

# Factsheet 2

## Get Organised



# Why do I need to get organised?



# Management and administration – getting the right structures in place

As groups become larger they recognise the need to establish a more formal structure and to ask people to take on specific roles and responsibilities. This usually involves the formality of setting up a 'club' or organisational structure with a constitution.

## Benefits of a formal, constituted structure

- **Continuity** – the group is not dependent upon one or two individuals to exist. It has an identity of its own
- **Capacity** – more people are involved in decision making and running of the group, bringing with them time, skills and experience. Clear roles and responsibilities encourage members to share the workload and to make the group successful
- **Structure** – a constitution and a set of rules provide a framework within which the group runs, and its members know what they can expect and what is expected of them
- **Development potential** – with the security of a long term structure, the group can plan for the future
- **Status** – the local community, potential members and potential supporters recognise the group as being well organised and accountable. A properly constituted group can open a bank account, apply for development funding and support from local and national organisations and undertake a wider range of fundraising activities.

- Moving from an informal, unstructured group to something more formal
- Expanding from a small to a larger group
- Forward planning – building the foundations for the long term future of your group
- Looking for support from external agencies
- Developing a pool of walk leaders to broaden the range of activities on offer
- Getting the right paperwork and processes in place

This factsheet looks at two aspects of getting organised:

- Management and administration – getting the right structures in place
- Organising and enjoying walks – the practical side of getting organised



# So what's involved?



All these benefits bring with them some responsibilities, and any group considering setting up as a formally constituted group should consider

- ✘ Their commitment to the long-term future of the group, its development potential and the 'business' reasons for taking this step
- ✘ Their willingness to take on individual roles and responsibilities and the increased time commitment, certainly in the early stages
- ✘ The capacity of the group – to run things effectively for at least two years from within the existing membership
- ✘ The changes that the formal structure will have on the 'feel' of the current group – and the way in which it operates
- ✘ Accountability to the membership – involving financial accountability, management accountability, record keeping, annual general meetings, minutes, reports etc
- ✘ The consequences of having to 'wind down' the formal group if it doesn't succeed.

1. Make it everyone's decision – hold a general meeting to discuss the pro's and con's and make sure that everyone understands what's involved and the differences this will make to them. It's important to have the support of a large majority of the members.
2. As part of that meeting, agree a very clear purpose and aims for your group – what it sets out to do; the values to which it will work – for example – *To encourage all members of the local community to enjoy walking for health and well being in a safe, friendly environment, regardless of their age or ability*
3. Plan and prepare – make a list of all the things you need to do, with a realistic and flexible timescale for each. Set up a small group or committee to work through the process.
4. Keep things as simple as possible and take advice at each step of the process. Your constitution and committee structure should be designed around the main purpose of your group – it's unlikely that you need anything very complicated. Make sure that your committee has enough, but not too many people with the right skills and responsibilities that reflect the activities of the group.
5. Consult your members at key points along the way. Don't leave it to the first formal general meeting to find out that they are concerned about the constitution and don't like the committee structure!
6. Use your local council for voluntary action, they have a good deal of experience in helping groups like you become formally constituted. They may be able to put you in touch with a local group that has recently gone through this process.



# Organising and enjoying walks



## What records should you keep?

It is good practice to keep some records about the walk and the walkers. You may wish to keep some or all of the following:

### ✎ A walker's registration form

Designed to record contact details of new participants. You will be able to see if the people you are attracting are the same as those you are targeting.

### ✎ A health questionnaire\*

To help gauge the walkers level of health to see if they are suitable to come on your walks.

### ✎ An accident report form\*

To record the details of any accidents or incidents whilst out walking.

### ✎ A risk assessment form\*

For the walk; walks should adhere to those which are risk assessed only.

### ✎ A walk register\*

Listing the names of people who have attended the walk. This will help you to identify those who attend regularly, and those who may have missed a few walks and may appreciate a follow up phone call.

The forms indicated with \* are often mandatory for insurance purposes (dependent on the type of cover). You will need to find out what your insurer requires.

Do remember that any personal information that you keep about individuals must be treated as confidential and adhere to the Data Protection Act (1998). For further information about this, contact your local council for voluntary action, or refer to [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

# Using walk leaders & taking responsibility for walkers?

**Trained walk leaders can enhance the enjoyment of a walk and ensure they are delivered safely. They are trained to:**

- ✎ Plan walks that meet the needs and capabilities of the people in their groups
- ✎ Give advice on practical issues such as the clothing and footwear that is suitable for the walk
- ✎ Conduct risk assessment and recognise potential hazards on a walk
- ✎ Provide advice and motivation to walkers about taking up walking as a regular and long term activity
- ✎ Make the walk fun, making sure that everyone knows someone else in the group, motivating the group if necessary; keeping an eye on everyone to make sure they are alright.

Qualified walk leaders are able to take responsibility for others, under certain conditions. This is particularly helpful for people new to walking, who may not have the confidence to walk without support and guidance. Trained walk leaders will be able to plan structured walks that offer just the right amount of brisk walking to benefit the health of participants.



## Things to consider

- ✎ Record keeping
- ✎ Using walk leaders
- ✎ Taking responsibility for walkers
- ✎ Leading walks of different grades, for different levels of ability/fitness

# Recruiting new walk leaders



**A well established walking group should look at developing their pool of volunteer walk leaders so that:**

- ✎ More walks can be offered
- ✎ You avoid relying on the same leaders week in, week out
- ✎ New faces bring new personalities and could provide motivation for walkers

**Make sure you recruit the right 'type' of volunteer to lead your walks. They should:**

- ✎ Be a good motivator
- ✎ Have time to commit to leading walks
- ✎ Have been a regular walker with the group to have a good understanding of the role of a walk leader

# Leading walks of different grades

Make sure that your leaders are appropriately qualified for the type of walks that you offer or are looking at developing. You could have a pool of leaders who are trained at different levels to incorporate a range of walking activities, including:

- ✎ Easy health walks in parks or around town
- ✎ Harder progression walks on hills or in the countryside
- ✎ Themed walks – nature, history, people and places, waterside.

For more information about developing your walks, [see Factsheet 4](#)

For more information on walk leader training, [see Factsheet 5](#).



## For further information, contact:

- ✎ Sports Council for Wales – Running Sport programme – booklets, distance learning materials, and taught courses.

[www.sports-council-wales.org.uk/runningsport](http://www.sports-council-wales.org.uk/runningsport)

- ✎ Local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) sometimes called the Local Council for Voluntary Action (CVA) Search for local contacts

- ✎ Data Protection Registrar

[www.gov.im/odps](http://www.gov.im/odps)

# Notes

