

Torbay Rambling Club	
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Policies of Torbay Rambling Club (Rev. 8 Oct 24) Made under Article 9 of the Constitution of the Club

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1. Membership

- a) Persons joining for the first time within 2 months of the renewal date will not have to pay their subscription again until the renewal date the following year.
- b) After a maximum of 3 taster rambles any person wishing to join the Club shall be requested to apply to the Membership Secretary for admission.
- c) The Club reserves the right to refuse membership renewal to any member whose conduct in the opinion of at least two-thirds of the Committee renders them unfit for membership.

2. Guests and Visitors to the area

- a) Guests, that is family and friends of a member, and visitors to the area in general are welcome to come on TRC walks but no more than twice in any calendar month, nor more than four times in any calendar year, unless they join the Club.
- b) Guests and visitors must be advised by the Walk Leader that they are uninsured and walk at their own risk.
- c) Guests and visitors under the age of 18 attending rambles shall be accompanied by an adult who accepts full responsibility for their behaviour and safety.

3. Dogs

- a) Dogs can be a risk to safety and must not present a hazard or annoyance to other walkers.
- b) All dogs taken on a Torbay Rambling Club walk must always be kept on a short static lead, except if being chased by cattle when the dog should be unleashed for the owner's safety.
- c) Dogs should not be allowed to defecate on agricultural land, to prevent crop contamination or animal disease.
- d) Dogs are the responsibility of their owner and Torbay Rambling Club cannot be held responsible for any damage they cause.
- e) Some walks will prohibit dogs. No reason has to be given.

4. Grading of rambles

- a) A grading system is helpful although they vary widely, for example the Ramblers Association defines an Easy Walk as being suitable for pushchairs. Ours is designed to suit the Club specifically.
- b) The grade depends on an assessment based on various criteria including terrain, height gain, obstacles and equipment needed.
- c) We are a Rambling Club therefore it should be assumed that none of our walks are either pushchair friendly or gentle strolls.
- d) The grades are all based on the assumption the route can be completed in reasonable weather conditions and in a reasonable time.
- e) The standard description of the Club's grading is as follows, and includes the Note following it:

GRADE	DESCRIPTION OF RAMBLE
Easy	Straightforward with possible gentle ascents or descents. Mostly good permanent paths or lanes. Obstacles such as stiles, few and simple.
Moderate	Steeper ascents and descents. Mixed terrain including fields and rough ground. May include greater obstacles such as higher stiles or boggy areas.
Harder	Hilly, with a high level of ascent. May be pathless in open country. Rough terrain. Obstacles such as streams and more difficult stiles. May be strenuous.

NOTE: The grading is separate from the distance. The distance of a ramble may, for you personally, raise it to another level. Members should consult the walk description and notes in the Walks Programme and be sure they are able to complete it without slowing the progress of the Group.

5. Torbay Rambling Club's Safe Rambling Code

For the safety and enjoyment of all, members must familiarise themselves with, and comply with Torbay Rambling Club's Safe Rambling Code.

- a) Only walk if you are sufficiently fit and able to complete the walk as described on the programme.
- b) Wear stout boots/walking shoes and consider using poles or a stick over rough ground. The leader reserves the right to not include you if you are inappropriately equipped. (For more detail see the TRC Website. [What to Wear \(torbayramblingclub.org.uk\)](http://torbayramblingclub.org.uk))
- c) Bring a waterproof jacket and trousers, warm clothing and sunscreen as appropriate.
- d) Take sufficient food and drink.
- e) Walkers are advised to carry a mobile phone, whistle, personal first aid kit and their In Case of Emergency card (details of any medical conditions and details of whom to contact in case of incident). [ICE Card \(torbayramblingclub.org.uk\)](http://torbayramblingclub.org.uk). Best practice – add the leader's phone number in case of separation from the group.
- f) Walk behind the leader and in front of the back marker and tell the leader and back marker if you leave a walk early, or one of them if you go off track for a comfort stop.
- g) Keep sight of the person in front of you and walk at a reasonable pace.
- h) Abide by [The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) including "Be nice, say hello, share the space."
- i) Follow the leader's instructions regarding single file walking, crossing roads, closing gates etc.
- j) Fluorescent vests should be worn when road walking if you have one.

- k) All members must treat each other with respect, kindness and courtesy. Members must respect the rights and dignity of fellow members regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- l) All dogs taken on a Torbay Rambling Club walk must always be kept on a short static lead, except if being chased by cattle when the dog should be unleashed for the owner's safety.

6. Walks Programme and Social Events

The Club's Walks Programme will be produced 3 times a year, every 4 months, covering October to January, February to May, and June to September.

Planned Social Events will be publicised regularly.

a. The format of Walks Programme walk entries is:

Day and date

Route and brief description

Distance and grade

Meeting point and time

Leader and contact details, if only email then give phone number at start of walk.

Notes, such as inclusion of special hazards or features

b. Other inclusions in the Walks Programme

- i) The panel showing our grading definitions together with the Note in 4(e) of these Policies.
- ii) The Club's walking at your own risk statement, as contained in Article 7(a) of the Constitution:

"All members take part in Club rambles and other activities at their own risk. The Club accepts no responsibility for any injuries sustained by a member".

- iii) A note regarding the encouragement to Car Share and the regular meeting points for such, where appropriate. Currently these are Osborne Street Car Park, Newton Abbot and Babbage Road, Totnes.

7. Guidance for Walk Leaders

- a) The Club could not operate without Walk Leaders, whose contribution is greatly appreciated. All members are encouraged to lead a walk and will be given any assistance they need.
- b) Walks of any grade are welcomed, including occasionally special challenging walks and those which may come in two halves, enabling some participants to enjoy a shorter walk.
- c) Walks must be reconnoitred [reccied] before putting them forward to the Walks Co-ordinator so that they can be accurately assessed, graded and described on the programme. They should be reccied again prior to the walk.
- d) The Club's Risk Assessment form must be completed and retained
[TRC-Walks-Risk-Assessment-Form-v2-May-23.pdf \(torbayramblingclub.org.uk\)](https://www.torbayramblingclub.org.uk/TRC-Walks-Risk-Assessment-Form-v2-May-23.pdf)
- e) Keep an eye on the weather forecast. In the rare case of really bad weather, you may need to make the decision to cancel or change the walk.
- f) At the start of the walk welcome everyone and check for new people to remind them they are not insured.

- g) Give a brief outline of the walk including toilet stops and breaks, hazards and conditions eg mud and ascents.
- h) Remind walkers to always keep the person in front of them in sight and to keep up with the group.
- i) A back marker should be nominated and, with large groups, a middle marker too.
- j) Carry out a head count.
- k) Particular hazards which have been noted should be reiterated as they occur during the walk.
- l) It is a good idea for the Walk Leader to carry a suitable detailed map in paper or digital format and a means of accurately finding their position, for example the free OS LOCATE mobile phone app gives your Grid Reference with no need for mobile reception. Emergency Services now also welcome your "What3words" position. This app requires internet access and gives a unique set of 3 words to describe every 1 metre square on the planet!!
- m) It is advisable for Walk Leaders to carry a First Aid Kit.
- n) Leave gates and property as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates. Farmers close gates to keep animals in or leave them open to give access to food and water.
- o) When walking on roads ordinarily keep to the right-hand side unless approaching a sharp right-hand bend, however if it is a large group keep to the left, as stated in Rule 5 of the Highway Code.

8. Procedure for minor issues and formal complaints

- a) It is to be hoped that any disagreements or complaints can be dealt with in an informal and friendly manner, for example by the Walk Leader if the Walking Code is being disregarded. In the rare event of an issue not being resolved in this way, the Committee will deal with the matter rigorously and impartially with this formal procedure.
- b) Any member may lodge a formal complaint about another member in writing to the Club Secretary (or to the Chairman if the complaint is against the Secretary) within 7 days of an incident, unless the complaint relates to a recurring pattern of behaviour. The complaint should contain evidence and state the nature of the misconduct. It must be signed by the Complainant.
- c) Where appropriate, the Committee will try to resolve the issue, between the parties, within at most a further 14 days.
- d) If this is not possible, the Chair will form an Enquiry Panel of 3 people, comprising 2 appropriate Committee members and 1 other Club member. Panel meetings must be conducted in a professional and impartial manner, with minutes taken and documentation retained.
- e) The panel will investigate the complaint within a further 21 days, keeping all parties informed.
- f) The member against whom a complaint has been made must be informed in writing of the nature of the complaint and invited to a Panel meeting, with a friend or representative if they so wish.
- g) Failure to respond or to attend a Panel meeting may result in a decision being reached in their absence.
- h) The Panel may recommend to the Committee no further action, a verbal warning, a written warning, membership not being renewed, or that the member now be removed from Club membership.

- i) The recommendation must be agreed by a majority of the full Committee, with a majority of two thirds needed to implement removal.
- j) The member will be informed of the final decision by the Club Chair.

9. Finances - Claiming expenses for recceing walks

- a) The Club cannot reimburse all recce expenses, however there are circumstances where a claim should be considered, for example where a rail journey is involved, or the walk is far away on a special Club excursion.
- b) All prospective recceing claims must have the prior approval of the Treasurer, who will liaise with the Chair/Committee if the expenditure exceeds £10 per walk (not per person).
- c) Claims will not be considered for overnight accommodation.
- d) Reimbursement will be for actual costs incurred, such as fuel costs or train tickets and receipts must be provided.
- e) For coach trips, recce expenses (if paid) should be factored into the price of a seat on the coach, and, for leaders for holiday recces, contributions should be sought from holiday participants.