North Downs Way



Ambassadors' Toolkit



A guide to leading walks on the North Downs Way National Trail







Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	WHAT MAKES A GOOD WALK	4
2.	.1. Features of a good walk	4
2.	.2. The best way to lead a good walk	4
3.	NUTS AND BOLTS (THE BITS YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW)	7
3.	.1. Risk assessments	7
3.	.2. First Aid	8
3.	.3. Insurance	8
3.	.4. Booking ahead	9
3.	.5. Photographs	9
4.	PROMOTION	10
4.	.1. Promotion and booking in one	10
4.	.2. Promotional website links	10
4.	.3. Social Media	11
4.	.4. It's not all digital you know	11
5.	USEFUL TOOLS FOR LEADING A GOOD WALK	12
5.	.1. Health conditions	12
5.	.2. Managing people	12
5.	.3. Reporting faults and damage on the North Downs Way	13
5	4 Other Useful Things	14

1. Introduction

North Downs Way Ambassadors are people who are dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of the North Downs Way National Trail. They lead walks on a wide range of subjects and provide different ways for people to enjoy the trail in a safe and interesting way.

Although ambassadors for the North Downs Way National Trail, we want you to have as much freedom as possible to interpret and celebrate the landscape, history, nature or whatever it is you are interested in. This toolkit will provide ideas and guidance to help you in your role as an ambassador but we will try and go easy on the telling you what to do bit!

This toolkit will provide information on how to promote your walk, what makes a good walk as well as health and safety and what you can do to make your walks as enjoyable as possible.

This document is designed to North Downs Way Ambassadors to lead walks safely and effectively. It is not the definitive guide to walk leading, simply an attempt to provide useful information. If you have any comments or would like to suggest or contribute additional material for the toolkit please contact Peter Morris at:

T: 01303 815170

E: peter.morris@kentdowns.org.uk

2. What makes a good walk

There is no one correct way to lead a guided walk. Different leaders have different styles which will suit different walkers. Some may focus on the wildlife, the plants or even some quite specialised element of natural history whereas others may concentrate on the built or military heritage of the trail or the spiritual and religious function that the North Downs Way plays. Essentially, the wider the range of walks that are delivered by North Downs Way Ambassadors the better as it provides more and varied ways for people to enjoy the trail.

Equally, different leaders have different styles of delivery. Some are effervescent, outgoing and lively, where others are more measured and circumspect. These kinds of delivery can be equally effective and walk leaders should always try and deliver in their natural style (even if maybe a little more upbeat) rather than force something that does not feel comfortable.

2.1. Features of a good walk

However, a good walk may often contain some or all of these features:

- Good views
- May contain dogs but only those that are under control
- Clear paths
- A back marker for larger walks
- Additional information other than just the route of the walk
- Accurate expectations (keeping to times)
- Good leader knowledge
- Good stops (to allow food and drink to be purchased)
- The right number of people for the walk type and the number of leaders
- Avoiding busy roads if possible
- Exposes people to something new or different
- Well planned with a trial run walk before the day to check the route

2.2. The best way to lead a good walk

Training courses for North Downs Way Ambassadors have identified a number of things that will help you lead a good walk. This next session summarises these findings and is split into things to do before the walk and things to do on the day.

Before the walk - the planning process

The route

Assess the difficulty

- Do you have maps?
- What is the aim?
- Consider your audience
- Are there any features that may impact those with limited mobility (e.g. stiles and gates, mud)
- What is the length/should it be circular?
- Where is the start finish point? Is there enough parking? Can it be accessed by public transport?
- Do you need a destination? (garden/house etc.)

The people

- Are you targeting certain groups? do you need to modify walk for them?
- How many people do you think there will be on the walk? Do you need additional leaders or a back marker?
- How do you find out about medical conditions of walkers?
- How do you know people will come prepared?
- Do you want to allow dogs (remember, certain communities will be put off by dogs)
- Do you need a booking process to find out some of the above?

Weather

- Check the weather forecast
- Contact people if weather looks like it may impact the walk
- What is the season? Will your issues be mud, ice or dehydration?

Risk assessment

- As well as carrying out the risk assessment consider locations to go to if there
 is an incident
- Have a plan for if there is an incident
- Check for mobile phone coverage and alternatives if no coverage

Promotion

This section is so important it will have its own section later in the toolkit

Timing

- Consider how long the walk will take (your group and the number of stops will impact this). Leave additional time as walks often take longer than planned.
- Consider daylight hours
- If a coastal walk consider the tide

Equipment list

- Water
- Maps (other guidance device (GPS etc.)
- Waterproofs

- First aid kit
- Sturdy shoes
- Food

On the day

Before you set off

- Arrive early
- Assess the weather and consider if risk assessment needs to be updated
- Welcome individuals as they arrive if you have a list of walkers tick them off
- Check your equipment and the equipment of others
- Take a head count and ask people to let you know if they leave the walk en route
- Introduce yourself and what you are trying to achieve, who you are representing etc.
- Give a brief list of things people can expect including stopping points, timings, whether there are toilets on the route and some of the highlights of the walk
- Give a safety briefing don't go over the top but if your risk assessment tells you to warn participants about something make sure you do it
- Tell people to drink plenty of water and use sun screen if the sun is shining

On the walk

- Keep the group together this will mean going at the pace of the slowest walker
- Stop to talk and make sure the whole group is present to hear
- Be aware of the route and check on a map if necessary
- Cross roads as a group in a safe place where visibility is good
- Try to stay on schedule and keep lunch and drinks breaks on time
- Regularly take a head count to make sure you haven't lost anybody
- Be aware of potential hazards and warn walkers if necessary

After the walk

- Make sure everybody is back
- Thank people for attending
- Tell people about future events and how to find out about them
- Consider feedback forms (nobody likes filling them in but if they are simple they don't take long to fill in and they can be really useful. READ THEM
- Make sure everybody can get home and that nobody is left alone on site waiting for a lift

3. Nuts and bolts (the bits you really need to know)

North Downs Way Ambassadors are given third party public liability insurance cover provided by the <u>Surrey Hills Society</u>. As such, you are volunteers for the society and need to operate under their rules. In order to be covered by their insurance you need to:

- Complete a risk assessment and save this file as something like "Jennys Dover Walk"
- Send the risk assessment to the Surrey Hills Society at least seven days before
 the event and let them know the date, time and name of your walk. This
 information must be sent to Chris Howard at least 7 days before your walk:
 choward006@googlemail.com
- If something happens on your walk fill in an incident/accident report and send this to Chris.

Anything else mentioned in this section is purely optional and for information only.

3.1. Risk assessments

Risk assessments aren't just completed to satisfy insurance companies. They are an important part of making sure that we are doing everything we can to look after the people that we lead on walks. After all, nobody wants to see an accident and thinking about the possible hazards that are present on our walks is a part of keeping the people that we care about safe.

To make the process of completing a risk assessment easier, we have provided a template that covers most of the things that are likely to present a hazard on walks as well as space for you to be able to add things specific to your walk. The idea is that you have an easy to fill in risk assessment but that you have to think about the risks for each walk that you do.

You will have received an electronic copy of the risk assessment by e-mail. You can also find a copy of the form in appendix 1 at the end of this toolkit. It is designed in a form format so you just have to fill in the grey spaces on the form (or click on the squares to check them.

To fill in the risk assessment:

- Add the walk name, the leader name and the date of the walk at the top of the form
- The form lists a number of generic hazards that may be present on your walk. Read each one and if it is present on your walk check the square in

the present column. Read the controls (what you will do to help lessen the hazard) and you can add more of your own in the local comments column.

- Repeat this process for each of the generic hazards.
- If there are additional hazards on your walk, fill in the empty rows after the generic hazards. This might be a particularly steep slope, close proximity to cliff edge etc.

3.2. First Aid

You will need to consider that somebody may have an incident on one of your walks. This might me tripping and spraining an ankle or it could be something more serious. It is currently not a requirement for being covered by the insurance policy that NDW Ambassadors are first aid trained. However, we highly recommend that you attend a first aid course.

You can source your own First Aid kit. We recommend something like this – <u>click</u> <u>here</u>

You can find some more information about First Aid Training here: http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/first-aid-training.htm

Also, if enough people are interested in attending a one-day first aid course we will arrange one on behalf of NDW Ambassadors though there may be a small charge for this. If you are interested then please contact Peter Morris at peter.morris@kentdowns.org.uk

3.3. Insurance

The Surrey Hills Society (who all NDW Ambassadors are registered with), as a registered charity, provides adequate third party civil liability insurance cover for all trained walk leaders when they are leading walks. You are automatically covered by this insurance when you have completed the North Downs Way Ambassador training. This insurance covers you only in the event that a legal claim for damages is made against you alleging you were negligent on a walk. It is not personal accident or medical cover insurance. All accidents or other incidents that might result in a claim must be reported to Chris Howard at the Surrey Hills Society using an incident report form. So long as we all stick to the agreed procedures we are covered by the policy. You will be sent a copy of the Incident Report Form and a copy is available in appendix 2.

It is good practice that:

- Walk Leaders should be trained
- To have a first aider with you on the walk
- Registers should be completed for every walk
- All routes should be risk assessed
- Accurate records of risk management should be kept for the insurers
- Accident/incident report forms should be filled when appropriate
- There should be a ratio of at least 1 Walk Leader to 20 walkers on each walk.

A copy of the insurance documentation can be obtained from Peter Morris upon request.

3.4. Booking ahead

You are not obliged to ask people to book ahead and sometimes you may attract more people if there is no obligation to book. However, if you want to have a good idea of how many people are going to come, find out more about the people who are coming and make sure people bring the right clothing and are fully prepared then booking can be useful. There are a number of online booking companies who can also handle booking fees as well if you are looking for a method of automating the booking process. There is often no fee for this service if your events are free. More information on booking services can be found in section 4.

3.5. Photographs

Photos are an excellent way to records the day, show what we are up to and promote your walks. However, we do need to make sure people are happy for us to take photos.

It is always polite to ask people if they want their photograph taken before just snapping away. If anybody does not want to be in a photo they should never be forced into doing so.

For young people under consent we advise that you gain written consent from parents and have included a form in appendix 3.

You may find it easier NOT to take pictures of young people, or to take pictures from behind where faces are not visible

4. Promotion

Having decided to organise and lead a walk you will probably need to promote it unless you are delivering the walk to an existing group of walkers or as a one off to a specific interest group. This section is not designed to be the last word in promotion, rather a place where you can find some suggestions as well as some ideas of how we can help to promote your walk.

4.1. Promotion and booking in one

There are a number of events sites that offer a way to promote your walk (and give you a link you can share in other places), take bookings and often there is no charge if events are free. You can also use the booking process to find out more about your walkers and some also issues tickets and you can add joining instructions to this too. Eventbrite and Facebook are two of the most popular ways to create events. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/

SHS has booking system – also advertising – links to page, helps with insurance Bookings are free. Contact Chris Howard for more information about this. choward006@googlemail.com

4.2. Promotional website links

We can promote your walk on the North Downs Way's own website. Please feel free to add your events.

North Downs Way website

https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way - for news stories & updates https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way/add-data - add your event

The **Kent Downs AONB** website will also promote your events. Just send them the details and they will be posted onto this page:

https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/visit/events/

Contact Kate Hickey <u>Kate.Hickey@kentdowns.org.uk</u> or Peter Morris

Peter.Morris@kentdowns.org.uk – this also feeds Explore Kent

https://explorekent.org/events

The **Surrey Hills AONB** also has an events page that you can upload your walk to. https://www.surreyhills.org/submit-an-event

Visit Kent and **Visit Surrey** both have pages that you can submit events to: https://www.visitkent.co.uk/event-submissions/

https://www.visitsurrey.com/whats-on/submit-event

Locally there may well be other options to promote events through, parish, district and interest group websites.

4.3. Social Media

The range and breadth of social media is almost immeasurable currently and is ever changing. However, the following Facebook pages and Twitter handles can be used and will promote your event whenever they are able to.

Twitter

- @NorthDownsWay
- @ExploreKent
- @KentDownsAONB
- @SurreyHillsAONB
- @ExploreSurreyUK

Facebook

Ambassadors have their own Facebook group:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/NDWAmbassadors/?ref=gs&fref=gs&dti=28680 2175310776&hc_location=group

Other trail related groups include:

https://www.facebook.com/NorthDownsWayNationalTrail/

https://www.facebook.com/KentDownsAONB/

https://www.facebook.com/SurreyHillsAONB/

Instagram

northdownsway_nt

4.4. It's not all digital you know

If spending all of your time on a computer or smart phone isn't appealing don't forget about the more traditional means of spreading the word. Newspapers, Parish magazines, clubs and societies may all promote your event. Word of mouth will be particularly effective if your walks are regular.

5. Useful tools for leading a good walk

5.1. Health conditions

Walking has many well documented benefits for health. However, your walks will attract a wide range of people and there are certain health conditions that you should be aware of. For people with particular medical conditions, it is important that you are aware of some basic facts. This guidance gives you some basic information to help you cater for everyone's needs on a walk.

- Diabetes All walkers should be encouraged to wear comfortable shoes. For diabetics this can be very important as some diabetics have poor circulation. It is also a good idea for diabetics to carry a sugary drink with them in case they suffer low blood sugar levels. This can be indicated by symptoms such as tremors, blurred vision, and confusion.
- Overweight It may be necessary to reduce the pace of walks in hot weather.
- Asthma Asthmatics should carry their inhaler with them if necessary.
- Arthritis People with osteoarthritis should walk at a pace that does not increase their pain.
- High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Moderate intensity activity is to be encouraged.
- Angina Walkers with angina should start exercising gently. If they use a GTN spray or tablets, they should carry this with them, and use it as they have been advised. They should follow their GP's advice on taking exercise. Walking in cold or windy weather affects angina sufferers and they may want to opt out or 'wrap up' well.
- Heart Attack Exercising after a heart attack can bring benefits but must be carefully managed. People who have had heart attacks are usually advised to first attend exercise programmes which are supervised by specialist staff.

N.B. You should always ask people if they have a medical condition that you should be made aware of. This can either be done during your introduction talk at the beginning of the walk or as part of the booking process.

5.2. Managing people

You will find that your walking group is made up of people with varying abilities in terms of pace and fitness. Ideally you want all walkers to find their own brisk pace. This will mean that the group is likely to get stretched out along the route.

Sometimes you may find that with a large mixed-ability group you will need to enlist the help of extra Walk Leaders.

Consider splitting the group into different abilities if you have enough leaders. You can both start from the same point, but the slower group may choose a shorter route or take a short-cut.

Allowing the group to spread out will ensure that everyone walks at their own optimum pace. Forcing the group to 'walk together' will mean that only a small number will benefit.

5.3. Reporting faults and damage on the North Downs Way

You may discover a problem whilst on your walk. Please make a note of any issues & faults so we can fix them.

Damage and fault reporting

When you find a fault we need some basic info:

- Picture
- Brief description of issue
- Grid ref and/ or location description

If the fault is in Kent report this information through the KCC online portal https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccesscams/standardmap.aspx You will have to create a profile to track issues

If the fault is in Surry report this information through the SCC online portal https://rightsofway.surreycc.gov.uk/

Fly tipping

Country Eye App (fly tipping) – android and apple stores https://countryeye.co.uk/

Alternatively

North Downs Way Report a fault – use sparingly as this means I have to transfer the data to the local authority sites mentioned above

https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way/report-a-problem

For suggestions/ general feedback about the North Downs Way – Peter.Morris@kentdowns.org.uk

5.4. Other useful things

To easily find **grid references** use Grid Reference Finder https://gridreferencefinder.com/

OS mapping - £20/ year for all OS maps- plan routes, track routes https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk – desktop & app for smart phones and tablets- one account across many devices

Magic Map https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx-SSSI's/AONB's/ is a useful government run mapping system giving digital geographical information

Explore Kent https://explorekent.org/ is also a useful resource for routes, maps etc

Kent Landscape Information System is very good for additional information, designations, historical information including all public rights of way. http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KLIS.Web.Sites.Public/ViewMap.aspx

Kent Historic Environment Record gives access to historical and archaeological records in Kent:

 $\underline{\text{https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.asp}}\underline{\textbf{x}}$

Exploring Surrey's Past gives limited access to parts of Surrey's Historic Environment Record https://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/

North Downs Way Ambassadors Risk Assessment

For the safety of all of the people on your walk, it is important that you should complete a risk assessment for each event you lead. It is hoped that this form will make the process as easy as possible. Simply tick the boxes that apply and fill in any extra information as you see fit. There is also extra space to add additional hazards specific to your walk.

Walk name: Leader: Date:

HAZARD	RISK	WHO	PRESENT	CONTROL	LOCAL COMMENTS
Slips, trips and	Cuts, bruises,	All		Wear sturdy shoes. Take care	
falls	broken limbs			when crossing rough ground	
Environment	Sunburn,	All		Avoid walks in extreme	
	hypothermia,			temperatures. Take suitable	
	exhaustion			clothing. Advise participants to	
				bring water	
Wildlife (bites,	Sickness,	All		Warn participants about	
stings,	anaphylactic			potential bites and stings and	
poisonous	reaction etc.			not to eat plants unless they	
plants)				are certain what it is.	
Roads and	Collisions with	All		Cross roads as a group in a	
other traffic	traffic			safe place. Warn participants	
(including illegal				of the possibility of off-road	
use of				vehicles using the route.	
footpaths)					
Human factors	Assault	All		Avoid confrontation if possible.	
				Carry mobile phone. Leave	
				nobody isolated	

	Isolated walker	Getting lost,	All	Leave no walker isolated. Use	
		vulnerable to		a back marker if numbers are	
		attack/accident		high	
	Livestock and	Bites, collisions and	All	Beware of livestock, avoid if	
	other animals	other attacks		necessary	
	Unsuitable	Increased risk of	All	Inform all participants to wear	
	clothing and	slips and trips as		sturdy footwear and bring	
	footwear	well as heat		enough clothes for changeable	
		stroke/hypothermia		conditions	
	Vulnerable	Potentially less	All	Consider smaller groups or	
	participants	aware of risks than		accompanied walkers only.	
	(e.g. young	other groups		Use less risk routes.	
	people, adults				
	with learning				
	difficulties)				
	LOCAL HAZARDS	SPECIFIC TO YOUR WA	LK		
,					

Appendix 2: Accident/incident form



This form should be completed by the walk leader of the Surrey Hills Society as soon as possible after an accident or incident. Please complete the whole of the form and attach any relevant witness statements or documents. This is not an insurance claim form – it is purely for notification. Receipt will be acknowledged, and an expenses form will be issued if any costs have been incurred. Please keep a copy for your records and return the original to the address overleaf.

Injured person Name	
If the injured person is not a Surrey Hills Society me	ember, please provide their details below.
Address	
Phone Number: En	nail Address:
Next of kin	
Name	
Relationship to injured person	
Contact details	
Walk Leader's Name	
Accident details	
Date and time of accident/incident	
Event	
Details of Event	

Has a risk assessment been completed prior to t	he activity taking place?	Yes/ No				
Size of group Number	of Leaders supervising					
Was this a joint activity with another organisation	on?					
Description of accident/incident						
Please give a full description of the accident or i	ncident, including the cause.					
Type of injury						
Treatment given (first aid, hospital etc)						
Address of hospital or doctor if applicable						
Signature of Leader						
I understand and give explicit consent that the i	nformation I provide about myself	and others				
named in this Notification, including any sensitiv	ve information such as health reco	rds, will be				
retained securely and will be shared with SHS in	surers.					
Signature	Date					
Please send the completed form to:						
Surrey Hills Society, Warren Farm Barns, Headley Lane, Mickleham, Dorking Surrey RH5						

6DG. Phone: 01372 220 647 or 07530 949302

Appendix 3: Photo consent form

Consent form for photographs (Children 16 and under)

То	Name of parer Address:							
				Post code:				
Nam	ne(s) of child(ren)	, , ,						
acco		y National Trail v	would like to take e photographs m	e photographs of you and nay be issued to the med these.	the ch	ild(rei	n)	d
	ore taking any pho 3 below, then sig			eed your permission. Ple ted.	ease an	swer	questions 1	, 2
				ŀ	Please o	circle		
1.		ur child's photogr roduced by North	raph in printed h Downs Way Na	ational Trail?	Yes	1	No	
2.	May we use you	ır child's photogr	raph on our intra	net or Internet web site?	Yes	1	No	
3.	May we issue p	hotographs of yo	our child to the m	edia?	Yes	1	No	
Plea appl		sites can be vi	iewed throughou	it the world and not just	in Brita	ain wh	here British	av
	form is valid foograph(s) are to l			signing. Renewed cor	nsent w	ill be	e sought if	the
Sign	ature:			Date:		_		
Date	e / Time and Loca	tion of photo:						