

Walking with Glenfield U3A

Walking is one of the most popular activities in all U3As as it is easily accessed and is a cost effective way of exercising. These are a few guidelines for members and leaders to ensure we all enjoy this activity safely.

Members

Walks organised by U3A groups automatically have public liability insurance provided participants are U3A members. For this reason, we ask that any member that wishes to bring along a non-member seek the permission of the group leader.

When walking with us, you are responsible for your own health and safety and for judging whether you are sufficiently fit to do the walk.

The group leader or walk leader will provide information by e mail on each walk to enable you to make an informed decision on joining the walk. Please confirm your attendance by e mail or phone and if your plans change please let the walk leader know. Including your mobile would be useful in case we have to contact you on the day.

You will normally be provided with a meeting time and a walk start time. Walks will start promptly at the start time.

Sometime walks become oversubscribed and leaders may limit the number attending for safety reasons on a first come first serve basis. Under these circumstances if you turn up without informing the walk leader in advance, she/he may refuse to allow you to join the walk.

You are expected to follow any advice given by the walk leader when on the walk. If you drop out of the walk before the end please inform the walk leader.

If you have any medical conditions that may flare up suddenly or any phobias e.g. fear of livestock please advise the walk leader on the day.

You should carry an "In Case of Emergency (ICE)" card or store the information on your phone if it is not password protected.

It is sensible to check the weather before each walk to ensure you wear clothing appropriate to the likely weather conditions. Walking poles are very useful.

You should follow the countryside code at all times.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

When walking on roads you should always use the pavement where available. If not please walk in single file on the right except around blind bends before which you should cross to the other side.

Take your time when using stiles and please ask for help from other if you are at all worried about your safety.

When in fields with livestock please give them a wide berth and don't get between a cow and its calf even if this means a significant diversion from the right of way.

The walk leader does not carry first aid kits but it may be sensible to bring along some plasters etc for your own use.

You may also consider bringing along a drink and snack.

Some group leaders will allow well behaved dogs to accompany members. However, the majority of serious incidents involving walkers and livestock also involve dogs. You should ask the leader for permission for each walk as conditions and hazards can vary greatly from walk to walk so don't assume that a dog will be allowed because it was on the last walk. Good advice can be found on the NFU web site:

<http://www.nfuonline.com/cross-sector/rural-affairs/access/access-news/livestock-and-rights-of-way-reducing-the-risk/>

Membership of walking groups is often oversubscribed with a waiting list usually of new members. If you are no longer able to participate in the group please let the leader know even if this is time limited, as it is unfair to prevent others from participating. The group leader will from time to time review the membership list and if you have not participated or communicated for a period, she/he will remove you from the membership list and allow others to join.

Finally, the ethos of the U3A is for all members to continue learning and get actively involved in group activities. In the case of walking you are encouraged to help identify and lead walks. Help will be provided for this if you feel unsure you can take on this responsibility. As with many groups if it is left up to a few to carry the burden of organisation the group will eventually fail. The group leader's decision when interpreting these guidelines is final.

Leaders

These guidelines assume walks are in the Leicestershire District and you will not meet more hazardous conditions present in remote areas. If this is not the case you should review the walk to see if any further issues need to be addressed.

Leaders should keep details of the group's membership and contact details preferably on Beacon. Membership of walking group is often oversubscribed so leaders should keep it under constant review and remove members who fail to attend walks or respond to communications. Please let the coordinator know when you have vacancies.

Individual participants are responsible for their own health and safety and for judging whether they are sufficiently fit to do the walk. However, U3A has a duty of care to its members. This sounds onerous but can be discharged with a few simple steps, which allow members to make an informed decision to join the walk, or not.

Before the walk:

1. Where possible the routes should be pre walked close to the actual walk date. This will ensure that any changes since it was last walked are identified. If you are unable to pre walk the route please make this clear to members when informing them of the arrangements.
2. Please provide members with details of distance and nature of the walk e.g. rough walking or significant changes in height to help them to decide if they wish to join the walk. It's a good idea to provide them with your mobile number so that they can contact you on the day.

3. Please provide members details of meeting place, time and car parking. Pub car parks should only be used if you intend to eat there. Most leaders give a meeting time and a time the walk will start promptly.
4. Decide if there should be a limit on the number of members participating and inform members.
5. Members are asked to confirm their attendance by e mail or phone. If members turn up to walks without informing you, you are at liberty to refuse to allow them on the walk if this would take numbers above a safe level. Make a list of all who are attending and take it on the walk.
6. Check the weather conditions before each walk and decide if they are extreme enough to cancel the walk. This will vary from group to group, as some groups are harderier than others.
7. Anyone bringing along a guest should seek your permission before the walk. You should make a diary note of guest's names as people are only allowed to participate in three taster sessions of any u3a activity before they will have to join. If you allow more than this, they will not be covered by our third party insurance.

On the walk:

8. Please brief the members at the start on the details of the walk, stopping places and any other relevant information.
9. Take a register of those attending before setting off.
10. Ensure that members follow the Countryside Code when walking off road. You can find it here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>
11. Ensure that you follow the advice in the highway code when walking on road particularly if it has no pavement. The relevant section of the code can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/rules-for-pedestrians-1-to-35>
12. Occasionally during the walk and at the end of the walk please have a head count to ensure all members are present.

After the Walk:

Planning a route can be onerous so in order to help we have placed many of the routes on the U3A web site for individuals or groups to use. In order to make this as useful as possible can you inform the walking secretary about the route you walked. This can be as simple as a description by e mail or if you are able to track the walk, an electronic file.