

HINTS FOR WALK LEADERS

With the popularity of Wednesday walks, we need to provide more than one walk each week in order to keep the numbers on each walk manageable, and during the summer programme we usually have three walks each Wednesday. Don't forget weekends too, Saturdays and Sundays are also popular walking days, usually we provide at least one walk on each day.

This does of course mean that we require more walk leaders, and of course our current walk leaders inevitably become older and sometimes have health problems, so we always encourage new walk leaders to come forward for future programmes.

If you have not led a walk before you might consider it a daunting prospect, and so this document is intended to give some pointers to make it easier.

1. If you feel anxious about taking on a walk yourself, consider teaming up with a "buddy" who can share the role of walk leader, help with the recce, and can act as "back marker" on the walk itself.
2. Find an appropriate walk – it does not have to be original, you can look back through old copies of the TRAIL to find walks that have been done before, and perhaps have not been repeated for a while. Other places to find walks are:
 - Books – most outdoor shops have loads of these, and you can also get some in W. H. Smith, Waterstones, etc. and also from the local Public Library
 - Tourist Information Offices and Ranger Centres, where you will usually find leaflets which give walks in the local area
 - The Internet – for example the Scottish Tourist Board site at <https://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/active/walking/> is very good, and most local authorities have similar sites. Another useful site is <http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk> this is also very good, and not just for the highlands, it covers all areas of Scotland. Fife Walking (<https://fifewalking.com>) is also recommended, and not just for Fife walks, it covers other areas too.

Choose a suitable walk – for your first walk as leader a "C" or "C+" grade walk is probably the most appropriate, so it should be no more than about 11km (7 miles), with not too much ascent, but you might also consider a Grade B or even an A walk if that is the kind of walking that you prefer.

Select a walk which is suitable for the time of year when you will be leading it, bearing in mind that walks have to be submitted well in advance. For example, for winter walks, try to avoid too long a drive, remembering that daylight hours will be short, and weather may be unpredictable.

3. Do at least one recce - this is essential for most walks, as unexpected things can crop up – for example a bridge could be closed for repair (or washed away!), erosion or fallen trees could block the path, the Forestry Commission can close routes for tree felling, and so on. It is not always practical to recce Munros and Corbetts, but for these try to obtain a detailed route description and other information from books or web sites. If possible, it is best to do a final recce about a week or so before the walk. While doing your recce, remember to take notes on the following:
 - The route from Linlithgow to the start point, and also the mileage, so that you can work out the fuel contribution for passengers. Note any landmarks, signposts, etc. which will help you to write your directions.
 - Car parking availability (and cost, if applicable)
 - Toilet availability – if there are none near the start of the walk, perhaps you can locate some on the way, even if it means a slight detour

- The OS Sheet Number for the map which covers the walk. If you are familiar with OS Grid References, make a note of the GR of the start point, as this can be useful for those going direct to the start rather than meeting in Linlithgow
 - The route of the walk, so that you don't get lost!
 - Perhaps a shorter option, in case the weather is very poor on the day
 - Suitable stopping points for lunch and other breaks
 - Points of interest along the way – you may be able to get information from leaflets produced by local authorities etc.
 - A coffee stop on the way home (for Wednesday walks, optional at weekends)
4. Remember to prepare directions for car drivers. A computer is ideal for this, because as well as making it easy produce several copies, you can keep the document for future re-use. Also, if you have Internet access, you can get good directions (and an accurate mileage) from Google Maps at <http://maps.google.co.uk/> (click on Directions, a little arrow in a blue diamond). Remember to include your mobile phone number if you have one, and the fuel contribution for passengers (currently 8p per mile, rounded to the nearest 50p).
 5. At the meeting point (usually in the car park behind the West Port Hotel) it is the leader's responsibility to ensure that everyone has transport, so be sure to wait until the scheduled departure time in case anyone turns up at the last minute. But generally, drivers are very good at organising themselves.
 6. After the walk, please remember to submit a report to our Press Officer Bob Beattie, preferably by completing the form on our web site at <https://linlithgowramblers.org.uk/site/submit-a-walk-report/> or by email to reports@linlithgowramblers.org.uk, or by phone on 01506 865322. Bob will use your report to write an entry for the *Linlithgow Gazette* Events column, and your report will be posted on our web site at <https://linlithgowramblers.org.uk/site/walk-reports/>. Please attach a suitable photo from the walk when submitting your report, this will be shown at the top. In your report please include the number of people who took part in the walk, as Bob will use this to record statistics on attendances. Your report can be as long or as short as you wish for the web site, only minimal details will be submitted to the *Linlithgow Gazette*.
 7. Finally, don't worry! You will be leading a party of responsible adults, who for the most part can look after themselves, not a group of children needing constant supervision. Leading a walk can be an enjoyable experience, and need not be a cause for anxiety. Even if you only lead one walk in each Walk Programme, this will be a help, and every contribution to the programme is greatly appreciated.

An example of a completed Offer of Walk form is given below. When you submit an Offer of Walk using the form on our web site (which is the preferred method), a formatted copy similar to the one below will be emailed to you for your records. You can print it if you wish, it is designed for printing on A5 stationery. A copy of the form is sent to the appropriate Walk Convenor automatically, and the Programme Secretary also keeps a copy, this will be used to construct the TRAIL programme. Please remember that space in TRAIL is limited, so please try to keep the walk description fairly concise, but give enough detail for members to be able to decide whether the walk is suitable for them, so mention any steep ascents, rough terrain etc. so that people do not come unprepared.

If you are unable to use the online form, blank printed forms are available from the Programme Secretary, to whom the completed form should be returned.

Please complete and pass to walk convenor or programme secretary before the deadline (See Trail)

LINLITHGOW RAMBLERS: OFFER OF WALKS FOR PROGRAMME				
Day and Date:	Grade:	Walk Length:	Leader & Telephone Number:	
Saturday/Sunday	B+	13.5km/8.5 miles <small>(Km calculated from miles)</small>	Sandy Janas 01506 670893/07526 544800 <u>For Web Site:</u> Sandy Janas 01506 670893	
Walk Title: King's Seat from Tillicoultry				
Circular, returning via Bank Hill and Dollar			Scheduled date:	
			(For Prog. Sec. use)	
Ascent:	OS Sheet:	Grid Reference:	Depart from:	Time:
685m/2250ft <small>(m calculated from ft)</small>	58/366	NS914974	• West Port	09:00

Ref. No. 72/5 Received: 7 May 2018 5:44 pm from a.p.janas@gmail.com