



Friends of Rising Sun Country Park

Risk Assessment for Volunteer-Led Community Nature Discovery & Wellbeing Walk

Location	Rising Sun Country Park - Paths, woodlands and grassland areas
Dates	Monthly – second Monday each month.
Meeting Point	Outside Countryside Centre Café, Whitley Road at 10 am.
Organiser	Friends of Rising Sun Country Park
Review date	Annually at AGM or after any incident

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1. Event Overview

Event Overview	A gentle, guided walk within the Rising Sun Country Park, led by volunteers. Activities include seasonal wildlife spotting and an opportunity to engage in citizen science. Please note: this is a dog-free walk.	
Roles and Responsibilities	Event Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers a welcome & safety briefing • Sets a gentle pace for the session and plans regular pauses • Carries a first aid kit and mobile phone • Adjusts the route or activity to suit group needs and environmental conditions • Decides whether to pause, shorten, or end the walk if conditions become unsafe 	Attendees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow guidance from the Event Lead • Walk at their own comfortable pace and communicate needs • Wear suitable clothing and footwear • Report hazards, discomfort, or concerns promptly • Take responsibility for their own wellbeing and stop if needed
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Mandatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sturdy, comfortable footwear suitable for walking on mixed surfaces 	Recommended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather-appropriate clothing (warm layers, waterproofs, sun protection)
Children, Young People and vulnerable adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times • Participants who may need additional support should attend with a companion 	
Welfare & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks are designed to support wellbeing • Participants should only attend if they feel able to do so safely • Participants are encouraged to walk at their own pace and make the Event Lead aware if they need to pause, rest or leave the session. 	
Incident Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All incidents, near misses, or emerging hazards must be reported to the Event Lead • Incidents will be reviewed and risk assessment updated as required 	

2. Risk Assessment Table

Risk Scoring Method: Risk Score = Likelihood × Severity

Score	Likelihood	Severity
1	Rare	Minor injury
2	Unlikely	First aid injury
3	Possible	Injury requiring medical attention
4	Likely	Serious injury
5	Very likely	Major injury/fatality

Risk Rating Bands:

1–4 Low – Acceptable with controls
 5–9 Medium – Manage and monitor
 10–25 High – Additional controls required

Hazard	Potential Harm	Risk level (LxS)	Control Measures	Additional Actions	Residual risk level (LxS)
Slips, trips and falls (uneven ground, roots, mud, vegetation and hidden obstacles)	Sprains, fractures, cuts	Medium (3x2=6)	Route planning using suitable paths, sturdy footwear advised, stay on paths where possible, avoid excessively wet/muddy ground, avoid dense vegetation and steep banks, group walks at pace of slowest participants	Group encouraged to report hazards during walk (shared responsibility).	Low (2x2=4)
Vegetation & wildlife (brambles, nettles, insects)	Scratches, stings, bites	Low (2x2=4)	Recommend long sleeves and trousers; avoid dense undergrowth; risks from plants and insects highlighted during safety briefing at start of session	First aid kit available and carried by Event Lead	Low (1x2=2)
Dog faeces	Bacterial/parasite exposure	Low (2x2=4)	Risk highlighted to group, particularly for those attending with children	Shared responsibility to alert group to hazards during walk	Low (1x2=2)

Water hazards (ponds, ditches, marshy ground)	Slips, immersion, drowning	Medium (2x3=6)	Maintain safe distance from water edges; children closely supervised, marshy or unstable areas avoided.	Pond dipping activities require a separate specific risk assessment.	Low (1x2=3)
Weather conditions	Hypothermia, heat exhaustion, sunburn	Medium (3x2=6)	Weather checked in advance of session, weather-appropriate clothing advised; woodland avoided in high winds; cancel activity in extreme weather	Monitor weather on the day	Low (1x2=2)
Moving vehicles (car parks, access roads)	Collision with vehicles/bikes	Medium (2x3=6)	Volunteers made aware of traffic areas; caution near roads and carparks	Event Lead reinforces road safety in car park and crossing roads	Low (1x3=3)
Public interaction with other park users	Conflict, distress,	Low (2x2=4)	Group keeps to one side of shared paths, avoid confrontation; step away and report concerns; maintain distance from off-lead dogs	Event Lead reinforces calm disengagement	Low (1x2=2)
Aggressive or reactive dogs	Bites, scratches, fear	Medium (2x3=6)	Do not engage with dogs; give dogs/owners space; avoid eye contact with stressed animals	Volunteers should not intervene or give instructions	Low (1x3=3)
Presence of Horse riders on shared paths	Startled horse, volunteer injury	Medium (2x3=6)	Step aside and give clear calm instructions to group, avoid sudden movements, be aware of narrow paths and blind corners, allow riders to choose passing point	Remind group to keep voices low and remain still as riders pass	Low (1x3=3)

Overall Risk Conclusion

- **Pre-control measures:** Several hazards present **Medium** inherent risk.
- **Post-control:** All hazards reduce to **Low** residual risk.

Conclusion: Residual risks are acceptable and manageable when control measures are followed and actively monitored.

3. Event Procedure

Purpose	Nature discovery and wellbeing walks encourage gentle physical activity, connection with nature, and positive mental wellbeing in a supportive group setting.
Before Starting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants sign in with the Event Lead • Welcome and short safety briefing • Walk outline explained (distance, pace, stops) • Participants encouraged to share access needs privately if relevant • Check clothing and footwear is suitable for event participation
Route Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible, well-used paths selected • Avoid steep gradients, unstable ground, and water edges • Adjusted on the day to suit group needs and weather
During the Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group stays together, walking at the pace of the slowest participant • Regular pauses to observe nature, rest, or take part in optional citizen science recordings • Participants may step aside or stop at any point and inform the Event Lead
Safety essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk within personal limits • Follow Event Lead guidance • Stay aware of surroundings e.g. uneven paths, cyclists, dogs, and other park users. • Children must be supervised by a responsible adult.
General Emergency procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Lead contacts emergency services if required • Incident recorded and reported to park team
Returning to the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group returns together to meeting point • Participants sign out • Opportunity for informal feedback or queries • Event Lead notes any concerns or improvements for future walks