

Health and Safety

The days are lengthening and we can look forward to balmy summer evenings later in the year. For now, however, with cold, wet and windy pack runs still a prospect for a while I invite you to consider safety. The FRA has recently issued revised rules on safety and equipment, and in the light of this (and concerns expressed by members both recently and historically) the Committee discussed the matter on 2nd December. All those present agreed that members taking part in 'batruns' with little or no equipment or additional kit potentially put their own safety, and the safety of their fellow runners, at risk. A runner who falls or becomes unwell can always rely on the group to help, but if one of the group gives away his/her jacket, for instance, that runner becomes vulnerable too. Even in summer the risks are real if you are on the high fells; in winter the risks are substantial. There is inherent danger in fell running, and perhaps this is one of its attractions.

Now, the Committee has no intention of issuing a decree, and certainly does not want to tell people what to do when out running alone. However, since pack runs are club organised events we have a responsibility not to keep quiet and hope for the best. The following is our official statement, valid with immediate effect and until such time as it might be revised by the committee subsequently:

The Committee expects all runners taking part in off road pack runs to carry appropriate additional kit and equipment. This expectation applies to all runners, regardless of experience, and at all times of year. It is recommended that runners are guided by the FRA Safety Rules and Equipment requirements, and in particular section 12c.

There is no intention to have kit checks at pack runs, or to stop anyone taking part. The expectation is that everyone will do the sensible thing, thus minimising risk to the individual and the group. Adhering to this expectation will not stop us from having a good run, or from having fun and a good laugh. The club will be purchasing some additional safety equipment which we intend should be available at pack runs.

We only discussed safety on the fells and on batruns at our meeting, but let's not forget the road runners. When you run on the road are you visible? Please wear something reflective, ideally a high viz jacket. You know it makes sense.

Derek Donohue
On behalf of Todmorden Harriers Committee
December 2013