

Pathfinders Club (Solihull)

Protocol for the continuation of organised club walks during the period of the coronavirus pandemic

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General

With the coronavirus pandemic worsening, England was put on lockdown on 23rd March 2020. Pathfinder club walks were cancelled. Lockdown restrictions were relaxed on 24th August 2020 allowing for groups of 30 people to meet; club walks were then recommenced. New restrictions were introduced on 14th September 2020 limiting social gatherings to a maximum of 6 people, the 'rule of six'. The exemption for organised 'outdoor physical activity events' allows for groups of up to 30 to meet. This exemption applies to the Pathfinders Club, allowing club walks to continue. This document details the protocol under which club walks can be undertaken.

Keeping up to Date with Government Rulings and Guidelines

The government rulings and guidelines on COVID-19 must be reviewed regularly and the club's protocol and guidelines for walk leaders and walkers updated, as necessary.

Walks Programme

All club walks form part of the club's walk programme and are agreed for inclusion by the Walk Secretary. Individual members organising a walk for themselves and friends are not covered by this document and do not form part of the official club programme: the 'rule of six' applies to them.

Members will be advised of upcoming club walks via email or through the post. Full details of the walk including the name of walk leader(s), meeting place and time, description of the route, length of walk, total ascent and any other relevant information is included in the communications sent to members. Members can contact the walk leader for further information, if the walk leader has provided their contact details, or by contacting the club.

The upcoming walks are also published on the club's website, full details are given but exclude the name of the walk leader. Non-members are welcome to join 2 walks before becoming members.

Restriction on the Numbers of Walkers

The maximum number people who can walk on any walk is 30, this includes the walk leader and back-marker, if appointed. The walkers can be from different households. The limit on the number

of walkers may be reduced for a particular walk depending on location, terrain and other factors particular to the walk. The walk leader can also stipulate a lower limit than 30 be applied. The limit will be agreed with the Walk Secretary.

All places on a walk must be pre-booked in advance. Turning up on the day without pre-booking will exclude a place on the walk if the limit has been reached.

Walk leaders will be provided with a list of the walkers who have pre-booked prior to the start of the walk. The walk leader must check the list against those who attended and amend it accordingly. The list must be returned to the Club Secretary. It will be used for contact tracing purposes and will be kept for 3 weeks.

Contact Tracing

The list of those who pre-booked for the walk will form the basis of the record for contact tracing purposes. The list will be checked and amended on the day to ensure all walkers are recorded. For members, their contact details are known. For guests, their contact details must be either given in advance, when booking a place or on the day; the list will show if their contact information is outstanding. If the contact details are not provided, they will not be allowed to join the walk.

Under no circumstances should the walk Leader or any walker turn up on the day if they show signs of the virus or are self-isolating, or if a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms.

Walk Leaders

Walk leaders are members of the club who volunteer to lead a walk, they are under no obligation to do so. Any member, before volunteering to lead a walk, must consider carefully whether they or a member of their household is over 70 or have certain underlying health conditions, as they are deemed clinically vulnerable to COVID-19. In these circumstances, leading a walk may not be the right option for them. If they decide that they will lead a walk and they and/or someone they live with is in the higher risk category, then they need to be especially careful and diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene. Potential volunteers need to advise the Walk Secretary if they are in the higher risk category.

Planning the Walk

The walk must be recced by the walk leader, preferably accompanied by another club member. If the reccé is some weeks before the actual date of the walk, then it is desirable that it be re-walked shortly before the date of the walk to check that nothing unforeseen has adversely affected the planned route.

The walk leader should follow the club's 'Guidelines for Walk Leaders' and to be COVID-19 secure pay particular attention to the route to avoid particularly busy or narrow paths where physical distancing is not possible, suitable places for a break and escape routes if the walk needs to be cut short. Watch out for poorly maintained stiles, as assisting each other over is to be avoided.

Check access to facilities such as car parks, toilets, cafes and pubs at the start and along the route.

Car sharing is to be discouraged.

A written risk assessment must be carried out by the walk leader prior to the day of the walk. The risk assessment needs to cover steps to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 as well as hazards found on a typical club walk. The risk assessment will form the basis of the pre-walk introduction

given to the walkers on the day and should deal with possible hazards or difficulties and any actions to be taken. A copy of the risk assessment should be sent into the club prior to the walk and will be kept for 12 months.

The Walk

The walk leader should follow the club's 'Guidelines for Walk Leaders'. To be COVID-19 secure:

- Appoint a back-marker, and if the group is large a middle-marker, to assist with physical distancing.
- In the introduction briefing remind walkers to maintain physical distancing and to be extra careful where space is limited and when crossing roads. Remind walkers to avoid touching gates, stiles and other path furniture and advise walkers not to share food, drinks or equipment. It is everyone's responsibility to maintain physical distancing and this is especially relevant at the start and end of a walk. They also should avoid social interaction with anyone outside the group whilst on the walk.
- Check that all walkers have read and understand the club's 'Guidelines for Walkers', if necessary, remind the walkers of its contents, especially for COVID-19.
- Remind walkers to stand back and give way when other walkers are passing.
- Carry a face mask in case of incidents.
- Remind walkers to continue to follow the government guidelines on physical distancing and keeping safe if mixing socially after the walk – the 'rule of six' applies.
- Remind anyone who develops the symptoms of COVID-19 within 7 days of the walk to follow the government guidelines and get a test and support the contact tracing system. Notify the Club Secretary as soon as possible.