want to have coffee and/or lunch in a pub you must contact the publican in advance and check that they can accommodate the numbers you expect. There may be strict regulations covering seating arrangements, especially inside premises. If you can make a booking for a group it is advisable to get hold of a menu in advance and arrange to phone through orders early on in the walk itself – either at the start or at a mid-morning break.
* It is **essential** to complete a CRC risk assessment checklist before leading a walk; this is a requirement of the government guidance for group activities. However, this isn’t onerous! You can download the form on-line from the ‘Members’ section of the CRC website. It must be retained for 12 months, either as a paper copy or saved electronically on a computer. *If you have no access to a computer, please contact the General Secretary for a paper copy*.
* The risk assessment suggests that it may be advisable to avoid very busy paths and congested areas – these may vary depending on the day and time. Food for thought!
* A ramble may be planned and walked out months in advance, (the ‘recce’), but we recommend checking it again closer to the scheduled walk. It is surprising what a farmer, a strong wind or a week of rain can do! Think about alternative routes you could take to avoid stiles or narrow footpaths and escape routes if you need to cut the walk short.
* When checking out your walk look for suitable morning and afternoon drink stops – especially those which can offer some undergrowth or woodland for loo stops! This also applies to lunch stops if you are not eating at a pub. Ideally arrange the lunch stop more than halfway through the walk to allow for afternoon fatigue!
* Consider how many people you are willing to lead; you can set a limit and ask your Programme Secretary to publicise this. In view of social-distancing you may want assistance from a co-leader or back marker – think about who you might ask to help.
* People will probably be booking a place on your walk ahead, either by texting you, phoning or via email. Under no circumstances can you currently lead more than 30 people. If you have set a limit you must tell people who contact you if they have a place or not.
* As the leader you will be responsible for collecting and holding the contact details of everyone coming on your walk for 21 days. This is a requirement for Covid-19 ‘test and trace’. Think about how you will do this. We recommend asking all walk participants to text you their name/phone number in advance or on the day of the walk.
* Finally, experienced leaders are generally very willing to assist new leaders in planning their first walk. Programme Secretaries can help with contacts.

**On the day – at the start of the walk**

* You must keep a record of everyone on your walk; as stated above, the most convenient way is to save a text on your mobile phone from everyone present if that is possible. But you may have to take a few names and other contact details down on paper - so bring a pen and note pad along. You must retain these details for 21 days in case they are required by NHS ‘Test and Trace’.
* You should have a map and/or GPS trace covering the entire route, together with any notes you have made. Please bring a compass if you feel confident using it!
* A torch, whistle and mobile phone are helpful.
* You should carry a face covering and hand sanitizer.
* At the start of the walk, first check that everyone expected has arrived. Please note that on no account can more than 30 people currently walk together. Any extras must go home!
* Food orders at a pub may best be arranged by telling people the options and writing down the choices. Bring a pen and paper! On figure of 8 walks starting from a pub car park it may be possible to arrange for orders to be made directly with the pub before you start walking.
* If you phone lunch orders through to a pub, please give an expected time of arrival.
* Gather people together, checking that everyone expected has arrived and give brief details of the walk, identifying interesting views or places of interest. Include information about any pub stop and where people with their own packed lunches can eat. It is helpful to indicate a likely finish time.
* Ask walkers to look out for those behind them, especially at path junctions. Warn people about any potential hazards, such as busy roads which need to be crossed or walked along.
* Do a head count; if there are 12+ ask someone to be a back marker. It may also be a good idea to ask someone to open/close gates for everyone, to minimize the need to touch.
* Remind everyone about Covid-19 risk mitigation: social-distancing of 2 metres at all times; no crowding around gates and stiles; use of hand sanitizer after touching gates etc; taking care when passing people en-route; no sharing of refreshments or walking equipment beyond households.

**During the walk**

* At any refreshment stops, give people some idea of when you will resume walking. A 2 or 3 minute warning is usually appreciated!
* If stopping at a pub for lunch, please make sue that everyone knows what has been arranged with the publican and what time you wish to resume walking. It is a nice gesture to than the pub staff on behalf of the group. Please make sure that no-one consumes their own food on pub premises unless the landlord has given permission; in no circumstances should Club members consume their own drinks on pub premises.
* Allow a few minutes to look round churches etc; by all means point out interesting details but do avoid a long lecture!
* It is the walk leader’s responsibility to *record accidents and incidents*. The Club maintains a register, which is held by the Club’s President. Any accident or incident must be reported to the Club’s President by the walk leader - if in doubt, please consult the President:
  + Accidents are those that require medical treatment at the time by the emergency services, local doctor, first aider or Club member or result in professional medical treatment at a future date. Accidents such as minor cuts, stings and bruises do not need to be reported.
  + Incidents are a non-medical event such as escaping livestock, damage to a fence or stile, accidental trespass (which has been noticed), dispute with a publican or another member of the public involving Club members etc.
* At the end – please check everyone has arrived! We have lost folk occasionally….

**After the walk**

* Please keep a record of who was on the walk for 21 days; the list should then be destroyed
* If you are contacted by NHS ‘test & trace’ please provide the contact details of everyone on the walk
* Please retain a copy of the risk assessment completed for the walk for 12 months.