



Rules & Guidance for the Nordic Walking in the Chalfonts Club



As amended following the 3rd AGM on 24th October 2024
(changes made to reflect us no longer operating via Meetup)

All members are required to abide by these rules and guidelines and while this is their responsibility, any walk leader can refuse to let someone join or continue a walk if they are not comfortable about what seems to be a breach of what is stated here.

Participants will be given a link to these rules by email and a link will be on our new website.

As with the Constitution, if anyone believes that a disability requires a 'reasonable adjustment' to one of these rules they are encouraged to raise their issue, in advance, with a member of the leadership team who will ensure it is given due consideration within the team. If necessary, one of the team will discuss the matter with British Nordic Walking Association and/or other relevant bodies.

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- o Participants undertake to be polite, considerate and treat everyone with equal respect. This includes respecting the walk leader and complying with any requests or instructions.
- o This is a Nordic walking only group and in order to promote the sport, preserve the integrity of the technique and comply with the British Nordic Walking statement on the subject, we do not include ordinary walkers or those using non-approved poles, such as trekking or Urban Activator poles (unless this has been agreed as a 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act 2010).
- o Everyone is required to complete the Nordic Walking in the Chalfonts version of the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PARQ) and return it to the instructor or walk leader before their attendance. This includes all guest/trial/prospective members. Details of Next of Kin and any important medical information will be shared with all walk leaders by the instructor on a 'need to know' basis.
- o Guest/Trial members:
 - Must complete (or have completed) beginner training sessions and either provide adequate evidence of this or demonstrate an acceptable technique and knowledge at an initial private session, or a refresher session, with the instructor. The instructor has the right to not allow them to walk with the group until further training has been undertaken.
 - Need to join the club after two trial walks with us, by paying our annual subscription fee before attending any further walks. The training fee is deducted from the subs if undertaken in the same club year (1/11 to 31/10) or within two months of the renewal date.

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Booking & Starting a Walk

- o Prospective members should liaise with the instructor about starting points for walks.
- o Members will be added to the WhatsApp group for the days they wish to walk. The instructor or walk leader posts starting point details and anyone who plans to come should just reply 'Yes' or use a thumbs up sign. As this is a quick reference page and is used as our attendance record, members are asked not to write anything else or give apologies etc but they can delete their 'Yes' if need be. We have a separate, optional WhatsApp page for 'Chat, Info etc' if required or members can message the instructor/leader directly.
- o The warm-up and walk will start promptly, regardless of those who may be late unless, in exceptional circumstances, they have made an arrangement with the walk leader by phone.
- o Cancellations by the walk leader will be posted ASAP on the relevant WhatsApp page – You are advised to check the page before setting off and having your mobile with you is strongly recommended.
- o At the beginning of each walk those attending will be asked if they have had any changes in their health or any injuries (which might affect their functioning on a Nordic walk). They are expected to answer honestly. If anything is of a personal nature they should contact the walk leader privately by mobile at least 2 hours before the walk is due to start.

General Rules & Guidance

- o The club's insurance stipulates a maximum of 20 people, plus leader, on any walk but walk leaders are free to set a number less than that - and are likely to do so. If there are more than 8 walkers, a back marker should be appointed.
- o What to wear/bring
 - Footwear should be enclosed and designed for outdoor exercise - preferably walking/hiking. It should also be appropriate for the weather and terrain, which generally means a good grip from the sole and water-resistant or waterproof uppers. The British Nordic Walking Association recommend walking shoes rather than boots for greater flexibility, and specific Nordic walking shoes are now being sold. However, this is down to individual preference and many of us wear walking boots, especially in the winter
 - It is good practice to wear or carry layers, especially a thin waterproof top. Cotton tops and jeans are not recommended in cold weather for various reasons. Hats or headbands are recommended in cold weather, as are gloves that can fit inside the pole straps. More specific guidance about shoes and clothing is on our website.
 - It is expected that everyone will carry water on walks likely to be more than an hour and a half long, and having water or other drinks available is strongly advisable at all times in hot weather.
 - Participants must plan to cater for their own medical and health needs eg sunscreen, sunglasses, sunhat, medication, appropriate drinks & snacks (especially if diabetic), plasters if prone to blisters etc.

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- The Instructor will always carry a first aid kit but please note that other walk leaders may not do so when leading short, local, low level, loop walks of less than 4 miles on established footpaths not far from roads, habitation or members cars.
- Mobile phones are a good idea and having the What3Words app available is strongly recommended for emergency use as it pinpoints locations. It is expected that mobiles will generally be on silent during walks, meetings and social events, unless by arrangement with the walk leader in exceptional circumstances.

- o Warm-up routines and cool-down stretches are important, although a warm-up can be brief in warmer weather when it may just consist of a slower walking pace to start with. When the instructor is present she will lead these routines and in her absence participants will be encouraged to do their own simple warm-ups and cool-downs because walk leaders, without specific training, are not qualified or insured to lead these routines.
- o This group has a strictly no smoking and no vaping policy.
- o No dogs are allowed on the walks for safety reasons.
- o Participants are required to comply with UK legal driving alcohol limits for the walks, regardless of whether they are driving to or from the starting point
- o If anyone hurts themselves, or starts to feel unwell or in pain during the walk they are expected to inform the walk leader immediately and not carry on regardless.
- o It is expected that everyone will adhere to the Countryside Code especially regarding not leaving litter, leaving gates as you find them, keeping to footpaths and being respectful to livestock and crops.
- o In the event of anyone wanting to join the group of approved walk leaders, the instructor will provide a brief induction training. However, permission may be given, denied or withdrawn after discussion with another member of the leadership team or the club's insurer (they currently cover up to six volunteers). Refresher training or the issuing of updates will be provided by the instructor as necessary.
- o Any members wishing to improve their technique for the increased health and fitness benefits it provides, can ask the instructor to offer improver sessions. If the instructor is not in a position to do this she will signpost the member(s) elsewhere.

Safety Behaviour Regarding NW Poles

- o Participants should unclip at least one of their poles when using gates, and both poles when crossing roads (especially major roads), and must do so if there is any traffic in the vicinity while crossing.
- o Both poles should also be unclipped on all slippery, downhill slopes and whenever a fall seems more likely because of the terrain or conditions.
- o When using stiles participants must be unclipped and should not be carrying poles. They should carefully pass their poles through or over the stile before climbing over. It is good

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practice for each person who has gone over the stile to take and hold the poles of the person who is due to come over next.

- o Livestock, particularly cows and horses being ridden, can be 'spooked' by poles as they look like riding crops and cattle prods. Because of this, participants may be advised to unclip and carry their poles vertically and close to their body when passing near to livestock. This can be particularly important when passing horses on roads.
- o Everyone needs to be mindful of the length of their poles, the spike on the end and how poles may inadvertently fly up or out if the user does something such as checking their phone
- o It is important to keep a 2 metre distance from the person in front, especially when people are poling fast, or there is long undergrowth which can cause anyone's pole to get caught and stretched out behind them. Another danger of being too close is that if someone does slip/trip etc they may automatically grab hold of someone else or that person's pole – resulting in two falls or injuries rather than one.
- o Space between participants is also important during warm-ups and cool-downs.
- o When carrying poles the pointed end should be pointed forwards and/or down, never backwards.
- o Participants are responsible for checking their poles regularly (eg monthly). Collapsible/telescopic poles can work loose so that an end drops off or the rest telescopes down unexpectedly causing stumbling or falls.

General Safety Behaviour

- o The group will obey the Highway Code and walk facing oncoming traffic, in single file on busy roads. However, when approaching blind bends they will cross over and then cross back again once it is possible to see ahead again
- o Crossing major roads will ideally be done together to avoid confusion and 'late crossers' rushing, so participants are expected to wait for the group to be ready to cross together. However, participants are responsible for their own safety so need to make their own judgements about the size of any gap in the traffic, and whether to wait etc. After crossing a major road, railway line or stile etc, the group will wait for everyone to be ready before moving off again
- o Everyone will take responsibility to initiate or pass on any warnings 'down the line' of walkers such as 'car coming', 'slippery here', 'barbed wire on the left', 'dog mess on the path', 'low hanging branch', 'brambles' etc. It is important to remember that not everyone will see or hear hazards and may be distracted and unobservant while in conversation.
- o Dogs off the lead and runners or cyclists approaching from the rear are particular hazards that should also be highlighted and passed on. Participants should move out of the way as soon as it is safe to do so, being mindful of any hazards near to the path.

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- o In poor light participants may need to consider their visibility – lighter coloured clothes, reflective patches or high vis straps etc are recommended.

N.B. In the instructor's absence walk leaders are required to inform her of the full details of any accident because the group's Accident Book must be used and kept up to date. A form will be supplied for this purpose.

Covid

- o Anyone booked on a walk must:
 - Cancel/change their RVSP if they start to feel unwell or develop any COVID / FLU-like symptoms.
 - Follow all government guidelines on social contact and physical distancing etc
 - Inform the walk leader if they develop symptoms within 48 to 72 hours after the walk so that everyone who attended can be advised.

This document of Rules and Guidance was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of Nordic Walking in the Chalfonts on 8th November 2022 and amended in the light of changes to the Constitution that were agreed at the 3rd AGM on 24th October 2024.

Name of Leadership Team member signing:.....

Signed:

Date:

Name of Leadership Team member signing:.....

Signed:

Date:

