

Bollington Walking Festival Walk Leaders' Guidance 2026

Emergency Procedure:

Please note that these procedures do not replace emergency medical care and in the event of a medical emergency, you should dial 999 first.

- The Bridgend Centre will be open during the majority of the time that the walks take place. In the event of a situation arising on a walk, please telephone the Bridgend Centre on **01625 576311**. In the event of the Bridgend Centre being closed please ring **07405 527346** for support and guidance from a member of the Walking Festival team.
- 'What3words' is a great way to identify your exact location and communicate this with the emergency services. You can download the App onto your smartphone so that you can identify your exact location at any time. For more information go to **<https://what3words.com/ways-to-use>**.
- If no mobile connection is available, agree for someone to walk to the nearest house/farm to contact the emergency services.

In the event of a walker not being able to finish the walk:

- Separate the person from the main group and make them comfortable.
- Ensure the main group is in a sheltered/safe place.
- Make a decision on what action to take next depending upon the circumstances.
- As Walk Leader, you may take the decision to carry on with the walk and leave one or more people with the 'distressed' person and wait for support services to arrive. Alternatively, you may decide to wait with the whole group, or thirdly, abandon the walk and head back to base using the shortest route. If you decide to abandon the walk and some of the walkers wish to continue the walk unguided, you should emphasise that this is at their own risk.

Guidance on leading walks

- It is good practice to pre-walk the route to note any difficulties or obstacles, for example, difficult stiles, muddy patches, walking on roads. It is also important to consider what the likely weather will be on the day of the walk and make appropriate adjustments.
- Please take a first aid kit with you on the walk. We have some at the Bridgend Centre for you to borrow if you don't have one. If you do so, please return it to us after the walk. The kit should ideally contain plasters in a variety of different sizes and shapes, small, medium and large, sterile gauze dressings, at least 2 sterile eye dressings, triangular bandages, crêpe rolled bandages, safety pins, disposable sterile gloves, tweezers, scissors, alcohol-free cleansing wipes and sticky tape. Please do ask us if you are unsure about any of this.
- Before the walk starts, do a briefing talk to the group. This should include flagging up the length and boot rating of the walk to ensure that the walkers are at an appropriate level of fitness for that walk. You can explain the boot rating (e.g. any steep climbs or descents, speed of walk) and talk about the conditions on the day e.g. weather conditions, terrain, any potential livestock, any sections of road-walking and open water.
- Appoint a backmarker if you feel it is necessary based on the size and ability of the group.
- The Walking Festival leaflet has a section headed 'Walking: essential information' which gives advice on what clothing and equipment people should bring. Please do have a read.
- There is also another section on the leaflet headed 'Key to walk symbols' which advises walkers on what to bring, suitability for dogs, whether charges apply and if the walk should be pre-booked.
- A walk leader can refuse to allow a person on his/her walk if they are not properly equipped.
- Communicate regularly with the group during the walk bearing in mind the speed of different people, changing weather and terrain.
- Think about pauses, regroupings, rest stops and meal breaks taking the weather conditions into account. Remember a rest stop only begins when the last person arrives.
- Advise walkers to keep dogs on a lead but if an aggressive animal approaches they should let the dog go to detract attention from the people.
- Be wary of livestock and walk around field edges where possible.
- Take care when walking along roads and ensure the group is walking in single file. If it is a quiet road, warn them when vehicles approach.

Thank you for volunteering as a walk leader for the Bollington Walking Festival, the event couldn't happen without you and we hugely appreciate it!

