Manx Footpaths Conservation Group

Affiliated to The Ramblers

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WALK LEADERS

All members of Manx Footpaths Conservation Group (MFCG) are actively encouraged to lead walks, however there is no requirement to do so. Please read the following guidelines when planning a walk:

- Only fully subscribed members are allowed to lead walks.
- Walk Leaders are encouraged to attend one of the First Aid courses organised by the club and to carry a First Aid kit when walking.
- All Walk Leaders are advised to carry their own mobile phone in case of emergency. Please consider downloading a location app such as the 'What3words' app and OS Locate app if possible so that the emergency services can accurately identify a location if required.
- Walk Leaders should design a walk that they feel comfortable to lead in terms of the distance and terrain, and that is in line with the guidance for distances stated in the FAQs (see 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the website – manxfootpaths.org). Stiles, gates, and the crossing of busy roads can extend the duration of a walk. Consideration should be given to the suitability of places for rests and lunch stops and 'escape/alternative' routes in case of an incident.
- Walk Leaders must undertake a reconnaissance (recce) walk to check the route for any unexpected alterations or diversions. Ideally this should take place as close to the walk date as possible but as a maximum, four weeks before the walk date.
- In exceptional circumstances where no recce has been possible and hence no risk assessment carried out (for example where the intended leader has fallen ill and another person has stepped in at short notice) the walk leader should make the situation clear to walkers who can then make an informed decision whether or not to join the walk.
- A Risk Assessment (RA) form must be filled out following the recce using the interactive form on the website. Please follow the guidelines for completing this form. The completion of a RA is a mandatory requirement. Non-compliance may invalidate the club's insurance policy.
- Walk Leaders should take into account the weather forecast and consider alternative routes if necessary. The safety of the Walk Leader and walkers must take priority and the Walk Leader should cancel the walk if they feel it is not appropriate to undertake the walk. Leaders are advised to cancel walks if an amber or red weather warning is in place for the planned route. Please contact the Walk Coordinator for advice if necessary. The Walk Leader or a representative should attend the start point of a cancelled walk to inform those members who have not been notified of the change in circumstances, when possible and safe to do so.
- All walk Leaders have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and fellow walkers.
- The Walk Leader should designate a Back Marker at the beginning of a walk. Both should agree the number of walkers taking part and complete checks at appropriate intervals during the walk. The Walk Leader and Back Marker should liaise regularly to ensure a comfortable and achievable pace is established for all participants. The Walk Leader and Back Marker should have each other's mobile numbers.

- Walkers should not walk ahead of the Walk Leader or behind the Back Marker without agreement from either of them.
- When walking on roads the Walk Leader should adhere to the Highway Code unless it is not safe to do so.
- Walk Leaders and Back Markers are advised to wear hi-visibility clothing whilst walking on long sections of road.
- In the unlikely event of an accident or incident Walk Leaders must complete an Incident Form in a timely manner – ideally within 24 hours. This can be completed via the website.
- No Dogs are permitted on MFCG walks.
- Children under the age of 16 may only attend walks with a responsible adult.
- In the event that the designated Walk Leader is unable to lead, they should find another Walk Leader to lead the walk for them. The Walk Coordinators can be contacted for advice. The Secretary (secretary@manxfootpaths.org) and Lesley (website@manxfootpaths.org) should be informed of any changes or cancellations.

At the start of every walk the leader should conduct a short briefing to:

- Introduce themselves and any new members/visitors.
- Outline of the route and any potential hazards.
- Remind all participants that they walk at their own risk.
- Identify a designated Back Marker.
- Highlight any concerns about the weather which might impact on the walk.