

Welcome to Gwentrek 2023, Gwent's pinnacle event for the Expedition Challenge – are you brave enough to take it on?

Where: CRAI Scout Activity Park, Newbridge  
Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer **152** (If additional areas are required for any part of the competition, high quality, laminated map printouts will be supplied)  
When: 29 September – 01 October 2023  
Cost: £15.00 per participant (leaders no cost) – Earlybird Booking of £12.50 before 31 July 2023

## Gwentrek overview

Teams of 4-7 Scouts or Explorer Scouts complete a hiking expedition through a series of checkpoints and base camp activities, to test Scouting expedition skills. This is a competition, so teams will be tested on knowledge, independence from leaders, kit, navigation and camping skills.

### GT teams – Scout section

A great way to experience Gwentrek, from the new through to the seasoned Scout. Leaders can accompany their teams around the route for peace of mind. This level of the competition is designed to get new people involved and the chance to gain some experience, so, in a few years they can tackle GT+. There is a GT trophy for the winning team, as well as meeting criteria for many activity badges.

### GT+ teams - Scout section

Feeling independent, feeling confident? Take on the challenge of GT+. Teams compete without leaders for 2 days from **Saturday morning** (arrive Friday night and camp with own Scout groups). Teams will be expected to compete on the GT route and be self-sufficient, this is important! Teams are expected to carry all food, equipment and everything they need for the weekend (Tents & Cooking Equipment will be left at base camp with competition team) and will be camping in a separate field on the Saturday night, away from leaders in their own area. Teams completing GT+ are eligible for the **Scouts Expedition Challenge Award** (subject to completing supporting elements with their section)

### GTx teams - Explorer section

Feeling brave? Take on Gwentrek Extreme, a specially designed route for the more confident and more adventurous. GTx teams will be camping in the same field on Friday but will be away from leaders and in their own area, on Saturday night they **may** be at a completely different campsite. Therefore, they must be self-sufficient and able to carry all kit. Points will be deducted for leader assistance.

More information, along with updates can be found at [www.gwentscouts.org.uk/gwentrek](http://www.gwentscouts.org.uk/gwentrek)

---

## Volunteering

In order to run an event for over 200 Scouts and Explorers, the event team rely on volunteers to be available to manage the safety and efficient running of the event. Any leaders, within Scouts / Explorers or other sections who would like to be part of this amazing team can volunteer via the booking site (<https://booking.gwentscouts.org.uk>). No prior experience is needed and there are roles from Sweep team to Administration over the weekend, any help is gratefully received.

We will hold a volunteer briefing on Sunday 24 September 2023 via teams for all volunteers, to confirm allocated support roles and provide details.

## Bookings

To assist in planning and organising of volunteers, the organisers require a view of numbers by the end of July. To encourage this, there is an early booking discount.

- Prior to 31 July 2023 the cost / participant will be **£12.50**
- From 01 August 2023 the cost per participant will be **£15.00**
- All bookings must be confirmed by **Wednesday 13 September 2023**

Bookings can be made on <https://booking.gwentscouts.org.uk> from mid-June. One leader from each group can make bookings for the whole group. Initial registration requires main contact details and number of participants / adults.

**Participant names or teams are not required.** This will secure your places in the competition.

Individual names and team composition can be added / changed up to the booking deadline of Wednesday 13 September 2023. During the w/c 18 September 2023 the main contact will be sent links to electronic health forms that must be completed by Wednesday 27 September 2023.

Reminders will be sent to the main contacts prior to key dates and deadlines.

## Kit list

All Gwentrek teams will need to carry relevant equipment to stay safe. An indicative kit list has been provided, and can be found on the Gwentrek website, this outlines the minimum equipment to be carried.

- GTx teams must carry all of their equipment, food and fuel, and their campsite will be checked to ensure it has been left clear each morning. **No team will be permitted to walk without mandatory equipment.**
- GT+ teams may arrive with additional kit that can be left with their Scout groups on the Friday night. From check-out on the Saturday morning, they must carry all of their equipment and food and their campsite will be checked to ensure it has been left clear each morning (Tents, Cooking equipment and fuel does not need to be carried on the hike, but must be checked in on Saturday morning). **No team will be permitted to walk without mandatory equipment.**
- GT teams are allowed help with their campsite by leaders and do not have to carry their tent which can be left erected at the site. All those accompanying GT teams must ensure the group carry the relevant equipment to stay safe. **No team will be permitted to walk without mandatory equipment.**

Individuals need to be able to complete the expedition with their own kit, therefore they must have an appropriately sized and weighted bag – anything carried in hands is unacceptable.

Individuals must wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the event and the weather conditions, failure to do so can prevent participation in the event, at the discretion of the event leaders who are responsible for the participants and volunteers safety.

# Gwentrek – GT23

## Nights Away and the InTouch Scheme

It is the responsibility of the Scout or Explorer Scout Leader to ensure that the requirements of the InTouch and Nights Away Scheme are met.

For GT teams – At least one leader staying overnight with teams must have suitable Nights Away permits (campsite or lightweight expedition level or above).

For GT+ Teams – At least one leader staying overnight on the Friday with teams must have suitable Nights Away permits (campsite or lightweight expedition level or above). GT+ teams should be issued with a Nights Away Passport\* for the Saturday Night, which should be presented on checkout Saturday morning. If a team is downgraded to GT, a leader from their group must be available to accompany the team on the route and overnight.

GTx teams must be issued with Nights Away Passports\* which should be presented on arrival. This will be checked and any non-compliant teams will be downgraded and their booking leader contacted to arrange suitable leadership support to accompany the team on the route and overnight.

*\* All unaccompanied groups (e.g. GT+ and GTx) must have an issued Nights Away Passport by their relevant Nights Away Permit holder. The competition staff on site are there in the capacity of 'site wardens' and the expectation of teams participating is that they are self-sufficient for competition.*

Groups are responsible for completing Nights Away Notifications to their home DC as required for camping activities. If there are groups without Nights Away permits, in the first instance leaders should contact their DC (or ADC's) to pair with another group. Alternatively, please reach out to the event team for assistance.

A suitable InTouch system must be arranged and implemented. This should be discussed with any teams participating under a passport, in line with POR. For further reading please see [www.scouts.org.uk/intouch](http://www.scouts.org.uk/intouch)

The campsite has permanent toilets and a mains water point. The event organising team will supply water to GTx teams at a remote campsite if applicable, and therefore the event has been classified as taking place on a **campsite** as far as participants are concerned.

# Gwentrek – GT23

## Key event start / end times

### Friday 29 September 2023

- 1800, Site opens to leaders only
- 1830, Participant drop off opens
- 2000, GTx / GT+ Scrutineering (GT is Saturday Morning)

### Sunday 01 October 2023

- 1500, Presentations
- 1530 to 1700, staggered departure

## Travel Arrangements

Due to the expected number of participants and the drop off arrangement on site, a 'one way' system will be shared nearer the event. The event will be operating a drop-off process for participants arriving and departing, parents will not be able to leave their cars and accompany their Scout/Explorer to the site. It is not a place for parents/guardians to park, due to volume of attendees! Participants will all be directed to a reception area, where they will be met by their leader or wait with the supervising team, until their leaders are on site. Where possible we ask that at least one leader arrives during the earlier 'leader' time to ensure that they are on site, and parents do not drop off early.

Vehicular access to the campsite will be restricted to those staying on site or delivering heavyweight camping equipment only. Access back onto the road may be restricted until after the main drop-off time.

Collection on Sunday will be staggered to minimise vehicle congestion and ensure participants are ready to leave as soon as parents arrive for pick up.

More detailed drop off and collection arrangements will be sent closer to the event date.

## Routes and Route Planning

Teams will be given a route to plan, in advance of the event and must plan a route between the checkpoints given in the most effective manner possible. They must prepare a route card and will be questioned on it before leaving the site. GT teams will still be assessed but their knowledge is not expected to be at the same level as the GT+ / GTx teams.

Route cards should be prepared using the designated template (shared with teams in September). Note that teams will be scored by their accuracy of time taken to reach the checkpoints.

Your route must use paths and tracks marked as public rights of way or 'access land' on the OS map. Sections may require walking along public roads and crossing busy roads, therefore the highway code and countryside code must be adhered to at all times. Teams must be warned of the dangers of crossing busy road sections and reminded not to take risks. Manned crossing points will be used, teams must not cross at any other point.

### Information Timings

- **Thursday 14 September 2023** – Routes will be sent to group leader (via email on the booking system). Route cards should be prepared by groups in advance of the competition. Checkpoint travel timings to be entered into booking system prior to arrival
- **Friday 29 September 2023** – GTx / GT+ teams to hand in **2 copies** of completed route card, along with a route trace at scrutineering
- **Saturday 30 September 2023** – GT teams to bring route cards and traces to check-out on Saturday morning
- **Saturday 30 September 2023** – All teams to be provided with Sunday route, teams should calculate total walking time for Sunday route
- **Sunday 01 October 2023** – Total route time to be provided at check-out

The route, and general location is being issued for planning purposes, and the spirit of the event means teams should not pre-walk the route or sections of it. Some of the organising team live very close to the route so will be watching!

To reduce time and ensure accuracy, each team should submit their Saturday Checkpoint timings prior to arrival at the event, through the booking system (details will be provided with the route). To speed up registration on the Friday evening, please complete these in advance.

GPS and electronic navigation devices are not permitted for navigating during the event. The only exception to this rule is in the event of an emergency situation.

All leaders are expected to camp at the campsite. The aim is for teams to experience the camp and expedition independently, therefore GT+ / GTx teams will be camping in a leader free area during their competition, points will be deducted for leader intervention. GT teams are expected to camp with leaders, as they need support. Whilst it may be prudent depending on the weather to bring a mess tent, it is not in the spirit of this light-weight expedition to bring tables, chairs and non-expedition equipment.

## Expedition Skills

Gwentrek is an expedition skills competition, therefore expedition skills form a key part of the competition. Participants (GTx & GT+) will be marked across the weekend on a number of skills, the competition starts from registration (GTx Friday night, GT+ Saturday Morning). Expedition skills will include campsite set-up and clearance, cooking, hiking equipment, first aid. Further skill tests may occur during the hike or Saturday evening.

GT Teams will need to navigate (with some support from leaders). In addition, there will be activity bases scoring expedition skills on the Saturday evening.

# Gwentrek – GT23

## Note to leaders

It is the responsibility of leaders to prepare teams according to the requirements of the event, Gwentrek can only function effectively if young people are properly prepared. GT/GT+ routes are in the region of 12-16km Saturday and 8-12km on Sunday, GTx should expect a Saturday route potentially upwards of 20km and 8-12km on Sunday.

Teams require working knowledge of navigation and its application, emergency procedures and a good helping of common sense! They must be aware of, and practice the country and highway codes.

Teams operating under a Night Away Passport, should also be capable of completing the weekend, as a peer-led team in a safe and Scouting manner. Where the organisers identify teams not capable of operating without leader support, their designated permit holder will be contacted

Teams entering Gwentrek are reminded that they are expected to stay together throughout the event, both whilst walking and camping. **Teams must not split apart and walk separately, if identified, teams may be disqualified.** The only exception to this rule is when an emergency dictates. Throughout the event, teams must ensure all members of the team are safe and no participants are excluded or left on their own. Any team/participant found in breach of this rule, will be held at a manned checkpoint / waypoint until they are removed back to base camp and excluded from further participation.

Teams should be prepared to map read in various environments, including; open field, forests and fields. Specifically, knowledge about Bearings, Pacing and Field Boundaries will be required.

Leaders and GT+ will be given notes of the route for guidance.

## Adult Support

In line with Scout rules, all adults staying overnight must hold a valid Scouts DBS, and where they hold a volunteer appointment, this must have the status FULL on Compass, with Safety and Safeguarding training completed and in date. Due to the nature of the event, each GT team must be accompanied by at least one adult who holds a full appointment. These do not have to be Section Leaders, but can be any adult with a full role (Section Assistants, Skills Instructor).

**Occasional Helper is not an adult appointment**, but they may help on site, or walk with a group **in addition** to a qualifying appointment holder.

Please also encourage members from other sections to support the event, either by helping your group, or volunteering for a role on the weekend, we rely on over 30 additional volunteers over the weekend to safely run the event (volunteer roles range from the full weekend to a few hours)

## Bookings

Booking owners do not need to know the exact names and teams at time of booking. If the total number of participants is unknown, reserve spaces by 31 July 2023 to secure the early bird discount, additional places can be added after this date (at the full cost). Bookings can be updated up to the close date 13 September 2023

Participants names and teams must be completed by 13 September 2023. This is so health forms, final invoices, camping areas, team departure times and parent collection times can be allocated and shared in advance of the event. Changes can be made after this date via the event team, but we cannot guarantee additional spaces.