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|  | Health and Safety Policy |

1. Stafford Rambling Group is a voluntary organisation and all members choose whether or not to participate in each activity. Walking is a relatively low risk activity and every care is taken in the planning of walks and events. Nevertheless, all members are primarily responsible for their own health and safety. This includes:
	1. Ensuring that the walk is within their physical capabilities. We publicise information on each walk together with the walk leaders’ phone numbers. If in doubt members should contact the leader for more information on a particular walk.
	2. Having suitable clothing and protective equipment as well as carrying sufficient food and drinks for a walk. SRG gives guidance in its information for new members.
	3. Being vigilant during walks and paying attention to any advice and instructions from the leader.
2. SRG does, however, take a number of steps to promote safety:
	1. Providing a welcome pack for new members about what to expect on walks. This includes a copy of this policy.
	2. Encouraging a culture of mutual protection, especially over alerting fellow walkers to difficulties on a walk (e.g. oncoming traffic, problems with stiles, hidden risks of trips and falls).
	3. Recognising the key role of walk leaders and providing them with written guidance and support.
	4. Walk leaders take a list of participants for each walk. The lists, which are kept by the secretary for 4 years, also facilitate reporting accidents or dangerous occurrences that occur during the walk, which must be reported to the leader at the time.
	5. One member of the committee is appointed to co-ordinate health and safety matters.
	6. Each committeemeeting has an agenda item on health and safety when activities are reviewed and the policy amended if appropriate.
	7. Any member can raise concerns about health and safety issues with the Chair, the Health and Safety Co-ordinator or with any committee member. There is also the opportunity to raise matters at the AGM.

**NOTE**: Participation is entirely at the individual’s risk and no responsibility for loss or damage (however caused) is accepted by the Group, its organisers or leaders.

**APPENDIX**

**RISKS SOMETIMES FOUND ON WALKS**

Travelling to and from activities

The risks encountered are essentially those found in every day driving. Occasionally we have to use rough tracks and minor roads which require greater care.

Whilst we encourage car-sharing we do not check to ensure that all drivers have licences, insurance and MOT certificates for their vehicle. Any member who has doubts about the safety of another member’s driving should politely decline a lift from that person.

Walk leaders are required to give details of the meeting point for their walk, including a post code for satnav devices. They should also provide a mobile phone contact number in case of difficulties or delays in reaching the meeting point.

Walking on the public highway

Whilst we mainly use public foot-paths we sometimes have to use public highways with the risk of encountering vehicles. Wherever possible we use a causeway. Elsewhere we should walk in single file and be vigilant. Anyone who first realises that a vehicle is approaching should call out a warning to everyone else. This should be passed along the line if those at the other end might not have heard.

Slips and trips

Wear walking boots with a good grip. Point out to other walkers anything which might increase the risk of a fall eg hidden holes or dips, tree roots and brambles. This is particularly important at stiles which might be poorly maintained or slippery.

Getting detached from the group

Leaders should always aim to keep the group reasonably together. All members can assist by not making a turning without checking that the next person behind has seen them and knows to turn too. Anyone making a stop should inform someone in the group. It is then advisable for at least one person to wait at a discreet distance to ensure no-one is left behind.

Anyone who does become detached should first try to contact someone else on the walk by mobile phone. If this is not possible s/he should wait at the point at which another walker was last seen. Note: walk leaders usually provide a mobile phone contact number when publishing details of their walk – please make a note of this.

Livestock

Wild animals rarely cause any problems but livestock and dogs occasionally cause concerns. Always try to walk around livestock and be especially careful not to cross between a mother and her new-born. Walk purposefully towards the exit from the field. Try to assist other walkers who might be particularly fearful.

Irate Landowners

We try to ensure that we always walk on a public right of way and therefore are not trespassing. If a landowner challenges our right to be where we are, refer them to the walk leader who should explain with the map why we are there. Be polite at all times (even if provoked) and if the landowner insists that we leave, do so by the route suggested.