

Notes on the organisation of trips for the CBMW

The organisation of trips has historically fallen into the remit of a single person or couple, and there have been many successful trips over the years. Some of these have been walking based, and others more “tourism” based. Generally the requirements below fit both, although in some cases the tourist trips can more easily utilise services from other providers.

For a walking trip the requirements and skills are basically these:-

JOB 1

Determine an area to be visited. This might depend on the quality and difficulty of the walking in the area.

Find a suitable hotel. The CBMW has gravitated a little over the years from a preference for a “cheap” hotel being of key importance to the current situation (2024) where comfort and good food are more important than price.

Depending on the specificity of the area to be visited there may not be very much choice, and the approach taken may simply be to find all of the 4 star (or 3 star?) hotels in the relevant area, and to canvas them all for a quotation for half board. Great care needs to be taken to specify exactly what is required. What does breakfast consist of, and what exactly is included with dinner. Of course you can specify your requirements but Spanish hotels have a habit of responding with what they want to provide, and this may NOT match your requirements. Check carefully!

Pricing needs to be understood especially whether IVA (VAT) is included or not, and also when payments have to be made and what cancellation options there might be.

Often the larger hotel groups will identify the enquirer as the responsible person for making payments, and equally hold them responsible for payments and cancellations PERSONALLY. Take care.

On the other side of the coin receiving payments also has to be managed and it is recommended that no exceptions be made to the policy of NO PAYMENT, NO GO.

Before going to the hotel make sure you have a convenient **print** of the agreed deal (perhaps as extracts of the relevant emails?) to flourish in front of the hotel management if necessary. If you have dealt with a “remote” group booking person it is often the case that the local hotel management know nothing of the details, and will need to have them explained in advance of the first meal.

JOB 2

Who wants to attend the trip? Somebody needs to be responsible for determining who might be interested in a trip. Right now (2024) demand is great, and the difficulty might be in limiting numbers rather than pushing for attendees. Are numbers to be strictly limited? (Leaders do not always want to take more than a certain number on their walks). A register of interest needs to be kept noting date and time of receipt so that if it is necessary to exclude people that can be done based on time of receipt. There is a form on the website that can be used for this.

Rules exist (but are not always followed) which recommend that leaders, and those that make a contribution to the running of the group should be given priority booking for trips.

How will any deposits and final payments be made?

Several scenarios exist here.

The relevant hotel may require NO deposit (rare!). However, it is important to gather a deposit from attendees as a way of affirming commitment even if this is held in one of the organiser's private accounts.

The hotel may be happy for individuals or couples to make their deposit payments directly to the hotel and to settle their own accounts directly either before arrival or on departure.

The hotel may prefer to deal only with the "organiser" and receive deposit payments from him or her, but then have final accounts paid directly by the attendees OR again to have the final payments made by the organiser in advance of the trip or at departure from the hotel.

Making payments can be a part of Jobs 1 or 2.

JOB 3

Identify the potential walks. This can be done either by raiding any existing literature from tourist offices, guide books and on-line sources – outdooractive, wikiloc, etc. or the walks can be designed from scratch using resources such as "plotter" or "plotaroute". In any event, it may be difficult to come up with enough walks at the relevant grade just by raiding existing resources, and some "construction" may also be needed.

It is worth collecting more walks than you expect to use so that choices can be made if necessary based on the capability of the group and the weather or any other issues.

Paper maps can be a very worthwhile addition to help in outlining areas of interest for walk planning and observing any existing PR routes already on the map.

In addition to the specific walk grade for the trip it is worth having a few walks at both higher, and lower grades available for use during the week. Not all walks need to aim for summits, and valley walks or walks to specific items of interest can also be very worthwhile.

Finally the walks planned need to have GPS tracks which can be given to the relevant leader.

Identifying suitable meeting points can be harder than expected, although it might be easier to find walks from other resources that have been completed by an individual or a couple. This does not guarantee that the start point will provide sufficient parking for a group of cars. Often this can be checked by using google earth, but in other cases there may be no substitute for a visit to the planned parking area at the start of the trip week.

Finally you will need to know how long it takes to get from the chosen hotel to the start point for the walks. Generally you would not want to include a drive of more than an hour. In most cases 30/40 minutes should be seen as the top stop. In exceptional cases it may be worth a longer drive

for an outstanding walk.

JOB 4

Walk leaders. Many people these days are happy to lead walks just using a gps track, and following either their gps device or phone to guide them on their route. This can be augmented by a description of any known issues or limitations along with any photos that can be viewed from source about the route. It is rare to find walks that are technically too challenging for our group.

On rare occasions the leader may have some reservations about a member of the party and their ability to complete the walk - where practicable – this can be tackled discreetly BEFORE the walk day.

Ideally the leader will want to have an escape route or shorter option in the back of their mind in case of difficulty during the walk including accident or illness but this is largely already covered in the conventions of the group.

JOB 5

Administrators during the trip. It is generally easiest for there to be an organiser who will take care of day to day administrative arrangement relating to the hotel, car groups, and announcements the evening before the walk along with suggestions for any “rest” day activities. They can also advise about nearest shops, health centre, churches etc. They will not be expected to get involved in any personal details such as room problems, dietary issues, and these should be pushed back if necessary and redirected to the hotel management. In exceptional cases help may be given where there are language, or other difficulties that can be more easily resolved by the administrator.