

OUWC Weekend Trip Organization Instructions

Organising a weekend trip is good fun and a great way to explore the more mountainous parts of the UK. It can be a fair bit of work but if you're organised and plan ahead carefully, all will go well!

The key things to organise are: **accommodation, transport, drivers, food, trip leaders and participant sign ups.**

Remember that the club will reimburse you (or any other trip member) for expenses incurred by the trip as a whole. In order to be reimbursed you should [download](#) and fill out a claim form, attach the receipts, and send them to the T&SC. If you know what some of the costs will be in advance (e.g. minibus hire, hut) then you can ask the treasurer to write you a club cheque in advance. Make sure to check the amount; don't rely on the default in the costing spreadsheet.

There are quite a few things to do when organizing a trip, outlined below in approximate chronological order.

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.

You'll need to get hold of various bits of paperwork along the way, these can mostly be found on <http://ouwc.org/info-for-leadersdrivers/to-and-tl-documents/>, or if not, they can be obtained from the T&SC. You'll also need to email some of the OUWC committee, who can be found on <http://www.ouwc.org/committee/>

Groups of Equals trips:

If you are planning to run a Group of Equals trip, consult the OUWC GoE trip organisation instructions, available on the website.

1. Book a hut

Choose an appropriate hut, using the clubs list <http://www.ouwc.org/leaders/accommodation/> or the BMC list <http://www.ouwc.org/documents/BMCAccommodationGuide2015.pdf>. You'll need to book two nights, the Friday and the Saturday. You should aim to find a hut/barn/bunkhouse/hostel for not much more than £10 per person per night, although some areas will be more expensive.

You'll probably have to pay a deposit, for which you'll be reimbursed (use an email as a receipt) – alternatively, arrange with the treasurer to send a club cheque. **This is best done ASAP**, since huts fill up quite quickly (*particularly in the Lake District*), and the nicer ones will fill up first.

Pay attention to the size of the hut – it is good to be able to fit in at least 13 (single trip) or 26 people (double trip) so that the minibuss cost is split between as many people as possible to keep costs down. If the hut is smaller, remember to account for this in costing the trip and determining participant numbers.

2. Find leaders and drivers

Finding leaders and drivers is mainly the job of the **Trip and Safety Coordinator [T&SC]** (trip.safety@ouwc.org), and the secretary (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 further stages if you think it is reasonable, before the full complement of leaders and drivers is found – consult the T&SC if not sure.

3. Register the trip and book a 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, 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, and a time of pick-up needs to be specified (probably about 3-4pm on Friday – see section 5). Choose "Other" from the drop down menu and, in the comments box, put *"If possible, can we have a 15 seat minibus."* A 15-seat bus is important so that there is adequate space for equipment - normally, we take 13 people in a 15 seater minus, leaving two seats free for equipment.

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 them with a cheque from the walking club), collect any equipment from the **club stores (a hut at the Iffley Road Sports Centre)**, and then go to Broad Street to pick everyone up. *The red OU Sports Federation Transport Scheme driver license cards for all drivers must be presented to Hotsons before the bus can be used.*

4. Costs spreadsheet

The T&SC will send you a **spreadsheet which helps you to calculate the price of your trip** (it is also available on website). Fill it in, and send it back to the T&SC before term starts. Cost per participant is usually between £55 and £75.

5. Make a poster and website description

Just a very **basic A4 poster**, with a couple of pictures, detailing when and **where your trip is going, what it costs, and what equipment participants will need**. Add a note to say that only OUWC club members can go on club trips. *Ask the T&SC for a template/example* (there are plenty) so that you have a more detailed idea.

The **description for the website** normally includes a brief description of the areas plus the following details: Trip Organiser; Leaders; Accommodation; Departure time & location; Estimated return time; Cost; Extra equipment. *We start all our weekend trips from outside Trinity College Gates, on Broad Street, usually at around 5pm, on Friday.*

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!

Send poster + description to T & SC.

6. Free Tea

Free tea is the sign-up event, organized by the T&SC, and is usually on Wednesday of first week. You'll need to turn up, with a copy of your poster, and stand behind one of the tables talking to people and describing what the trip will involve. Be welcoming but honest about what the trip will involve – the purpose is (hill)walking, not sightseeing; weather can be cold and wet at any time of year; terrain is often steep, uneven and lacking in distinct paths. The T&SC will provide you with a sign-up sheet to record information on, or you may do so on your laptop.

People will pay either by cash or by cheque, or they can sign up and pay for trips online. If they pay by cheque they must give the treasurer separate cheques for membership and for each trip.

On the sign-up sheet, there is an option for participants to borrow some equipment from the club and to specify if they're vegetarian. There is also a column for you to record who has paid.

IMPORTANT: YOUR DRIVERS AND LEADERS AND YOURSELF MUST SIGN UP AND PAY FOR THE TRIP AS EVERY OTHER PARTICIPANT DOES

7. Ballot Meeting

Often, our trips are oversubscribed. We have a **ballot meeting**, organized by the T&SC, usually early in second week, 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) Emphasise that they need sturdy, broken in *walking* boots! Tell them they'll need to bring money for two pub meals, 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 5pm 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. 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). 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 more than 24hrs before your departure time. Mention that the final list of participants is given by the participation statements, 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 Friday afternoon 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: Get all the leaders to sign a [trip leader agreement form](#), 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 it is a wild camping trip and the weather forecast is atrocious, or if a driver drops out, leaving insufficient minibus drivers to satisfy the club's transport safety guidelines (see appendix 2). 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. For a recent weekend trip (MT15), Hotsons demanded that the cancellation be made before 8am on Wednesday morning, when the pick up time was Friday early afternoon. 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. 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. Plan the food

Generally on club weekend trips we purchase ingredients for breakfasts, lunches and Saturday evening dinner. Full details on food are here:

http://www.ouwc.org/documents/Food_for_an_OUWC_walking_trip_2015.pdf . It is a good idea to find someone to do the food planning for you.

Buying Food: The easiest way to do this is through **Tesco Click and Collect**, where you shop online and then collect it from the store (Oxford Superstore) en route to meeting people at Broad Street on the Friday. You need to register for an online account - choose the 2-4pm pick up slot and then **do the shopping online**. Hope that they have everything you ask for – it's worth allowing them to do substitutions, as you don't want to be left without vital ingredients. The allocated budget as per the Trip Cost spreadsheet is £120 per weekend per 13 people. Look for special offers to make the money go further. **These are sufficient funds to purchase good quality food** – no need to buy absolutely cheapest especially for bread and meat.

Friday/Sunday Dinner: It's usual to find a pub near to the motorway on the way there, for the Friday night, and again on the way back for the Sunday night. The club has a list of useful pubs for this, which you can find at <http://www.ouwc.org/documents/PubGuide.pdf> (there should also be a copy inside the 'trip document file') or use the internet for more up to date information on pubs. Book ahead if you can.

11. The afternoon before the trip

Allow quite a high proportion of the afternoon for this, as traffic can be heavy or you could be delayed – you don't want to keep people waiting at Broad Street if you can help it.

Print off enough participation statements for everyone on the trip:

<http://www.ouwc.org/documents/LedTripParticipStatement-march2012.pdf>

Print 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).

Meet up with the driver who is coming to **collect the minibus**, either in Oxford or at Hotsons (here is the [location](#) on Google Maps). You'll have to take the bus to Hotsons, since there is nowhere to park bikes there. The 10 goes quite close and the 103/104 goes directly. 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.

Then go to Tesco Superstore (Oxford Retail Park) to **pick up the food order**. Make sure you have the order number.

Then go to Iffley Road to **pick up the equipment** from the club shed (stores) at the Sports Centre. Collect the equipment you requested, which the quartermaster will have prepared for you. It is useful to have someone help you with this. Then go to Trinity gates, where you can meet up with everyone else. *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.*

Leave lots of time for all of this to avoid being late; ring someone at Trinity Gates if you're going to arrive there later than you told everyone.

12. Just before leaving Oxford

At Trinity Gates, get every participant to sign a participation statement. **Leave the participation statements in the designated pigeon hole: currently Natasha Ng's pigeonhole (marked Ng, H.J), in Balliol college.**

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.*

13. On the trip itself

Drivers will need some description of the route and some help with navigation (make use of the GPS). Stop for dinner en route at a pub but try not to take too long. Often you'll arrive quite late at the hut. Come up with a range of walks for the Saturday and Sunday (leaders mainly do this). On Sunday morning, make sure to pack up and clean the hut as per the instructions from the hut owners.

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.*

14. Returning on Sunday night

Leave the participants outside Trinity Gates, and make sure you have all the equipment they

borrowed back. Go to stores to return all the equipment you borrowed. You should mark on the equipment loan form that you have returned each item. If you don't know where something goes then leave it on the floor for the quartermaster to put away.

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.

15. After the trip

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, as well as information on any injuries that may need to be reported to Sports Fed (minor things like blisters don't matter).

Send the yellow forms which Hotsons gave you to the club secretary. Any minibus incident (damage) needs to be reported to the Secretary, too.

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
- Book accommodation (often needs to be far in advance)
- 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 the food
- Plan walking routes + 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!), food order 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 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](#).