

# OUWC Minibus Day Trip Organisation Instructions

Minibus day trips are easy to organise: all you need to do is choose where to go, find some people to lead and drive, get everyone to sign up and pay and then head off for the walk! There's always plenty of help available for finding people to drive/lead and to make sure the trip complies with university regulation. For emailing the OUWC committee when you need to: they can be found on <http://www.ouwc.org/committee/>

**At the end of this document is a checklist of the main things that you need to do, to help you keep track of your trip organization as you're doing it.**

## Organising a Trip

### 1. Choose where to go

- in the past, day trips have gone to the New Forest, South Downs, Jurassic Coast, Black Mountains, Malvern Hills, Cheddar Gorge, Wye Valley, Forest of Dean and Stonehenge (for example!). In winter times, nearer locations are better, as daylight is limited. Try to make sure that locations are within a 2.5hr drive or about 130 miles– any further usually doesn't leave enough time for walking and is a **lot** of driving for one day. (Consider 3hrs as an absolute maximum, and only doable in Trinity term or end of Hilary)

### 2. Choose a route

- This can be decided on later, in consultation with leaders, but it's nice to have some sort of initial plan. Routes can be circular or, if there are two minibuses, linear (park at each end and swap keys). Coastal walks work particularly nicely as linear routes.
- Use maps and online suggestions to come up with routes. If you're stuck for ideas, ask previous organisers for inspiration or look for interesting sites (historical or natural) that you could pass along the way.
- Distance: up to you. 16km is a good standard. Any more than 20km might be a bit much for some. This is of course very much dependent on where you go – remember that some parts of the coast (e.g. Jurassic coast) can involve a lot of up and down, adding to the time requirement.

### 3. Find leaders and drivers

- Finding leaders and drivers is mainly the job of the **Trip and Safety Coordinator [T&SC]** ([trip.safety@ouwc.org](mailto:trip.safety@ouwc.org)), and the secretary ([secretary@ouwc.org](mailto:secretary@ouwc.org)) may also help to find drivers for the trip. *See Appendix 2 for requirements on number of drivers, and number and type of leaders.*
- Once there are enough leaders and drivers, the trip can go ahead. Use some discretion, ie. you could move on to stage 4 if you think it is reasonable, before the full complement of leaders and drivers is found – consult the T&SC if not sure.

### 4. Register the trip with Sports Fed and book the minibus

- Register the trip here: <http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/student-sport/resources/register-a-trip/>, filling in the necessary sections of the form. You'll need to give the date and location of the trip. For the list of participants, write: *"A list of participants will be emailed to [transport@sport.ox.ac.uk](mailto:transport@sport.ox.ac.uk), at least two days before the trip. Participation statements for all participants on the trip will be found in the pigeonhole of Natasha Ng (marked Ng, H.J.) at Balliol College, including next of kin contact details. They will be placed there just before departure from Oxford, constituting the final list of participants."*
- The form is also used to book minibuses (Hire Vehicles section). The names of the drivers are needed. Choose "Other" from the drop down menu and, in the comments box, put *"If possible,*

*can we have a 15 seat minibus.” Pay attention to the confirmation email from Sports Fed: it contains useful information on minibus damage, refueling and emergency situations, and also should tell you if they are only able to offer smaller (14-seat) minibuses, which could alter trip plans. If you don’t get a confirmation email, contact the T&SC.*

- The minibuses are provided through the university from a company called Hotsons Eurodrive. On the day of the trip, the drivers pick up the minibus (and pay for it, usually with a cheque from the OUWC treasurer), collect any equipment from the **club stores (a hut at the Iffley Road Sports Centre)**, and then go to Broad Street to pick up everyone. *The red OU Sports Federation Transport Scheme driver license cards for all drivers must be presented to Hotsons before the bus can be used.*

## 5. Produce a costing spreadsheet

- Although the standard cost is normally £12 for minibus day trips, it is good practice to fill in the costing spreadsheet which will be sent to you by the T&SC to get an idea of fuel and minibus costs (it is also available on website).

## 6. Produce a poster and website description

- **Produce a poster** to advertise, explain the location and plans for the trip, and some rules (ask the T&SC for some example posters – there are plenty).
- The **description for the website** normally includes a brief description of the areas plus the following details: Trip Organiser; Leaders; Departure time & location; Estimated return time; Cost; Extra equipment. *We start all our minibus day trips from outside Trinity College Gates, on Broad Street, usually at around 8am on the day.*
- In the description, it is more important to **describe the sort of terrain and walks that will be expected** (as well as the typical weather for that time of year) than to advertise the nice scenery or history of the area! The point isn’t to scare people off (the trips are open to all) but to explain what it is reasonable for people to expect: which may be steep hills, rough paths and wild weather!
- *At this point, it is worth deciding on whether you will stop for dinner on the way back to Oxford* on the day of the trip. If yes, it is best to advertise that people will need to bring money for a pub dinner, and that arrival back in Oxford will be later in the evening because of the dinner.
- Send poster + description to T & SC

## 7. Free tea and ballot

- The cost is normally £12.
- At **Free Tea (usually Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> week)**, collect people’s details on the sign up sheet (The T&SC can give you this), or on your laptop, and talk to them about what the trip involves. On the sign-up sheet, there is an option for participants to borrow some equipment from the club, and there is also a column for you to record who has paid. Display your poster, and try to have a map and some photos to illustrate the sort of place you’re going to, which is especially useful for people new to walking in the UK. They can sign up for the trip and OUWC membership at Free Tea, and pay the treasurer by cash or cheque (separate cheques needed for membership and each trip). People can also sign up and pay online. **IMPORTANT: YOUR DRIVERS AND LEADERS AND YOURSELF MUST SIGN UP AND PAY FOR THE TRIP AS EVERY OTHER PARTICIPANT DOES**
- **Ballot for Spaces:** (usually early 2<sup>nd</sup> Week). Often, our trips are oversubscribed. We have a **ballot meeting**, organized by the T&SC, at which we allocate places amongst the people who signed up and paid. We usually say that people must have paid by Friday of First Week to be included in the ballot. If the trip is not full by then, we keep payment open until it is. Before the ballot meeting, sign ups (from both the online booking form, and the ones that you collected at free tea) are cross-referenced with the treasurer’s record of payments and the membership secretary’s record of membership sign ups, to make sure that each person being entered into the ballot for a trip has

signed up and paid for it as well as membership of OUWC (ie. steps 1 and 2 in the procedure outlined in appendix 1 are actually carried out before the ballot meeting). *For this procedure to occur before the ballot, you will need to send your free tea sign up details to the membership secretary and treasurer: the T&SC should put you in contact normally when they set the date and time of the ballot.*

- There is a hierarchy of allocating places. The trip organiser(s), leaders and drivers are obviously guaranteed spaces and also each get a guaranteed space for a friend. Everyone else is entered in a ballot. Full details of the place allocation, priority, waiting list and refund rules are in **Appendix 1**.
- Overall, the outcome of the ballot is a participant list, and a waiting list. It is up to the TO whether to rank their waiting list.

## 8. After the ballot meeting: emails

- After the ballot meeting, **email the people who got on the trip**, and remind them of the dates/times of the trip, and of the equipment they should bring (the kit list is here: [http://www.ouwc.org/documents/Updated\\_Equipment\\_List\\_MT15.pdf](http://www.ouwc.org/documents/Updated_Equipment_List_MT15.pdf)). Emphasise that they need sturdy, broken in *walking* boots! Remember to tell them whether they'll need to bring money for a pub meal, and that they should be prepared for the appropriate weather conditions, which is particularly important in winter. Make sure you've got a **phone number** for everyone on the trip, in case people don't turn up on the day. They also need to tell you which equipment they need to borrow, if not done so already: setting up a Google Form or a cloud-based document can help with this, and set a final deadline so the request can be sent to the Quartermaster in time.
  - (Email contents: meeting times (normally 8am at Trinity Gates, Broad Street), equipment required (and to **let you know if they need to borrow anything**), details required (mobile number, medical issues [to be confidential]), send you the participation statement, any other details (e.g. money needed if you plan to stop for dinner). Remind participants of the importance of bringing sufficient clothing, food and drink and explain the importance of equipment suitable for a whole day of walking)
- **Email those without a place** to explain about the **waiting list** and how refunds work (see Appendix 1)
- *The T&SC will provide you with example emails to send, for more detailed guidance.*
- **Drop Outs:** it is likely that people will drop out: email the waiting list to try to fill the place with someone from it. If the waiting list is ranked, the highest ranked person on the waiting list who still wants to go on the trip should get the place. If it isn't ranked, simply allocate the place to the first person that expresses the desire to have it. If this is not successful, ask the T&SC or president to advertise on the walking announce mailing list and Facebook group. *If a replacement is not found, then the person who drops out remains liable for the cost.*

## 9. Paperwork/Admin

- **Equipment:** Once you've got a final list of which participants are borrowing club kit, fill it in on one the loan agreement form (find on website), and send it to the Quartermaster. That form contains some pre-filled in items, which you should not remove. The Trip Document File (kept in stores) is important, as it contains information needed in an emergency. Please also include at least one copy of each map (and compass) per leader, from the clubs list of maps ([available from the Archivist archivist@ouwc.org](mailto:archivist@ouwc.org)). You'll need to know which maps you need for the area you'll be walking in – speak to the leaders if not sure. Make sure you know the number of waterproof jackets and trousers that you need to take for participants, and put this in the form.
- **Participant List:** Send a list of the participants of the trip to [transport@sport.ox.ac.uk](mailto:transport@sport.ox.ac.uk) more than 24hrs before your departure time. Mention (as in stage 2) that the final list of participants is given by the participation statements, which are placed in Natasha Ng's Balliol pigeonhole (marked Ng, H.J.) just before the trip leaves. This is in case there are any last minute dropouts and replacements, resulting in the participant list changing at the last minute, which is not uncommon.
- **Driving Arrangements:** The Quartermaster will prepare the equipment you've asked for, and you'll be

able to pick it up from the club stores on the day of the trip. You'll need to borrow keys to the club stores, from either the president, quartermaster, or archivist. Arrange with drivers who will collect the minibus on the Saturday morning and collect the equipment from stores on Iffley Road (you may accompany them – decide amongst yourselves), and who will return the minibus afterwards. The red OU Sports Federation Transport Scheme driver license card of each of the drivers must be presented at Hotsons, so make sure these are all with the person going to pick up the minibus ahead of the trip. The person collecting the minibus will be required to pay for the rental: it is a good idea to prepare for this by getting the treasurer to write a cheque that they can give to Hotsons, avoiding either the driver or organizer being out of pocket. *The person returning the bus will need to fill it up with fuel and will be reimbursed by the club.*

- **Driver, leader and TO payment:** you must make sure yourself and all leaders and drivers have paid the full price of the trip. People in these roles often assume that they don't have to pay as they are helping out on the trip, but this viewpoint has no evidence backing in the club rules.
- **Confirmation of minibus booking:** there has sometimes been improper communication between the Sports Fed and Hotsons/OUWC, and this can result the unexpected allocation of a 14-seat minibus, when a 15-seat minibus is expected, resulting in a person being forced to leave the trip. To avoid this happening, it may be a good idea to phone Hotsons Eurodrive near the beginning of the week before the trip, to confirm that a 15-seat bus has been booked and is available.
- **Trip leader agreement:** Leaders need to sign a trip [leader agreement form](#) (available from website), and sign it yourself. Send it to the T&SC before the trip leaves, or leave it in the designated pigeon hole along with the participation statements.
- **If your trip must be cancelled:** for example, this could be the case if the weather forecast is absolutely atrocious, or if a driver drops out, leaving insufficient minibus drivers to satisfy the club's transport safety guidelines (see appendix 1). Let the T&SC know if you have any doubt about whether your trip can go ahead, and they will advise on whether it must be cancelled. *Minibus cancellation must be done at least 48 hours before pick up:* otherwise OUWC will still be charged a proportion of the price of hire. This should theoretically mean cancelling by 7:30am on Thursday morning before the trip, but Hotsons are not always consistent so if the trip is in danger of being cancelled, it may be worth contacting them on a case by case basis to see when they demand the cancellation be done by (eg. it could be Wednesday evening). If cancelling with plenty of time to spare, the TO should cancel the minibus booking through the Sports Fed: phone 01865 241335. If cancelling at the last minute, the TO should do so by phoning Hotsons directly: 01865 715500, but also notify the Sports Fed so that OUWC will not be charged for the minibus insurance.

## 10. Trip Preparation

- Make sure you know the route from Oxford to the start of the walk, and the routes of the walk(s).
- If you would like to stop at a pub for dinner on the way back, you may check the club's list of useful pubs as one resource: <http://www.ouwc.org/documents/PubGuide.pdf>
- Arrange with drivers who will collect the minibus in the morning (and collect the equipment from stores on Iffley Road) and who will return the minibus afterwards. The person collecting the minibus will be required to pay for the rental. It is a good idea to prepare for this by getting the treasurer to write a cheque that they can give to Hotsons, avoiding either the driver or organizer being out of pocket.
- Send a final list of participants to [transport@sports.ox.ac.uk](mailto:transport@sports.ox.ac.uk) by Friday 8am before the trip (>24hrs before departure).

## 11. On the day of the trip

- Print off enough participation statements for everyone on the trip: <http://www.ouwc.org/documents/LedTripParticipStatement-march2012.pdf>
- Consider printing off mountain weather forecasts from <http://mwis.org> (and if it's a coastal trip also be aware of the tide times for where you're going).

- **Collect the minibus** (either the driver alone, or you and the driver). Here is the [location](#) of Hotsons Eurodrive on Google Maps. You'll have to take the bus to Hotsons, since there is nowhere to park bikes there. *You should aim to arrive at Hotsons to collect the minibus at 7:30am, which is the time they open. The 10 bus goes quite close and is the only bus running early enough on Saturday morning to achieve this.* You'll probably have to spend about 15/30 minutes at Hotsons while they sort out the bus and check the red Transport Scheme cards (make sure to have these for all drivers). Hotsons will give you some yellow forms which you should pass on to the secretary.
- **Pick up the equipment** from the club stores at the Iffley Road Sports Centre. Collect the equipment you requested, which the quartermaster will have prepared for you. It may be useful to have two people for this. Ensure the trip document file is there. *There should be one GPS in stores that the driver(s) of one minibus can use for navigation: this is one of the default items requested in the leader loan agreement form.*
- Meet everyone else at Trinity Gates on Broad Street at the designated time (usually 8am) and make sure everyone is there.
- Collect completed participation statements from everyone and leave in Natasha Ng's pidge in Balliol (marked Ng, H.J)
- Go on the trip!

## 12. On the trip

- Drivers will need some description of the route and some help with navigation (make use of the GPS)
- **Injuries, etc.:** Each minibus for the trip should have a 'trip document file' inside it at all times. This was one of the pre-filled items you requested from stores, and should contain (1) The trip guidance notes (2) Risk assessment (3) Trip Leader Safety Document (4) Incident Card and (5) Minibus drivers advice sheet. *If there is any incident or injury, follow the instructions in document (4) (incident card) in the trip document file, and tell the T&SC.*
- If the minibus breaks down you should contact Hotsons on 01865 715500. If the minibus is involved in an accident, you should contact both Hotsons and the Sports Federation. Do not discuss the accident, or who was at fault, but make sure to swap contact details with any other vehicle(s) involved. *Full details in **incident card**, which is on website and in trip document file.*

## 13. Return to Oxford/after the trip

- Once back in Oxford (Broad Street), collect back any borrowed equipment from participants.
- Drivers need to return the equipment to stores and then return the minibus. You may want to go with them for the stores part. *The minibus must be returned filled with fuel (diesel).* By then, it may be late, and Hotsons is probably closed. On the minibus keys, there will be a key for the iron gate to Hotsons. If there is space, leave the minibus inside Hotsons, if not, leave it parked by the road. Put the minibus keys through the letterbox at Hotsons. It will probably be too late to take a bus, so call a taxi (e.g. 01865 242424), which the returner of the minibus can be reimbursed for.
- Any minibus incident (damage) needs to be reported to the Secretary. The Secretary also needs the yellow form from Hotsons, given to the driver when they pick up the bus.
- *Email the T&SC with a list of people for each of these three categories:*
  - 1) participants of the trip
  - 2) people who were entered into the ballot, but dropped out, either by deciding not to come on the trip when offered a place or by deciding not to stay on the waiting list
  - 3) people who were entered into the ballot but were not allocated a place on the trip, remained on the waiting list until the trip but did not end up with a place on the trip.
- *Make sure everyone who needs to be reimbursed (usually drivers for fuel) fills in an expenses claim form (see website) and sends it to the T&SC with receipts.*
- Fill in a [trip report form](#) from the T&SC and send it to them, along with your expenses claim form and receipts, if any, as well as information on any injuries that may need to be reported to Sports Fed (minor things like blisters don't matter).

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- Send an email to participants after the trip to distribute any group photos and *remind people of the need to volunteer to lead/drive/organise or be on committee to ensure that future trips can take place*

## **Checklist of main things**

- Choose a destination
- Find drivers and leaders – T&SC does this
- Register the trip with Sports Fed and book transport
- Produce costing spreadsheet
- Produce poster + website description for the trip and send details for website to Webmaster and T&SC
- Collect sign ups and payment
- Ballot for places
- Contact all those with and without places to inform them of the next step
- Receive equipment borrowing requests, fill in loan agreement form and send to Quartermaster
- Plan route + get leaders to sign agreement form, sort arrangements with drivers collecting/returning minibuses etc.
- 48 hrs (or more) before the trip: minibus booking cancellation deadline
- Friday morning/Thursday evening before the trip (>24hrs before departure): send final list of participants to Sports Fed
- Trip departure: collect minibus (remember red cards!) and equipment, and leave participation statements for all participants in relevant pigeonhole before departure
- During trip: be aware of emergency procedures etc.
- Trip return: return equipment to stores, return minibus full of fuel
- After trip: trip report form + data to T & SC

## Appendices

### 1. Allocation of trip places

At the beginning of 2nd Week, a Ballot Meeting takes place. The aim of the meeting is to allocate places on Weekend Trips and Minibus Day-trips in a fair and impartial manner.

Places are allocated according to the following procedure:

For each Trip:

1. Only people that have paid are counted as having signed up for a trip
2. The name of each person is checked against the membership list. Anybody who is not a club member is removed from the list of any over-subscribed trip (and will only be granted a provisional place on an under-subscribed trip)
3. Priority is given in the following order:
  - a) The Trip Organiser and Trip Leaders for that trip,
  - b) Minibus Drivers and their 'plus one', Trip Organiser(s) and their 'plus one', Trip Leaders and their 'plus one'. (We can't risk losing minibus drivers by not giving their plus ones/close friends a place - only 1 per person (driver/leader/organiser) though!)
  - c) Members on the Priority List from last term (for one trip only)
  - d) Trip Leaders of other trips that term (for one trip only)
  - e) Other members
4. If the trip is still oversubscribed then a fair, open and independent ballot is held to decide which people are to participate. This is best done on a spreadsheet, allocating a random number to each participant in the ballot (i.e. not leaders, drivers etc.) and then placing in ascending order.
5. Note that any 'pairs' (such as couples, friends or people who have paid together) each get entered into the ballot individually. If they have said that they only wish to go if they can go together, then if one loses a place then they both do.

Priority, waiting list and membership rules:

Members who have paid for a particular trip, but do not get a place due to the limited number of spaces available, are put on the waiting list for that trip so that they may be able to get a place if members who already have a place decide to drop out of the trip. Members on the waiting list for a trip may decide to stay on the waiting list, and if they still do not get a place on the trip they can get a refund of the trip fee after the trip has run. This way, they remain a member of the club and may

be eligible for a priority place on a trip of their choice for the next term. They are eligible for a priority place if they do not get a place on *any* of the trips that they entered the ballot for in a particular term, and they did not forfeit their place on *any* waiting list for an early refund. A member is placed on the Priority List for the following term only – after that they are removed from the Priority List unless they fail to get on a trip again. (Some discretion can be used if, for example, they are away from Oxford for the whole of that term).

Alternatively, they may decide to get an early refund on their trip fee, or get a refund of their trip fee as well as membership fee and cease to be a member of the club. The Treasurer will co-ordinate the refunds.

As outlined on [www.ouwc.org](http://www.ouwc.org) under the "membership" section, "in most cases, membership is non-refundable, particularly as we have to pay subscriptions to the BMC for each member. We recognize that you may wish to join solely to go on a Club trip, so under some conditions you may cancel membership. Memberships taken out during 1st or 2nd Week of any term may be cancelled with full refund if requested by the end of 2nd Week of the same term, provided that the member has not got places on any trips nor made any other use of the membership meanwhile. On cancellation of membership, any places on reserve lists for trips, as well as any place on the priority list for trip



allocation in future terms, will be forfeit." *In practice, the deadline for requesting membership as well as trip fee refunds varies depending on when the ballot is done and when the trip organisers send the emails to participants after the ballot.*

## 2. Numbers of drivers and leaders needed

### Number of Drivers Required for Club Trips

Recommendations made by the Area Safety Officer for Sport state that drivers should not drive for more than 2 hours without a swap or break. The club therefore has the following guidelines to assist this:

1. Trips to New Forest, Cotswolds, Chilterns, Malverns, Wye Valley, Forest of Dean and New Forest (and any other location less than 2 hours drive from Oxford) must have at least 1 minibus driver.
2. All other trips involving 1 minibus must have at least 2 drivers.
3. Trips to the same destination involving more than 1 minibus must have at least 2 drivers for the first minibus and at least 1 driver thereafter, (i.e. 3 drivers for 2 minibuses), with mobile phone contact between the Trip Leaders so the drivers can change minibuses if there is a problem. The ideal should be to have 2 drivers per bus, especially on journeys substantially over 2 hours in length.

### Number of Leaders Required for Club Trips

Every led trip must have at least 2 leaders for each 17 participants (including the 2 leaders). To be precise, each led trip must have at least two leaders, and a led trip with n participants must have at least  $2n / 17$  leaders, rounded up. All leaders on a led trip must satisfy the requirements of Section 3.1 of the [Trip Leader Safety Document](#).