

Bridgnorth and District Rights of Way Association Guidance for Working Group Leaders

1. Risks and insurance cover

Please read the document “Guidance for Members” in conjunction with this document. It covers a number of risks that might arise and tells you how members should have prepared. It also reduces the length of briefing you need to give.

Other actions you, as working group leader, can take to reduce risk are covered below.

You are insured for negligence and any claims against you or the club for any incidents arising. Note that the insurance may cover injuries members may sustain that are their own fault – if the personal accident insurance sections of the policy are in force.

2. Before the working group

If you have not led a working group before, there are experienced members will be happy to assist. Ask a committee member to put you in touch with one of them.

Choose a location to work

- Choose a footpath or bridleway that you know and that requires either to be cleared (of overgrowth and rubbish) or needs more serious construction work. You can either attack a short length of path with considerable overgrowth or a longer walk on which you ask attendees to clear stiles and other blocked areas.
- Stick to public rights of way, permissive ways and access land. Try to keep working close to roads to a minimum.
- Consider where there is safe provision for several cars to park. If there are toilets in the area then include the location in your information to be sent to members.
- Consider whether a brush cutter or hedge trimmer is needed. Often, a group of several people with loppers, bush saws, secateurs and rakes can clear a path quickly. A number of our members are trained to operate brush cutters and they do make quick work of areas of overgrowth to be cleared.

Recce the area to be cleared

- Check the area you plan to work in a few days in advance.

Admin

- Inform the Working Group Secretary of the paths you plan to cover – see the web site for a link to Shropshire Council mapping. They will notify members and arrange, via Shropshire Council, for permission to be obtained from the land owner if necessary.

3. The day before the working group

- Check the weather forecast. Be prepared to make alterations to the proposed work, or cancel it in extremis, and contact the Working Group Secretary (or another committee member) if you need to do so.
- Check you have access to an Association first-aid kit, its stock of eye protection, gloves and tools, and a (charged) mobile phone.
- Ensure that you have contact details for the emergency services: 999 or 112.
- Make sure that you, or someone on the working group, would be able give map grid references to the emergency services, if necessary.

4. On the day

Meeting at the start of the working group

- Arrive early and check that people can park safely. Welcome those arriving, particularly newcomers. You must refuse to let anyone whom you consider to be inadequately dressed participate.
- Be prepared for anyone to tell you, in private, of any medical conditions or medication.
- Give a short briefing, but do stress eye protection in particular and the need to keep **15m from brush cutters**, if they are being used. Introduce any new members. If you are walking a distance, clearing stiles and other areas, outline the walk and give instructions on how you want people to keep together. Point out any particular hazards.
- Mention the “Guidance for Members” document and that people should read it so they can minimise risks to themselves and others.
- Stress that we expect anyone that gets separated from the group to **return to the last point where they were last with the group and WAIT**. Send someone back to find them if this occurs.
- Count the number of people in the group.
- On a clearance walk, brief a back-marker, who should know the route.

On the working group

- Aim to allocate work to small groups. People generally just get on with things.
- Make sure that only trained people operate brush cutters and other power tools.
- If there is any heavy lifting required ensure that it is supervised by someone who can ensure it is carried out safely. If nobody can then don't let it occur.
- Appoint someone to focus on litter collection, if there is a lot of it.
- Should someone become unwell, then two people should stay with the person or accompany them back to an appropriate safe place.

End of day

- Check the headcount and thank everyone for attending.
- Return the Association first aid kit, safety equipment and tools for safe keeping.