

Running Forever Running Club

Guidance for Group Leaders – February 2025

Introduction

Our group leaders are all volunteers without whom the club could not operate. Whilst each club member is responsible for their own safety, the club has a duty of care towards our members and the general public as laid out in the Health and Safety Policy, associated Risk Assessment and the current Guidelines for Group Running. These are all available on the club website.

<https://runningforever.club/policies/>

It is essential that our leaders have read these documents and are comfortable with guiding a group of up to fourteen other members as safely as possible.

Training

Although not compulsory regular group leaders are encouraged to undertake the England Athletics Leadership in Running Fitness course which now includes a safeguarding & first aid module.

<https://www.englandathletics.org/coaching/qualifications/leadership-in-running-fitness/>

The committee will consider paying a contribution of up to 50% towards the cost of this course (payable on successful completion). Applications for financial support should be made by email to

membership@runningforever.club

Group Runs

Runs are usually arranged up to a week in advance and requests made for leaders using the Group Leaders facebook group. Formal sessions are held on Monday evenings (a coached session led by one of the club's EA qualified coaches, additionally utilising the Castle School track twice a month), Tuesday evenings (a one hour trail run from various locations around Taunton), Wednesday evenings (the main club night

with ten groups organised by pace band running for one hour mostly on road) and on Saturdays and/or Sundays (any distance road or trail from various locations).

Wednesday runs start from Belvedere Road between October & March. During the summer months they meet at various locations on the outskirts of Taunton to allow for a greater variety of routes. Belvedere Road continues to be the meeting point on the first Wednesday of each month. Every two months a 'step up' session is held and members are encouraged to try out a faster group.

All formal club runs are now booked online using the RunTogether website or Runner App. This ensures that the club has a record of who is running in case of any incident. Depending on location leaders will be informed of who is running in their group before or at the start of their run. They should ensure a record is kept of who actually runs, using the RunTogether Leader App, or by message to a nominated committee member. If a leader has not been told who is running in their group they should message any of the committee members named in the Appendix below. Leaders with access to the Leader app should refrain from adding members manually if this means the group will exceed the safe limit of 15 runners.

Weather Conditions

Members should expect to have to cope with the usual British weather, equipping themselves with wind/rain jackets, gloves, hats, sun cream, water etc. as necessary. However there will be occasions, usually when there is a Met Office weather warning, that the club may need to cancel a formal session. In this event the Club Captain will carry out an assessment and make a decision on whether runs should go ahead, in consultation with the committee. If a session is cancelled every effort will be made to inform booked runners via email, message and facebook. If there is a RED weather warning it is mandatory that club runs are cancelled.

Incidents

These may include injury to a runner, sudden illness, collision with a member of the public or a vehicle etc.

All group leaders should carry a fully charged mobile phone, or ensure a member of the group has one. It should have the what3words app downloaded.

In any case of serious injury leaders should not hesitate to call 999. The runner's emergency contact should also be informed. If the runner is unconscious then the contact details may be obtained from a member of the committee (see Appendix).

If the injury or illness is not serious but the runner is unable to continue, a volunteer should be sought to accompany the member to their car or to home.

In all cases an incident must be reported after the run to the Club Captain who can decide if a report should be made to England Athletics for insurance purposes.

Guidance for Wednesday Group Leaders

- Runs should be planned to last approximately one hour taking account of the pace of the group.
- Routes can be planned using a variety of means including mapping applications, by recce, or by copying previous runs from garmin, strava etc. If in doubt consult other leaders for advice using the facebook group.
- Members should expect to wear road shoes so routes should predominately be on road although short sections of trail may be utilised in dry summer conditions.
- Members are not expected to carry torches in winter, although some may choose to do so. Routes should therefore be confined to roads which are street lit.
- Members are encouraged to wear hi-viz clothing and this is mandatory in winter. Anyone turning up in dark clothes should be prevented from running unless a committee member has a spare bib available.
- Anyone wearing any form of earphones should be asked to remove them.
- Leaders should try and keep within the pace band for their group. If a runner is obviously faster or slower than the requisite pace and causing issues for the group they should be encouraged to move up or down the following week.

- Leaders may wish to ask one of the runners to stay at the back of the group to ensure looping takes place and no one gets left behind.
- Where pavements are available they should be used with due regard to other pedestrians. Shouting 'keep right' or 'keep left' is essential and if necessary the group should just stop. The safety of the public as well as the runners is paramount.
- When crossing roads, a pedestrian crossing should be utilised if one is available. Runners should be discouraged from 'taking a chance'.
- When running on country lanes with no pavement the group should keep to the left hand side unless approaching a left hand bend. If a vehicle approaches from ahead or behind a shout of 'car' or 'bike' is essential. Again if necessary the group should just stop.
- It is useful to identify a deputy leader for groups, who can be called upon if the nominated leader is unable to attend the run at short notice.

Other Road Runs

These may take place at weekends and be of any length. In general the same guidance applies as for Wednesday runs. For very long runs the leader should ensure runners are equipped with clothing, water and snacks sufficient for the weather conditions and distance.

Trail Runs

These may be of any distance and take place during the day or night. The following additional considerations should be noted by leaders.

- Leaders must carry a mobile phone equipped with the what3words app, basic first aid kit and foil blanket.
- Routes should be carefully planned and recce'd if possible. A map with the route must be carried, either on paper, phone or watch.
- The leader must check that runners have appropriate shoes for the expected conditions and also are carrying sufficient clothing, water and food.
- If a run is planned to take place partly or wholly in the dark or at dusk, runners must wear a head or chest torch. For very long runs spare batteries and/or a spare torch should be taken.

Appendix

In an emergency contact one of the following committee members for advice (phone numbers available in version posted in group leaders facebook group).

Robin Upton (Club Captain)

Simon Denson (Chair)

Peter Hall (Club Secretary)

Emma Greig (Lead Welfare Officer)