

Booking systems for group walks

Ramblers group walks are open to everyone, but as a walk leader, you can decide how big a group you feel safe and comfortable to lead, and can use a booking system to manage numbers if that is right for you. This guide explains some of the options available to manage the number of people on your group walk.

If you use a booking system, it's important to make sure that the booking process is fair, transparent and accessible.

Keeping your data safe & secure

When choosing a booking method, it's important to think about how names and contact details will be collected and managed, so that you keep everyone's data safe. Platforms like Facebook and Meetup allow you to message attendees directly without collecting their contact details.

- Don't collect more information than you need – just ask for names and a contact phone number or email address.
- Only use the details to send messages about the arrangements for the walk.
- Keep any paper list securely, where only you can access it.
- If you're keeping an electronic copy make sure it's password protected.
- If you're emailing the group, send it to everyone individually or use the bcc option so they don't see each other's email addresses.
- Don't share the data with anyone and destroy or delete the list straight after the walk.

Booking systems – the options

1. Contacting the walk leader

One option is simply to include a phone number or email address to contact the walk leader in your walk listing. Anyone who wants to take part must contact the walk leader (or another volunteer) in advance, to confirm they have a place (or be added to a waiting list) - specify this in the walk description or title.

If you are using Walks Manager to publish the walk, the walk leader will need to set their contact preferences for their details to be displayed within the listing. See the Walks Manager Guide for information on setting contact preferences in the system.



Pros

- No new technology required
- Can be done by phone, text or email
- Contact information goes directly to the walk leader



Cons

- Walk leaders may receive a large number of emails or phone calls
- The walk leader will have to take steps to store the information securely



When the walk is full

Add the phrase 'Fully Booked' to the title of your walk on Walks Manager or your local website once all the places are filled.

2. Create a Facebook Event

If your group or area has a public [Facebook](#) page, you can use it to create events with a limited number of spaces. If your group doesn't already have a Facebook page, this may be a good time to start one!

If you are using Walks Manager you can add a link to the event in the website link field and ask people to follow the link to sign up.



Pros

- Free
- Easy to use
- Members can post questions on the event page
- Having an active Facebook page is a good way to attract new members
- Allows you to message attendees directly without collecting their contact details.



Cons

- No waiting list option
- Not everyone may have (or want to set up) a Facebook account

See Facebook's guide to [Creating and Managing a Facebook Page](#) and [Creating an event for a Facebook Page](#) for more information.

3. Create a Meetup Event

Some groups already advertise their group walks on [Meetup](#), and find it a good way to attract new members.

If you are using Walks Manager you can add a link to the Meetup event in the website link field and ask people to follow the link to sign up.



Pros

- Easy to use
- Automatically creates a waiting list and fills spaces if somebody drops out
- Members can post questions on the event page
- Having an active Meetup page is a good way to attract new members



Cons

- Cost for a subscription which allows you to create up to 3 groups
- Not everyone may have (or want to set up) a Meetup account

- Allows you to message attendees directly without collecting their contact details.

See Meetup's guides to [Starting a Meetup Group](#) and [Creating a Meetup event](#).

4. List the walk on Eventbrite

[Eventbrite](#) is an online ticketing platform that you can use to create a fixed number of places for people to register for your walk.

If you are using Walks Manager you can link to the event in the website link field and ask people to follow the link to sign up.



Pros

- Free for events with up to x25 places
- No account required for walkers to sign up (but you will need an account to create the event)
- Can manually add attendees if they're not able to go online themselves



Cons

- Waiting list doesn't automatically invite the next person if someone drops out
- A bit more complicated than Facebook or Meetup

See Eventbrite's guide to [Creating an Event](#).

5. Create a sign-up sheet with Google Forms

[Google Forms](#) lets you create an online form with your own questions – you could use this to create an online sign-up sheet.

If you are using Walks Manager you can link to the form in the website link field and ask people to click the link to sign up.



Pros

- Free
- No account required for walkers to sign up (but you will need a Google account to create the form)
- Can list multiple walks on the same link
- More options when creating your form – e.g. you could limit the number of walks that each person can sign up to



Cons

- You need to create your own sign-up form
- You need to collect contact details and store them securely (see [Keeping your data safe and secure](#) above).

See Google's guide to using [Google Forms](#).