

Deeside Ramblers Walking Group

Guidance for New Walkers

1. I'd like to have a go at walking with the Ramblers; how do I go about it?

Take a look at our [walks programme](#) and choose a walk from the list. In the programme you will see the leader's name and contact details. You may wish to call the leader a day or so before the walk to check for any specific details, though this is not essential. Otherwise just turn up at the advertised place in good time and introduce yourself to the leader.

2. Do I have to be a member of the Ramblers to come on one of your walks?

No. You are welcome to join us for 3 or 4 trial walks as a non-member to see if the organisation meets your needs. Thereafter the expectation is that you will take up membership of the UK-wide Ramblers organisation.

3. Do I have to pay to take part in a walk?

There is no charge for taking part in Ramblers walks.

4. Do I have to book to come on a walk?

There is no need to book a place on our walks. You may, if you choose, contact the leader by phone beforehand but this is not essential.

5. How will I know where the walk starts/finishes?

Most of our walks are "circular" walks (i.e. they finish where they started). Details of the start point are given in the walks programme in the form of an address, a postcode and an Ordnance Survey Grid Reference.

6. What does C7 mean in the description of a walk?

Each walk is given a "grading" to indicate the degree of difficulty and the length (in miles) of the walk. In the example, C7 indicates a 7-mile walk with a moderate degree of ascent. For further details of the grading scheme please refer to the group's [website](#).

7. How will I get to the start point?

It is your responsibility to make your way to the start of the walk. It may be possible for you to arrange a car-share or a lift with another participant, but this is something you must arrange yourself. Many of our walks start at remote locations so unfortunately it is not usually possible to rely on public transport.

8. Do you provide car-sharing or lifts to the start point?

The group doesn't have a set arrangement for car-sharing or lifts, but participants are free to make their own informal arrangements.

9. Can I bring a dog on a walk?

No. It is the group's long-standing policy to not allow dogs on our walks. Registered assistance dogs may be permitted, but only by prior arrangement with the walk leader.

10. Can I bring a child on a walk?

Yes, you may bring a child (under 18) with you, but strictly on the understanding that the child remains entirely under your adult supervision at all times.

11. What do I need to wear on a walk? (clothing/footwear etc.)

There are no hard and fast rules on what you should wear on a walk; however you should ensure that footwear is adequate for the terrain and that you have outerwear that provides adequate protection against wind and rain/snow. Most walkers wear strong shoes or walking boots and use a layered approach to clothing, allowing them to add or remove sweaters, fleeces and waterproofs according to the conditions. You should also make provision for sun protection (even in North Wales).

12. Do I need a rucksack?

There are no rules about what you carry, but you will find that most walkers will carry a rucksack or similar to hold extra clothing, food and drink.

13. What do you do about refreshments on a walk?

Our weekend walks usually include a break of about 20-30 minutes for a picnic lunch, usually taken together at a time and location (outdoors) chosen by the walk leader. On these walks it is usual for walkers to bring their own packed lunch of their choosing, with a supply of water and perhaps a thermos for tea/coffee. There will usually be one or two additional short "tea breaks" at the leader's discretion.

Midweek morning walks are usually advertised with the phrase "Optional Pub Lunch". In these cases, the leader will have chosen a pub or other food establishment, close to the meeting place, where the group gather after the walk to eat together. If you prefer you can, of course, make your own arrangements. There will normally be a short "tea-break" during the walk to take on liquids.

On evening walks there is usually no requirement for edible snacks, but is recommended to bring a bottle of water.

14. What do you do about toilet stops?

The location of most of our walks means there are rarely public toilet facilities available. But it may become necessary at some stage of the walk for you to answer a "call of nature" outdoors. Try to dispel any feelings of embarrassment about this perfectly natural instinct. If your need happens to coincide with a tea/lunch break and you are able to identify a suitable secluded spot nearby, you can simply notify another walker of your intention before discreetly disappearing out of sight off the path before re-joining the group. If you are not able to wait for a scheduled break, inform the leader or the back marker that you need a comfort stop. The leader will take the group ahead from your chosen spot and wait for you at a respectable distance. The most important considerations are your comfort, your dignity and the avoidance of being left behind when the group moves on. To avoid embarrassment or offence to others as you go about your business you should ensure that you remain out of sight of fellow walkers and the general public.

15. I'm worried I might not be able to keep up with the group. How do I know I won't get left behind?

The walk leader, assisted by the appointed "back marker", will adjust the pace of the walk and keep a careful eye on the group to ensure that everyone is able to remain in visual range as far as possible. The back marker's role is to be the eyes and ears of the leader at the back of the group and to make sure the group doesn't become too strung out. By choosing a walk that matches your capabilities, you can enjoy the walk without fear of being a nuisance to the rest of the group. We never leave anyone behind!

16. Can I walk at my own pace or do I have to keep to the pace of the group?

The walk leader sets the pace of the walk, according to the abilities of those taking part. Out of courtesy to the leader you should not go ahead of the leader, unless advised to, nor should you deliberately attempt to slow the pace of the walk without good reason. If you find yourself struggling to keep pace with the group, speak to the leader (via the back marker if necessary) who will make the necessary adjustments to the walk pace to accommodate the slowest participant. Note that for our evening walks (May-Aug) you should expect the pace to be a little quicker due to the limited time available.

17. What happens if I'm taken ill or have a fall on a walk?

Our group's walk leaders are volunteers who are experienced walkers but most will not have undergone any specialist training to deal with medical emergencies. Therefore you should not expect to receive immediate medical assistance over and above what can be provided from a simple first aid kit. If you feel unwell at the start of a walk you should not assume that your condition will improve, but instead consider the risk that your symptoms may get worse when you are further from professional help. If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could impact your ability to complete the walk, you should notify the walk leader at the start of the walk. You should also consider carrying an ["In Case of Emergency" card](#) (obtainable from the Walks Programme Secretary) that provides details of medication and emergency contact details. Rest assured that in the event of an accident or medical incident the walk leader will make all reasonable attempts to ensure that appropriate help is provided, including if necessary contacting the emergency services.

18. Does the group organise social activities other than walks?

Our social secretary arranges a variety of non-walking activities during the year to which all group members are invited. Such events are promoted via mailing and via the group's website and social media.

19. Do I have to belong to the group nearest to my home address?

No. When you join the Ramblers national organisation, unless you express a preference you will be allocated to the local group closest to your home address. For instance if you live within the catchment area of Deeside group, you will by default be assigned to our group. If you wish to become a member of our group and we are not the nearest to your home, you can simply ask at the time of application, or at any future date, to be assigned to Deeside.

20. Could I volunteer to lead a walk for the group?

The group is keen to expand the ranks of its walk leaders. The more leaders who volunteer the more walks we can host and the workload on current leaders can be reduced. If you'd like to offer your services in leading group walks or would simply like to find out more about what it entails, speak to one of our current leaders or our walks programme secretary.

For further details of our group visit our website at www.deesideramblers.org.uk