

## **RIDGEWAY CHALLENGE 2021 RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The eighteenth holding of the Ridgeway Challenge will be on Saturday/Sunday 28/29 August 2021. The race is being organised by the Trail Running Association (TRA) and the Race Director is Tim Mitchell.
- 1.2 A UK Athletics race permit number will be made available once the permit is approved. Insurance cover is provided by a policy arranged by UK Athletics. Copy available on request.
- 1.3 The route and checkpoints are detailed on the [ridgewaychallenge.com](http://ridgewaychallenge.com) website.
- 1.4 Variations to the route may occur as deemed necessary by the authorities and safety related issues occurring on-the-day.

### **2 AIM**

- 2.1 To assess any risks to competitors, administrators, officials, spectators and support teams at the Ridgeway Challenge and what action may be taken to reduce them to acceptable levels.

### **3 DESCRIPTION OF COURSE**

- 3.1 The course starts on Ivinghoe Beacon near Ivinghoe in Hertfordshire and finishes at Avebury in Wiltshire, a distance of 86 miles. There are 7,000 feet of ascent.
- 3.2 For the first 17.5 miles, the route passes close to sizeable towns with train services, Tring, Wendover and Princes Risborough. For the next 25.6 miles, between Princes Risborough and Goring-on-Thames, the route passes near

the towns in Chinnor, Watlington and Wallingford. There are no rail services in these towns and bus services in Chinnor and Watlington are very limited. In Wallingford there is a bus service to Goring and Streatley station.

- 3.3 After Goring the course passes over the North Wessex Downs. This is remote country and the nearest towns to the route, Wantage and Swindon, are further away than the towns up to Goring.
- 3.4 In order to reduce the risk of a runner being stranded all runners agree to carry a mobile phone during the event, warm item of clothing, waterproof, cup and torch. There are three support vehicles dedicated to traversing the course to collect runners throughout the event.

#### 4 RISKS

- 4.1 There are many road crossings on the route. It is not feasible for marshals to attend all these crossings or to put out warning signs. All volunteers have been allocated to check points to provide refreshments for the runners.
- 4.2 Road crossings provide excellent locations to pinpoint a retiring runner's location and a place to collect them.
- 4.3 From 2021 onward each runner has a GPS tracker viewable from the [ridgewaychallenge.com](http://ridgewaychallenge.com) website.
- 4.4 In the first part of the course there are many gated field entries and exits. These may become slippery in wet weather. Runners are warned of this risk on application.
- 4.5 This is an overnight event and there is a risk of competitors suffering from exposure, particularly if the weather is bad. The risk is more acute on the hills after Goring where the area is thinly populated and there are very few dwellings near the course. The mandatory kit list includes a piece of warm clothing to counter this risk.
- 4.6 First aiders will be limited in number and location. All marshals and competitors will be able to download the

telephone numbers of the hospitals with Accident and Emergency facilities which are nearest to the route. The limited amount of medical back-up means that there is a possibility that a sick or injured competitor may suffer from not receiving medical attention as promptly as he/she might otherwise have done. However, with the distance being 86 miles, the probability is that first aiders would not be in the right place to provide such attention in any case. *See First Aid later in the Risk Assessment.*

- 4.7 Competitors may go off route and get lost, particularly at night. This could happen in an area where it is not feasible to get assistance from marshals or members of the public. The marshals may not be able to help a lost competitor as their primary obligation is to manage check points. Runners can call the race director for advice.
- 4.8 Raynet will monitor runners on the course and alert those that are straying significantly of course, alerting the race director.
- 4.9 Support teams are at risk since they will often be waiting for the competitor they are supporting at a point where the Ridgeway crosses a road. If parking space is limited their vehicle may cause an obstruction or affect visibility. Checkpoint locations are positioned where at least the minimum number of cars needed for the checkpoint can be parked off road. A dedicated web page with support crew instructions is provided to counter this problem.
- 4.10 Restrictions are listed in the CP section of this document. Where parking is not easily available **NO PARKING** restrictions apply to runner's support team. Disqualification penalties apply to runners who team ignore the restriction. In this case runners will be asked to surrender their numbers and their names removed from the 'running list'.

## 5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

- 5.1 Each competitor has primary responsibility for his/her own safety.
- 5.2 Marshals will do what they reasonably can to assist competitors with the resources they have but they cannot be held responsible for competitors' safety. It is part of the essence of ultra-running that competitors knowingly enter a situation where there is an element of risk. They cannot expect the marshals to be responsible if there is a mishap. If marshals were held responsible in such circumstances, events such as this would never take place. This is generally understood by everyone involved in events such as this, and reinforced by the disclaimer on the entry form which is signed by each competitor or terms of entry if the application was on line.
- 5.3 Support teams are responsible for their own safety and safety including adhering to the Highway Code and instructions of officials e.g. the Police.
- 5.4 Road crossings at Ivinghoe Beacon have marshals on the road. All marshals are informed that they are forbidden by law to indicate to road users that they are to change speed or direction. That is, **they are not to attempt to direct traffic**. Marshals are not to stand in the road. Runners are reminded in the application process that marshals will not stop traffic and as a runner they need to be sure it is safe to cross before doing so.
- 5.5 All checkpoints must know the location of the nearest A&E. All checkpoints must have a vehicle constantly available to take an injured runner or marshal to the A&E department or to the location of the event medical team.

## 6 SAFEGUARDS AGAINST RISKS

- 6.1 It is compulsory for all competitors to carry a mobile phone and for the competitor to give the number to the Race Organiser. The Info Sheet supplied to competitors will require them to write on the back of their running number of any allergy or medical condition they may have and of any medication they are taking.
- 6.2 All runners carry a tracker from 2021 onwards. The location of runners can be pinpointed to within approx. three metres. The tracking is online and can be accessed by both event staff and support crews.
- 6.3 The marshals at each check point will be asked to mark the competitors off against a list as they pass through. The marshals will be asked to inform the Race Organiser of the competitors who fail to reach the check point by the cut off time. They will also be required to inform the Race Organiser when they become aware of any competitor who is sick or injured or any competitor who retires from the race.
- 6.4 All competitors, marshals and support crews will be warned to take special care at road crossings.
  - 6.4.1 Road crossing are of interest during the Wiltshire section of the course. Between Fox Hill and the turning for the Ridgeway off the B1492 there is 1.3miles of road that forms a part of the Ridgeway route proper. This section of the course will be used between the hours of 21:45 on the 28th to 09:15 on the 29th of August. These times are approximate. The road will be signed with Caution Runners on the roads and road junctions as necessary. Runners will be informed of the hours of darkness, 20:30hrs 24th to 06:30 28th August, and instructed to wear some reflective clothing and carry a torch/head torch during these hours in the race instructions. Runners need

to satisfy themselves that they can be safely seen by other road users.

6.4.2 A further road crossing intersects the A346 is now being avoided by taking a route through Ogbourne St George. Runners will take a right turn and head down Blytham Road down past Old Chase Road on to Copse Drove, then left under the A346. They will then follow the High Street until re-joining the Ridgeway route at Draycott Cl. Signs will be out on the road indicating to road users that runners are taking this route.

Note: This is the route taken by the Ridgeway Relay and mostly Race to the Stones.

6.4.3 The finish of the event is Avebury Social Centre, High Street, Avebury. Runners leave The Ridgeway at Overton Down and descend toward Avebury along Green Street in to Avebury. Runners will arrive at the Road Crossing over the B4003 between 00:01 and 14:00 on the Sunday morning. Again, runners will be informed of the hours of darkness and instructed to wear reflective clothing and carry a torch/head torch during these hours in the race instructions. Caution Runner signs will be posted either side of the Crossing at Avebury.

6.4.4 Parking outside the Social Centre at Avebury is limited to Radio Operating and Medical vehicles and a small number of marshal's vehicles. From 2019 onward, no vehicles are allowed past the Social Centre. The National Trust parking area can be used for a fee, payable by the runner's support team. Free parking as available at the Sports Centre. Signs out for parking will be placed out on the road from 23:00 on the Saturday night.

6.4.5 Support teams are not to park outside the Social Centre as this area will be used for ambulances in the case of emergency. Entrants are informed of this during the application process. Support vehicles are not to risk a restriction to the ambulance by parking on the High Street.

Support crews are not to park on the road even to just collect runners or bags. Entrants are informed that their name may be removed from the results if their support crew parks outside the Social Centre.

## 7 First Aid (TBC)

- 7.1 Between the hours of 09:00 and 12:30 the main first aid support will be provided by First Aiders as qualified by St John Ambulance and Red Cross at the registration point.
- 7.2 From 12:30 to 17:30 first aid support will be provided by a mobile First Aider as qualified by St John Ambulance and Red Cross. Call 07917 364 364 or ask Raynet to contact the Race Director.
- 7.3 An authorised first aid company will provide a first aid and paramedic support at South Stoke Village hall from 17:30 to 23:30 on the 28<sup>th</sup> August. From 23:30 the first aider and paramedic will follow the run route down to Avebury. The mobile first aider will also be on route.
- 7.4 The appointed first aid company will provide a Paramedic, Emergency 4x4 support vehicle and a first aider based at Avebury. Cover will start at 00:01 to 15:00 on Sunday.
- 7.5 Raynet will provide communications covering the entire field as the event unfolds. Runner locations will be transmitted to, and recorded at, a central point. The Race Director will have a dedicated Raynet operator in the Race Director's vehicle allowing quick and easy communications throughout the event.
- 7.6 Raynet will be monitoring the trackers throughout the event alerting the Race Director to those runners off course and retired.

Checkpoint Opening and Closing Times

Complete information at [ridgewaychallenge.com](http://ridgewaychallenge.com)

point/ link	CP Name	Provides	Distance	Open	Close
Registration and The Start	Registration and The Start	Water, toilets, ample free parking.	0	09:00 28th	Last registration 11:30 28th
CP1	Wendover	Cold drinks, simple food, NO PARKING.	10.5 (10.5)	11:15 28th	14:30 28th
CP2	Whiteleaf	Cold drinks, simple food, ample parking	16.8 (6.3)	12:45 28th	16:00 28th
CP3	Hill Road, Lewknor	Cold drinks, simple food, some parking (off road)	25.2 (9.4)	14:30 28th	18:15 28th
CP4	Nuffield Church	Cold drinks, simple food, parking may be available.	34.2 (7.7)	16:00 28th	20:30 28th
CP5	<b>South Stoke Village Hall</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Flush toilets. Parking on road.</b>	<b>41.8 (7.6)</b>	<b>17:00 28th</b>	<b>23:15 28th</b>
CP6	<b>Bury Down</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Ample parking.</b>	<b>52.4 (8.7)</b>	<b>18:45 28th</b>	<b>02:30 29th</b>
CP7	<b>Sparshalt Firs</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Ample parking.</b>	<b>61.5 (9.1)</b>	<b>20:00 28th</b>	<b>06:30 29th</b>
CP8	<b>Fox Hill</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Some parking.</b>	<b>69.4 (7.9)</b>	<b>21:45 28th</b>	<b>08:45 29th</b>
CP9	<b>Barbury Castle</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Ample parking.</b>	<b>79.9 (10.5)</b>	<b>11:45 28th</b>	<b>12:15 29th</b>
CP10, finish	<b>Avebury Centre</b>	<b>Hot and cold drinks, hot and cold food. Parking at Avebury visitor car park only. DO NOT PARK ON THE STREET</b>	<b>86 (6.1)</b>	<b>00:01 29th</b>	<b>15:00 29th</b>

## 8 Evacuation Procedure

In each case the Race Director will SMS all runners and Runner's ICoE numbers informing them that a situation has arisen that they need to be aware of.

### Registration

Should the registration point need to be evacuated the car drivers will be asked to leave the area and head either towards Ringshall or Tring. Marshals will remain at the entrance/exit of the car park to direct vehicles away from the car park. Should the event still be going ahead runners will be asked to congregate at the end of the trail that leads down to the Ridgeway and await further instructions. At least one marshal should remain at the checkpoint in case runners are still out on the course. The Raynet operator will also remain close by to ensure communications are always available.

CP1, Wendover: staff to move away from the road junction along Church Lane. A make-shift checkpoint can be housed at opposite the church just before the Ridgeway takes a right turn towards the cricket grounds.

CP2, Whiteleaf: staff are to collapse the checkpoint table and chairs and leave the standard checkpoint area. They should return to their cars and await further instructions. Should the event still be going ahead then the checkpoint should move to the edge of the car park where the trail begins to descend towards Peter's Lane.

CP3, Hill Road Lewknor: staff are to leave a marshal and food for at least 10 runners then move the remaining cars to Kingston Blount where the Ridgeway intersects the A40. Once all runners are account for the marshal at Mill Lane can stand down. Raynet can also move to this location.

CP4, Nuffield Church: staff are to leave the church car park and move to the area where the Ridgeway leaves the road outside the

church and heads along the field edge. Raynet can move to this location or park opposite.

CP5, South Stoke Village Hall: staff are to leave the area and move to the the small field adjacent to the hall. Should it be necessary to move further away staff should move to the footpath at the end of the access road.

CP6, Bury Down: staff are to move to the other car park across the road. If this is not possible they can move further along the trail towards Sparsholt Firs. All cars are to leave the area however staff with provisions for the remaining runners should stay resident ensuring that runners passing through will have sufficient food to enable them to reach CP7. Raynet should find an area to park near the checkpoint and use walkie talkies to relay information to and from the checkpoint.

CP7, Sparsholt Firs: staff are to move to the other car park across the road. If this is not possible they can move further along the trail towards Foxhill. All cars are to leave the area however staff with provisions for the remaining runners should stay resident ensuring that runners passing through will have sufficient food to enable them to reach CP8. Raynet can park here.

CP8, Fox Hill, should the area need to be evacuated then the checkpoint should move up the hill towards the access road. This is done to allow radio communications to continue with Raynet as lower down the hill towards the car park may cause problems. Should this location not be available checkpoint staff should exit the area and make a reduced size checkpoint at the bus stop and wooded area entrance on the Swindon road. Raynet can park here.

The open fire at CP8 needs to be carefully managed. To limit the chance of harm or damage to property the following must be adhered to.

1. The firepit must be purpose built – that is the pit must be purchased for the use of containing a fire.
2. Firewood must be purchased for being burnt as fuel. No chopped-up pallets, bedsteads or old fencing etc.
3. Do not use accelerants such as petrol. Use only firelighters and fire lighting fluid designed and sold for igniting wood fires.
4. Keep the fire away from the trail, runners and other people using the trail should be able to pass easily.
5. Ensure you have a bucket of water or container to extinguish the wood fire quickly if you need to.
6. Do not burn rubbish on the fire. Ensure all people attending know not to burn rubbish on the fire.
7. Take in to account that embers may drift away from the fire. Ensure the fire is located where no flammable material, tents, gazebos are in range of hot embers.
8. The fire should be located away from cars. Embers may damage paintwork.
9. You must have a named person responsible for the extinguishing of the fire. Taking a photograph showing the fire is extinguished and the surrounding area is not damaged by fire is a great way to prove the event has been responsible.
10. A record of anyone that is burnt by the fire must be made.
11. A record of any fire damaged equipment must be made.

CP9, Barbury Castle: staff are to leave the area and follow the trail towards the stables and road, this is towards the direction of the arriving runners. Should the checkpoint not be able to stay in the park then a reduced size checkpoint should be created at the top of Smeeth Ridge where the Ridgeway joins the farm track at the stables.

CP10, Avebury Social Centre: Should this venue need to be evacuated the event will be administered from the carpark at the top of High Street (first aid and water only) with the remaining facilities being administered from Avebury Sports Club a short walk from the finish.

## Summary

The event takes place along a well-established trail with minimal obstacles. Checkpoints are spaced such that competitors can run the event without need to carry large amounts of food and water. The average distance between checkpoints is approx. 9.5 miles. Whilst the overnight section brings a risk of exposure competitors are aware of this risk and are prompted to carry warm clothing and a waterproof. These items make up part of the mandatory kit list. As with all ultra-distance events there is an element of risk though the combination of a well-established track, regular checkpoints, first aid points, access to drop bags at halfway, dedicated transport for retiring runners, trackers and event communications the risk is kept to an acceptable level.

Tim Mitchell

Race Organiser, for and on behalf of the Trail Running Association  
5 May 2021

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