

NEWSLETTER – MAY 2022



MESSAGE FROM JOHN PYE

A big thank you to all those who responded to our recent survey, your views and opinions are valued, and it will really help us to shape the activities of the group going forward. Discussions on this will start at our next Committee Meeting in early May.

As with a lot of things in life, however, it can get difficult to please all of the people all of the time. It is recognised that the distance and pace of some of the group walks don't suit everyone. Our Walks Co-ordinators, Tony and Anne, do an excellent job in preparing a diverse and wide-ranging programme of walks. However, that programme can only be based on walks that are offered by our Volunteer Walk Leaders. Our Walk Leaders offer walks that suit them in terms of distance and pace, they don't design walks that necessarily cater for specific needs. Despite the length and grade of walk being advised in the programme unfortunately some in the Group can find them either too fast and long or conversely too slow and short. This is one of the vagaries in dealing with a large Group with a wide-ranging membership with different walking capabilities and aspirations of what makes a good Ramble.

Also, a thank you to all those who, in completing the survey, offered to volunteer. It's our volunteers who do so much to help make White Cliffs Ramblers such an enjoyable, friendly, and welcoming group. There are a few people who when completing the survey offered to volunteer but didn't complete their names or contact information; if you think you might be one of these please send your contact details to me at johnrpye@icloud.com or text to 07414 863194.

As the better weather is approaching, I hope, like me, you are looking forward to walking more in T shirts and shorts, with perhaps a little less mud on the boots at the end of the day.

WCR MEMBERS SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who took part in our members survey. We had 105 responses, which was very encouraging.

The WCR Committee will be meeting in the next few days when they will be considering the detailed results of the survey. In the meantime, here are a few key highlights:

- In response to the question '*What is your primary interest in being a member of the Ramblers?*', 62% said taking part in led group walks. Whilst a further 28% indicated that their primary interest was in maintaining or protecting the footpath network.
- The group emails sent out by our membership secretary was the most popular channel for keeping in touch with you. This was followed by the WCR Group Newsletter.

- When asked 'How often do you walk with the rambles?' 50% of respondents indicated that it depended on the walk. There was an almost identical response to be asked on which day(s) do you walk.
- There was clear support for the possibility of walks being offered on days other than a Thursday or Sunday. Only 12% of respondents were completely against the idea. Tuesday or Saturdays were the most popular possible alternatives.
- Over 75% of respondents were in favour of making our walks more accessible by public transport. This may pose an increasing challenge when several bus services in Kent are being cut or having to navigate engineering works on the rail network on Sundays. A well developed car sharing scheme is one option that we will be considering.
- From a list of possible social activities, Group holidays (either in the UK or abroad) was the most popular response, followed by a quiz night and barn dance.

A fuller report will be available after the next WCR Committee meeting.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL – CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Work on planning for this year's Festival has continued apace over recent months. At the time of writing, the Festival will consist of thirty-four walks, spread over six days (25th – 30th August). It is intended that details of all the Festival walks will be available by mid-June.

In previous years, we would have been receiving a rallying call from Les Preston, cajoling us into contributing to the continued success of the Festival. Sadly, Les is no longer with us, but with your efforts, let's make this year's Festival one of which he would have been proud.

You can help by getting involved in various ways, including:

- Supporting walk leaders as a backmarker;
- Being primary WCR member on one of seven walks being provided by external organisations / individuals;
- Acting as a steward / marshall;
- Helping to distribute Festival publicity materials.

If you would like further information about how to get involved, please contact:

Andrew Swarbrick, Festival Project Co-ordinator: andrewswarbrick13@googlemail.com or

Lesley Stephenson, Festival Walks Co-ordinator: lstephenson@live.co.uk

MALLORCA 2022

There are still places available for White Cliffs members for this year's trip to Mallorca – 11th – 19th October.

For more information, please contact Margaret Milsted-Williamson – maglou@yahoo.co.uk

DOVER INLAND BORDER FACILITY (IBF) / NORTH DOWNS WAY



Preliminary construction of this facility - and the Dover Fastrack route - has now started. As a result, the definitive route of the North Downs Way (byways ER60 and ER55A) has been temporarily closed and diverted around the southern and eastern boundaries of the site. As previously mentioned, a good source of the latest information is always the Guston Parish Council website. [Guston Parish Council](http://Guston Parish Council website) (guston-pc.gov.uk)

ALDINGTON – PROPOSED SOLAR FARM DEVELOPMENT

Aldington resident, and WCR Membership Secretary, Andrew Swarbrick, has alerted us to two new proposed solar farm developments in the parish. Although Aldington lies outside our boundary, it is an area in which we frequently walk, and Andrew has identified a significant number of footpaths that could be impacted by these two developments.

Notwithstanding the need to tackle the climate emergency, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and develop renewable energy sources – the scale of these two proposed developments must be of concern to all those who enjoy the countryside in this part of Kent. With existing solar farms in the area, the two new developments would result in 769 acres being given over to solar panels. Put another way, this represents over 22% of the land within the Aldington parish boundary!

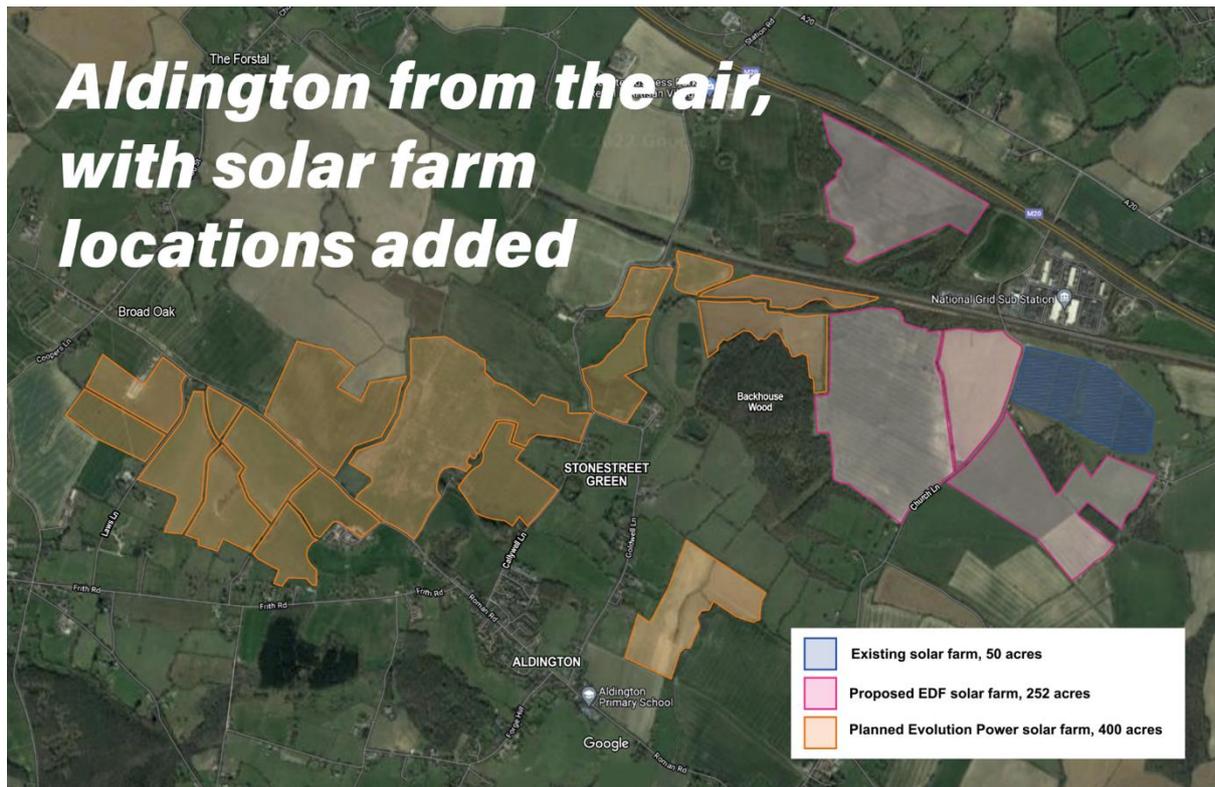


Image copied from the Save Aldington website: [Save Aldington](#)

TICKS

In his opening address, John Pye said that he was looking forward to the warmer weather and being able to walk in T-shirts and shorts. It therefore seemed an opportune time to re-issue advice about ticks.

Ticks are tiny blood-sucking arachnids which can be found in areas of dense vegetation, such as long grass or bracken. They can attach themselves to you and feed on your blood by biting through your skin. Ticks are known to carry a variety of diseases. The most serious of these is Lyme disease, which can be transmitted through the bite of an infected sheep tick.

If you are planning to go walking in an area of dense vegetation, consider taking the following precautions:

- Wear trousers and long-sleeved shirts and keep cuffs fastened and trousers tucked into socks.
- Wear shoes or boots rather than open sandals.
- Use insect repellent: DEET or Permethrin can protect against ticks for several hours.
- If you find a tick, remove it quickly, preferably with a specially-designed tick removal tool. These are better than household tweezers as they avoid the risk of squashing the tick and releasing fluids into your skin. In an emergency you can use a thread of cotton looped around the tick's mouthparts, which you then pull steadily upwards.
- Dogs are also vulnerable to ticks: consult your vet for insect repellent or a tick collar.

- After your walk, carefully brush all clothing and examine yourself for ticks. Pay special attention to their favourite feeding places: the backs of knees, around the groin, under the arms and, especially on small children, the hairline and scalp.

If part of the tick breaks off or you think any part of it may be left in your skin, wash the site thoroughly but don't worry about digging with a needle as that may do more damage. Your body will deal with any embedded remains. Consult a doctor if the small area of redness gets worse. Further information on [tick bites and Lyme disease](#) can be found via the NHS website, or from the charity [Lyme Disease Action](#).

WALKING WITH YOUR DOG

We regularly receive requests asking if a dog may be brought on one of our Group walks. Normally our response is to say 'Yes, dogs are welcome'. However, we would also ask that you respect the wishes of those walk leaders who prefer not to have a dog on one of their walks. By law, we cannot prevent anyone with a registered assistance dog from attending our walks. Therefore, to comply with this, some walk descriptions may contain the acronym RADO or Registered Assistance Dogs Only.

The Ramblers has worked alongside Natural England, the Kennel Club, National Farmers' Union and others to create a new [a new Dog Walking Code](#) (Ctrl+Click to follow link)

If you do wish to bring your dog on a walk, we would ask that you follow the [Dog Walking Code](#) (Ctrl+Click to follow link) a simple, ten-point guide which aims to ensure safe and happy walks with your dog, and to avoid causing problems for others.

If you find yourself being threatened by [cattle](#) (Ctrl+Click to follow link) – which can become unsettled by the presence of a dog – while out walking it's always best to release your dog from its lead. The dog will be able to run away, and the cattle's interest will be diverted from you to the dog. Extra care should also be taken on bridleways and byways where dogs could frighten [horses](#) (Ctrl+Click to follow link) or be at risk of vehicle traffic, where there are ground nesting birds, near reservoirs and streams used for public water, and by the coast. There may also be local restrictions banning dogs from areas that people use.

WHAT3WORDS

For the first time you will have noticed that we have used what3words in the May / June edition of the walks programme. What3Words is an app that you can download to your desktop / laptop or mobile device. Within the app, every three-metre square of the world has been given a unique combination of three words. This makes it more precise than a six-digit OS map reference (100 square metres). Whilst a postcode can cover a much wider geographical area.

To use the app to obtain directions to a what3words address, enter the what3words address in the format word.word.word. Select the correct result and then tap the 'Navigate' button. You will then be able to select your preferred navigation app (e.g. Google Maps / Waze etc.).

There are some known issues when using what3words that you should be aware of. The address needs to be entered into the app correctly. Common mistakes include leaving out the 's' when one or more words in the address is a plural. Secondly, mistyping a word (e.g. 'live' for 'love') could take you to a location on the other side of the world!