

TREFRIW WALKING FESTIVAL

An Introduction to Walk Leading

This resource has been developed with the help of
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The Outdoor Partnership & CCBC



Before we start – The Health Benefits of Walking

At any pace

- Mental and social benefits
- Increases 'good' cholesterol and helps to prevent diabetes
- Helps to reduce/manage weight
- Benefits the immune system and reduces bowel cancer
- Reduces risk factors for falls in the elderly
- Prevents development of osteoarthritis & osteoporosis in certain groups
- Improves muscle strength and mobility

At a 'brisk' pace

- Improves cardiovascular functioning of heart and lungs
- Reduces blood pressure

Why is Walking so Good?

- Most people can join in
- There's no special equipment
- It's low impact
- You can vary the pace
- You can increase the daily amount
- There are many health gains
- You get quick results
- It's not age or cost-related



Some reasons given for not walking:

- Not enough time in the day
- Worries about not finishing walk
- No transport
- No-one to go with
- Don't know where to walk
- Not fit enough or overweight
- Too expensive, and don't have right equipment
- Fit enough already
- Boring – what's the point? – not seen as 'cool'



Benefits of walking in the community

- Encourages social interaction
- Improves health and well-being
- Regular use of local paths/bridleways
- Can create new paths and open up footpath network
- Acts as security – eyes on the street and in the countryside
- Visit local places of interest, parks, nature reserves etc
- Encourages sense of place – local history & bio-diversity
- Raises civic pride of place – welcomes visitors
- Makes use of local facilities, cafes, pubs, shops etc
- Economic benefits for town or village community
- Reduce use of cars - walk or use public transport
- Empowers the local community
- Potential for ‘Walkers are Welcome’ status

About Trefriw Walking Festival

Trefriw Walking Festival has been running since 2013, such that it is now Snowdonia's premier walking event.

It is organised by a core committee of volunteers, but during the event we call on the help of many other additional volunteers, including walk leaders.

In order to put on 20+ walks over the 3 days, we enlist up to 30 walk leaders in total, many of whom return year after year.

Our leaders are regularly praised for their proficiency, knowledge and friendliness, and we aim for this to continue.

A quote from a walker:

“Our third visit to the Walking Festival ... It has got better each year ... The ethos and atmosphere are special. Your festival is run by passionate folk who love walking, and love the area they live in. Warmth and friendliness are evident in all aspects.”

(C.L., 2017)

Our website

Our website is our main form of communication with our walkers.

www.trefriwwalkingfestival.co.uk

Have a good look round it and see what our walkers see.

Please especially have a look at the contents of the 'about us' tab, including 'funding'.

Also please have a look at the Terms and Conditions under the 'booking' tab.

Our website

www.trefriwwalkingfestival.co.uk

The website has an admin page (password protected), which contains information for organisers and walk leaders. Leaders can also preview walk details here before they are published on the website.

The admin page also contains walk leaders' email contact details and various useful downloads, and once we go live for bookings you can see how things are going.

(The current password is [admin42](#))

Two walk leaders

Every walk in Trefriw Walking Festival has two walk leaders, at least one of whom will be a qualified First Aider.

We don't differentiate between leaders and back-markers; we consider them both as co-leaders.

However, if you wish to designate specific roles with your partner, that's fine. You can chop and change roles during the walk too, so long as one leader is near the front, and the other near the back.

First Aid



- At least one of the leaders will be a qualified First Aider – often both are.
- As a member of the Outdoor Partnership, we can send our walk leaders on a two-day REC (Rescue Emergency Care) outdoor First Aid course at no expense to themselves, and at reduced expense to us.
- This qualification lasts for 3 years. If you wish to get a qualification, or to renew it, please let us know, and we'll tell you how to apply. (We use a local provider who runs courses every month through the year.)

A good walk leader?

- To be a good walk leader you have to like walking. However, not every good walker makes a good walk leader!
- Whilst an awful lot of what a good walk leader does is common sense, it nevertheless calls for certain skills and abilities, and being a 'people person' is important.
- We also like to think that enthusiasm and friendliness are every bit as important as qualifications.

Qualified?

- Aside from First Aid training, it is important that our leaders are appropriately trained and/or experienced.
- Some leaders have had formal training (such as Lowland Leader, Hill & Moorland Leader or Mountain Leader) but many have simply had an informal induction, such as this presentation, but can call on a great deal of walking experience.

The Basic structure of a Walk

There are five basic phases to be considered:

- Planning for the walk
- The day or days before
- On the day – at the start
- On the day – during the walk
- At the end of the walk

Planning for the walk

In most cases we will do the following for you:

- **Choose a suitable route & distance**
- **Consider the meeting & starting points**
(We use the Village Hall for our assembly point.)
- **Promote the walk**
(via the website, flyers, social media, etc)
- **Take bookings**
(This is done on-line, using Eventbrite.)



Dogs

Unfortunately we do not allow dogs on our walks, as they can cause problems (people's definitions of 'under close control' differs).

It is also the time of year when ground-nesting birds are around.



(This is explained in the booking terms and conditions.)

Booking and Registering

All bookings are made on-line, via Eventbrite, a free booking platform. The website explains how this works.

Booking: To book a place on this walk, click on the button below.

Before booking, please click [here](#) to check availability of places.

Register Now on Eventbrite

Registration print-outs are provided to walk leaders on the day.

Planning a walk

Every year we offer some 20+ walks over the 3 days of the Walking Festival.

Some of these are themed, but the priority throughout is to offer a variety of good, interesting walks, of varying distances and gradings.

(That said, we know that most of our walkers are attracted to all-day walks of a reasonable length.)

Every year we have a mixture of brand new walks and old favourites.

The Committee usually design the walks, though often leaving scope for the leaders to 'tweak' it if they wish (and we're always open to new ideas!).

Planning a suitable route

We aim to:

- Keep it simple, and on good paths
- Keep it to an appropriate distance/time
- Choose safe routes
- Choose accessible routes
- Give a thought to facilities, where possible
- Make it appealing

What makes a walk easy or hard?

- Length and time
- Slopes, gradients and hills
- Path surface and terrain
- Pace
- Altitude
- Obstacles
- Weather conditions
- Load
- Number of rests to aid recovery



Planning for the walk

As a walk leader we will ask you to do the following:

- **Recce the route and consider risks/hazards**

(a Risk Assessment form will need to be filled in)

(It's useful too to check mobile signal while you're out)

- **Confirm the grading given for the walk**
- **Consider alternative/escape routes, should the need arise**
- **Research points of interest**
- **Create a brief description of the walk**

(or tweak the detail we might already have written, to suit yourself, along the lines of other examples on the website)

Planning for the walk

- Give some thought to where the best place will be for a lunch stop
- Let your walkers know what the plan for lunch is
- If lunch looks like being late, suggest having an earlier brief snack-stop to keep you going till then.



- Also give some thought to toilet facilities. If it's a long walk and you won't be passing any formal toilets, consider what opportunities arise for those who might need it. (Most walkers are pretty adept at nipping behind walls and bushes, etc.)

Sample from walk programme

Sunday 20th May, 2018

Rivers, Lakes and Falls

See the walk [here!](#)

This is a gorgeous walk in three parts: The first part of the walk sees us walking past the Fairy Falls waterfall, then beside the river Crafnant out of the village and up along the Crafnant valley, as far as its confluence with the Afon Geirionydd. Here there is a short strenuous section as the river flows past waterfalls and down a gorge, and we follow this short river up to Llyn Geirionydd (with toilets at its far end).

The middle section sees us crossing the upper part of the Gwydir Forest, passing a couple of beautiful lakes, and with some great views, before descending to the river Conwy upstream of Gwydir Castle.

The last third of the walk – a level section – sees us following the banks of the river Conwy, past Llanrwst, then round the riverside Cob back to Trefriw. We'll be back in time for the [Cake Fest](#) at 4 p.m.!

Duration: All day. Please bring a packed lunch.

Distance: about 10.5 miles / 17 km

Grade: Moderate (with a short, steeper uphill section, but also a long final easy section)

Meet: 9.15 a.m. at [Trefriw Village Hall \(LL27 0JH, SH781631\)](#)

Walk Leaders: Tony Ellis and Nigel Thomas

Walk Gradings

(as stated on the website – we can qualify these and add extra wording where appropriate)

Easy = a shorter walk with easy terrain, less than 5 miles

Moderate = a medium length walk which may contain some shorter steeper slopes and uneven ground; this grade sits between 'easy' and 'strenuous'

Strenuous = a longer walk which will likely have steeper and rougher sections, usually over 9 miles

Strenuous High Mountain = a long walk with a lot of ascent and descent; involves some continuous mountain terrain walking on less defined paths

Our walk-leading annual diary

Late autumn – The committee start to put together ideas for walks; the schedule will change many times over the next couple of months while we play with ideas and try to fit them all in!

New Year – As we firm up the schedule, work starts on the website (and we start contacting walk leaders for their availability and preferences).

February – Walk leaders will be asked to check the details of their walk on the admin page of the website, or to submit new text, as appropriate. The walks become available on the website.

Mid-March - The website goes live for bookings

April – Risk Assessment forms are sent out

Mid-May – Walk leaders are asked to send in their Risk Assessment forms in the week leading up to the Walking Festival

May – It's the Walking Festival ! Enjoy !

Wheels ...

In the past we have been fortunate to have had the loan of a Plas y Brenin minibus. We now hire one for the weekend. This means that this is available to take us to a starting point, or bring us home at the end of a walk, or both.



Numbers ...

When we use the minibus, numbers are usually limited to 12. Otherwise we will usually take up to 14 – 16 walkers.



Who are our walkers?

Some of our walkers come from the Conwy valley.

Some come from the North Wales coastal area.

But many come from places as far afield as Manchester
Birmingham, London, Cornwall

We sometimes even get people from abroad!

For some, this will be their first time with us. Others have
been coming regularly for years.

Who are our walkers?

A small proportion of our walkers are Welsh speakers.
(Our website and publicity is totally bilingual.)



If you're a Welsh speaker, and you're aware of any Welsh speakers amongst your walkers, please engage them in some Welsh.

If you're a learner and have limited Welsh, this is a good opportunity to tell them, and to practise a bit!

Welsh names

Wherever you walk around here, you'll find yourself having to pronounce Welsh place-names.



Our walkers will rightly assume that you are pronouncing names correctly!

If you're not sure how a name is pronounced, please ask us – we'll be very pleased to help.

Risk Assessment - Common Hazards

- Weather (e.g. wet grass)
- Trip hazards
- Pavements and Obstacles
- Badly maintained stiles & paths
- Overgrown vegetation
- Water - e.g. ponds and streams
- Roads and vehicles
- People and animals



Risk Assessment

We use a generic Risk Assessment form which is very easy to fill in.

The sheet is emailed to walk leaders about a month prior to the Walking Festival, to be returned the week before the event. (The form is additionally downloadable from the Admin page on the TWF website.)

Walk leaders are asked to decide with their co-leader which of them is best placed to fill this in. (It probably makes sense for the more experienced leader to do this.)

The day or days before (Preparation)

- Check and assess the local weather forecast (which might affect any risk assessment)
- Confirm any details or changes with your co-leader, as necessary
- Check personal gear incl. hi-viz jacket, first aid kit, whistle, etc
- Check you have route notes, map(s)
- Be prepared for enquiries about the walk

Leader Equipment

- Many leaders will have their own map, compass, first aid kit, etc., and will want to use these.
- However, please note that we have a stock of this sort of equipment which we can lend you, if you wish.



Leader Equipment

- First Aid kit
(This may include a foil blanket or group shelter, depending on your walk)
- Map and compass
- Mobile phone (though we can't always guarantee a signal!)
- Food and drink, incl. snacks / energy bars, etc.
- Route / information
- Spare personal clothes
- Wipes / tissue
- Spare kit for others?
- Walking poles?



On the day – at the start

- Be early and be ready to welcome your group
- Introduce yourselves
- Check walkers are suitably attired e.g. footwear, clothing etc
- Explain any pertinent details of the walk – terrain, hills, stiles etc.
- Remind about water and refreshments
- Inform the group of any toilets en-route, or the lack of
- You might want to give an estimated return time (we don't usually publish this as it's notoriously hard to keep to)
- Remind them that this is *their* walk. They must let you know if need a break or a slower pace.
- Do a head-count

On the day – at the start

Before you leave you will be given :

- A copy of the registration list, showing the names of the walkers in your group

(Check for any medical issues mentioned.)

(Please hand this in to us on your return.)

- A list of phone numbers should you need to contact base
- The phone number of the minibus (where applicable)
- A blank accident report form

On the day – during the walk

- **One leader to stay at or near front**

(The leader doesn't have to be at the very front all the time – we'd rather you enjoy the company of your walkers – but you will need to be *near* the front, controlling the pace, and able to contact any walkers ahead.)

- **Check you can see the back marker**

(The back-marker doesn't have to be the very last person all the time, but will invariably be in the back group. Again, we'd rather you enjoy the company of your walkers.)

- **Ideally both leaders will be able to see the whole group**
- **Set and regulate the pace according to group abilities/conditions**

On the day – during the walk

- Point out places of interest or special features. Use these occasions as an opportunity to regroup

- Manage the flow of party over stiles, through gates, etc.

(Bear in mind that, with a larger group, crossing stiles can add 5 minutes to the walk every time one is encountered.)



- Be alert to problems and involve everyone in group

i.e. Try and speak to everyone during the walk.

(Our walk leaders are often praised for being inclusive, which is your aim.)

On the day – during the walk

- Remind individuals, if necessary, that they themselves are responsible for crossing roads, including when leaving the village hall
- Discretely observe all walkers for signs of distress
- Do a regular head-count
- Aim to stick to the walk as billed – that's what your walkers signed up for – but be flexible should any problems arise.
- Enjoy the walk!

Group management

- One of the hardest aspects of being a walk leader is that of group management.
- Your group will be made up of people with varying abilities in terms of pace and fitness. Ideally we want walkers to find their own pace, as far as possible.
- Whilst there will always be a gap between the front walkers and the tail-enders, it is important that the leaders can see the group. In some circumstances you may want to split the group, with a leader in each group, but stopping periodically (often to point out interesting features) often provides an opportunity for everyone to regroup.

Know your walkers

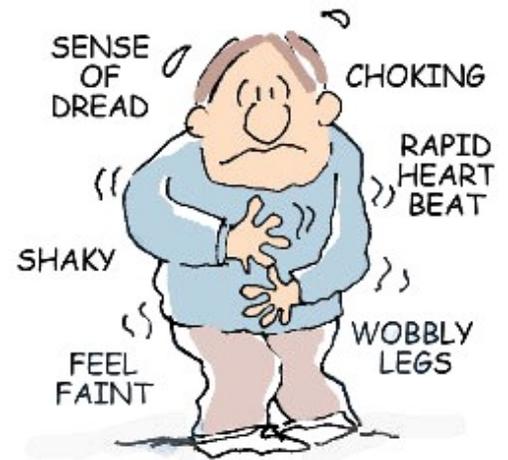
- Throughout the day, make sure you have conversations with every single person in your group.
- Periodically swapping positions with your co-leader will likely give you the opportunity to talk with different walkers. (Walkers often tend to be in the same sort of position in the group, such as nearer the front or nearer the back.)
- Learning the names of some/all of your walkers as the walk progresses gives a valuable impression. (You will have a sheet with the names of your walkers, and this may help you with this.)

Enjoyment!

We want everyone to enjoy the walk – walkers and leaders alike.

If the leader knows the route well and is prepared, the walk should prove carefree for the walkers.

However, for the walk leader it can never be quite as carefree! A good walk leader is constantly on the look-out to ensure things go well. If you're new to walk leading, you'll probably be a bit anxious at times, but with experience you'll still be able to enjoy the walk every bit as much as your walkers!



Weather!

Our Walking Festival is always in late May. By then, the temperature can be fairly warm.

However, May can still bring colder conditions, and where walks go into the mountains and more remote areas where conditions are more extreme, the website will point out that walkers should come equipped with warm, waterproof clothing.

Equally, if it looks like being very hot, you'll all need plenty of water.



Weather!

In short, wherever you are walking, you and your walkers should be equipped accordingly.



We would always recommend that leaders set the best example possible in terms of how they are equipped, and how they are dressed and booted.

Weather!

The weather can also play a large part in how well the day goes!

When conditions are ideal, a good day is fairly guaranteed!

When conditions are poor, it can take the shine off what is a good walk.

Remember that the weather can affect where you stop for lunch, and if it's really bad you may need to amend your walk plan, especially if you're in more remote or elevated terrain.



On the day – during the walk

- Take photos!



We're always pleased to receive your photos. We'll put some of them on the website gallery, and may use others in our future publicity.

(Walkers are informed in the Terms and Conditions that we may take photos, and are asked to inform the walk leader if they do not wish to appear in any photos.)

On the day – during the walk

Risk Assessment in action

If you come to a spot where you have previously identified some sort of risk, remember to warn your walkers if you perceive the risk still to be there.

e.g. if it is wet underfoot, you may want to point out a slope with wet grass, wet tree roots, wet rocks, wet steps, etc.

e.g. a wobbly stile

e.g. a short section of road

We have our own accident report form, should the need arise.



TREFRIW WALKING FESTIVAL
ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

ABOUT THE PERSON WHO HAD THIS ACCIDENT	
Name:	
Gender:	Age:
Address:	
Phone number or email address:	
DETAILS OF ACCIDENT/INJURY	
Name of walk:	
Date:	Time:
Where did the accident/injury take place?	
How did the accident happen? (Give a cause if you can.)	
Detail of accident/injury:	
Detail of any action taken and/or First Aid given:	
ABOUT THE PERSON REPORTING THIS ACCIDENT	
Name:	
Address:	
Phone number or email address:	
Role:	
Signed:	Date:

(To comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), personal details entered on accident report forms must be kept confidential.)

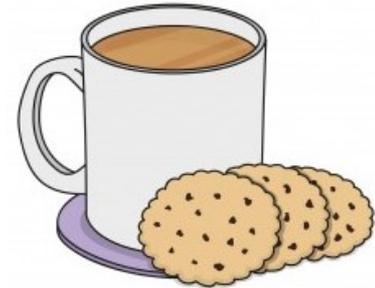
In case of emergency

In an Emergency:

- Remain Calm
- Call for assistance, if necessary (police 999/112)
- Give relevant information
 - (Position / Grid location / Condition / History / casualty info)
- Keep the casualty warm, and reassure them
- Use other leaders / walkers to assist as appropriate
- Remain with the casualty with assistant(s)
- The co-leader may continue / return with other walkers if appropriate

At the end of the walk

- Check that everyone has returned safely
- Thank your walkers for participating, and for their company, etc.
- Thank your co-leader
- Invite your walkers to stay and have refreshments and a chat in the Village Hall
- Invite your walkers to write a comment in the Comments Book (including comments for improvement – we always strive to improve)
- Remember to tell reception that you are back!



At the end of the walk

- Report any accidents or incidents to the organising team
- If you noticed any problems with rights of way, stiles, way-markers, etc., you may want to ask us to report it to the authorities, or you could do it yourself:

Give an accurate description of problem and location

Give the location, grid ref, footpath number

Report to Environment, Roads and Facilities

erf@conwy.gov.uk 01492 575337

- If you can, please stay and have a cuppa and a chat with us!

The good walk leader (summary)

- Completes the five basic phases of the walk
- Leads the walk on a chosen route
- Sets a good example
- Sets a suitable pace consistent with the group's abilities
- Maintains awareness and observes walkers
- Keeps the group together and gives recovery time
e.g. rest/refreshment stops as appropriate
- Communicates any changes or potential hazards on the route
- Creates an environment in which everyone can enjoy the walk in safety

A good back-marker (summary)

- Remains towards the back of the group / with last walkers
- Helps leader in keeping group together
- Motivates and encourages slower walkers
- Communicates with leader
- Closes gates
- Reports to leader if anyone leaves the walk
- Ensures that nothing is left behind after stops

Good leaders should

- Be punctual
- Treat each walker as an individual
- Be friendly and welcoming
- Make the walks enjoyable and appealing
- Complete paperwork, incl. Risk Assessment, and lead walks as demonstrated in the training
- Remember, it's not your walk – it is for everyone taking part.

Contacting us

Once we've got you on board for the festival, much of the subsequent contact will come from Tony, who also manages the website.

You can contact us anytime via the 'contact us' link on the website, or directly at

contact.trefriwwalkingfestival@gmail.com

Expenses

We have an expenses form which will allow you to claim mileage incurred, if you wish (although we are very grateful to those leaders who choose not to do this!)

This may be mileage incurred on the day, and/or on a previous recce trip.

An expenses form will be sent to you prior to the walking Festival, and is also available for download from the admin page on the website.

Some feedback ...

- “Excellent leaders and well-planned, interesting walks.”
- “As ever, the walk guides were knowledgeable and welcoming.”
- “Great leaders too, and the Village Hall team are so welcoming.”
- “Superb organisation. Excellent and well-informed leaders.”
- “Supportive, patient and encouraging walk leaders.”
- “Excellent walk, leaders and company.”
- “A brilliant day – great leaders, great company ...”

Some feedback ...

- “I want to thank everyone concerned, in particular the walk leaders on our two days.”
- “Interesting and enthusiastic leaders and walkers”
- “A great choice of walks, excellent leaders, friendly team ...”
- “The walks were very enjoyable with excellent guides.”
- “A fantastic day lead by C. and S.”
- “A fabulous day with P. and J.”
- “M. and C. were great leaders.”
- “A lovely walk – great route – led superbly by D. and N.
- “M. and A. looked after us really well.”
- “Particular thanks to T. – just a brilliant walk.”

Some other useful information on paths



Footpaths are for walkers only



Bridleway – You are allowed to walk, ride a horse and cycle on a bridleway. Cyclists must give way to walkers and horse riders.



Byway – Usually unsurfaced tracks. These are open to walkers, horse riders, cyclists and some motor vehicles.



Permissive Routes – Not a legal right of way, but the landowner has given permission for the route to be used for the time being.



National Trail – Also known as a Long Distance Path.

Conwy Footpath Public Footpath Network 1072 km = about 670 miles

Where to Walk

A brief guide to where you can walk:

- You can find places that are traffic free even in towns and cities – parks, canal towpaths, heaths, etc.
- There may also be ‘Heritage Trails’ already marked in your area
- In the countryside and on the edge of towns and villages there are many footpaths (“Public Rights of Way”) that are signposted along their route
- Access land – where you can roam at will (marked on Ordnance Survey maps)
- Look at guidebooks to give you ideas and pick up a copy of the Ordnance Survey map for your area – Explorer maps with an orange spine are the most useful



Open Access Land



The rights apply to specific areas of land classed as **mountain** (over 600m), **moor, heath, down** and **registered common land** (areas of land which were historically used communally by local residents).

Around 1.4 million ha/3.4 million acres of land in England and Wales are designated as **access land**, where the public has a right to walk under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

22% of Wales' landmass offers Access Rights

If you're interested in further formal training towards an accredited award (such as Lowland Leader, Mountain Leader, etc.), please let us know.



<http://www.mountain-training.org/walking>

Any questions?

We're only a click away!

Please don't hesitate to contact us,
either via the 'contact us' link on the website,
or directly at

contact.trefriwwalkingfestival@gmail.com