



White Cliffs Ramblers – News, September 2020

WCR WALKS PROGRAMME

The resumption of the WCR walks programme at the beginning of August has been highly successful, with most walks being attended by the maximum number of participants. There have been a few examples of places becoming available at short notice due to last minute cancellations – where possible we have endeavoured to let members know of these vacancies. Sadly, we also have to report that there have been a couple of instances of ‘no shows’, where no notification or explanation has been given. Given the restrictions on the numbers permitted, such behaviour denies other members the opportunity to join a group walk and is discourteous to the walk leader.

At a recent meeting of the WCR Committee it was confirmed that we should continue to offer a walks programme through to the end of November. In doing so, it was also agreed to allow for longer walks and to increase the maximum number of participants. I’ll return to these points later.

RAMBLERS ORGANISED WALKS AND ‘THE RULE OF SIX’

As you will doubtless be aware, the government has announced that as from Monday 14th September social gatherings of more than six people will be banned in England. There are several exemptions to these new laws – **Ramblers organised led walks are included in these exemptions**. This means, that in theory, WCR could organise walks for up to 30 participants, provided we follow the guidance and protocols that have been developed by Ramblers head office.

You may be asking yourself why Ramblers led walks are exempt from ‘the rule of six’? Inevitably, the answer is somewhat complex.

Firstly, Sport England recognise The Ramblers (and LDWA) as being the National Governing Body for ‘Rambling’ in England. Over the past few months Ramblers head office has developed various protocols and processes to reduce the risk of Covid-19 whilst undertaking rambling activities. These include requirements for all walk leaders to be registered as volunteers, for risk assessments to be undertaken for each planned walk, and for a record of those attending walks to be kept. These various documents and processes are known as ‘right to play’ protocols.

Via Sport England, the government has clarified that from 14th September people can continue to:

- take part in organised sports and activities that have been through ‘right to play’ protocols;
- take part in organised sports and physical activity events; and
- use leisure facilities, including gyms and pools.

Ramblers (and Walking for Health) organised group walks are categorised as ‘outdoor physical activity events’ – hence the exemption from ‘the rule of six’.

Further information on Sport England’s ‘return to play’ protocols can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/2FliCsT>

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER WALK PROGRAMME

To offer a Ramblers organised led walks programme, as a Group we need to be able to demonstrate that we have met all the requirements set out via head office. (Details of these requirements can be found in various documents that can be accessed at:

<https://bit.ly/2FoFAzh>

In planning for an October / November walks programme all the key requirements set out by head office have been reviewed, and we are continuing to meet these. This being so the WCR Committee have agreed the following framework for the upcoming programme:

- Walk leaders will be able to decide the maximum number of participants for any walk that they offer, this being subject to a maximum of no more than 20. The number of permitted participants will be included in the details of the walk.
- 'Twinned walks' – could continue to be offered – that is the same walk, led by 2 or more leaders, held on the same day with staggered start times.
- Longer walks, up to 10 – 12 miles, will be permitted.
- Places on walks will still need to be booked in advance. The details of the booking arrangements will be included in the walk description. For some walks, we will be trialling an online booking system.
- A record of all attendees will be kept securely, for 21 days and then destroyed.

We have already received a number of walk offers for October and November, but there are still several vacant slots available. If you have a walk in mind please contact Anne or Tony Bristow as soon as possible.

Tel. 01304 372814

Email anne.hickey1@gmail.com or at.bristow@gmail.com

Our walks are planned in accordance with the guidance issued by the Government and Ramblers head office. Therefore any changes to the guidance may result in revised arrangements having to be made to our walks programme.

NB. The exemption referred to in this newsletter only applies to Ramblers / Walking for Health organised walks. IT DOES NOT APPLY TO THOSE WALKS ORGANISED AS PART OF A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS – 'the rule of 6' applies to these walks.

WHITE CLIFFS RAMBLERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM is to be held on Sunday 1st November. As in previous years we have been planning to hold the meeting at St. Margaret's Village Hall, albeit with reduced numbers. However, in view of this week's announcements we are seeking clarification as to whether this might still be possible. If not, we will be considering using technological solutions to enable the meeting to go ahead. Watch for further announcements.