

Freaks in the Peaks – tips for organising a weekend

What do you need to do?

So you've volunteered to organise a Freaks? What does that mean? Essentially, you have to check out a venue (instructions below), consult people on dates and provisionally book dates with the venue, then confirm as soon as possible, and get the word out via the list.

The format

Generally speaking, we meet up on the Friday night in a pub for a session, have a workshop in a hall on Sat morning, dance out in the town during Sat afternoon, and have a bit of a party on Sat evening. Then on Sunday we go for a walk with a bit more dancing to finish things off. Friday night is pretty quiet (about 10 people) Saturday is busiest (between 20 and 50 people), and Sunday is quieter again (about 20 people). Small villages are more appealing than busy towns, although there can be fewer options. These are the things to check out:

Venue

We need a hall for the Sat morning workshop, and generally also to sleep in overnight and cook a meal in on Sat night. We can cope with either a total price or a price per head – consult the treasurer if necessary.

Booking options:

- From 8pm Friday until 5pm Saturday – if it is cheap.
- From 11pm Friday until 10am Sunday – if it is expensive.
- From 9:30am Saturday until 1pm Saturday – in summer with a campsite nearby.

Questions:

- Is it big enough for three sets of 8?
- What's the floor like – is it wood, can we dance on it, can we drop sticks?
- Will their insurers tell them off if we sleep overnight?
- Does it have a kitchen and heating?
- Showers are a bonus – sometimes there are some close by.

Pubs and cafés

We need three or four pubs: Friday night; Saturday lunchtime and afternoon; Sunday lunchtime. Could do with a couple of cafés – one for Saturday afternoon, and one for Sunday afternoon, although we can also use the hall. Questions as follows:

- What are their opening hours, when do they serve beer/tea, and food?
- What kind of food do they offer (i.e. prices, veggie options... etc.?)
- Can we dance outside, and play inside?
- Do they have other music/sport/quiz on which would be difficult for us?
- Do they have a separate function room we could use – particularly for the Sat evening? Is there a price for it? Do we need to book it?

- Do they need a reminder that we are coming? Can they put a flyer up for us?

Sunday walk

The walk on Sunday should take a leisurely 2½ hours in total, and stop (well over halfway) at a pub. i.e. 1½ hrs there and 1 hr back, or 2 hrs there and ½ hour back. Consider alternative (easy) routes / shortcuts. And for extra bonus points, find a place of interest, eg. stone circle, country house, or cave to dance at.

Other random things

- Not everyone is up for indoor or outdoor camping. You also need to check out B&B / youth hostel options.
- Public transport access is important – otherwise be prepared to ferry people in from stations. But remember that mobile phone access is sketchy in the Peak District, so this may have to be sorted out in advance.
- Is there a shop in the village? What are the opening hours, what does it sell in terms of: milk, groceries, vegetables, sandwiches, newspapers, candles?

Putting it all together

Once you've checked out all the details above, checked costs with the treasurer, and decided where to go when, then get the details to the web maestro, get flyers and posters sorted (we can provide templates), and make sure emails go out to the list – both well in advance, and reminders too. Make sure people know what to expect.

At the weekend, most of your work is already over – other people will turn up with the Freaks kit, and teach the dances, and you've already reminded the hall, pubs, cafes etc. You'll need to make sure posters are up in strategic places, bring a map for the walk, and liaise with the venues – thanking them etc., but all being well, you can get on with enjoying a fantastic weekend!