

Newton Stewart Walking Festival 2026 Participant Information Pack

Version dated: 8 March 2026

Please read through this information pack which contains helpful information designed to ensure your safety and enjoyment during our festival, which takes from 8 May 2026 to 14 May 2026.

Before the event

Bookings

Advance booking is usually required to guarantee a place on our walks and is required for our welcome dinner on 8 May 2026. Our preferred method is that you book and pay online (using your credit or debit card, or Paypal account) via our website www.walkfestnewtonstewart.com. For our two evening talks you can either pay in advance or tickets will be available on the night. Online booking will close on 7 May 2026. After this date, new bookings, or amendments to existing bookings, can only be made in person at the registration point or by emailing info@walkfestnewtonstewart.com.

Cancellation or amendment to your booking

If you wish to cancel or amend a booking, please e-mail us on info@walkfestnewtonstewart.com with your request so that we can amend your booking and process a refund if applicable. We will issue a full refund for cancellations made up to 3 May 2026. After that date we will not normally issue refunds, but you are free to transfer the full value of your payment to other walks and events during the festival if there are spaces available.

Changes to the festival programme

The organisers retain the right to alter walk routes and/or withdraw routes from the programme without notice. Wherever possible, changes will be advised to you and via our website, Facebook page or via our newsletter.

Dogs

Please note that dogs are **not** allowed on any WalkFest walks.

Walkers aged under 16

Walkers under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Accommodation and staying longer

You can find accommodation options on the regional tourism website www.scotlandstartshere.com or on commercial sites, such as www.booking.com. If you would like to extend your stay in Galloway, there are lots of ideas of things to do and places to visit at www.scotlandstartshere.com.

Preparing for your walk

Weather

Our walks will proceed in both rain and shine, unless it is unsafe to do so. However, routes may need to be changed. For a detailed weather forecast for the uplands, visit the Mountain Weather Information Service at www.mwis.org.uk and select the Southern Uplands weather forecast.

Clothing, footwear and other equipment

On the hill walks you must wear proper walking boots and clothing and carry your own waterproofs and sufficient food for the duration of the walk. On other walks you are advised to wear walking boots and be prepared for all kinds of weather. All walks will include a lunch stop and/or other breaks so please bring a supply of food and drink with you. We also recommend you consider packing treatments for common issues such as blisters (Compeed is good) and cramp (Crampfix is effective).

Walk leader discretion

In the interests of safety, walk leaders reserve the right to decline to take walkers whom they consider to be inadequately equipped or who they have reason to believe may not be able to complete the route. Walkers' safety is our priority at all times. If you are unsure about your suitability for a particular walk, do not hesitate to contact us and one of our experienced guides will contact you to discuss.

On the day

Registration

You must register before joining your walk. Registration for all walks will take place at McMillan Hall, Dashwood Square, Newton Stewart, DG8 6EQ. The table at the end of this pack shows the registration times for each walk and evening event.

Registration for each walk opens around 30 minutes before the walk is due to depart. Please ensure you arrive in good time to complete the registration process. A copy of the form you will be asked to complete can be viewed [here](#), but it is not necessary to complete this in advance – there will be a plentiful supply at the registration point. Please also bring along a copy of your booking in case of any queries.

Unable to attend on the day

If you are unexpectedly unable to participate in your booked walk, such as due to illness or injury on the day, please try to let us know so that we know not to expect you at registration. You can call or text the registration mobile phone on 07421 312 056.

Minibus transfers

When required, walks include minibus transfer from Dashwood Square, outside McMillan Hall, to the walk start point. All walkers will be returned to Newton Stewart after completing their walk. Our registration staff will guide you to the correct minibus. Minibuses will leave promptly, and for the enjoyment of others we can't wait for those arriving late.

Walk leaders

All walks will be led by experienced leaders. On the more demanding walks, the walk leaders will be members of the Galloway Mountain Rescue Team. On some of the shorter walks the guides may include local historians, wildlife rangers or enthusiasts who will discuss the history, wildlife etc of the area as you walk.

Walking responsibly

We operate a "leave no trace" policy, so please do not drop litter and always leave the countryside as you found it. When walking, please observe the Country Code and respect the life and work of the countryside.

Liability

Whilst Newton Stewart Walking Festival has public liability insurance it will not be responsible for any injury, illness, death or claim of any description whatsoever which results from any of the following:

1. The act(s) and/or omission(s) of any walker
2. The act(s) and/or omission(s) of a third party not connected with Newton Stewart Walking Festival and which were unforeseeable or unavoidable

All walkers are strongly advised to obtain adequate medical insurance to cover them in the event of an accident or illness.

Walk registration and evening event times

The following table provides times for our walks and other events. Please note that there may have been some changes to timings to those originally advised on our website and/or at the time of your booking. The times shown below should be treated as the up to date times.

Registration for all walks is at McMillan Hall, Dashwood Square, Newton Stewart, DG8 6EQ

Evening events in McMillan Hall or Belted Galloway Visitor Centre, Riverside View, Newton Stewart, DG8 6NQ

Name of walk / event	Registration point	Registration open from	Minibus departs at	Return time *
Friday 8 May 2026				
1-1 Into the wilderness:Cairnsmore of Fleet	McMillan Hall	07:30	08:00	17:00
1-2 Round the North Rhins	McMillan Hall	08:30	09:00	16:15
1-3 Gatehouse by the back door	McMillan Hall	09:00	09:30	15:45
Welcome Dinner	Served at 19:30 in The Belted Galloway			
Saturday 9 May 2026				
2-1 Into the fire: Merrick circuit	McMillan Hall	06:30	07:00	18:30
2-2 Into solitude: Millfore	McMillan Hall	07:30	08:00	15:15
2-3 Mt Pigma, Kenlum and Boreland Hills	McMillan Hall	08:30	09:00	16:15
2-4 Glenkens: Mossdale to New Galloway	McMillan Hall	09:30	10:00	16:45
2-5 Castle Kennedy estate	McMillan Hall	10:00	10:30	15:15
Evening talk: The native forests of Glen Trool	Talk starts at 19:30 in McMillan Hall			
Sunday 10 May 2026				
3-1 Baggers delight:Shalloch on Minnoch	McMillan Hall	07:30	08:00	16:30
3-2 The southern Stewartry hills	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	17:30
3-3 The wheely brig and the germstone	McMillan Hall	09:30	10:00	14:15
3-4 Kilsture and Bladnoch	McMillan Hall	10:00	10:30	15:15
3-5 The nature of the Wood of Cree	McMillan Hall	10:00	10:30	14:30
3-6 Sunset on Cairnsmore	McMillan Hall	17:30	18:00	23:00
Monday 11 May 2026				
4-1 Game on: Mochrum Fell	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	17:45
4-2 Wild west coast to Portpatrick	McMillan Hall	09:00	09:30	17:00
4-3 Supper Walk:Bruce's Stone-Glentrool (Mod)	McMillan Hall	13:30	14:00	21:15
4-4 Supper Walk:Bruce's Stone-Glentrool (Easy)	McMillan Hall	13:30	14:00	21:15
Tuesday 12 May 2026				
5-1 King of the gypsies	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	17:30
5-2 Fells, woods and lochs	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	15:15
5-3 The 39 steps, and then some!	McMillan Hall	09:45	10:15	17.15
5-4 Pilgrims Way:Glasserton-Isle of Whithorn	McMillan Hall	10:00	10:30	17:00
Evening talk: Lawrie Johnston's Galloway stories	Talk starts at 19:30 in McMillan Hall			
Wednesday 13 May 2026				
6-1 Round the lochs	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	18:00
6-2 Larg and Knockens hills	McMillan Hall	09:00	09:30	15:00
6-3 Needle's Eye and the Muckle Lands	McMillan Hall	09:30	10:00	16:15
6-4 Kilsture at night	McMillan Hall	19:30	20:00	23:00
Thursday 14 May 2026				
7-1 Into the past: Cairnsmore of Carsphairn	McMillan Hall	07:30	08:00	18:30
7-2 Kirk, castle and coast	McMillan Hall	08:00	08:30	14:45
7-3 Gemrock and Creetown's quarries	McMillan Hall	09:30	10:00	16:00
7-4 Discovering Penninghame pond	McMillan Hall	10:00	10:30	14:00

* Return time shown is meant as a guide only and may vary depending on conditions on the day and the group

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