

# Factsheet 3

## Share the Workload



# Why do you need to share the workload?



- To keep the group organised and up to date
- To utilise skills within the group
- To keep the volunteers motivated

## Don't forget to...

- Support people whilst they get started with a task or a new role
- To say thanks, so that volunteers feel that their work is recognised and valued

**In a small, informal group**, it's likely that these things will happen naturally. You may take it in turns to:

- Phone around and make arrangements for next week's walk
- Meet at one another's houses as the starting point for the walk
- Organise and provide the refreshments
- Choose a route to walk or a theme for a walk

Because you know one another well, you'll know who is creative and likes researching new walks; who is good at motivating the others on a cold winter's day; who will give attention to detail – make sure that all contact details are kept up to date, and make a note of when people are going away.

**A larger group** might need a bit more organisation and planning to ensure that the workload is shared amongst the members. It may seem an easier option to do everything yourself but in the long term the benefits of involving other members of the group can pay dividends. You will see a greater commitment from members who will gain a sense of

ownership and responsibility, and you will have the knowledge that the group can function without depending just on one person.

**Start by making a list of all the jobs that need to be done (there is an example task list at the end of this factsheet).**

- ***Which are the most time consuming?***  
Can these be broken down into smaller parts, or shared by two or more people? For example, keeping in touch with everyone, phoning around to change meeting places, cancel if the weather is poor. People prefer to feel that they could do more, than being overburdened by a task that is too onerous and time consuming.
- ***Which tasks need special skills or knowledge?*** For example, researching walks, checking the walks to make sure they are suitable for all group members, finding suitable parking areas.
- ***Which tasks benefit from access to information technology?*** For example, keeping records of members and participation on spreadsheets.
- ***Which tasks need local knowledge?*** For example, to develop local history walks.
- ***Which tasks require design skills?*** For example, to create posters and flyers or to develop a club identity with a logo.
- ***Which tasks need good communication skills?*** For example, writing an article for the local paper, appearing on local radio, and going to speak to other groups.

# How to make a difference...



## ↘ **Get to know individuals within the group.**

What are their other interests? What do/did they do as a job? What skills do they think they have? How much time do they have, and when?

↘ **People like to be asked** – especially if you can link your request to a particular skill or interest that they have told you about. It helps if you can explain exactly what's involved, how much time is likely to be needed and when. Try to match tasks to individuals. People are more likely to take on things with which they feel confident. Reassure them that there will be help if required.

↘ **Volunteers will remain motivated** if they know that the tasks they are undertaking are necessary, valued and make a difference to the group. Use their time effectively. Honest and timely feedback is important, so that volunteers know that they are doing the job well, or how to improve if necessary.

## ↘ **It's a good idea to ring the changes**

**occasionally**, so that volunteers don't stagnate in a particular role, or become too possessive about that role. Suggest rotating tasks or bringing in new volunteers to work alongside an experienced group member for a while, before taking over the task.

## ↘ **Saying thank you is everybody's responsibility**

– but it needs to be timely, focused and sincere. For example, thanks to Susan for organising such an interesting route for our walk this week; thanks to Brenda for phoning around everyone yesterday evening with the change of meeting time; thanks to Steve for his ongoing work behind the scenes writing the monthly newsletter – we all know how difficult it is to keep coming up with new ideas.

## ↘ **Some other 'thank you' ideas:**

- a small collection at the beginning of every walk to go towards the costs of an annual evening out, or pub lunch whilst out for a walk to say thank you for everybody's hard work
- get the date of everybody's birthdays
- send a card with a thank you message from the group



All of these ideas can apply to a formally constituted group – the main difference being that volunteers at this level will probably be elected into positions, such as those on the task list below.

- They should have clear role descriptions and a term of office during which they will carry out that role.
- Groups of this size and structure should consider making someone responsible for coordinating volunteers – possibly the vice Chairperson, who takes the main responsibility for recruiting, training, supporting, recognising and valuing all the voluntary work that keeps the walking group operating effectively.



- A buddy system – one person shadowing another to learn the role helps to ensure a smooth transition when a term of office comes to an end.
- Small teams of volunteers can offer an effective way of sharing a heavy workload. Taking responsibility for an aspect of the walking group will develop an individual's skills and confidence.





Task	What's involved	Any special skills required?
<b>Membership secretary</b>	Keeping membership records up to date. Keeping in touch with everyone to let them know what's going on.	Accurate record keeping and time to keep in touch with members. Computer skills would be beneficial for large membership records.
<b>Maintaining walk records</b>	Register, registration forms, health screening questionnaire.	Well organised, good record keeping and the ability to keep information confidential, if required.
<b>Publicity and promotion</b>	Writing newsletters, newspaper articles, design of posters, flyers, speaking to interested groups.	Effective communicator, good writing skills, confident and able to speak to groups, present information clearly. Design skills, creative.
<b>Treasurer</b>	Collecting fees, paying bills, involved in applications for funding, keeping good financial records.	Accurate financial record keeping. Budgeting and accounting for income and expenditure.
<b>Walk leaders</b>	Researching walks, planning routes, risk assessments, managing the group whilst walking, suggesting new or themed walks, keeping walks interesting. Supporting walkers through progressively challenging walks.	Good interpersonal skills, confident, motivator, and ideally, trained as a walk leader.
<b>Social secretary</b>	Organising social gatherings, (even if only for a cup of tea) at the beginning or end of walks, or in addition to walking activities.	Well organised, motivator, outgoing personality. Creative.
<b>Fundraisers</b>	Running fund raising activities – from a simple raffle to a major event helps to raise funds for the running costs of the group.	Outgoing personalities. Well organised, persuasive.
<b>Committee members</b>	Taking responsibility for managing and organising the walking group. Planning for the future.	Willing to take responsibility, good communication skills, commitment and interest in the future of the group.
<b>Chairperson</b>	Leading the committee. Making sure that the group is well managed and democratically run. Longer term planning to ensure that the group is sustainable.	Leadership, management and planning skills. Fair, approachable, strong interpersonal skills. Enthusiasm and patience.
<b>Vice Chairperson</b>	Supporting the chair person and substituting for them in their absence. Mentoring, supporting and retaining the volunteer work force.	Strong interpersonal skills. A genuine interest in helping other people to succeed in and enjoy their voluntary roles.

# Notes

**For further information about recruiting, retaining, recognising and rewarding volunteers, visit:**

- Sports Council for Wales  
[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](#)