

Caring for the countryside

The DofE Expedition section is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. Your enjoyment and the enjoyment of future DofE participants is dependent upon treating the countryside with respect and maintaining positive relationships with the people who live and work there.

It's not just enough to know the Countryside Code. Remembering to show consideration and courtesy for the rural way of life is important. Please take some time to read the information in this leaflet to reinforce and supplement your own training programme and as a quick reminder of good practice before setting off on expedition.

Essential Practice

- The peace of the countryside is part of its appeal to others, so keep noise to a minimum.
- Keep to your route
- Use stiles or gates.
- If you find yourself confronted with a locked gate or fence — check your route, you are probably in the wrong place.
- Don't climb over fences or walls, remember, if you damage a boundary someone has to pay to have it repaired—you may need to compensate the landowner.
- Know when you can and can't journey across Access Land.
- Farmers often leave gates shut, but will sometimes leave them

open to allow animals to get to food, water or low ground in bad weather. Leave gates as you find them.

- Stay together—never leave gates open for the last person in the team to shut. The person who arrives first at a gate should wait until the last person is through so that it can be left as it was found.
- Country lanes may appear quiet but people drive very fast on them. So taking a break on a road isn't a great idea, find somewhere safe away from traffic to take your breaks, and take care crossing roads.
- Fires in the countryside cause widespread damage to the environment and wildlife and of course are a risk to human life. Grass/Moorland fires take hold very quickly—always take great care when using stoves and disposing of matches. Do not light camp fires or burn toilet paper to dispose of it.

Facilities

- Don't use private facilities such as toilets or parking if you aren't a paying customer at the camp site.
- Remember that other people using the campsite may be trying to relax or sleep, so be quiet on camp sites, especially after dark.



Useful Contacts:

**Wales Assessor
Network
Administration
Officer:**

Bev Williams-Pugh

**The Duke of
Edinburgh's Award**

Wales / Cymru

E: Walesexpeds@dofe.org

T: 01874 623086

Further information:

Find out more about the countryside code at:
www.countrysidecode.wales.org.uk

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website has lots of information at:
www.breconbeacons.org

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) has lots of useful information on its website and you can download *The Green Guide to the Uplands* at:
www.thebmc.co.uk

Snowdonia National Park Authority website:
www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/home

Travel and parking

- Explore public transport options to get you around the area you are visiting and reduce your carbon footprint.
- Start and finish your route at a point where it will be ok for your leader to stop their vehicle or better still many areas have shuttle buses for walkers which could be used to get you to your start point.
- Be courteous and inform landowners if you know that you will be dropping off or collecting teams near their homes.
- Please use public car parks where available.
- If you have to park in a village don't block drives or gateways even if they look unused.
- If you would like to use a pub as a drop off point call before hand and check its OK. If you want to park all day offer to pay a fee.

Litter

- All litter and spare food must be carried off the hill. It doesn't just spoil the surroundings, it can be poisonous to wildlife & livestock.
- If you are using check point cards or similar they all **must** be collected up.
- Litter can take many forms. Human waste needs to be dealt with in an appropriate way. Do not leave toilet paper/tissues in the countryside they do not degrade quickly. For information on disposing of human waste go to www.lnt.org

- Always check your stopping points for litter before you leave especially at your pick up point at the end of your expedition when the excitement of tucking into your emergency rations can cause you to forget to clear up your rubbish.

Livestock and wildlife

- Most animals are used to people. Some animals though can behave unpredictably if you get too close, especially if they have their young with them. Give them plenty of space and be quiet as you pass by and they won't bother you.
- Some of the areas you pass through will contain rare or protected species of plants and animals. Find out about the biodiversity of your route before you set out - it will enhance your experience and will help to protect these sensitive places

Keep these things in mind and you will have a great experience and you will leave knowing that your impact on the beautiful countryside of Wales has been a positive one.

Give something back

During your visit to the Welsh countryside think about how you can give something back:

- Buy local food for your journey.
- Feed back to the DofE Co-ordinator any issues with footpath information or positive comments about the places you have visited.

