

## **HSWC – Newsletter September 2025**

The weather has changed! Some lovely autumn colour to look forward to on our walks.

### **Safe Walking**

It is the time of year to remember to pack an extra warm layer in case you are delayed – you cool down very quickly on hillsides when you are not walking and are out of the sun. Also don't forget to pack a torch (with batteries or charged if it is a usb device). You may not need them, but it is much better to be safe than sorry.

There was some discussion on and after a recent walk about what to do if you are out on a walk when an electric storm is in progress. Apparently, there was no consensus on the day. To help I have linked to the Ramblers advice section [Ramblers Lightning Advice](#) . In summary the higher and more exposed you are, the greater the danger. It may seem counter intuitive, but don't seek shelter under cliffs, caves, mine entrances or trees – all of which could put you at greater risk if they are struck by lightning. Instead, aim to ensure that there is higher ground above you. It is recommended that you find the lowest open ground space and sit on your rucksack with any walking poles away from you.

### **Christmas Events**

Plans are progressing well for a Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December walk and Christmas lunch at Fox & Hounds in Wroughton. Information will be sent out shortly and you will be asked to pre-pay and to make your menu selections. Sue Aiken is kindly leading the organisation and Jeremy Winfield will lead the walk. Thank you to both of them. Anyone wanting to help out please contact Sue.

The arrangements for a Sunday event just after New Year are not so well advanced. A date of 11<sup>th</sup> January has been selected. Volunteers to organise the meal and the walk please.

### **Committee Posts Vacancies**

Dave Hazell is stepping down from the role of Treasurer and Minute Secretary at the AGM in February. He has been the Wednesday Walk Coordinator and then the Treasurer and Secretary. A heartfelt thanks to Dave for supporting the Club in these roles.

We therefore need volunteers. We can split the role into 2 (it is a historical reason for them being combined. Please do step up for either Minute Secretary and or Treasurer. Dave will be providing a brief outline of the Treasurer role. The Minute Secretary role is fairly self-explanatory – but please contact Dave if you want more information.

The Club cannot operate without these roles so please do help out and support the Club. Neither role is challenging – the Club keeps things simple. No prior experience is required and a careful hand-over will be provided. The Committee is very supportive and friendly (and the biscuits aren't bad either!).

## **Footpath Maintenance**

It has been an increasing theme that walks are being challenged by footpath issues – either landowner issues or footpath deterioration aspects. Ramblers run footpath maintenance events when volunteers help with clearing paths or improving styles. Of course, we can complain amongst ourselves and/or to the relevant footpath liaison officer via Don Webster (and thanks to Don for keeping going with this process). We can do all that as we have been doing, but we discussed at committee polling for interest to support the Ramblers in this maintenance activity. It would be good to be constructive as well as muttering! Please contact Don to discuss further.

## **First Aid Training**

I am sure we all want to aid someone who needs help. This does not require an extensive medical training, but a basic understanding will go a long way towards helping someone – friend or stranger. Do not be held back by fear/uncertainty. Some simple help goes a long way, and doing something constructive is far better than ‘leaving it all to someone else’.

There will be an internally run workshop for leaders who carry Club first aid kits to refresh how to use some of the items to build confidence for those who want a boost. Dates to be announced.

We are also planning to use external instructors to provide training. We are considering a couple of options. One is an online course that can be taken in your own time and provides a basic grounding in the major incidents. This is a fairly general course, not particularly focussed on outdoor walking (but sport inclined), but is felt to be good and would help people feel confident to help out.

A second option that we might follow is a more expensive course delivered to a group locally, by a trained first aid instructor who is also an experienced walker so he will tailor the course to align with our needs.

Please do contact me ([andrewesnowden@gmail.com](mailto:andrewesnowden@gmail.com)) and express an interest in either or one particular option – we are aware that a number of you are interested so please do register your interest. Also if you think an alternative approach might be better, please let me know.