

LDWA Environment Policy

8 August 2020, Stuart Bain, Environment Officer LDWA

Introduction

This is the Environment Policy of the Long Distance Walkers Association Limited (LDWA). The LDWA is an Association of people with the common interest of walking long distances mainly in rural, urban, mountainous or moorland areas. It is a Company limited by Guarantee. The Local Group Committees and the National Executive Committee (NEC) are all volunteers.

This policy is very much one of recommendation and education with explanation rather than enforcement, with the aim to take the LDWA forward as an environmentally responsible association which strives to reduce the impact of its activities rather than take the minimal approach of simply having an environmental statement.

The positive approach is that numerous small actions will add up to make a significant beneficial difference.

Scope

LDWA members are involved in walks

- As individuals.
- In small groups walking a route together (social walks).
- In larger numbers on challenge events where the walkers follow the same or similar route but at their own pace and where support is offered by the event organiser.

This policy covers meetings to organise them and run the Association focused on environmental Sustainability.

This policy also covers specific impacts in the running of the LDWA, in addition to member led social, challenge walks and individual walks. These can include travel, recycling/minimising waste, efficient use of water/energy and how local and national group meetings take place.

Environment Policy Statement

- The LDWA accepts the harmful effects the association and its members have on both the local and global environment, including pollution and is committed to reducing them.
- The LDWA will comply with all relevant environmental legislation.
- The LDWA will implement an education and awareness programme amongst the National Executive Committee, Local Group Officers and members. This will be in the form of supplementary practical guidance notes in addition to the appendix.
- The LDWA will encourage the adoption of similar principles by its suppliers, partners and peers.

APPENDIX - Environment Policy Guidelines

1. Issues relating to the choice of route and volume of walkers

- **Numbers on a walk**

The LDWA restricts numbers on a challenge walk to a maximum of 500 walkers. This is designed to ensure that the impact on the environment is manageable as well as out of regard for landowners and other path users. Organisers should consider what should be the appropriate maximum number of walkers on an event having regard to these considerations.

- **Over-used routes:**

It is of concern that some paths are badly eroded from overuse. Organisers should consider using less well used paths and avoiding particularly eroded areas.

- **Habitats**

Organisers should be sensitive to the natural environment and the effect of walkers. This is of particular concern in the spring when walkers can disturb ground nesting birds and rare flowering plants. It is good practice to consult with bodies such as the local Wildlife Trust, English Heritage/CADW and the National Trust to avoid unintended damage to the natural environment. Further guidance will be made available on this subject in due course.

- **Litter**

The dropping of litter in any form is completely unacceptable on LDWA walks and organisers should ensure that this is known and understood and that litter bins are available at checkpoints and event headquarters. Further guidance on how to arrange litter picks will be made available on this subject in due course.

- **Toilet**

Organisers should consider the provision of toilet at event centres and checkpoints and the use of public toilets on the route. On occasions where toilets are not available and there is a need for people to relieve themselves this should be done discretely, away from residential areas, roads, paths and thoroughfares, and taking care not to pollute streams and watercourses. Ideally any solid excretia should be buried.

2. Transportation

Given that Long Distance Walking is typically a rural activity our most significant impact is almost certainly walker's transport to/from the start/finish or our events. In many cases public transport is not available, either at all, or at the appropriate time for our walks.

Members should aim to:

- Encourage walkers to car share wherever possible; and
- Point out public transport options to walkers where they are available.

Similar consideration should also apply to LDWA committee meetings (both local and national).

Consideration should also be given to minimise the miles driven by marshals and helpers during Challenge events.

3. Strider magazine

While paper copies of Strider magazine are sent to members, the opportunity to receive an electronic version is available.

While receiving an electronic version instead of a paper version would be on the basis of positive opt in, the LDWA should consider incentivising this choice. We should also remind those electing for electronic versions not to print out the magazine themselves, as that defeats the object, but to read and store the publication electronically.

4. Challenge Walk applications

Challenge Walk organisers should encourage those applying for entry to LDWA challenge walks to request electronic (e-mail) confirmation of entry at all times. Such electronic entrants should not be expected to bring a print out of their entry number to the event, but should instead be registered on the day of the event by name and post code. This would save an envelope, the environmental impact of return postage, and the use of a sheet of paper to printout entry confirmation per entry.

5. Catering

Walkers should always be strongly encouraged to bring and use their own mugs and cutlery throughout challenge walks

Caterers should strive to keep food waste to a minimum.

Catering waste should be disposed of responsibly and recycled where appropriate.

Locally sourced ingredients should be considered where possible.

7. Education and Profile

The LDWA must ensure that the importance of Environmental Sustainability to the LDWA is visible to all members, and that where appropriate members are educated and enlightened by:

- Ensuring there is there is an Environment page on the LDWA website that is kept to date;
- That Strider contains at least one environmental article each edition.
- Guidance notes to be published on specific areas within the local group toolkit.
- Joining existing environment campaigns initiated by like minded organisations.