



Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble Toolkit

How to set up and deliver group sessions



Foreword

When we first had the idea for a walking singing group, we just thought it was a lovely idea.

We both loved walking in the countryside and knew it is good for you; we also knew that singing songs can really lift your spirits and is good for you too.

So why not put them together?

We thought it could bring real health benefits to peoples' lives, not to mention a lot of fun and enjoyment.

We became involved with Stepping into Nature, which aims to help people be happier and healthier by connecting with nature.

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the project uses Dorset's natural and cultural landscape to provide inclusive nature-based activities for older adults, including those with living with long term health

conditions, such as dementia, and their care partners.

This enabled us to turn that lovely idea into a reality and before we knew it, we were running our first group in Bridport, Dorset under the name **'Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble'**.

It was soon apparent we had discovered something special and nearly everyone that joined the group stayed with it. We had some beautiful times together, walking in Dorset's glorious landscape and singing songs.

Some said that at first, they thought it was weird – but they loved it, and a group of people became a group of friends.

We hope that other groups can enjoy Singing and Strolling together so we have created this guide to help you set up your own Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble group.

Peter Grech & Tina Bridgman



Who Is This Toolkit For?

This toolkit will help anyone who wishes to set up a Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble group or event.

This is a guide written in partnership with Peter, Tina and Stepping into Nature and we hope that in some way you will find it useful, inspirational and provide you with some ideas of what can be achieved.

The idea is simple but setting up a group or running a session can seem daunting at first.

In this toolkit you will find advice, guidance and tips to help you move from an idea to running your own singing and walking group.

We hope you have as much fun and get as much benefit as we did.

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1. Introduction

What is Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble?

Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble is a guided countryside walk, with stops along the way to sing together and enjoy being out in nature.

Often, we just call it 'Sing & Stroll'.

Human beings have been walking and singing in natural settings for a very long time. Sing & Stroll is designed to offer people the many joys and benefits of walking, singing together and being out in nature.

The walks are designed to be invigorating but gentle – more of a stroll than a hike.

The songs are popular favourites in a sing-along style rather than as a choir; it is just about the fun of singing together in the great outdoors – no talent required!

Who is it for?

Anyone! Sing & Stroll is dementia-friendly and particularly beneficial to people over 55 and those living with a long-term health condition.

***At the same time, it is your group –
Be creative and have fun!***

The benefits of singing & strolling

Many scientific studies support the fact that walking, singing (especially in a group) and being out in nature are all good for us. Putting them together adds up a whole range of health benefits. The proven combined benefits include:

- Improving our health and physical fitness
- Keeping the musculoskeletal system healthy
- Supporting our mental wellbeing
- Promoting healthier nervous and immune systems
- Supporting healthy memory and brain activity
- Promoting social confidence and connection with others
- Reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

See Appendix A

2. Setting Up Your Sing & Stroll Group

Creating Your Group

Q Who is the group for?

Your Sing & Stroll group might be for whoever wishes to come along or focussed on a group of people, such as those with a specific health condition or people from a certain area.

Q How big will the group be?

Ideally groups should not be bigger than 15 people; larger than this can be difficult to manage. Smaller groups can be more intimate but may need more input from leaders.

Q Will the group be open or closed to new members?

A closed group allows a group of people to get to know each other and gives a certain security to the group, but means that if people leave, the group diminishes. An open group is more dynamic but means more work.

Q What area will the group cover?

Having an area in mind will help you to make decisions about what routes are available and how to get there, where you will advertise and where participants might come from.

Q When and how often will the group meet?

Regular events are easiest to manage, possibly weekly, monthly or occasionally, and will depend on what people want and how much time and effort you are able to put in.

Q How much support does the group have?

How much funding and/or support the event has makes a difference to how ambitious you can be, for example in providing transport or refreshments. Start simple and if it works well, you can look at growing the group.

Q How will the group be funded?

Even with an entirely closed self-maintaining group, there will be costs, for refreshments, for transport, for phone calls. You will need to decide if you are looking for outside sponsorship, charging a fee to cover costs or simply keeping a kitty.

Q Who will be your Walk Leader, Singing Leader, Administrator and Backstop?

These are explained in the next section.

For a checklist see Appendix B

The Key Roles

There are four key roles in running a Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble Group. The tables below outline these roles and the skills, qualities and tasks involved. For summary table, **See Appendix C**

The Walk Leader Leads the walks and is responsible for the safe and effective planning, organisation, management and leading of the walk itself. The Walk Leader sets the pace, theme and the tone of the walk.	
Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• research• planning and preparation• organising group activities• leading and managing group activities• clear communication• understanding of safeguarding and H & S issues	Qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reasonable physical fitness• calm confidence• a love of walking and the outdoors• empathy, patience, alertness and diplomacy• the willingness to sing!
Key tasks for the Walk Leader include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research and design safe, appropriate and enjoyable walks• Plan, prepare, manage and lead walks• Plan and organise resources for the walk• Engage with participants and other personnel• Ensure appropriate safety procedures and insurance are in place• Monitor weather and other potential influences• Manage emergencies and other situations• Keep records	
Tips <p>Walk Leader training is a great step towards developing these skills and training might be available through Walking for Health, The Ramblers Association or other providers, often for little or no fee. Dementia Awareness Training and First Aid Training are also useful.</p>	

The Singing Leader

Singing together is the heart of Sing & Stroll and the Singing Leader is responsible for organising the music for the group, and leading and supporting the group in singing together. The Singing Leader role is the one that makes the difference to the group.

Skills

- research and preparation
- leading group activity
- leading singing sessions
- supporting participants
- generating a positive and confident atmosphere
- managing groups of people in general

Qualities

- physical fitness
- a love of music and singing
- a willingness to 'be the first' and out in front (without stealing the show!)
- an interest in health and wellbeing
- an encouraging, tolerant and accepting nature
- an interest in helping others to grow
- understanding of issues affecting people's willingness and ability to sing
- understanding of possible dynamics in groups

Key tasks for the Singing Leader include:

- Choose and learn suitable songs for each walk
-
- Design and lead a warm-up routine
- Lead singing sessions
- Engage with participants for feedback
- Generate enthusiasm and atmosphere
- Support the Walk Leader

Tips

Dementia Awareness Training and First Aid Training are also useful.

While experience in leading singing groups is helpful, it is not as important as enthusiasm and a supportive and friendly approach

The Administrator

Organises the group, keeps records and interacts with participants and outside organisations including funders, advertisers, GP surgeries and. The administrator is often the first point of contact for the group and therefore has to be the salesperson for the idea and the activity.

Skills

- office skills – research, record keeping and accounts
- advertising design and printing,
- promotion, planning and organising
- communicating with others by phone, email, social media

Qualities

- an enjoyment of good organisation
- a creative ability to work with limited resources,
- an enthusiasm for the Sing & stroll concept
- ability to delegate and ask favors

Key tasks for the Administrator include:

- Organise the group
- Engage with potential participants and outside organisations
- Promotes the group
- Gathers information keeps records & accounts and managing membership

Tips

Look for free IT training that might be available in your local area. Dementia Awareness Training and First Aid Training are also useful.

The Walk Backstop

This role involves following the walk at the tail end in a supporting role and alerting the Walk Leader to any issues arising.

Qualities

- reasonable physical fitness
- alertness to the needs of others
- a warm and supportive nature, plenty of patience and the willingness to sing!

Key tasks for the Walk Backstop include:

- oversee the group at the rear to support the slower walkers and alert the Walk Leader to any issues arising

Tips

Walk Leader training is useful but not essential. Dementia Awareness Training and First Aid Training are also useful.



"I like being outside in the beautiful Dorset countryside enjoying the Autumn colours and singing well-loved songs with likeminded people" Sing & Stroll participant

3. Planning Sing & Stroll Walks

Route Planning

Sing & Stroll is a gentler walk in the countryside that is inclusive for people with limited mobility, and those aiming to maintain or improve their fitness and wellbeing.

The abilities and needs of the people joining the walks will help you decide whether routes are suitable or not. Once you know which area your Sing & Stroll group will cover, you can start looking at the walking opportunities there.

The easiest way to develop suitable routes is to look at the local trails, footpaths, bridleways and tracks that are already

established in the area, using local tourist information maps, Ordnance Survey maps, local walk books and online resources. Local knowledge is also very useful.

Walking a route beforehand helps you to decide if it is suitable, and to identify any meeting and stopping places, seating and toilet facilities, highlights or features, and any potential hazards along the way. It will also give you an idea of how long the walk will take.

It's a good idea to make notes and mark a map, creating future records for reference and for other walk leaders.

Tip
You can add value to a walk by researching local history, folklore and ecology and talking about these things on the way. This opens the door for conversation and makes the walk more of an experience.

A Typical Route

1. Meeting point where the group gathers
2. Warm-up stop. This is usually the first available green area along the walk.
3. Second stop. About a quarter of the way along the walk, in a natural and quiet setting, where the group can stand and sing without too much attention. Allowing slower walkers to catch up and the group to reform.
4. Third stop. Approximately halfway along the route, again where the group can sing together.
5. Final stop. Ideally with seating, this is a place where the group can have refreshments, sit, chat and sing together
6. Finishing point where the walk ends.



An ideal Sing & Stroll route:

- Between 1 and 4 miles long
- Has a clear, firm and even walking surface
- Is a circular route
- Starts and ends in a safe, pleasant and accessible place
- Has 3 or more places along the route to stop and sing
- Includes beautiful and interesting places such as woodlands, hill views and historic features
- Gives a sense of wilderness and adventure
- Has seasonal opportunities such as bluebell walks
- Has suitable seating and toilets
- Has public transport access
- Provides opportunities to join for a segment of the walk
- Avoids roads and busy places
- Has no stiles or steep slopes
- Avoids hazards such as excessive trip hazards, muddy livestock areas and badly maintained pathways.

Planning for Singing

Singing in a group is an ancient human activity; it is an entirely natural behaviour which is both healthy and uplifting and can evoke early memories and positive emotions.

Singing is the heart of any Sing & Stroll event and the Singing Leader can encourage the group by leading with enthusiasm, good humour and smiles.

For many people, singing in front of others is embarrassing and they will say things like “I can’t sing” or “You don’t want to hear ME singing! “

They may be reluctant to sing out at first and it is important not to push them to do more than they are comfortable with.

Leaders can reassure participants that Sing & Stroll is not a choir, no singing talent is required, and there is nothing to be learnt or remembered. People can join in as much or as little as they wish.

They may prefer to hum, sway or just listen. The aim is to create a completely non-judgmental space for people to use their own voices and have fun together. In most cases if the group is singing, they will join in of their own choice.

Tip.

Research shows that our strongest musical memories are created in our younger years, between the ages of 5 and 25. For example, for someone born in 1940 their strongest musical memories would be from the years 1945 to 1965.

Choosing songs which are familiar to the group and which fit the mood and the moment helps give people confidence to join in and relax into the moment.

Songs should have relatively simple melodies and rhythms; some popular songs are surprisingly complex and may make it difficult for the group to stay harmonious!

Singing in rounds and complex songs can be great fun but can be confusing for people with dementia or those who lack confidence.

At the same time, new songs and slightly more challenging singing exercises can invigorate the group and give a sense of achievement.



Tip

Melodies for songs tend to stick in our memories, lyrics are not so easy to recall, so song sheets are helpful. In an outdoor environment individual song sheets can be awkward; people must dig out reading glasses and will be looking down rather than at the Singing Leader and each other.

A solution is to make up poster-sized lyrics sheets, a flip-chart scroll is ideal. Lyrics can be written out in large, clear lettering using a thick marker pen (it takes time but works well). These can be held up for everyone to see, like a karaoke set-up.

For people currently aged 55 - 90 and particularly those living with dementia, examples of suitable songs include:

Bring Me Sunshine

Blue Skies

Blue Moon

Catch a Falling Star

Dream a Little Dream

Doing the Lambeth Walk

Good Day Sunshine

Feeling Groovy (59th Street Song)

Fly Me to the Moon

I Can See Clearly

La Vie en Rose (English version)

Moon River

Sing, Sing a Song

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

The Happy Wanderer

Top of the World

When the Saints Go Marching In

Wonderful World

Singing Leading

There are typically 4 singing stops along a Sing & Stroll walk.

The First Stop is a warm-up stop, helping participants to loosen up, get used to using their voices and start having fun.

Everyone is invited to stand in a circle so that they can see each other while the Singing Leader takes them through a voice and body warm-up, including:

- Stretching arms, shoulders, hips and feet with controlled breathing
- Body exercises including wriggling, shaking, clapping and stamping
- Sound exercises including sighing, humming and call-and-response
- A warmup song.

This helps ease people into the activity both physically and mentally and is the start of the group bonding by being together in something.

It can also generate laughter, comments and playful behaviour, which leaders can actively promote - the goal is to help people to relax and have fun, not to train for opera!

While the warm-up is intended to help people stretch and open up, they should be advised to only go as far as their bodies comfortably allow.

For examples see Appendix D

Tip
People may know different exercises or songs with movements, and it is great to include these wherever possible – it gives people a chance to contribute to the group

The Second Stop is the first proper singing stop. The Singing Leader leads the group through 2 or 3 songs which ideally should be lively, uplifting, cheerful and easy.

The Third Stop is a straightforward singing stop and gives the group a chance to rest and regroup.

Again, the songs should be cheerful and uplifting, but there is a little more space for more thoughtful or slower songs.

The Fourth Stop is the final stop and typically when you might have some refreshments.

This is usually the longest stop and ideally has seats. It is a great time for conversation, sharing things seen on the walk and getting to know each other.

The last songs of the session happen here and are ideally hopeful and celebratory.

Tip

A good idea is to offer participants the opportunity to choose a favourite song from the list or suggest songs for the next walk.

Passers-by are often delighted to hear people singing and may even join in or wish to find out more about the group. It is worth having leaflets to hand.



Music can trigger powerful memories and there may be occasions when someone will get emotional and perhaps shed some tears.

This can happen if the song reminds them of an upsetting experience or equally if it reminds them of good times or people they have loved. These upsets are not necessarily a bad thing. For people who are grieving, it can be a helpful experience.

It may be an important moment for them, and they may welcome the reminiscence.

It is important to keep alert to how people are reacting and if a person becomes visibly upset, remain calm and keep singing, unless they become very distraught.

If a person is moved or upset, they may not want to become the focus of attention in the group. A good way to handle it is for a leader to approach the person quietly after singing and check in with them to make sure they are ok and see what they need.

4. The Singing and Strolling

The Day Before

As well as checking the weather forecast, the Walk Leader should ideally walk the intended route to check for any last-minute problems and alert the group if necessary.

They should also make sure they have:

- Emergency contact numbers for participants
- Details of connecting public transport
- Taxi or minicab numbers for the area
- Any relevant maps or notes
- Charged mobile phones
- First Aid kit

On the Day

Before the walk, the Walk Leader should check weather conditions again and if necessary, alter or cancel the walk, letting members know as soon as possible.

The Walk Leader should also check all necessary items are prepared and packed.

Leaders should arrive early at the meeting point to meet and greet participants on arrival.

It is worthwhile letting people know that the group will generally leave on time unless leaders know that someone will be late with good reason.

As participants arrive, the leader can:	Once everyone expected has arrived, the leader can
Welcome them individually, ask them privately about any relevant health issues and check that they have suitable footwear and clothing	Describe the route and what the weather will be like, how long the walk is likely to take and any important features or hazards.
Mark them on any participant register and complete any enrolment paperwork used	Explain the role of the leaders and back-stop and the involvement of any funders, and cover any Health and Safety details
Make introductions to other participants, staff or volunteers and encourage group conversation – this is especially helpful for new participants	Talk about benefits of walking and singing outdoors and answer any questions

Tip
Walking the route, the day before allows the walk leader to account for any sudden changes such as mud, road works or fallen trees. After this the walk (including changes or cancellation) can be confirmed to members by email, social media or phone.



During the Walk

- Walk Leaders should maintain a position at the front of the walk to both lead the way and set the right pace.
- Leaders and Backstop should always maintain awareness of the position and progress of all participants.
- Walk Leader should alert walkers to hazards as they arise and ask followers to pass the information back (including dogs and dog faeces or any unexpected hazards)
- The Backstop should maintain a position at the tail of the group so that they can see participants ahead of them.
- When crossing roads, the Walk Leader should stop and wait for walkers and the backstop to catch up and cross together.
- On approaching steps, more vulnerable walkers can be helped by the leader or a suitable volunteer from the group.
- Where the group is carrying refreshments, leaders can act as serving staff to ensure walkers can relax and are included.
- If a walker needs to drop out, the Walk Leader should halt the group and take the time to ensure that suitable arrangements are made.

Tip
Always follow the Countryside Code. Leave gates as you find them, don't touch farm machinery or animals, don't disturb heritage sites, don't disturb plants or wildlife and leave no trace behind, especially food or litter.



Health & Wellbeing

Ideally the registration process will inform walk leaders of any health issues that might affect a person's ability to participate.

On the day of the walk itself, leaders can encourage participants to talk to them if they are experiencing any difficulties such as pain, fatigue or cold.

The leaders can also keep observing participants -are they shivering, stooped, falling behind, on their own, downcast, limping? - and can consider if they need assistance.

Leaders need to be alert to people who may need additional support, for example, people living with dementia who should ideally be accompanied by a care partner.

Sometimes the care partner also needs support; this may be a rare chance to socialise and have fun and leaders should support this wherever possible

In busy or complex situations, people with dementia can be more easily confused or distracted which may cause them to miss their footing, walk in the wrong direction or fall behind. Leaders and backstop should always be alert to this.

If a walker needs to drop out, the Walk Leader should halt the group and take the time to ensure that suitable arrangements are made. This might involve accompanying the person to a bus-stop, contacting a carer or driver, or calling them a cab.

On finishing the walk, the leader should contact them afterwards to ensure they got home safely. Frail or vulnerable people should not be left to find their own way home without support.

On the issue of drugs and alcohol, intoxication amongst participants should generally be a bar to their attendance as it undermines the safety and enjoyment of the whole group.

Tip
Older people or those with health issues may be reluctant to admit they are struggling on the walk.

Some people will welcome assistance – a helping hand – at stairs or on uneven terrain. This must be done tactfully as over-attentiveness can undermine a person's sense of ability or independence, or just annoy them.

If a member of the group or a passer-by wants to film, photograph or record the group, the Walk Leader should find out what they will do with it and get the consent of every person on the walk – including other leaders and backstop – before agreeing.

Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments are a necessary part of safe walk planning and must be kept with you on each walk. They are a valuable tool in enabling leaders to understand the risks and protect the group from harm as far as is possible.

Risk Assessments are not difficult, but it is important to understand how they work and most importantly to complete the necessary tasks resulting from the assessments and ensure you keep updated.

For sample see Appendix E

A Risk Assessment includes:

Identifying the Hazards

The process of finding, listing, and characterizing hazards.

- hazards presented by the route itself such as tree roots, trips, slips and falls
- adverse weather
- potential hazards relating to walkers' circumstances, e.g. limited mobility or long-term health conditions, correct footwear, clothing

Assessing the Risk

The process for comprehending the nature of hazards and determining the level of risk.

- Normally ranked Low, Medium or High.
- Determine the likelihood of harm, such as an injury or illness occurring, and its severity.
- Consider normal operational situations as well as non-standard events such as maintenance, Covid 19 guidelines, emergencies, extreme weather, etc.

Reducing or Eliminate the Risk

Describing what actions can be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk.

- For example, eliminate the risk of falling while climbing a stile by avoiding stiles altogether or reduce the risks posed by inadequate footwear by telling walkers in advance that they need adequate footwear and making sure on the day that they have it.

Additional information can be found on the Health & Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

Liability Insurance

Public Liability insurance covers the leaders and/or organisers of the group if anyone is hurt due to their actions or negligence.

Walking groups or organisations may be able to help and advise you on this or a simple online search for 'insurance for walking groups' will bring up relevant insurance companies and advice

For an informal group of friends, insurance is not probably necessary so long as each

participant understands that they are not covered for accidents (unless they have their own insurance) and that they are entirely responsible for their own welfare.

However, in any group that includes people who might be vulnerable and where the leaders are taking an active role in organising, guiding and directing the group, and/or where a membership fee is being charged, insurance is a good idea and might need to be covered either by funds received or from a membership fee.

Emergencies

The potential for emergency situations should be minimised through preparation and Risk Assessment actions if done correctly; however, they can still arise.

In the event of an emergency, the Walk Leader should stop the walk and bring the group together. It may be that the situation can be resolved with First Aid treatment; it is advisable if one of the organisers or volunteers is First Aid trained and a First Aid kit should be carried on all walks.

If First Aid is not adequate or relevant it may be necessary to contact carers, next of

kin or the Emergency Services. It is important that the Walk Leader is carrying the necessary contact numbers and a charged mobile phone; they should also be able to tell anyone they speak to where they are and where the nearest vehicle access point is.

The Walk Leader should stay with the person until the emergency services arrive.

It may be necessary for the Walk Leader to delegate the Backstop and volunteers to return the group to the meeting point while they focus on the emergency.

Tip

Emergency calls can be made on any mobile phone network, not just your own. If you are somewhere where your network doesn't have reception, but another does, you get Emergency Calls Only.

If you are in a remote area there is an app you can download on your phone //what3words which will give you the location for 999 to know exactly where to find the incident.

Resources & Equipment

Sing & Stroll does not require much in the way of resources, this is one of its strengths. However, there are certain things that are needed for:

- Establishing and organising the group
- The walking
- The singing

Establishing and organising the group requires access to a computer with suitable software, internet access, a

The Walk Leader should also carry:

- First Aid Kit, including sunscreen and bite & sting soothing medication
- Charged mobile phone/s
- Risk Assessment paperwork

Other items might be provided by group members, or you might choose to provide them for the group, which can involve spending money.

This can be funded through a small charge to participants, or from any funding made available to the group.

Someone will be responsible for money, purchases and keeping accounts which may need to be made available either to the group, or the funder.

phone, paper, pens and a printer would be beneficial.

For the singing element, little more is needed than a flipchart scroll and some black marker pens.

For the walk itself, each participant will need their own suitable sturdy footwear, weather appropriate clothing (such as a sunhat or water-proof jacket), water-bottle and walking aids.

It may be that refreshments are purchased from an outlet on the way, which avoids the need to carry them but means people may need to know in advance to carry money.

In this case, you will need to buy or make refreshments and the necessary equipment to carry and serve them.

It could be that you provide some of the refreshments or equipment and members of the group contribute the rest.

For examples see Appendix F

A close-up photograph of several chocolate cupcakes. Each cupcake is topped with a swirl of dark chocolate frosting and decorated with numerous small, heart-shaped sprinkles in shades of pink and white. The cupcakes are arranged in a cluster, with some in the foreground and others slightly out of focus in the background. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the frosting and the vibrant colors of the sprinkles.

Tip

If you are providing refreshments, a little extra effort goes a long way – consider hot drinks in cold weather and or cold drinks when it's hot.

Allow for the range of possible dietary preferences such as decaffeinated or herbal teas, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, and allergy-considerate options for snacks.

Local or home-made treats also go down well.

5. Administration

Paperwork

The amount of paperwork required for your group depends on its organisation and funding.

An informal group of friends with no official membership or fees will have virtually no 'paperwork' beyond contact numbers or a Facebook page for example.

If your group is a managed, led and externally funded group, it is likely to require more paperwork – including computer files - which may include:

- Written agreements with funders
- Advertising materials that include funder logos
- A membership form and database
- A record of Leaders and volunteer names, contact details and training & qualifications
- Accounts
- A participant day register
- Evaluation and Feedback forms
- Written details regarding how participant's personal data will be handled in line with GDPR.

Promoting Your Group

If you do not already have members for your group, you will need to advertise. This involves time and/or money but is essential for the group to take off.

Things to consider are:

- who are the main group of people you wish to attract to the group?
- where are they most likely to come across your advertisement?
- what is your budget in terms of time, money and skills available?
- Create a clear and simple title

- Have a clear and simple description of the event advertised
- Don't forget to add dates, times, locations
- Include contact information – A name, a telephone number and/or email address
- Add details of any costs, limitations or requirements

Promotion involves a wide range of skills, if you don't have these skills yourself, this is a great time to look for volunteers and ask for favours!

For more on promoting see Appendix G

Tip
One thing to keep in mind is that all advertising takes time to put in place and to produce results. It must be done well in advance, ongoing and not just a one-off.

Registering New Members

Registering people as members helps them feel part of the group and signing a membership form creates a record of their agreement with any conditions.

A signed form might also be necessary to ensure they are covered by any insurance you have, or to meet your obligations to sponsors.

Registration can start with an informal conversation to get to know the new member and to tell them something about the group. This leads into gathering important information, including:

- Name and Address
- Contact number and/or email (including their preferred method of contact)
- Emergency contact numbers
- Any health information that might affect their participation such as limited mobility, arthritis, early stage dementia, limited vision etc.
- What they want to get out of the event

For sample form see Appendix H

Information for members

In return you will need to make sure new members are given details – preferably in writing - of:

- Your name and contact details
- What the walks will involve – the dates, distance, difficulty, pace and so on
- What singing with the group will involve
- How you will be in contact with them and when
- What is asked or expected of them
- What they will need to bring

It is vital that you assure members that their personal information will be kept securely and not passed on to any third party without their prior consent; and that you put GDPR measures in place.

Communicating with Participants

Good communication within with the group is a vital part of creating a successful and safe group. Communication can happen by email, phone call, text message, social media posts and word-of-mouth.

Different group members will have different needs or preferences, which need to be allowed for – for example some older people do not use the internet.

Ideally walks are regular so communications can also be regular, for example a regular walk at the same time on a Tuesday can be regularly confirmed (or cancelled) on the Monday.

Members can also confirm whether they will attend if they have an easy way to do

so, which means you will know in advance how many members to expect.

Routine is also a part of creating success – if people know, as part of their routine, when walks are likely to happen and when they are likely to hear about it, they are less likely to forget or make other arrangements.

Information Sources

Online searches are a great way to dig out information or talking to other organisations in the area is also very useful.

Information and opportunities may vary from area to area and time to time so you will need to do some research to find out what is available to you.

Useful starting points to find information and locate training.

<p>Local Information Council Offices Public Libraries GP Surgeries Community Action Organisations</p>	<p>Walk Leader Training The Ramblers Walking for Health Local walking groups</p>
<p>Training SCIE Online (Social care Institute for excellence) Alzheimer’s UK Age UK Local Community Action Groups Wildlife Trusts</p>	<p>Local Routes Local conservation organisations Tourist Information Walkers maps Rights of Way</p>
<p>Choosing Songs Playlists for Life website BBC Music Memories website YouTube</p>	<p>First Aid Training St John Ambulance British Red Cross Other approved Bodies</p>



6. Checklist: Are you ready to run your Sing & stroll event?

Task	Check
Walk Leader nominated?	
Walk Leader received proper training?	
Administrator nominated?	
Singing Leader nominated?	
Backstop nominated?	
Target audience decided on?	
Routes planned and checked?	
Risk Assessments written and acted on?	
Records and accounts set up?	
Songs decided and lyrics sheets set up?	
Methods of communication set up?	
Any necessary funding planned?	
Any necessary funding received?	
Resources & equipment gathered?	
Suitable advertising outlets identified?	
Group or event advertised?	
New members registered?	
Date decided for first event?	

If the answer to all the questions on this checklist is Yes, then you are Ready!

Appendix

- A. List of Benefits of singing together, walking and being out in nature
- B. Creating Our Group Template.
- C. Summary of Roles & Tasks
- D. Sample Warm-Up Exercises for Sing & Stroll
- E. Sample Risk Assessment
- F. List of Items required
- G. Sample poster / leaflet from previous Sing & Stroll
- H. Membership Registration Form
- I. Top tips for Running a Successful Group



A. List of Benefits of singing together, walking and being out in nature

Numerous scientific studies describe the multiple benefits of walking, singing together in groups, and being in natural settings. Including:

Benefits to the Body

- Improving muscle tone and general fitness
- Improving posture, which is good for joints, muscles, tendons, skeleton & internal organs
- Weight loss and increased muscle strength
- Greater joint mobility and health
- Supporting balance & motor skills
- Reducing muscle tension
- Improving heart, lung and digestive tract functions
- Regulating heartbeat
- Improving circulation
- Improving breathing & breath control
- Reduced the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Benefits to the Nervous System

- Exercising the nervous system, including the Vagus nerve which 'interfaces with parasympathetic control of the heart, lungs, and digestive tract' (Wikipedia) and can be stimulated by singing and humming, breathing exercises, cold, laughter and exercise.
- Benefits to the immune system by boosting the Immunoglobulin A Antibody

Benefits to Mental Wellbeing

- Stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system, which has a calming effect
- Promoting Endorphin & Oxytocin release which help to improve our mood
- Helping to balance cortisol which can help reduce chronic stress
- Promoting empathy and connection in pairs and groups
- Supporting memory and motor functions, especially for people with dementia
- Promoting self-expression and social confidence
- Reducing Stress and Anxiety
- Relieving Depression
- Improving sleep
- Lowering Alzheimer's risk

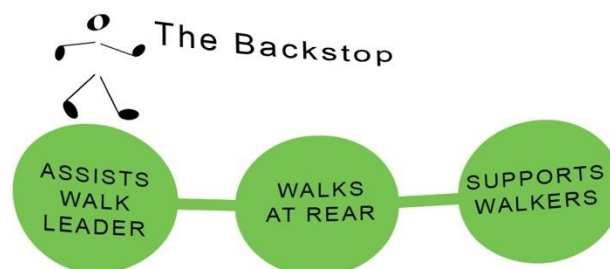
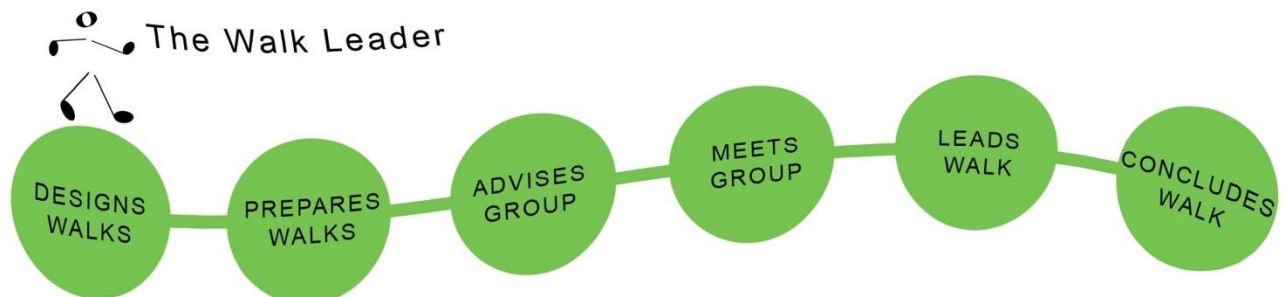
B. Creating Our Group Template

Question	Answer
Who Is the group for?	
How big will the group be?	
Will the Group be open to New members?	
What area will the group cover?	
When and how often will the group meet?	
How much support does the group have?	
How will the group be funded?	
Who will be the Walk Leader?	
Who will be the group Administrator?	
Who will be the Singing Leader?	
Who will be the Walk Backstop?	

C. Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble – Summary of Roles & Tasks

Shown here is a summary of the roles and tasks involved in running a Sing & Stroll event or group.

One person can do more than one role, or roles can be shared, but a minimum of two people are needed to cover all the roles – one person cannot be both Walk Leader and Backstop. For example, the Singing Leader can also be the Backstop and the Walk Leader can act as Administrator.





D. Sample Warm-Up Exercises for Sing & Stroll

The following some examples of suitable exercises, there are many more examples online.

The Singing Leader should illustrate each exercise first so the participants can watch and copy in time and should remind people to only go as far as they comfortably can and not to strain their body or voice.

Warming Up the Body:

- Stand up straight with your feet firmly planted on the ground
- Roll your shoulders forwards 10 times, then back 10 ten time.
- Breathing in, raise your arms up in front of you and up above your head. Hold this for a few seconds, then slowly lower your arms to your side while breathing out. Repeat.
- With your feet shoulder-width apart, put your left hand on your hip and raise your right hand above your head.
- Breathing out, stretch your right hand over your head towards your left and lean to the left to flex your spine. drop your hands to your side while breathing in. Swap hands – right hand on your hip – and repeat, bending to the right.
- Take a step forward onto your right foot and with your hands on your hips, move your hips forward while flexing your right knee and bending your spine back. Swap feet and repeat. Breath out as your push forward, breath in as your step back.
- If possible, stand on your left leg and flex your right knee then rotate your right ankle. Then swap feet and repeat.

Movements and Sounds

- With your feet shoulder width apart, place your hands on your hips and wind your hips in a clockwise direction and give a sound to those stretchy feelings – Oooh! Aaah! Repeat in an anticlockwise direction.
- Start by wiggling your shoulders like a 'shimmy'. Work the wiggle down your body, arms and legs ending in your wrist and ankles, all the time giving it a sound as if you are shaking off the cold.
- Do a standing march and clap in time. Then add a rhythmic chant, something like 'GO-ING-WALK-ING-GO-ING-SING-ING'

Voice Warm-Ups

- Take a deep breath in and as you exhale, sigh deeply.

Repeat, replacing the sigh with 'Ooooooh', 'Aaaah', 'Mmmm', 'Sssss' and 'Ssshhhh', each time trying to project the sound out in front of you.

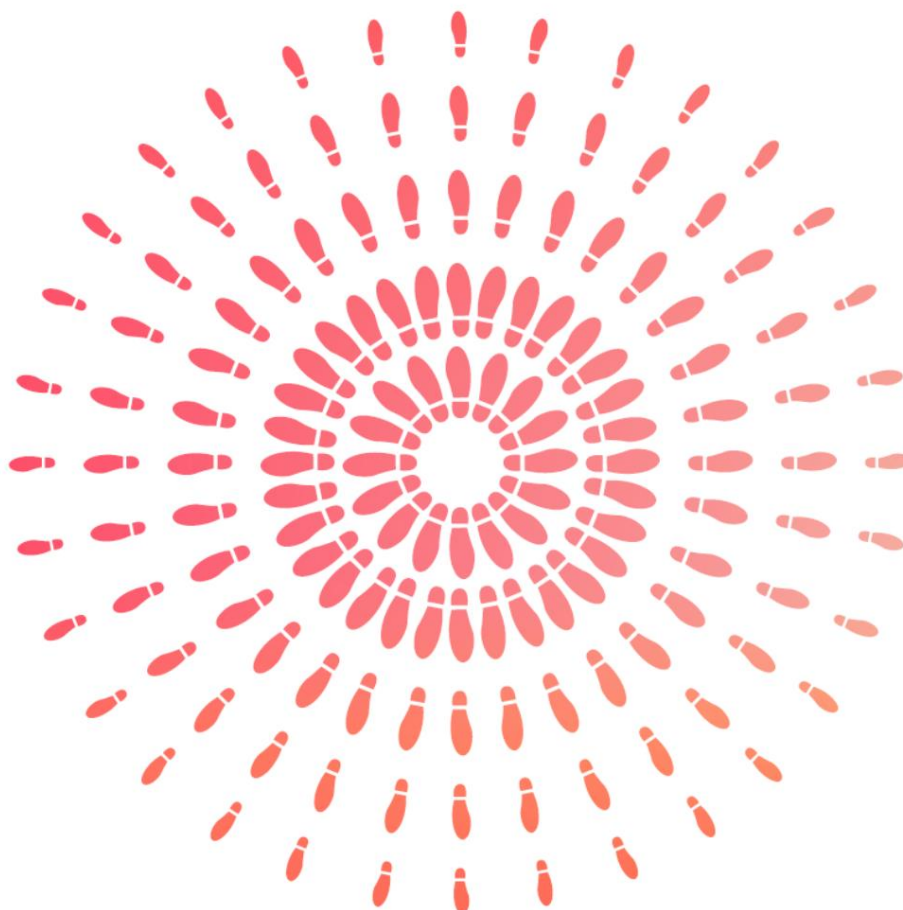
- Take a breath and start humming, gradually working the sound up from your tummy, through your chest and throat up into your nose, then back down.

- With the group swaying together in time, the Singing Leader calls out some 'nonsense sounds' or short phrases and the group responds by copying the sound in rhythm.

- A Warmup song – this closes the warm-up and readies the group for moving on.

'When the Saints Go Marching In' can be sung while marching on the spot.

The Hokey-Cokey is a very familiar song with associated movements.



E. Sample Risk Assessment

Risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually, or after accidents, near misses and when significant changes in personnel or work practices occur.

Advice on hazards, risks and risk assessment is available from the HMRC H&S Advisers.

Location		Activity					
All walk Locations		Sing & stroll, Rock & Ramble					
Issue							
1							
No.	Hazard	Possible effects/harm	Risk rating H, M, L	Detail existing controls	Detail further action required to reduce risk	Revised risk rating H, M, L	
	Something with the potential to harm: hazards listed should be all those present before controls are in place.	Where a group of people may be affected differently, for example young people or expectant mothers, identify the separate effects/harm and risk rating.	Indicate the rating prior to controls being in place. (See page 7 for guidance on rating the risk.)	Provide details of control measures already in place. If measures are detailed in other documents, state where.	Note the action required, responsible person and target date.	Indicate the rating following implementation of controls.	
1	Inadequate footwear	Physical harm due to Slipping, stumbling or falling	M	Participants advised in advance to wear suitable footwear	Walk leader to check participants footwear prior to walk. Advise not to walk if necessary.	L	
2	Inadequate clothing	Illness due to weather exposure	L	Participants advised in advance to wear suitable clothing.	Emergency ponchos to be carried by walk leader.	L	
3	Walking	Physical harm due to over-exertion	L	Walks designed to minimise potential for over-exertion. Walks to be paced by walk leader.	Participants to be advised to go at their own pace and advise walk leader of any difficulties.	L	
		Fatigue	L	As above	As above	L	
4	Distance from emergency services	Exacerbation of harm	L		Walk leader to ensure charged mobile phone carried at all times	L	
5	Infirmity	Physical harm due to pre-existing health conditions	M	Participants asked in advance to declare any health issues that might be cause harm	Walk leaders discretion to advise participants on whether and/or how long to participate	L	

		Wandering off due to dementia	H	Participants advised in advance that any person in need of care to be accompanied by a carer	Walk leaders discretion to refuse participation without care of any person evidently unfit	L	
		Intoxication	L		Walk leaders discretion to refuse participation of any person consuming alcohol or any drug, or obviously intoxicated	L	
	Trip/Fall Hazards	Physical harm due to stumbling or falling	M	Routes planned to minimise potential trip hazards.	Walk leader to advise participants in advance of potential trip / stumble hazards on route	L	
	Roads	Physical harm from moving vehicles	H	Routes planned to minimise road crossings.	Walk leader to advise participants in advance of road crossings and with backup to manage participants crossing roads	L	
	Footpaths	Slipping or falling due to slippery, wet or infirm surfaces	M	Walk leader to study weather forecast and scope routes in advance	Walk leader to advise participants in advance of surface conditions and change route if deemed necessary	L	
		Physical harm due to difficult walking terrain	L	Routes planned to minimise difficulty of route terrain.	Walk leader to revise route if deemed necessary	L	
	Ditches, waterways, barbed wire or other fences	Physical harm or death resulting from falling into water or from a height	H	Routes designed to avoid proximity to hazards as far as possible	Walk leader to warn participants in advance of hazards nearby and guide them to safe areas	L	
	Paths – obstructions, overhanging, thorns, Trip Hazards	Physical harm due to overhanging branches, thorns	L	Well-used and maintained routes used	Walk leader to alert participants in advance of hazards overhead	L	
	Plants & Insects	Physical harm due to bites, stings, scratches etc.	L	Routes and season minimise possibility of insect bites. Routes planned to minimise exposure to stinging & scratching plants. Participants advised in advance to bring any necessary medication.	Basic first aid materials to be carried.	L	
		Allergic Reactions	H	Participants asked beforehand to inform walk leader of any potential allergic reactions and necessary actions	As above – where possible. Walk leader to maintain charged mobile phone to ensure uninterrupted contact with emergency services		

	Weather	Sunburn	L	Participants advised in advance to wear suitable clothing.	Walk leader to modify or cancel walks to allow for weather conditions if deemed necessary	L	
		Hypothermia	L	Participants advised in advance to wear suitable clothing.	Walk leader to modify or cancel walks to allow for weather conditions if deemed necessary	L	
		Dehydration	L		Walk leader to carry water and refreshments	L	
	Livestock	Physical harm through contact with animals	M	Walk leader to ascertain in advance presence and nature of livestock	Participants to be advised at beginning of walk of presence of livestock and appropriate behaviour. Route to be modified if walk leader deems necessary.	L	
		Damage to property or livestock	M	As above	As above	L	
	Singing	Vocal strain	L	Singing leader to plan suitable warm-up exercises	Singing leader to allow for weather conditions and participant experience and advise participants accordingly	L	
	Tea & refreshments	Burns or choking	L		Walk leader to be responsible for handling hot water.	L	
		Allergic reactions	M	Participants asked in advance if they have any allergies or intolerances	Refreshments to include gluten & lactose free alternatives.		

Declaration

Managers should monitor and review the application of the specified controls.

Prepared by

Date

Signature

Date

I certify that all controls are in place which reduce risk to as low as is reasonably practicable, all staff have been informed and safe systems of work have been applied.

F. List of Items required

Essential and Important items

- First Aid kit including high factor sunscreen, eye wash and ointment for stings and bites
- Charged mobile phone
- Any necessary maps and/or notes
- Public transport information
- List of numbers for taxi firms
- Weatherproof paperwork holder
- Song Lyric sheets

Necessary Items for all Leaders and Group Members

- Sturdy footwear with a good grip
- Weather – appropriate clothing (Waterproofs, warm clothing, cool clothing, sunhats etc)
- Personal Water bottle
- Walking poles if required

Helpful Extra Items to Take

- Emergency ponchos / Umbrellas
- Spare walking poles
- Small lightweight folding chair/s
- Camera / video
- Torch

For Refreshments

- Hot water / flask
- Cups
- Tea / coffee / fruit teas
- Biscuits / gluten free / other
- Biscuit/cake box
- Sheathed knife
- Small picnic blanket

Depending on set-up of group

- Walk Register
- Registration Forms
- Evaluation Survey Information
- Satisfaction Survey Forms
- Sponsor & walk leaflets
- Clipboard & Pens



G. List Ways to Advertise & Sample Poster

Way of Advertising	Notes
<p>Leaflets – Can be handed out at events and on walks, left at information points, sent to other organisations, included with letters or other mail-outs. Remember leaflets can be treated as junk-mail so think carefully how cost-effective they are.</p>	
<p>Posters – One poster in a good location can reach many people and therefore be very effective. Remember the poster should be eye-catching, clear, attractive and informative.</p>	
<p>Online Advertising – Social media sites and websites offer great cost-free opportunities for advertising. Remember that not everyone uses the internet, have another way to contact these.</p>	
<p>Through other organisations – Many organisations such as charities and community groups will be happy to promote your group on websites, events, noticeboard & newsletters. Remember check local directories as many of these will be listed.</p>	
<p>Local GP surgeries – These often have noticeboards or leaflet outlets, and increasingly doctors and surgeries are happy to promote events which support health and wellbeing. Remember health services such as mental health and hospital services can also help.</p>	
<p>Local newspapers – Local newspapers are always looking for interesting local events to include, you can provide them with photographs and a well-written press release or article, they are very likely to print it, and can regularly include it in their ‘What’s On’ section.</p>	
<p>Local radio stations – These are often looking for local interest items. They may just read out your information a few times, or they may be willing to interview you on air to give you a chance to talk in more detail about your event.</p>	
<p>Personal Invitation – This is a very effective and easy way of promoting the group. Word of mouth is very powerful, so if you are out and about and meet others that you think might be interested, talk to them, remember you are not selling. Remember you can also ask your group to tell their friends and their friends</p>	



Sing & Stroll Rock & Ramble

**Walking & Singing Together
in the Great Outdoors.**

**Join us for a short, medium or longer walk in
and around Bridport. On the way we'll stop to
sing familiar & favourite songs. Refresh your
mind, body and soul in 2019!**



**Fun, Fitness & Fresh Air
No Singing Talent Required**



FREE!

STARTING JANUARY 2019

TUESDAYs at 1.30pm

**For Dates or to Reserve a Space contact Peter on
07817 397331 or at timeandscale@gmail.com**



H. Sample Membership Registration Form

Sing & Stroll, Rock & Ramble – Membership Registration Form	
Date	
First Name	
Surname	
Address Line 1	
Line 2	
Line 3	
Town	
Postcode	
Phone	
Mobile	
Preferred mode of contact	
Emergency Contact Details	
Name	
Contact Number	
Relationship	
Emergency Contact Details	
Date of Birth	
Details of any health conditions that may limit walking ability e.g. arthritis, asthma	
Anything else walk leaders should know about you	
Notes	
I acknowledge that I have been made aware of any conditions of joining this group and agree to abide by those conditions.	
Signed	
Date	

I. Top Tips for Running a Successful Group

There are many things organisers can do to create an enjoyable Sing & Stroll event. These include:

- Clear communication to make sure everyone knows what is going on and when
- Warm welcomes and introductions, which create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.
- Acknowledging shyness as something we might all experience.
- Building confidence by using making it easy for people to join in.
- Conversation helps to grow friendships and mutual support.
- Encouraging singing by joining in with enthusiasm, regardless of talent!
- Encouraging movement with a healthy pace on the walk and moving while singing.
- Adventure and discovery such as unexpected views and seasonal surprises
- Gentle challenges such as walking up a hill or visiting a wild area
- Finding peace and quiet for meditation, listening to nature and singing quieter songs.
- Including local history adds value and allows people to contribute their own knowledge.
- Being prepared and letting People Know It allows people to relax and feel safe
- Refreshments provide sustenance and the opportunity for rest and conversation
- Enabling participants to contribute stories, knowledge, home-made cakes or support for others enables them to feel part of the group, even to have a stake in it.
- Expecting the unexpected moments that often arise – a rainbow, birds singing or passers-by joining in. Embracing these moments opens the group up to moments of shared joy.
- Encouraging laughter is one of the best ways to dissolve embarrassment and encourage bonding, if it is not at anyone's expense. Laughter is good medicine!

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This publication is not intended as a 'how to' guide for working with people living with dementia, it is a selection of activities used and enjoyed as part of the Sing & stroll, Rock & Ramble project, and guidance on how to successfully deliver them.

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