

# Leading Walks for South East Berks Ramblers (SEBR)

## Simply

Leading a walk for SEBR is not onerous. You only need to know where you are going and be reasonably confident that the route will not have changed since you last walked it. You can expect that most of the people on the walk will be experienced walkers and are there to enjoy your walk in the company of similar people.

When leading a walk you are not "on test", you are with friends, and if needed many will gladly offer help and advice.

This guide is aimed specifically at the type of walks we do in SEBR as part of our standard published programme and the demographic profile of those that walk with us. It does not cover walks outside the SE Berks area, e.g. walks on holidays and coach trips.

## Responsibilities

You only need to act in the normal way you would in an everyday situation as a responsible adult. There are no "special" responsibilities. Walking is one of the safest activities that people do and in our area it is safer than many others.

You are not responsible for people's health or the clothes they choose to wear, but you are able to refuse to take people if you think they are not fit or suitably equipped. There is no requirement to know anything about first aid.

On the day you should arrive around 20 minutes before the walk starts so you are ready to greet people as they arrive. Also (very occasionally) so you can take last-minute calls on a mobile from people lost or otherwise delayed. Say a few words of welcome to the group and maybe a brief description of the walk before setting off.

Preferably have a map with you. Even if you know the route very well, something unexpected might necessitate a change of plan. And even if you can't read a map it is almost certain that someone else in your group can.

Check regularly to make sure the people behind can see where you are going. Stop occasionally to let all the group catch up. Always check that the people at the back are ready to continue once they have caught up. Stopping is particularly important where there is a choice of directions.

If you have a large group, say 10 or more, it is a good idea to appoint a back marker and make sure you keep in contact. Often a wave is sufficient.

Don't let people get too far in front of you. Make sure anyone in front of you does not take a wrong turning. Ask people in front to slow down if the group becomes stretched – you set the pace. In fact, apart from navigating, setting the pace is the only time you might need to use your authority as a leader.

If perchance someone<sup>1</sup> gets separated from the group you can be sure they will find their own way home – we are in the Home Counties, England.

## Insurance

The insurance details change from year to year. It is not complicated but the best thing to do is visit this link :- [The insurance guide for 2014/2015](#)

Quoting from that document:

It is important to remember that the insurance cover exists to give protection to individuals in the case of a claim being made *against* them by a third party (such as a landowner, a member of the public, or another Ramblers member). This is known as civil liability insurance.

For such a claim to be successful, the injured party has to be able to demonstrate that *they have suffered as a result of negligence*. This principle is particularly important to remember in the context of led walks. Here, for a successful claim to be made against the Ramblers, the injured party needs to show that the walk leader abdicated their responsibility in a reckless or negligent manner.

## Reporting

As a matter of course, **after every walk you lead for SEBR**, you should fill in a simple form on our website telling us of numbers, weather and any incidents. Even if you don't have anything exciting to say there are lots of people who look at the reports and like to know how many people went on the walk, what the weather was like and anything else you might like to add. These reports demonstrate that SEBR takes reporting seriously.

Incidents can be anything from a near miss to a fatality. As far as SEBR is concerned you should always report the facts and your committee will help you if matters need to be taken further. Ramblers' Central Office require reports of all incidents.

As from February 2015 we would like to know the names of the people attending our walks. This is not compulsory but many other groups do this as a matter of policy and it helps to prove that we are using "best practice" as well as providing useful information for the future. There is a simple attendance sheet you can [download here](#) and take with you to your walk. If any walkers do not wish to have their names recorded on this form please write them in as anonymous and maybe a reason why they want to be anonymous.

## Non-members

Non-members can attend any of our walks. Ramblers policy is to encourage non-members to join Ramblers if they walk more than three times with us. However, this does not prevent non-members walking with us as many times as they like. The two things to consider here, if they do not join, is that:

1. they might be abusing our goodwill
2. they are not covered by Ramblers insurance for any claim against THEM.

Let's face it though, people walk in the countryside without being part of a Ramblers organised walk and don't even think that they need insurance – they don't. It's just that Ramblers insurance could cover them in the event that they cause an accident or cause damage.

## Dogs

SEBR does not have a policy about dogs on walks. If your walk takes you across any area where dogs should be on a lead or dogs are not allowed you need to make that clear in the published description of the walk. Most people with dogs are fully aware that dogs are not always welcome and will usually check with you beforehand if there is any doubt.

## Choosing a walk to lead

Most people start by choosing a walk they already know. This may be something close to home, a place where you walk your dog, a walk you found in a book or a walk recommended to you. The only difference between a walk you might do on your own and a walk you are offering to lead is that there needs to be sufficient parking for several cars.

It doesn't matter if someone else has led a walk from the same place recently, your walk will be different – guaranteed.

Once you are confident about leading walks choosing locations is a great excuse to go exploring new possibilities.

## Getting your walk in the programme

Our walks programme is dynamic and can be seen online at any time.

Anyone can offer a walk in our programme. The only thing is, you will need to register on our website beforehand. When you register our Membership Secretary will check that you are a current member of Ramblers and let you know when you are cleared to add a walk that can appear on our programme. Your walk details will be checked and once they are agreed they will be locked. You can still make changes later if you need to.

### Your contact details

Very occasionally someone may wish to check something with you before they come on your walk or if they cannot find the start on the day. For this reason we like to show a telephone number. You can choose your home number or a mobile number or leave it blank. A mobile number is best. You can edit these details at any time and the changes will appear immediately on our website.

## Walk Leader training

SEBR does not currently offer any walk leader training but if you feel that you would be prepared to lead a walk if you had some training we have plenty of leaders who would be very happy to show you the ropes – as they say. Just ask.

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## N.B.

The best way to search Ramblers website is to use Google rather than their own search facility. For instance, if you are concerned about cows, just put “*cows site:ramblers.org.uk*” into a Google search.

Or if you are unsure about the currency of a document, especially the latest version of the insurance policy, just put “*insurance site:ramblers.org.uk*” into a Google search.

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1 This assumes you are not leading vulnerable adults or children. We have no members of SEBR that known as vulnerable adults or children but if any do arrive at the start of your walk you can decline to take them if they are not accompanied by another responsible person.