

Walk Leader Training - Risk to HQ Managers email 22 June 2025 and response 24 June 2025

From "Walker" <walkeryriramblers@gmail.com>
To Heather.Thompson@ramblers.org.uk
Date 22/06/2025 10:38:26
Subject Walk Leader Training - risk to HQ Managers

Hello Heather,

Thank you for the Walk Leader Training email 17 June 2025. It is good that The Ramblers are creating a database to record skills to ensure members are led by competent leaders. The video Preventing and Managing Incidents is excellent, and the new version of the Walk Leader Foundation video whilst too long-winded, is an improvement on the original simplistic one. It's still a pity that it shows old people walking on tarmac in a park- an image I thought The Rambler were trying to shake off.

It must have been disappointing that most leaders have disregarded the 2024 Walk Leaders Handbook after the vast sums of money HQ has spent on walk safety consultants. As an ex-consultant myself (Energy) I can recognise bumpf and padding to justify fees and obviously so can our walk leaders! The important elements of the guidance could have been condensed to 3 pages not 33 -which might have had wider acceptance.

Many of our groups are suffering from a desperate lack of leaders (No leaders = No walks = Less members). Our Eryri group is prospering because our prime focus is to look after and support our leaders making it as easy as possible to putting on and lead a walk. Leaders are not pestered with admin or phone calls or having to take a register, our simple booking system deals with it. HQ need to bear this in mind when introducing new requirements for leaders, I know of several who have been discouraged by too much bumpf.

You state: *"It's also essential to protect us all - individual walk leaders and Ramblers as a charity - if anything were to go wrong on a group walk"*

With respect your consultant has abjectly failed to protect all you managers at HQ:
It is unsafe for HQ Managers to continue to permit uncontrolled numbers of perhaps unknown people on group walks, they are putting leaders and members at risk. The Handbook refers in several places to booking in advance and knowing who is coming on your walk.
However, The Ramblers have failed to provide a booking system (Eventbrite is no use as it only recognises known buildings).
In the event of a mishap, the leader and all managers in the chain right up to Ross Maloney the Ramblers CEO could be prosecuted. Why not ditch the unloved unwanted App and also the clunky Walks Manager to spend the money on a proper easy to use proprietary walks booking system?

In your consultant's guidance, ratios of leaders to walkers are suggested but as HQ continue to advertise open walks the ratios are meaningless (you cannot make an untrained, unregistered back marker legally responsible for increasing the numbers of a group). If you load the task of taking bookings onto the walk leader, some groups have over 1,000 members (North Wales has about 1350 members), with only 4 places allowed on Technical Tryfan or 10 places on a moderate walk, the leaders would be pestered continually.

May I suggest that you think hard about imposing changes which may reduce the number of walk leaders and actively consider methods to make a leader's life easier.

Kind Regards

Roy Milnes
Walks Secretary
Eryri Ramblers
FB [Eryri Ramblers](#)
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PS As earlier warnings to HQ managers have been ignored about the liability they carry due to permitting uncontrolled numbers on walks, this email is published on our website for legal reference.

----- Original Message -----

From "Walker" <walkeryriramblers@gmail.com>
To "Heather Thompson" <Heather.Thompson@ramblers.org.uk>
Date 27/06/2025 12:11:23
Subject Re[2]: Walk Leader Training - risk to HQ Managers

Dear Heather,

Thank you for your positive response, it is pleasing that HQ are aware of the issues, we look forward to further develops in the interest of safety for us all.

Cheerio

Roy Milnes

Walks Secretary

Eryri Ramblers

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----- Original Message -----

From "Heather Thompson" <Heather.Thompson@ramblers.org.uk>
To "Walker" <walkeryriramblers@gmail.com>
Date 24/06/2025 19:26:17
Subject Re: Walk Leader Training - risk to HQ Managers

Dear Roy,

Many thanks for your email and your commitment and time you give to the Ramblers.

I am sorry you don't feel, we as an organisation, are doing enough or possibly are doing too much, but we are doing our best to ensure our walk leaders have the support, resources and help they need to lead safe, enjoyable and inclusive walks.

We are a relatively small charity with a limited resource and recognise not all our systems and processes are perfect, but we are doing our best. We have plans in the future to look at the exact issues you refer to in your email - the app, walker registration, a booking system - the outcome of which I couldn't predict.

We are always keen to hear from groups what is working well, so we can share that expertise and knowledge with other groups; please do share those with us if you're able.

Thanks again for taking the time to email, and for all you do for your group.

Best wishes

Heather

Heather Thompson (she/her)
Programmes Manager - Walking Experience
The Ramblers

Email: heather.thompson@ramblers.org.uk