

1. Introduction

To comply with government lockdown rules the Russell Society halted the 2020 field trip programme until 30th June 2020. The government has since eased the lockdown and social distancing guidelines were amended on 1st June 2020 and were subject to further amendment on 4th July 2020. They have since been further amended, and a new version was issued on the 7th October 2020 (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>). In addition, in October the government introduced local COVID Alert Levels (Medium, High and Very High). Field trips need to comply with government requirements for local Alert Levels, and field trip leaders should check the local Alert Levels prior to trips as they are subject to change. See <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> . This guidance note has been prepared to help Branches undertake their activities in a safe manner and in accordance with Government social distancing rules.

This guidance note only applies to activities being undertaken within England. For activities undertaken in other parts of the UK, branches should adapt this guidance to take account of the specific (and different) social distancing guidelines that may apply to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In addition, for clarity, social distancing guidelines issued by the government for England shall take precedence over this guidance note, should any inconsistency between the two be identified. Social distancing guidelines may change further in the future. Council will update this guidance on an ad hoc basis to take account of any future changes. In the meantime, it remains the responsibility of Branches, however, to keep themselves up to date with government social distancing rules and to apply any new rules to their activities.

2. Government Guidance

Refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Outdoor field trips

Council considers field trip activity to be outdoor exercise. Since 1st June 2020 the government has allowed people to exercise outdoors in groups of up to six people, from different households and at any distance from home. This government guidance will remain in place after 4th July. From 4th July larger groups of up to 30 people may gather for ‘major life events’.

Indoor meetings

Indoor meetings between members of different households are not currently permitted by the government. The 4th July changes will only allow groups from two different households to meet indoors at any one time.

Council decision

Council has agreed that the outdoor field trip programme can recommence on 4th July 2020 providing field trips only involve groups of up to six people and providing social distancing rules are applied. Field trips are not 'major life events' therefore larger groups are not permitted.

Council has decided that indoor meetings are not permitted until further notice.

3. Risk

The application of social distancing rules will reduce the risk of catching Covid 19 but will not completely remove this risk. Given the nature of our field trip activities, including an outdoor location and the application of social distancing measures, Council considers that the general risk of members catching Covid 19 is low.

Signing of the field trip indemnity form will be deemed to be confirmation that attendees have read and understood this guidance (in addition to the normal Society risk assessment), that they will adhere to the social distancing rules set out in this guidance and that they are attending at their own risk, in the knowledge that a residual risk of catching the virus remains.

Whilst Council considers that it is now reasonable and safe to recommence field trips we wish to make it clear that should any field trip leader remain uncomfortable with running field trips, e.g. either for personal reasons or because of an increased incidence of the virus locally, no obligation is placed on them to hold the trip and the final decision to run a trip or cancel is at their discretion.

4. Social distancing rules for field trips

The following social distancing rules and mitigation measures will be applied to all field trips from 4th July 2020 until further notice:

1. This guidance note shall be issued in advance to all persons attending the trip, by email or post (for those without email).
2. Field trip party size shall not exceed six people, including the field trip leader.
3. People experiencing Covid 19 symptoms or generally feeling unwell shall not attend field trips. If a person begins to feel unwell en-route to a field trip, turn back and do not attend. If a person begins to feel unwell during a field trip, notify the field trip leader immediately and leave.
4. People who have been asked to isolate by NHS after Test and Trace shall not attend field trips.
5. People who are clinically shielding shall not attend field trips.
6. People who are clinically vulnerable (i.e. over 70 years old or under 70 years old but with an underlying health condition as set out by the government) are recommended not to attend field trips. Council appreciates, however, that many of our older members are fit and healthy and may wish to accept the risk of attending.
7. Do not car share on your journeys to and from field trips.
8. Maintain a minimum 2m distance between yourself and others (including third parties such as landowners/ quarry operators) at all times. Try to avoid facing each other for prolonged periods, even at 2m separation.
9. Do not share tools, food, water or other objects between people.

10. Take your own pen for signing the indemnity form and either use gloves whilst signing or wash/ sanitise your hands before and after signing. Field trip leaders should weigh the indemnity form down and leave people to sign it independently. The indemnity form should be placed in a container (e.g. plastic wallet) and not handled for at least 72 hours after the trip. Council considers the signing and processing of independent forms for those attending both unwieldy and unnecessary.
11. Field trip gifts (e.g. bottle of wine for landowner/ operator) should be avoided at this time. No cash contributions should be asked of members. Where a fee is payable to the landowner (e.g. Raby Estates, Ting Tang Mine, the field trip leader shall make the payment online and members attending shall pay the field trip leader online).
12. The initial field trip briefing/ H&S review must be held outdoors.
13. If using toilets/ wash facilities do so singly. Avoid contact with surfaces/ handles as much as possible and sanitise hands again after leaving the building.
14. Each person shall bring their own hand sanitiser with them on the trip. Sanitise your hands before eating lunch or taking drinks. Preferably wear gloves at all times (this is required for quarry trips in any event) and minimise contact with gates/ latches/ handles/ stiles where possible.
15. The field trip leader shall carry with them spare hand sanitiser, three 'face coverings' such as 'face masks' (to meet government guidance - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>) and three pairs of latex disposable gloves, in the unlikely event that a member of the party needs assistance which requires operating within the 2m safeguarding distance. The injured person should be asked to wear a mask if possible. Helpers should wear a mask and gloves. The cost of these items can be recovered from the Society as an expense.

5. Documentation

This guidance shall be issued to all Branch Organisers and Field Trip Organisers. A copy of the guidance shall be held online at <http://russellsoc.org/safety/> or can be obtained from the Vice President or General Secretary.

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