

# WALKING THE EXTRA MILE

## Information for Walkers



Welcome to Walking the Extra Mile with u3a Gosport which was set up in 2015. The fundamental u3a aim for everyone to share their knowledge and try new experiences is central to the spirit of this group. We are keen to attract new members who would like to enjoy exploring our varied countryside with us - and possibly to help with planning our walks.

We aim to cover a variety of walking routes in Hampshire and Sussex involving distances of 7-10 miles, with ups and downs, mostly off road tracks and designated footpaths but this does not include remote terrain or very high hills. On our walks we do tackle steep slopes, muddy conditions and stiles. However this means we have explored some hidden corners of our wonderful countryside and, from the Downs especially, we have enjoyed great views. We research our walks carefully and try to give an indication of any challenging aspects of a walk in advance. Importantly we encourage any member who would like to learn more about organising walks. - this approach is vital if the group is to have long term sustainability.

The Extra Mile Walking group has drawn up Walk Planning, Health, Safety and Risk assessment guidelines using national U3A Walk Leaders' advice documents found online. They are available as a link on our page of the u3a Gosport website. We have also draw up Emergency Procedures so that we know what to do if there is an incident. Members' contact details are stored and protected in line with Data Protection Regulations.

Walkers do need to take personal responsibility for their safety and to have a good level of fitness. We hope the following guidelines will help you prepare to get the best enjoyment from our walks.

## BE PREPARED

- ✓ Check the email giving information about the walk over the weekend before
- ✓ Let the leader know by email if you plan to walk – especially if you need a lift
- ✓ Wear suitable strong walking shoes or boots that your feet know. Good socks are important. Boots provide good ankle support on uneven surfaces and should be waterproof.
- ✓ Check weather - wear appropriate clothing - consider the need for waterproofs (including trousers), hat, scarf, extra layers in winter and light shirt with sleeves and sunhat in hot summer weather.
- ✓ Bring a picnic in a small rucksack – we try and find a good spot just over half way. A hot drink in winter is comforting.
- ✓ Get to the start at least 10 minutes before the departure time so travel arrangements can be made
- ✓ Bring something to sit on – a plastic bag will do but you can get little mats in outdoor shops.
- ✓ If you are offered a lift be ready to make a fuel contribution and bring spare shoes for the return
- ✓ Please offer lifts if you have a car and are happy to drive – an important aim of our group is to help people who do not have transport get into the countryside) **Non drivers should take note that a lift cannot be guaranteed.**



## STAY SAFE

- ✓ Contact the leader if you are not sure if the walk is suitable for you
- ✓ Bring any medication you may need and if you have special requirements speak to the leader before the walk.
- ✓ Bring sunscreen & sunglasses in the summer also plenty of water
- ✓ When walking **stay in sight of the group leader who should be at the front** – the leader will appoint a backmarker.
- ✓ While we intend to walk at a reasonable pace we recognise everyone has their own comfortable speed – especially up hills. The group will wait for everyone to complete a climb and give everyone the chance to recover their breath
- ✓ Walking sticks are worth bringing as they support your knees and balance on uneven ground and hills.
- ✓ We can access your contact details from the Beacon database-you must report changes to the membership secretary
- ✓ You will be asked to provide additional information for safety eg emergency contact numbers.
- ✓ If you are driving be sure you have the leader's mobile number and that you have an accessible mobile in your car.
- ✓ **Walks organised by u3a Groups receive Public Liability Insurance cover through the Third Age Trust. This is NOT a personal accident insurance.**

***It should be noted that participants walk at their own risk.***



## ENJOY AND RESPECT THE COUNTRYSIDE

We are fortunate to have access to the counties of Hampshire and Sussex - right on our door step - with several areas of outstanding natural beauty. This includes the varied coast lines, the South Downs and the New Forest as well as several other nature reserves. We want our group to explore as much as possible.

We will :

- ✓ experience different countryside habitats - allowing us to see & share our knowledge of geography, history & variety of flora and fauna in the wild pl
- ✓ observe the same places in different seasons
- ✓ notice the many uses of farmland and different sorts of woodland
- ✓ find special places to stop & enjoy the views – eg our picnic
- ✓ follow designated footpaths and respect the countryside code
- ✓ organise some special events eg walk on IOW, A Christmas walk and meal, a summer pub.

We will be walking in the countryside beyond the Gosport peninsula. There will be hills, rough paths but also mud and puddles at times as the majority of our walks will be off roads. However we will have planned the best routes with diversions if necessary. We will usually go whatever the weather if you are ready, willing and able!!!



## YOUR LEADERS

### GROUP LEADER will

- ✓ be an experienced navigator & map reader who is keen to share her enjoyment of the outdoors with friends.
- ✓ ensure all walks are researched and checked although weather may alter the conditions found on the walk day.
- ✓ coordinate plans and arrange communication with all members prior to each walk.
- ✓ carry a basic first aid kit but may not be a qualified first aider
- ✓ support prospective **Walk Leaders** to learn skills of map reading, navigation & walk planning

### WALK LEADERS

We wish to encourage group members to become **Walk Leaders** who will

- ✓ propose & check their own walk route **OR** plan and check a walk with the support of the **Group Leader**
- ✓ have access to the relevant OS map for the duration of the walk. (**Group Leader** can help with this)
- ✓ plan sufficient and suitable stops on the walk
- ✓ appoint a back marker and check the pace & progress of the group frequently.
- ✓ arrange directions and parking for the walk start (**Group Leader** can help with this)
- ✓ provide information about the walk so the **Group Leader** can communicate information to members

**On some occasions an experienced Walk Leader will have overall responsibility when the Group Leader cannot attend.**

*Maps used are from the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series 1:25000*

## THE WALK PROGRAMME

- ✓ Our planned programme dates are the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month except August and only 1 in December
- ✓ The most up to date information about the forthcoming programme of walks is on the Walking the Extra Mile page of the website.
- ✓ We meet at **Holbrook Leisure Centre** to organise car sharing and then drive to the start of the walk – leaving by 0930 latest or when everyone who has said they are coming are there. We are usually home around 3.30pm.
- ✓ More details about each walk will be sent by email the weekend before the walk. If you do not have access to email the leader will make other communication arrangements with you . **Please let us know.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Group Leader: Kathy Parker [kathy.parker2.kp@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.parker2.kp@gmail.com) 07533 272089

Or visit the u3a Gosport website <https://u3asites.org.uk/gosport/home>

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