



A few pointers on setting up a Mountaineering Ireland club

Is there a need for the club or are there other clubs in the area that you could join?

Is there (likely to be) sufficient interest to sustain a club? (You probably need at least 10 members to keep a club going).

Are there walking opportunities in the vicinity or within one (maximum two) hour's driving distance?

Do you have the experience to lead walks or is there somebody else involved with that experience?

Set up a meeting to discuss the formation of a group, agree some ground rules and plan your first few walks.

Decide early on what activities you want to do (e.g. rambling or hill walking) and make it clear in any publicity what level the group is pitched at.

Do you want to have any membership restrictions? (e.g. will the club be open to under 18's?).

Have some fun deciding on a name.

Choose a central meeting point, this will allow people without transport to join in and it means that you can car-pool (this reduces the pressure for parking spaces in popular walking areas).

Make some provision for drivers to be compensated for their petrol expenses (possibly best to have a fixed fee for passengers irrespective of distance, it's easier to manage and it'll balance out over time)

Starting off it's probably best to walk every two weeks (you may not have sufficient numbers if you go out every week and once a month may not be frequent enough to allow fitness build up).

Local radio, local newspapers, library and supermarket notice boards could be useful to publicise the group, but be careful not to enlarge the group too fast.

Make sure everybody knows what they're getting into - how many hours they will be out for, what clothing to wear and what to bring with them (put together a brief information sheet or gear list).

Ask people to tell you discreetly if they are on medication or have any medical condition.

For safety and environmental reasons walking group size should ideally be less than 10 people, and should not exceed 15. If your numbers are greater than that consider having two walks (possibly longer and shorter).

Avoid being too dependent on one person (e.g. what happens if that person moves to another area?) get as many people as possible involved in planning and leading walks, and other aspects of organising the club.

Setting up a committee can be a good way of ensuring that responsibility is shared, it is also helpful in decision-making.

Think about joining Mountaineering Ireland

- you get insurance, a quarterly magazine, discounts in outdoor shops, plus information and advice to help with running your club.

Consider organising a training course for members of the club.

Go away for a walking (or training) weekend, this is a really good way of bonding the group and you can have the fun of exploring a new area.

Working for and representing hillwalking, climbing and alpinism

www.mountaineering.ie