

## Charnwood u3a

### Notes for Walk Leaders

Thank you for offering to lead a walk. Having been out with us, you will be familiar with what the group usually does i.e. typically a 6-7 mile walk in the Charnwood (and thereabouts) area. Our walks start at 10.00 and have a tea/coffee break (wherever is most suitable) shortly after 11.00. Many walkers appreciate lunches being organised at the end of a walk but arranging these is not essential.

It is often best to choose a walk that you like doing yourself (as you will be more relaxed and this will help others enjoy it). Do however think about whether it will suit the group, and their varying capabilities, and choose a starting point where there is parking for a reasonable number of cars. Let me know if you would like to talk through your walk, or help in either planning the route or checking it out.

You should pre-walk the route in advance and, ideally, check it again a few days before the actual date. Planning routes by first looking at possibilities on maps can be helpful. The OSM app is useful. However, maps don't need to be bought, especially as OS Maps are on-line at [www.bing.com/maps](http://www.bing.com/maps) (and selecting 'OS Maps' under 'Road' on the upper right of the page and magnifying the view). Alternatively try [www.openstreetmap.org](http://www.openstreetmap.org) which shows walked paths.

Members of Cu3a take responsibility for their own safety, for wearing suitable (wet weather) clothing, deciding on their walking ability and also to carry their Emergency Contact details. Walks should however be planned to minimise risks. Any particular difficulties or dangers you identify should be made known to me when you send walk details so that I can, where necessary, discuss them and give appropriate details in the walk programme information. Any hazards should also be detailed when, at the start, a walk outline is given.

Things to look out for and consider in your walk planning are:-

- To avoid (wherever possible) busy roads and to pick safe crossing points;
- That low lying areas can flood, or turn muddy;
- Not to use unsteady, or difficult to use, stiles and footbridges;
- Being alert to crops and overgrowth (which may grow before the walk is done);
- Ploughing (where a path has not been re-established);
- Fields with, or likely to have, livestock that may become excited.

Re-routing is the only option to avoid busy roads or flooding but the County Council has a duty to keep paths usable and to maintain stiles and footbridges. Should, in Leicestershire, you want them to remove obstructions to open up a route, the best way of reporting issues is to use the county's 'Report It' form (which covers Rights of Way). This gives access to the definitive map which shows the County's footpaths (which after scrolling) enables the location of the instruction to be identified. Similar (website) reporting can be done in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. (Note - remedial actions can take weeks!).

Leading up to the walk date, do keep me updated should you be unwell or otherwise be unable to lead and also if you have concerns about the weather (being too hot, wintry or wet). We can then consider making changes or cancelling and notifying the group. On the day, it is your decision as leader whether to proceed.

Hopefully all will go well on the walk itself. At the start, do a head count and check from time to time that all the walkers are with you. For larger groups appoint a 'back marker'. On the walk things can happen that you were not expecting and you may need to change your plans. But explain to the group what is going on and others will invariably help you out. Also please have a

charged mobile phone (or know who is carrying one). If I am not on a walk and an incident, or accident occurs, I need to give details of whatever has happened.

Our ongoing programme is only possible with offers, such as from yourself, to lead walks. Thanks for doing this and hopefully these notes will assist you preparing and leading a walk which Charnwood u3a members can safely enjoy. Do please contact me if you have any concerns or matters you want to talk through.

Debbie Brown, Charnwood u3a Thursday 6 Miler Walk Co-ordinator  
E: Debbie.brown@btinternet.com, M: 07805 542407

## **Some Extracts From Recent Walk Descriptions (Highlighting Identified Risks)**

- This is a gently undulating walk with a small number of stiles, taking in the villages of Barsby, Twycross and Thorpe Satchville. Regardless of the weather, trousers (not shorts) are recommended as the wet weather has encouraged some dense vegetation (nettles) in few parts. Also, if there is any rain in the days leading up to the walk, boots are also recommended as there are a few short lengths of the path that could be muddy.
- This walk will go up onto the West Leake Hills, across to East Leake and back down to West Leake. It has just 3 stiles but 1 good hill! Given the weather it is anticipated that this walk will have some muddy sections.
- The walk is around the lake, then across the railway line to the edge of Frisby. Then through the small developing Priory Wildlife and water park nature reserve before a rest stop outside Kirby Bellars St Peter's church. The return to Frisby is along footpaths through fields (which the walk leaders hope will not be muddy) and then loops through the village before heading back down Hollow Lane and past St Thomas of Canterbury's Church and returning around the lake.
- Our walk leader advises against walking in shorts as sections of the walk are along field paths with some scratchy grass and other vegetation.

Note – it is only 'advisory' hazards that get notes, the expectation being that normal countryside features will arise anyway.

It's helpful to give an indication of the distance to be walked and the hills/altitude to be climbed.