

Walks Policy

Aims and Objectives

Our aims are to ensure that walks take place in a safe, pleasant and supportive environment, and that everyone benefits from fresh air and exercise while experiencing the companionship of other members.

RESPONSIBILITIES

EVERYONE is responsible for contributing to the success of every walk.

Where responsibilities are specific to a particular group this is indicated.

GROUP LEADERS are responsible for ensuring that:

- a prior risk assessment of the planned route and congregation point has been carried out to ensure it is suitable for the group.
- members are informed in advance of relevant information about the walk such as distance, walking pace, terrain and any risk factors associated with the route. This is to ensure that members can assess their own ability to participate.
- a front marker and back marker are appointed so that the leader can move freely within the group and carry out any duties relevant to the group.
- a high visibility jacket is worn by front and back markers on public roads.
- they carry a basic first aid kit and a mobile phone.
- they are equipped to deal with emergencies, calling for assistance if required.
- a register of participating members is taken at the start of each walk.
- they hold contact details for each member.
- they hold emergency contact details and any relevant medical information for each member, to be held in confidence and used for emergencies only.
- they ensure that any guest members have not attended more than one U3A taster session prior to the walk (see Insurance section below).
- there are toilets and refreshments available at the end of the walk if that is the custom of the group.
- on Nature Walks the route includes flora and fauna of interest, which should be pointed out to the group.

GROUP MEMBERS are responsible for ensuring that:

- they take note that they are walking at their own risk.
- they assess their own ability to complete the walk without assistance from another member.
- they remain with the group.
- they **ALWAYS** inform the group leader if they wish/need to leave the group for any reason. Please note that once a person chooses to leave the group then they are no longer a group participant.
- they follow the instructions of the group leader and any appointed front and back markers.
- they behave in a way that does not endanger themselves, other group members or other members of the route.

Walks Policy

- they show respect for and safeguard other members of the group.
- they carry details such as relevant medical information and emergency contact details in case of emergency.
- They carry any necessary medical equipment or medication with them.
- they wear appropriate footwear and clothing.
- they remain protected from dehydration, cold, heat and any other risk factors that could endanger their wellbeing and affect the progress of the group.
- they do not bring along any children or pets to the walk.
- someone who is their guest is registered with the group leader and has not attended more than one U3A activity prior to the walk.

INSURANCE

Walks organised by Upper Bann U3A are covered by Public Liability Insurance, provided that walkers are U3A members. This is not personal accident insurance and walkers need to be aware that they walk at their own risk. Guests are covered by U3A insurance provided they have not attended more than two Upper Bann U3A taster sessions in total. It is the joint responsibility of the Group Leader, the member and the guest to ensure that this is adhered to.

Children are not permitted to attend U3A events including walks under the terms of U3A insurance cover.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

In the event of a **MINOR** accident or illness, the group leader will consult with the injured/ill person and should decide a course of action. If the injured person leaves the walk they should be accompanied by a companion appointed by the group leader. The group leader may need to call the member's emergency contact. If in doubt about the health and wellbeing of the participant, the emergency services **MUST** be called as they can assess the need for assistance.

In the event of a **SERIOUS** accident, or a participant being taken seriously ill, the group leader **MUST** contact the emergency services immediately. First aid should only be administered under the direction of the emergency services. However, if the situation is urgent, such as breathing difficulties or severe bleeding, then emergency measures should be taken. If possible this should be carried out by any trained first aider present. The Red Cross information on 'Treating Injuries' should be used as a template for dealing with incidents. Information is available at www.redcross.org.uk/firstaid.

In all cases of accident or injury an Incident Report must be completed.