



W O L V E R H A M P T O N
mountaineering club

WMC Rules – Introduction to Members

For over 50 years, the Club has existed without seeing any need for written rules. We have always had a constitution – a brief document saying what we are, what we stand for, and how we operate in a general sense. This was written in the 1950s when the Club was founded, and proved quite adequate in those days, for a club with only 20 to 30 members.

But times change, we now have approaching a hundred members, a catchment area covering most of the West Midlands, and a thriving hut, which throws up its own issues. With a larger club, it is hard to know everyone well. Members in the further-flung parts of the region have difficulty in attending the regular Tuesday pub evenings. New members have difficulty in finding out about the Club's modus operandi. So do some older ones. The present committee felt the need to have the Club's decisions collected together for easier reference, rather than scattered throughout the minutes of many past meetings. We have grasped this nettle firmly, and the result is the following set of rules.

Society has become more litigation-conscious. We have to change to take account of the changes in the law. The biggest change we have recently made is one undertaken with reluctance - to restrict membership to people over the age of 18. Not to have done so would leave the club and its members liable under child abuse and safety law. Hopefully, a written set of rules will make members more aware of their rights and obligations.

It is not the intention to make the Club more bureaucratic. The rules are all made for a purpose. Some of them are hard and fast rules, like the one that says dogs are not allowed at the hut. Others, like the one that says you should do your share of the cleaning, are more in the nature of codes of practice. All of them are thought to be worth following, but not in a petty-minded or officious way, and the committee will give short shrift to any member who tries to play the game of gratuitous rule enforcement.

None of these rules is set in concrete. Unlike the constitution (which requires a two-thirds majority at a general meeting for any change), the rules were made by a simple majority of the committee, and can likewise be unmade or altered by later committees. However, much thought and hard work has gone into their writing, and we trust that future committees will not amend them without good reason and due deliberation. If any member has comments, good or bad, about any of the rules, the committee will always be prepared to listen.

Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club Rules

Rules first written Jan 2008, including revisions Nov 2011, June 2014, June 2019, and Nov 2023

Originally, the Club had a very brief written constitution. Now that the Club is much larger, the need has arisen for a more detailed set of written rules, to expand on the constitution. With more members, close communication is harder. The committee thought it would help new members (and some old ones) to have an easily accessible record of how the Club operates.

Membership Rules

Every organisation needs new blood to thrive, but we also need to survive, and even mountaineers need to be safety conscious. We do not want members who are an excessive danger to themselves and others. Nor are we so keen on those with a short-term thrill-seeking bungee-jumping mentality. Because of its commitment, long duration and wide flung venues, mountaineering involves more “down time” than conventional sports, so we do want members who are sociable and good company.

It's hard to make snap judgements on prospective members, so, unlike the YHA; we don't have a sign-on-the-line, lets-have-your-money instant membership style. We do need a few rules to control the mad scramble to join such a wonderful outfit.

1. Membership of the Club is open to anyone over the age of 18 years, who shares the Club's objectives, as defined in the constitution.
2. A member of the Club is any person who falls into either of the following two categories:
 - (i) Ordinary Member: Someone who has been elected to membership by the committee and paid the appropriate current subscription.
 - (ii) Honorary Member: Someone who has been elected as an honorary member by a general meeting, for outstanding service to the Club. An honorary member has the same rights as an ordinary member, but is not obliged to pay subscriptions.
3. A Lapsed Member is anyone other than an honorary member, who has been a member, but has not paid the current subscription. A lapsed member is not a member, and has none of the rights of membership until their subscription is fully paid. Someone whose membership has lapsed for two years or more may be required to reapply for membership as a prospective member, at the committee's discretion.
4. A Prospective Member is anyone who is not yet a member, but has expressed a wish to become one, and has submitted a membership application form to the New Members' Secretary. A prospective member must be at least 18 years of age.
5. To qualify for membership, a prospective member must, after submitting an application form, attend at least three official outdoor meets (other than single day meets), or two of these and two other days on the crags/hills in the company of at least two members, within a 12 month period, or longer at the committee's discretion. If any member has comments to make about a prospective member, favourable or otherwise, these should be made ASAP to the New Members' Secretary who will take appropriate action before the application is placed before the committee.
6. After completing these requirements, a prospective member may then apply for membership by completing the application form, with the signatures of the proposer and seconder, who must both be members and the proposer, must have been on the crags/hills with the applicant. The completed form should then be submitted to the committee via the New Members' Secretary. Election to membership is then at the discretion of the committee.
7. A prospective member who is elected to membership will then become a member as soon as they have paid the appropriate subscription. New members joining part way through the year may be eligible to pay a reduced rate for their first part-year, at the discretion of the committee.
8. A prospective member who is unsuccessful in their application may, at the committee's discretion, continue to attend further club activities, and re-submit their application at a later date.
9. A member may have their membership terminated by the committee at any time, without notice or refund of subscriptions. Of course, the committee would not do so without very good reasons.

HUT RULES

We own Tal-y-Braich, our club hut in North Wales, the best centre for mountain activities within easy reach of our homes. The hut is a valuable asset and deserves preservation. There is much demand for its use, and conflicts do occasionally arise. Financial factors make it desirable to hire the hut out to visiting parties. We like to take a broader view of climbing and visit huts in other areas, so we should be prepared to return the compliment. We need to strike a balance between demand for the hut from ourselves and from visiting parties. We also need to get along with the North Wales locals (our neighbours), and with the local authority – factors easily overlooked by members who were not around when the hut was acquired. We also need to get along with each other in an often crowded environment.

Many of these rules are a matter of common sense and consideration for others, but it's all too easy to take short cuts in a hectic out of the hut-into the car-off to the crags-back to the hut frenzy. The hut rules are a matter of looking after the hut, each other, and the locals.

Hut Booking Rules

10. When there is a WMC meet at Tal-y-Braich, members and prospective members who wish to attend the meet should book their place with the meet organiser. If this is not done, they cannot attend the meet unless there is an unfilled bed space. Booking your place with the meet organiser is strongly recommended, as those who book always have priority over those who do not, no matter who arrives first.

An email reminder will normally be distributed to members before meets informing about meets/need for booking. No deposit to be charged for popular meets; however members who do not turn up may be required to cover the costs if insufficient notice given and other members were turned away.

Members wishing to bring a guest(s) to a Tal-y-Braich meet must ask the designated meet organiser whether there is likely to be space. (See also 41.)

11. When there is no WMC meet at Tal-y-Braich, members may stay in the Byre at any time without booking, and take a maximum of three guests per member. The Byre is non-bookable by outside clubs.

If space is available, members may also stay in the cottage with or without prior booking, and take a maximum of three guests per member. If you wish to make such a booking, apply to the Hut Booking Secretary. If you plan to use the cottage without booking, you are advised to check the Club website for availability. People who have booked always have priority over those who have not.

12. With the committee's permission, other clubs and visiting parties are allowed to book Tal-y-Braich Cottage (not Byre). Unless the booking is "exclusive" (see 15. below), members and their guests may use any unfilled spaces. Such "outside" bookings will not normally be accepted on any two consecutive weekends

13. Members who wish to take more than 3 guests, may only do so in the cottage, and only by booking in advance with the Booking Secretary.

14. Non-exclusive bookings of the cottage may be made by WMC members and outside clubs, with the booking secretary, on any weekend without a WMC Tal-y-Braich meet, up to a maximum of 12 places, leaving at least 4 places free for other WMC members.

15. Outside parties and members may make an "exclusive" booking of the cottage. To do so, they must agree to pay for at least ten places for each night. When a party has such a booking, other WMC members and their guests may only use the Byre, which will never be booked out. In this case, members may only enter the Cottage to turn the Byre water on/off, and to have access to the visitors' book.

Exclusive bookings will not normally be accepted on any two consecutive weekends.

Members thinking of taking guests to Tal-y-Braich are advised to check the Club website to see if the cottage is exclusively booked, in which case the Byre may well be overcrowded.

16. Club members may, at the committee's discretion, make a "family booking" of the Cottage or Byre (not both). Children are welcome on such occasions. The member making the booking must be staying for the whole period, and other adults may also attend as guests. All such bookings are exclusive – other members and their guests must use the other hut. For family bookings on weekends (Friday/Saturday nights), at least ten places for cottage bookings or 6 for byre bookings must be booked and paid for (the usual minimum for an exclusive booking), regardless of how many are actually used. Family bookings may be made midweek without any minimum number, but will still be exclusive. Children will usually be charged at concessionary rates, to be fixed by the committee from time to time.

Family bookings should not be confused with family meets (see rule 45.)

17. For non-bank holiday midweek use of the Hut (Sunday night to Thursday night inclusive), there are no booking restrictions.

General Hut Rules

18. Every new member is required to complete a checklist relating to Tal-y-Braich procedures with the Hut Warden within 3 months of joining. A hut key is available to a paid-up member who has completed this checklist, in exchange for a returnable deposit to be decided by the committee. A lost key may be replaced on payment of a further deposit. Replacement of a second lost key will be referred to the committee.
19. All hut users must enter their names in the visitors' book on arrival. The book in the Cottage serves as a visitors' book for the Byre as well.
20. Members who take guests to Tal-y-Braich are responsible for all aspects of their guests' behaviour.
21. When leaving Tal-y-Braich at the end of your stay you must leave it clean and tidy. Whether you leave before or after others, you must do your share of the cleaning and tidying – do not leave it all to the last party to leave, as they will probably be in an even greater hurry to get away than you. If you are the last to leave, follow the closure instructions on the checklist on the door adjacent to the front door, which must be carried out. In the event of any problems, please refer to the Hut Operating Manual on the bookshelf to the right of the fireplace in the cottage lounge.
22. Hut fees must be paid to the Treasurer as soon as possible. Do this by bank transfer to the Club's account: a/c name WOLVERHAMPTON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, Sort Code 30-99-50, a/c Number 39461560.

Please include as a reference your name and date of stay. This is to enable the treasurer to identify the payer.

Alternatively, use one of the envelopes provided in the Cottage living-room, including cash or cheque made payable to "Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club". The current rates will be indicated in the front of the visitors' book. It is each member's responsibility to pay their fees and those of their guests, neither the treasurer nor anyone else should have to chase this up.

23. Day fees are not charged, but voluntary contributions are welcomed. Camping and camper vans pay normal hut fees.
24. The farmer's field at the front (opposite the cottage entrance) and side of the cottage is strictly out of bounds unless going to the rear of the cottage for access/camping or use of the gate, then keep to the path at the side of the Cottage.
25. **Strictly no dogs** allowed at any time, even outside, except guide dogs for the blind. (This relates to the terms of our occupancy, a violation could mean we lose our right to use the hut).
26. All gates leading onto the road must be closed/secured immediately after access/use. This is to prevent the farmer's livestock from straying. Doors to the buildings must be locked when departing. While it is pleasant to leave doors open in fine weather when people are present, be aware that sheep like to invade enclosed spaces, and can make a terrible mess, so use your common sense.
27. **No smoking** inside any of the buildings.
28. Children below the age of 16 may not stay at Tal-y-Braich, except as part of a family booking or family meet (see Hut Booking Rule 16.).
29. Other than on family bookings and family meets, young persons below the age of 18, but above the age of 16, may only stay at Tal-y-Braich in the company of a parent or legal guardian, or a Club member who is acting "in loco-parentis", and has the written consent of the parent/legal guardian.

A consent form is available from the committee and on the website. The parent/guardian must show their consent by completing and signing this form, which must then be kept by the member acting in loco parentis, and produced on demand to any member. The consent is a matter agreed between the parent/guardian and the member acting in loco-parentis. The Wolverhampton M.C. will under no circumstances make recommendations for, or approval of any person's suitability to act in loco-parentis. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure such suitability. (See also meets rule 45.).

30. No person is allowed to run courses or a business from Tal-y-Braich, or gain profit from its use or from the Club's name. (This relates to the terms of our occupancy, a violation could mean we lose our right to use the hut).
31. Washing-up liquid, toilet rolls and other hut consumables are provided, and are usually stocked in plenty. The only product that is at all likely to run out is calor gas. If you do have to buy a new cylinder (for local stockists see cottage notice board), make a note on your hut fee envelope, enclose the receipt, and deduct the cost from your fees, or if the fees do not cover it, ask the treasurer for a refund. Do likewise for any other emergency supplies. Fuel for the fires is *not* provided, and visitors must bring their own

Rules on Hut Trustees (added 15th May 2020)

32. The Club hut will vest in trustees, who hold it on behalf of the members.
33. The trustees must all be Club members, and the number of trustees will be at least two and at most four.
34. The trustees will be appointed or removed by the chairman acting in accordance with a resolution of the committee or of the members. The resolution should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and evidenced by a letter signed by the secretary.
35. A trustee's appointment will terminate immediately if they:
 - 35.1. Give a written notice of resignation to the club chairmen or secretary; or
 - 35.2. Become bankrupt or make an arrangement or composition with their creditors; or
 - 35.3. Become incapable of managing and administering their property and affairs; or
 - 35.4. Commit a criminal act and are sentenced to a term of imprisonment, whether immediate or suspended; or
 - 35.5. Cease to be a member of the Club.
36. The duties of the trustees are as follows:
 - 36.1. To safeguard the legal title to the Club hut vested in them;
 - 36.2. To notify the committee of anything that comes to their notice that may cause damage or loss of value or amenity to the Club hut;
 - 36.3. To cooperate with the committee in doing whatever is required from time to time to minimise such risks, including taking professional advice when it is considered necessary;
 - 36.4. To deliver to the Club secretary any official notice relating to the property that they may receive;
 - 36.5. To agree to appoint the chairman as their attorney for the purpose of executing any document relating to a transaction concerning the Club hut, or to give effect to their removal as a trustee where they are unable or unwilling to execute the document in person;
 - 36.6. To implement section 11.2 of the Club's constitution, should the Club pass a motion under section 11.1 of the Club's constitution.
37. Liabilities of trustees. The trustees will have no liabilities over and above those of all the members because of the following:
 - 37.1. The Club will insure the trustees against civil liability, this will be implemented by the committee;
 - 37.2. The Club members jointly and severally indemnify every trustee against all costs, charges, losses, expenses, liabilities and claims incurred by an individual while acting as a trustee and legal owner of the club's property, which are not covered by the insurance of 37.1.
38. Duties of the committee concerning the hut and its trustees are as follows:
 - 38.1. To be responsible for the maintenance and management of the Club hut and insuring it for full value against all normal risks, and to deal with these matters on behalf of the trustees;
 - 38.2. To consult with the trustees about any major alterations to the property and all issues relating to health and safety, occupiers liability, child protection and disability discrimination;
 - 38.3. To provide the trustees with any information they request concerning insurance, maintenance, use of the premises, and any other matters which may be relevant, and allow the trustees to inspect all records and information regarding these matters;
 - 38.4. To call an EGM of the Club if at least two trustees request one.

Meets Rules

The club's growth in recent years has caused increased demand for hut spaces, particularly on the popular New Year and August Bank holiday meets at Tal-y-Braich.

This high demand for bed spaces also extends to some outside bookings, where the need to pre-pay for spaces booked makes us reluctant to book large numbers of spaces with no guarantee that they will all be used.

The following regulations are intended to advise new members on the way meets are generally run, and to ensure that members and prospective members have priority on available spaces on meets with high demand.

39. Every official meet (one shown on the meets programme) will have a member designated as the meet organiser. Their role will be to allocate bed spaces on the meet, and attempt to co-ordinate transport arrangements. For weekend meets, this will usually be done the previous Tuesday evening. Members who wish to attend a meet but cannot make it on the Tuesday should ask the organiser beforehand, or arrange with a proxy..
40. Members and prospective members may attend official club meets subject to spaces being available. Members are also permitted to invite guests on club meets (normally up to a maximum of three), but members and prospective members have priority – see 41. Members are responsible for all aspects of their guests' behaviour
41. For all outside hut meets, and for the Tal-y-Braich meets over all bank holidays, members' guests may only attend when it is clear that the available bed-spaces have not been filled by members and prospective members. For this purpose, a deadline of 10.30 pm on the Tuesday evening prior to the meet will usually apply to weekend hut meets. Before the deadline, spaces will be allocated, at the meet organiser's discretion, on a first-come-first-served basis to members and prospective members. After the deadline, unfilled spaces can be allocated to guests, at the meet organiser's discretion.

These restrictions will not normally apply to other Tal-y-Braich meets or camping meets, where space is less restricted.

42. For some outside hut meets, special conditions may apply, these will be advised to members in advance.
43. Members organising their own unofficial meets may make arrangements to suit themselves.
44. To reflect the increasing demand from members who wish to introduce their children to the club and its activities, the meets programme may include one or more "Family Meet(s)" at TyB. Family meets should not be confused with family bookings – see hut booking rule 7). Family meets will normally be held in the cottage. Children can attend these meets at the meet organiser's discretion
45. No person below the age of 16 may attend any official club meet, apart from family meets. A young person below the age of 18, but above 16, may only attend an official meet if, in the case of hut meets, the hut rules do not prohibit under 18 year olds. In addition, the young person must be in the company of a parent or legal guardian, or a club member who is acting "in loco parentis", and has the written consent of the parent/legal guardian. A consent form is available from the committee and on the website. The consent must be shown by completing and signing this form, which must then be kept by the member acting in loco parentis, and produced on demand to any member. The consent is a matter agreed between the parent/guardian and the member acting in loco parentis. The Wolverhampton M.C. will under no circumstances make recommendations for, or approval of any person's suitability to act in loco parentis. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure such suitability. The form is the same one used for staying at Tal-y-Braich (see general hut rule 29.), and one completion of it will cover both uses
46. Members have certain responsibilities when attending meets, especially those in other clubs' huts:
 - 46.1. Write your name clearly in the hut visitors' book immediately you arrive.
 - 46.2. Most huts have rules/regulations displayed on notice boards, walls, etc. Please familiarise yourself with them, and abide by them. For outside clubs' huts, we are there as their guests – please do not abuse their hospitality. Most hut rules are common sense and following them is a matter of general consideration for others, such as doing your share of the cleaning and tidying at the end of the visit. Remember that hut wardens are usually volunteers, and are not paid to tidy up after you.
 - 46.3. Some huts will have their own peculiar rules. These will be dictated by special circumstances of a club or its hut – please abide by them even if they seem a little strange – they are usually made for good reasons.
 - 46.4. The meet organiser will usually arrange to collect hut fees during the visit, but it is the member's responsibility to pay them. This must be done before the visit ends.
 - 46.5. If, for any reason, you fail to pay hut fees on time, you must rectify this **as soon as possible**. It is each member's responsibility to pay their fees and those of their guests; neither the meet organiser, the treasurer, nor anyone else should have to chase this up.

Appendix to the rules.

Parental Consent Form

For young persons over 16 and under 18 years of age, participating in activities with the Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club (WMC).

To be completed by the parent or legal guardian, by word processor, or by hand in block capitals, and kept as a printed copy by the person(s) acting in loco parentis.

To whom it may concern.

I, _____ (Full name),
Confirm that I am the Parent/Legal Guardian (delete as appropriate)
of the following young person(s) (full name & date of birth):

I hereby consent to the following named adult(s), being member(s) of the WMC:

Supervising the above named young person(s) in loco parentis, for activities with the WMC.

I have discussed with the adult(s) concerned the level of supervision I expect, and they confirm that they are able and willing to provide this.

I, and the young person(s) and adult(s) named above are aware of the potentially dangerous nature of the activities, and the informal style of transport and accommodation, and we are happy with these and all other arrangements.

I also agree that I expect no additional supervision from any other member or officer of the WMC.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Legal Guardian)

Emergency contact telephone number: _____

Name of person to be contacted in an emergency and their relationship with the young person(s):

Date: _____

This consent is a matter agreed between the parent/guardian and the member acting in loco parentis. The WMC will under no circumstances make recommendations for, or approval of any person's suitability to act in loco parentis. It is the Parent/Legal Guardian's responsibility to ensure such suitability.

The agreement may last for multiple visits, until the young person's 18th birthday.

To the adult acting in loco parentis: You must keep this form, as a hard copy, signed by the parent/legal guardian, with you when accompanying the young person, in case a member asks to see it.