

The Cork Gay Ramblers Hillwalking Club

This group is for members of the community who have an interest in rambling and hillwalking and who would like to share that interest and experience with others. The group is facilitated by members who are volunteers and who have some prior experience of hiking and hillwalking. These Facilitators are not trained walk leaders and the emphasis on the walks will be on enjoyment and safety. Each person partakes in the walks at their own risk.

Walks will be scheduled to take place on the second Sunday of each month, with a 9am city centre meeting point. Those interested in taking part in a walk should register by the Thursday before the walk. If anyone is unable to attend a walk that they have registered for, they should inform the Facilitator. A closed WhatsApp group will be created for members.

Mountaineering Ireland – Individual Membership Fees

MI (Mountaineering Ireland) recognises that hillwalking and hiking are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

The Gay Ramblers Social Hillwalkers walking club is not affiliated with Mountaineering Ireland, however, we encourage everyone to take out individual membership with Mountaineering Ireland to avail of their insurance cover and other benefits. Individual membership lasts for 12 months from the date of joining Mountaineering Ireland.

Individual membership (Ireland and Northern Ireland)	€41.60
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Log-on to www.mountaineering.ie for further information and membership application.

Membership Benefits

As a member of Mountaineering Ireland you benefit from a range of benefits, including:-

- The Irish Mountain Log, delivered by post to your home address;
- Discounts in all good outdoor shops and a variety of other related retailers;
- Civil Liability and Limited Personal Accident cover insurance policy;
- A personalised membership card;
- A committed staff team to provide advice and information;
- Access to training schemes and awards for hillwalkers and climbers;
- Access to Mountaineering Ireland Training Grant schemes;
- A channel for your access, environmental and other concerns;
- Spring and Autumn Gatherings that include member forums;
- Expedition grants and advice;
- Skills and environmental workshops;
- Annual indoor climbing competitions;
- Access to Travel & Activity insurance for walking and climbing trips abroad.

Guidelines for Walkers – Suggested Best Practice

In an effort to respect the environment and landowners, the number of cars travelling to any start point should be limited and therefore car-pooling and sharing is encouraged. Consideration should be given to the environment with regard to noise, access and cleanliness when parking at any start point.

Don't obstruct or hinder traffic when walking along the road. Respect private property and observe The Country Code and The I.F.A. Farmland Code of Conduct.

Participants in club activities should be aware that they are responsible for their own actions and decisions, especially if they choose to disregard the advice of the Walk Facilitators. Bear in mind that the Facilitators are all volunteers and should be respected as such.

It is irresponsible to go on a walk if you are unwell or injured. You should select a walk that matches your ability and fitness level on the day. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.

If you are on medication or suffering from any physical, mental, or other condition that might affect you or the group on the walk, then you must inform the Walk Facilitator of it before the walk starts.

Don't assume that because it's sunny in Cork, it will be hot on the mountains and hills. In general, temperatures drop 2-3 degrees for each 1,000ft. climbed. The sign at the base of Mangerton mountain in Killarney advises that temperature at the summit is generally 10 degrees lower than that at the base.

Walkers should bring with them, the following essential items:

- Strong walking boots, with good ankle support.
- A hooded waterproof coat and over-trousers.
- Suitable trousers. These must **not** be jeans, which once wet become very heavy and cold and do not dry out quickly enough.
- Plenty of warm clothing, including a jumper, gloves and a warm hat.
- Reflective high-viz vest or reflective top.
- Torch with a battery, a back-up battery and spare bulb.
- Whistle.
- Sufficient liquids appropriate to the grade of walk.
- Sufficient food appropriate to the grade of walk.
- An appropriate backpack/rucksack to carry them all in.

The Walk Facilitator has the right to refuse anyone who is not adequately equipped or anyone who in the leader's opinion is unfit to walk.

The following are useful and recommended

- Relevant map (preferably OS Discovery Series 1:50000)
- Walking sticks/poles
- Compass

- Watch
- Survival bag
- Individual first aid kit to cater for personal conditions, e.g. inhalers
- Emergency rations such as chocolate
- Some form of personal identification and the name of someone who can be contacted in the event of an accident, e.g. parents, friends.

The Walk Facilitator has the right to extend, curtail or alter the route from that described at the walk start. The Walk Facilitator sets the pace of the hike and walkers are expected to follow this pace.

All walkers have a Duty of Responsibility towards the leader and the group as a whole. This means that they must not do anything to undermine the authority of the leader nor the safety of the group. Walkers must follow all reasonable instructions from the Walk Facilitator.

For everybody's safety and security those starting out together must stay together during the walk. A group may travel no faster than the speed of its slowest member. If you are on a walk of a lower grade than your usual then you must slow down to the slower pace of that lower grade or else organise your own group and transport for that day.

If you go ahead of the walk leader of your own accord, then you are no longer considered to be part of the group and you are responsible for your own actions and for those who follow you.

At the end of a walk no person should leave the rendezvous point until everyone is off the mountain. If a walker insists on leaving their group during a walk they must inform the Walk Facilitator and initial their signature on the Walk Registration Sheet. It is vital that the walker later contacts the Walk Facilitator on their safe arrival. Failure to do so could result in an unnecessary callout of Mountain Rescue.

Inform the Walk Facilitator if you're feeling tired or the pace is too brisk for you. If a walker is unable to continue for whatever reason, the Walk Facilitator may appoint someone of sufficient ability and properly equipped with map etc. to bring him or her to safety.

If a walker wishes to stop for whatever reason while the main group is walking they must inform the Walk Facilitator or sweeper if one has been appointed.

By signing on the Walk Registration Sheet at the beginning of each walk, participants - both members and visitors - agree to abide by these guidelines.

The Gay Ramblers Social Hillwalking Club asserts that no Walk Facilitator can be held responsible for the welfare of individuals who ignore these guidelines.