



## Covid-19 The Way Ahead

Bore da pawb. Gobeithio fod popeth yn iawn hefo chi.

It's still is a very trying time for us all despite the reducing cases. The Welsh government are determined to see the end of this saga, their way, regardless of what England do. We may not all agree with their approach but given the social and wealth issues in Wales I, for one agree with their approach. During the lockdown I have taken another step towards my 80th birthday and I fully intend to get there.

Whilst I endorse the views expressed by Joanna about restarting group walks it is not appropriate or even legal to encourage "small (4/5)" group walks until we get permission.

Currently the rules state - groups from not more than two households can meet outside - locally

- essential journeys of not more than five miles by car, rural homes can stretch that.
- be mindful of the police interpretation of "essential".
- social distancing is still two meters.
- do not ignore the farming communities, they do not welcome walkers that may take the virus on to their property. One farmer sadly died because of that.
- public toilets are currently closed and you are advised not to visit households to use their bathrooms.

The five mile rule may be with us until the autumn, group activities may be slackened during July/ August, and the arguments re social distancing will continue. The wearing of face masks may become compulsory and hand washing and strict hygiene rule will be part of normal life for some time.

I will try and join the Zoom call at Area level on 3 July, Simon will also be there. But in the meantime my advice is to stay very local, walk in pairs, not groups, social distance, meet outdoors, observe hygiene rules and be mindful of how the police interpret travel rules. As your Chairman I cannot endorse any meetings of groups, even informal walks in pairs etc will NOT be covered by insurance, whatever arrangements any of you make for walks has to be your business and nothing to do with Ramblers.

The challenge for the Welsh government and local communities is how do we all deal with the influx of visitors once they get the green light. Tourism has suffered as well as the local economy.

My lockdown has been here in Borth y Gest with Maxine, blessed by good weather and surrounded by spectacular scenery when local walks and cycle rides starting and finishing from B y G has kept us safe. Warm regards to you all, stay safe, and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Dafydd

### Restarting group walking in North Wales- discussion paper for Ramblers Area

'Restrictions are starting to ease, but it's clear that COVID-19 has not gone away'. We need to follow Ramblers and Welsh Government advice and 'resume activities in a phased way which is safe and responsible'. **All group walks and group activities remain suspended until further notice.**

Welsh Government latest advice: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Ramblers latest guidance:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/coronavirus/volunteering>.

Ramblers don't recommend planning a 3 or 6 month walk programme at this time, but ask us to "please:

- *Stay in touch with the walk leaders in your group. (Remember that COVID-19 has affected everyone in different ways - and there is no pressure for anyone to volunteer at this time.)*
- *Start to think about the different types of walks that your group might organise.*
- *Recce local walks for the future..."*

We are all keen to see group walks restart as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. Discussing this with Ramblers staff and members from other Areas and reading the latest advice has highlighted some of the challenges this will present and we need to give some practical guidance for our groups and walk leaders.

**Below are some suggestions and a timeline for us to discuss them.** We may need to change them to match future guidance.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July: Area discussion on these proposals via zoom.

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July: Inform groups and walk leaders of the possible changes that will be needed (with the link for Ramblers updates).

Groups and walk leaders can then (If they wish) start to try to come up with walks that are likely to work / adapt to the changed situation. They will need to be prepared to modify them as needed.

End of July: publish and post a newsletter to all members (groups can include a newsletter if they wish). This will advise members to look online once walks have been announced as restarting and to contact their group if they are unable to do that so that the group can print a list for them when walks restart. Also the newsletter will include provisional arrangements for Group and Area AGM's but stress the need to confirm the details before attending.

#### **What will we need to do?**

It is impossible to be sure when and with what government set conditions group walks will restart. Walks will be able to restart sooner if we adapt the way they are planned and run. Rambler advice states "This might include: introducing a booking system for walks, leading different types of walks, and implementing hygiene and physical distancing measures." Once a vaccination programme has taken place things should be simpler.

**It is very important that leaders feel free to temporarily withdraw from leading** whether due to health issues, age, what they feel comfortable with or because they prefer to wait until the extra issues/ responsibilities have gone.

**Smaller numbers** will be needed for social distancing. This may mean pre-booking will be needed. Walk leaders may want to run the same walk twice to allow more people the opportunity to join in that walk. Groups could consider a number of leaders meeting at the same point with the number of walks determined by the number of participants. Any other ideas?

#### **Revised routes:**

- Walks will be easier to manage as socially distanced if we choose routes with less stiles and wider paths.
- Car sharing and public transport may need to be avoided. Walks may need to start from large car parks or towns. Starting from a town also means some people should be able to walk to the start. Circular routes or there and back routes avoid public transport or car sharing.
- Leaders may want to consider shorter routes. Less / no stops would reduce hygiene issues
- We may want to avoid busy locations and 'honeypots'

- Think about facilities such as car parks and toilets, which may be closed for some time
- Staying local may make some of these easier

**Advice** Walk leaders may need to give advice to participants on things like social distancing, face covering, hand sanitizing? the best way to use stiles?

**As stated above it is very important that leaders feel free to temporarily withdraw from leading and that walks are planned to ease social distancing.** I suggest all currently planned walks should therefore be withdrawn and leaders be asked if they want to resubmit walks, modified if needed or submit new walks or wait until we can walk more freely. I apologise to everyone who has put work into the existing list but I can't see an alternative.

Please consider creating a Ramblers Route from your planned walk and ones you have done in lockdown. Find out more about [Ramblers Routes](#)

Joanna Slattery (Area Secretary)

## Re-starting Walks

Eryri Committee and Area members are discussing how to restart walks once the Government and Ramblers HQ give the go-ahead. From a current report on the BBC about Snowdonia, it may not be until the Autumn.

The plan is to publish walks on-line as the 2020 walks programme booklet will not be issued.

When the Government announce guidelines for us to safely meet, I think the personal priority will be to visit family and friends and to take a holiday in the weeks that are left of 2020.

We lost so many good walks last year due to a run of poor weekends so we propose as an experiment, to scrap a fixed programme and leave it to walk leaders to publish a walk 3 or 4 days beforehand dependent upon the weather.

If the forecast is OK and a leader has a good walk in mind, they publish details on Eryri Facebook (members who are not on-line should team up with an on line "buddy" for support).

As the number of Saturdays will be reduced, we would permit one "C" or "D" walk (hooray for Rachel!) as well as one "A" or "B" walk.

A proviso is that Ramblers HQ must accept that if a walk is on our Facebook page, it is covered by insurance and walks should require on-line pre-registration so the walk leader can limit numbers, these items are to be resolved at an Area Zoom meeting on 03 July.

This way we should end the year with some great walks on fine days for everyone's benefit.

Keep Safe Roy Walks Secretary