

Cardigan u3a  
Tuesday Walkers Group  
Risk Assessment (Issue 1.0, dated 03 April 2021)

1. Introduction

1.1 A condition for the resumption of Tuesday Walkers Group activities within Cardigan u3a is that a risk assessment be in place which demonstrates to the satisfaction of the committee that this activity can be safely undertaken by participating members in a safe and coronavirus secure way. By formally documenting the general procedures already followed by the group, and adding additional coronavirus secure procedures where necessary, this document aims to fulfil this task.

1.2 Although Cardigan u3a is operationally independent it is also a member of The Third Age Trust, which is the national umbrella body representing all the individual u3a branches in the UK. This trust exists to ensure individual members of u3a have access to support, guidance and advice to help run individual u3a branches, lead interest groups and connect with each other. The Third Age Trust Document Management System provides central documented advice to assist members with this task.

1.3 The document "Risk assessment for outdoor activities" (Reference: U3A-KMS-DOC-073) provides relevant guidance on organised group walks. This risk assessment follows the guidance there contained by encompassing three major component parts, namely: Group Leader's Risk Assessment, Walk Leader's Risk Assessment Checklist and Individual Member's Personal Assessment.

1.4 Walks undertaken by the group are of a similar nature and in the main repeated on a six-monthly or annual basis. Many are also frequently walked by group members independent of either the group or u3a. Consequently, the need to undertake weekly risk assessments for each walk is considered unnecessary as a generic assessment (this document), which by its nature and composition encompasses risks associated with all group walks, is appropriate to the task.

## 2. General Issues

### 2.1 Welfare

All participants who take part in Cardigan u3a Tuesday Walking Group activities walk at their own risk and are individually and collectively responsible for the welfare of both themselves and others. The responsibilities of the Group Leader and Walk Leader in such matters is to provide general management and guidance, and where necessary arbitration and binding instruction.

### 2.2 Medical Emergencies

The group is not required to have trained first aiders present. In the event of a serious incident the advice is to contact the emergency services immediately, by whatever means possible, even if there happens to be a member present who has appropriate medical training.

### 2.3 Insurance

Walks organised by Cardigan u3a automatically have public liability insurance cover, provided the walkers are u3a members. However, this is not a personal accident insurance and all participants should be aware that they walk at their own risk.

### 2.4 Health and Safety

For guidance on Health and Safety issues, walk participants should read the document "Health and Safety on u3a walks", which is available via the Cardigan u3a Tuesday Walkers webpage.

### 2.5 Walking with Dogs

Dogs are welcome on group walks provided they are well behaved, always under the effective control of their owner and participate in accordance with the requirements of the Tuesday Walkers Group policy document "Walking with dogs", which is available via the Cardigan u3a Tuesday Walkers webpage.

### 3. Group Leader's Risk Assessment

#### 3.1 Introduction

This assessment identifies the steps to be taken to ensure identified general risks are mitigated and the activity is managed in a coronavirus secure manner. It covers the procedures needed before, during and after the walk to ensure group walks are safe, welcoming and accessible to all. This information will be made available to group members to assist them in completing their own Individual Personal Assessment.

#### 3.2 General Risks

Throughout the year walks undertaken by the group vary in terms of duration, physical difficulty and prevailing weather conditions. They also encompass a wide variety of terrains, obstacles and underfoot surfaces, which include coastal and narrow paths with precipitous boundaries, overgrown and poorly maintained paths, trip hazards, obstructions (gates, stiles, fallen trees, road crossings, etc) and steep, slippery and muddy sections. Many walks are also undertaken in exposed and isolated locations with little to no ready access to public roads and amenities. Consequently, unforeseen difficulties which may be encountered on individual walks are numerous and on-the-day must be managed by participating group members accordingly. To mitigate associated risks it is the collective responsibility of all participants to act in a proactive manner whilst assuming individual responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of both themselves and others.

#### 3.3 Livestock

When walking through fields that contain livestock there are additional risks of both physical injury and damage to property should livestock escape. To mitigate these risks participants should follow the Country Code and leave gates and property as found. Fields should be crossed calmly and quietly whilst keeping the group together and avoiding any unnecessary separation of livestock. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to change the walk route. Dogs should be managed in accordance with the requirements of the group document "Walking with dogs".

#### 3.4 Coronavirus Risks

3.4.1 The following should be read in conjunction with the latest Welsh government coronavirus guidance, and in particular that relating to organised outdoor sport and physical activity events. Consideration should also be given to any local lockdown arrangements, which may take precedence over national arrangements. This information could change at short notice in response to ongoing developments and should therefore be actively reviewed on a regular basis.

3.4.2 In the absence of a recognised UK authority on matters associated with coronavirus and the conduct of organised group walks, the UK Ramblers' Association interpretation and advice as it applies to group walking in Wales should be adopted. This information can be found at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/coronavirus.aspx>

3.4.3 If you or someone else from your household or extended household have coronavirus symptoms you should self-isolate in line with government guidance and not take part in group activities during this time. The main coronavirus symptoms can be found on the NHS website and include a high temperature, a new continuous cough and the loss or a change to your sense of smell or taste.

3.4.4 Everyone over 70 years of age, and those with certain underlying health conditions, are considered clinically vulnerable to coronavirus. If you, or anyone else from your household or extended household, are in this higher risk category you should be especially careful and diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene. This includes in all areas where people congregate.

3.4.5 To minimise transmission of the virus through close contact with other walkers or members of the public the following risk mitigation measures should be adopted:

- Be safe: Maintain good hygiene and social distancing. If you begin to show coronavirus symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone who has coronavirus, you must self-isolate in accordance with government guidance and not take part in group activities
- Plan the walk: To minimise social distancing problems with others avoid walking during busy periods. Plan the walk route to minimise pinch points where participants are likely to congregate, such as road crossings, narrow footpaths and the navigation of obstacles such as stiles and gates. Where this is not possible, or unforeseen, then social distancing should be maintained by all participants
- Reconnaissance: It is recommended that the walk route be reconnoitred as close to the date of the walk as possible, to make a note of hazards and plan for any adjustments. Other considerations should include the identification of locations for rest and lunch breaks where social distancing can be maintained, alternative routes to avoid obstacles and escape routes should there be a need to amend the intended walk
- Transport: The use of public and shared transport is not advised. Where necessary this should be minimised. Shared transport with people from the same household or extended household is not an issue
- Numbers - The group size should be limited in accordance with government guidance. On the day of the walk should the number of participants arriving at the start point exceed this figure then it will be necessary for the Walk Leader to manage the situation, which may require the group to be divided into two sub-groups and then distance separating the two
- Conduct of Walks: Participants should refrain from all social contact with other group members who are not part of their household or extended household. During the walk participants not in these household categories should consider walking in small subgroups whilst maintaining at least two metre physical distancing between individuals. It is recommended that a

social distance of four metres be maintained between these subgroups. Participants should avoid touching gates and path furniture, where possible, and are advised to bring and use hand sanitiser when this cannot be avoided

- Face Coverings: Although face coverings are not required to be worn during the conduct of walks it is nevertheless required that they be carried by all participants to facilitate unforeseen circumstances, such as the need to provide close proximity support or assistance to others, and used where required by government regulations
- Track and Trace: A Tuesday Walkers' logbook will be maintained by the Group Leader containing the names of all walk participants, including dogs, for each walk undertaken by the group. On the day of the walk the Walk Leader should ensure this information is accurately recorded and within 24 hours forwarded to the Group Leader for inclusion within the logbook. Within five days of a walk, in the event of a participant developing coronavirus symptoms they should apply for a test and support NHS contact tracing if requested. The Walk Leader and Group Leader should be informed of this situation as soon as possible so other group participants can be made aware
- Walk Leaders should manage walks in accordance with the requirements of the Walk Leader's Risk Assessment Checklist

#### 4. Walk Leader's Risk Assessment Checklist

4.1 The role of the Walk Leader is to provide general guidance, management and arbitration in matters associated with the conduct of individual assigned walks in accordance with the requirements of this document and in particular the Walk Leader's Risk Assessment Checklist. The need to complete a written risk assessment for each individual walk is not required.

4.2 The Walk Leader should be familiar with the walk route. Ideally a reconnaissance walk should be undertaken as close to the day of the walk as possible to identify unknown hazards and arrangements made for them to be either removed or mitigated before the planned walk. Other considerations should include the identification of locations for rest and lunch breaks where social distancing can be maintained, alternative routes to avoid obstacles and escape routes should there be a need to amend the intended walk

4.3 The Walk Leader should maintain an awareness of the weather forecast for the day of the walk, including extreme temperatures, and in the interest of safety be prepared to cancel the walk, either beforehand or on the day, if this action is deemed appropriate.

4.4 For each walk the Walk Leader should address the following requirements:

(a) Before the walk prospective participants should have access to the following information, which may be either written or verbal:

- Name of Walk Leader
- Walk Leader's contact details
- Name of walk
- Distance
- Start point
- Lunch arrangements (if any)
- Timing
- Linear / Circular route
- Terrain
- Known hazards
- Height and climb involved
- Tides on coastal sections
- Level of fitness required
- Appropriate footwear and clothing
- Toilet / refreshment facilities on route
- What to bring (food, drink, compass, map, mobile phone, first aid kit, etc)
- Public transport options
- Car parking facilities
- The need to bring emergency telephone numbers for next of kin and relevant medical details

(b) On the day of the walk:

- Awareness of the weather forecast for the day and if it is appropriate to modify or cancel the walk
- An accurate record be made of the names of the participants, including any dogs, and within 24 hours of the walk this information to be forwarded to the Group Leader for inclusion within the Tuesday Walkers' logbook
- A mental note of the number of participants and their names
- The group has access to a mobile phone and first aid kit
- To be prepared to advise inadequately equipped walkers not to go, but to be aware that they must make the final decision
- To confirm owners with dogs are aware of the group document "Walking with dogs" and the need for compliance with the requirements therein.
- To confirm participants are aware of the Tuesday Walkers Group Risk Assessment (this document) and the need for compliance with the requirements therein. In particular, the need to maintain social distancing for the duration of the walk in accordance with up-to-date public health and government guidelines should be emphasised
- Before starting out to provide participants with a walk briefing, to include:
  - Weather forecast
  - Name of backmarker
  - Lunch arrangements
  - Route
  - Distance
  - Duration
  - Terrain
  - Know hazards and their mitigation, including the navigation of busy roads
  - Emergency arrangements such as illness, exhaustion, accident, weather problems, terrain problems, lost contact with group, etc

(c) During the walk:

- Stay at the front but make sure you can always see the backmarker
- Set an appropriate pace for the level of the walk and the participants
- Check the route frequently for hazards
- Periodically check participants are physically comfortable
- Periodically count the number of walkers in the group
- Pause when necessary to allow walkers to catch-up, take a rest, adjust clothing, consume refreshment, etc
- Be prepared to amend the walk as necessary in response to unforeseen circumstances, such as inclement weather, hazards on route, accidents or illness
- Maintain verbal or signal contact with the backmarker
- Ensure dogs are managed by their owners in accordance with the requirements of the group document "Walking with dogs"

- Ensure walk participants comply with coronavirus risk mitigation measures

(d) After the walk:

- Ensure everyone is in good health and able to return home independently
- If they plan to spend time together socially after the walk, remind them to follow the latest government guidelines on social contact and physical distancing
- Remind walkers that if they develop symptoms of coronavirus within five days of the walk, they should apply to the NHS for a test and support NHS contact tracing if required. They should also advise the Group Leader and Walk Leader of the situation so other walk participants can be made aware
- Within 24 hours forward the names of the walk participants, including any dogs, to the Group Leader for inclusion within the Tuesday Walkers' logbook



## 5. Individual Member's Personal Assessment

5.1 Before participating in Cardigan u3a Tuesday Walkers Group activities members are required to read the Tuesday Walkers Group Risk Assessment (this document) and be aware of the roles and responsibilities of all participants, the general and coronavirus risks identified with the activity and the procedural mitigation measures to be adopted. They should also undertake their own individual assessment to enable them to decide and be confident that they should attend.

5.2 This assessment is purely for personal use and does **not** need to be shared with any other person, including the Group Leader or Walk Leader.

5.3 Before taking part in the activity it is strongly advised that this assessment is recorded.

5.4 The assessment should consider both general and coronavirus issues.

5.4.1 General considerations should include:

- Your personal health
- Your personal level of fitness
- Tuesday Walkers Group Risk Assessment (this document) and whether the identified risks and associated mitigation measures are sufficient to allow you to take part without any adverse risk to yourself

5.4.2 Coronavirus considerations should include:

- Your personal health
- Your personal circumstances
- The health risk categories of anyone else you are isolating with in your household or extended household
- Tuesday Walkers Group Risk Assessment (this document) and whether the identified coronavirus risks mitigation measures are sufficient to allow you to take part without any adverse risk to yourself, household or extended household
- Awareness that if you are showing any symptoms of coronavirus you must not participate in group activities and follow appropriate government isolation and health guidance