

# Notes for Jane's Walk Leaders

Practical advice on walk planning, walk strategies and safety, in advance and on the day

## Excited? Spread the word

@janeswalkcolch



The following guidance is in part taken from the Jane's Walk international site ([janeswalk.org](https://janeswalk.org)) and in part based on our former experience in Colchester.

Do take a look at the international site - there are useful materials there, and a long list of all the past and present Jane's Walk cities which is fun to browse. In particular, check out the '6 tips for Leading a Jane's Walk' (see: <https://janeswalk.org/about-us/>); they are a nice introduction to the spirit of leading a Jane's Walk.

Here are some practical tips and reminders for our walks in Colchester

## Meeting your group

- Be sure to identify yourself easily as walk leader - be proactive in looking out for people who are looking out for you! If you said in advance that you would identify yourself one way or another, make sure you do in fact do that on the day.
- Keep to the agreed starting time as far as possible (ideally no more than 5 minutes after your published start time). Equally, don't be tempted to start early just because a good number of people arrive early.
- Importantly, have a friend with you in a supporting role (\*for various practical purposes discussed further below, eg to take a headcount, take photographs, bring up the rear, keep the pavement clear, look out for people who are looking lost or may need assistance!). These are all roles you don't really want as walk leader, especially when there is a large turnout although *all* walks benefit from such support.
- Take note the makeup of your group – eg any mobility-restricted walkers or chair users (accompanied or unaccompanied), whose presence may impact on the route taken if there are any barriers along the way. Have an individual word before setting off as you feel necessary.

# Things to cover at the beginning of all walks

*This may seem like a lot to cover but these notes are mostly only brief mentions, and this time spent at the beginning of the walk does also allow latecomers to catch up and the group to fully assemble.*

## Introductions

- Introduce yourself and say a word about the wider Jane's Walk festival, in Colchester and internationally (500+ cities have participated worldwide by now).
- Likewise, it's great to say a word about Jane Jacobs, the festival namesake (aim to know enough at least to be able to answer basic questions about who she was, when she lived, some of her key ideas)
- Give a bit of an intro to your walk, what it's about and the general route you plan to take (this doesn't need to be detailed but helps a larger group stay together, especially if your walk is in the busy city centre).

## Expectations

- Our walks are not tour guide style walks: they don't claim expertise in quite the same way (although walk leaders may be very knowledgeable about their subject areas); in principle anybody can lead a walk, and importantly they encourage conversation. In fact this is one of their main objectives. It's good to say this at the outset – to encourage questions, and the sharing of knowledge/experience and stories by walk participants etc wherever relevant.

## A word about photographs

- We love to gather photographs from the walks and encourage people to take them. Do let people know though, at the outset of the walk, that photographs may be shared on social media or occasionally used for promotional purposes. Some walk participants may understandably not want this. Please give them the opportunity to opt out and ask the group to be sensitive to this.
- If children are present on walks be especially mindful of consent issues. In general, avoid individual and/or close-up shots of children, where they are easily identifiable, unless in a context where parents/guardians are present or involved. We avoid photographs of children when images are chosen for promotional purposes (e.g. in press releases etc), except where this is in the context of larger groups of walkers where children are not the focus of the shot.
- We do have a policy on taking photographs on walks, which is now published online beneath the walk programme on our Jane's Walk webpage: [walkcolchester.org.uk/janes-walk](http://walkcolchester.org.uk/janes-walk)
- Our social media accounts / contact info are as follows:

Facebook: @janeswalkcolch  
Instagram: @janeswalkcolch  
Email: info@walkcolchester.org.uk

## Walk Safety

- A few notes of caution (for city centre walks especially) given at the outset of your walk is always a good idea e.g. encouraging the group to stay together, to take care crossing roads etc. It may seem unnecessary, but it is also about establishing that we have done what we can to make our walks safe....
- It is also *very important* that we speak to the group about ensuring the safety of other path/pavement users, i.e. those not part of our walks but potentially negatively impacted by them.

In particular we **MUST** be mindful of always keeping a route along the pavement clear, especially important in busy locations within the city centre, allowing sufficient space for passers-by.

This is *everybody's* responsibility, hence the need to mention it at this point. BUT it is the walk leader's responsibility overall, despite the fact that you are not always in the best position to keep an eye on such issues when preoccupied with delivering other aspects of your walk. Another reason for the particular importance of having a friend co-lead on such practical aspects.

## Headcounts

- Please take one! (definitely a \*supporter's role!). We are always asked about numbers, which is a pity in many ways because large numbers do not make for the best walks (so don't be disheartened if yours is a smaller one). But this remains one of the main ways we can demonstrate impact, and it is helpful for funding applications etc.

## Helping walks work well along the way

*You are strongly advised to run through the full route of your own walk, stop by stop, with the practical and safety points below in mind (in your head if not in person). What is your Plan B in the various scenarios that might present themselves (unexpectedly large numbers; a wheelchair user turning up; poor weather etc).*

### Consider the suitability of stop locations

- A great point of interest (POI) is not necessarily a great place to stop! Think about the size and nature of the space available and the nearby alternative locations that might be better suited to stopping and talking.
- Hold that thought! If there isn't adequate room for the group to stop safely at the actual POI, stop just long enough to point it out, then relocate to talk about it somewhere there's more space (or better cover from the weather or less noise etc). You don't need to be immediately in front of a POI to talk about it.

### Give advance notice of the next stop

- Just as suggested at the route outset, it's a good idea at each stop to let your group know where you're headed next, especially on longer route sections. This helps keep the group together and prevent floaters getting lost and peeling away. Again, this is especially relevant to walks with large numbers where it really is possible to lose walkers in the busy city centre...
- Note, walks typically gain and lose some walkers as they go. Don't be disheartened if walkers peel off occasionally; this happens for all sorts of reasons (other commitments, children's needs, even occasionally to join another walk!), but we regularly pick up walkers too, especially on city centre walks.

## Be heard (especially on large walks and in busy city centre settings)

- Wherever possible position yourself where possible so that your back is against the wall or similar, as a buffer, so your voice project fully outwards, and is least affected by peripheral noise.
- Consider standing on a low wall or a bench or similar, to give you the advantage of some height above your group, and the group the possibility to see your face.
- Consider using voice amplification. Few of us have made this work successfully out of doors, but it is an option. A portable PA system was once used, but for a Rock n Roll History of Colchester (over 100 turned up), so a microphone turned out to be not only necessary but perfect!

## Allow time to regroup

- On larger walks especially, some walkers tend to trail out between stops. A bit of re-grouping keeps walkers engaged with what you're saying, avoids repetition and helps with the problem of being heard (above).
- Don't wait so long though that you begin to lose the engagement of those walk participants up front, especially where the weather is poor etc. There's a judgement obviously to be made. On a nice day, a 2 or 3-minute break whilst others catch up is a great opportunity for conversation. But it is very often conversation that is slowing down those bringing up the rear, so no need always to worry *too much* about them!

## Bring your walk to an end!

- It sounds obvious but do find some way of rounding your walk up with some final comments and opportunity for chat and questions. A perfect way to do this might be over a cup of tea/coffee or beer etc, so bear this in mind when thinking about the location of your last walk stop?

## Have fun with it 😊

Whether this is your first walk or you're a seasoned Jane's Walker, hopefully you will find your stride, relax into it and have a great time

I hope this all helps you on the day. Most of it is common sense and just to be treated as a check list, but worth a look over each time, even if you've led plenty of walks previously. We also welcome your additional comments for inclusion here, based on your experience. Please be in touch to discuss; likewise with any concerns or questions you may have.

Rowena Macaulay

## Contact

t: City Organiser - Rowena Macaulay 07710 474999

e: [janeswalkcolch@gmail.com](mailto:janeswalkcolch@gmail.com)

## Links

JW Web: <https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/janes-walk>

JW Blog: <https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/talking-walking-colchester>

Facebook: Jane's Walk Colchester / @janewalkcolch

Instagram: janeswalkcolch