

Body  
& Soul



TRIP NOTES

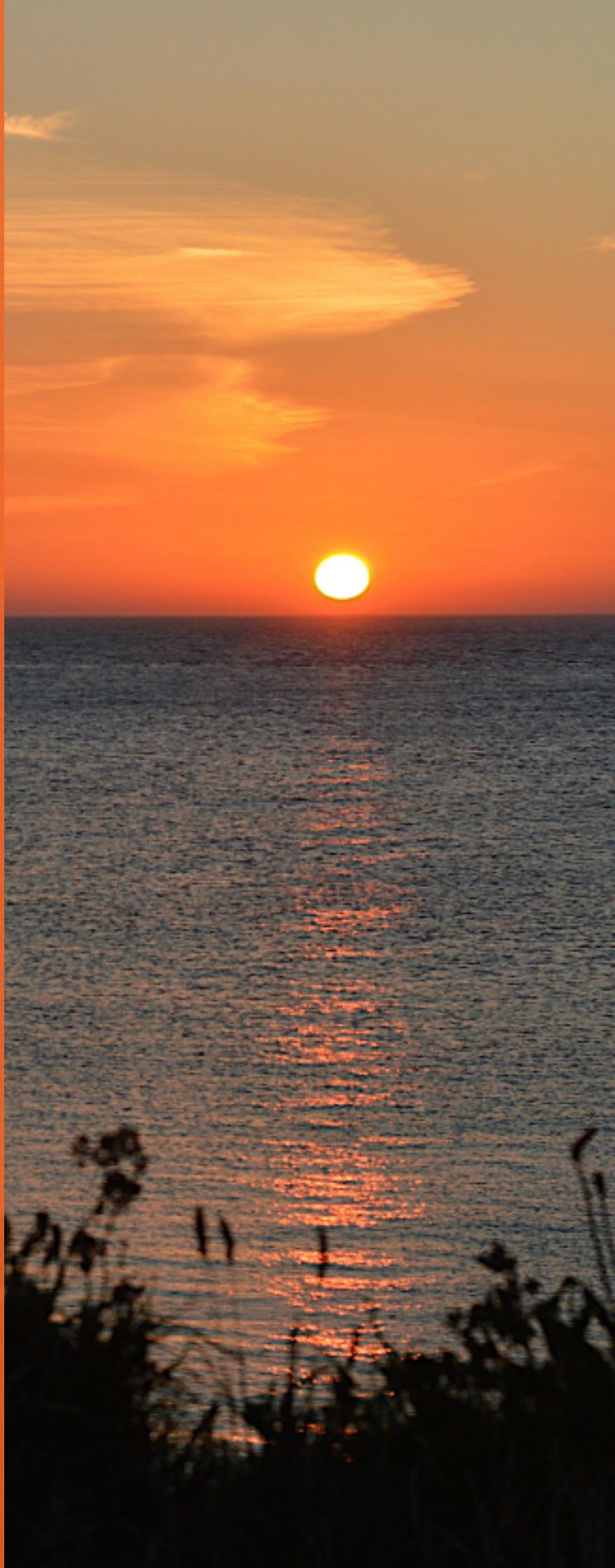
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# BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

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OUT OF THE DARKNESS: SOUTH  
DOWNS AT NIGHT  
UK

Sat 27 Sep - Sun 28 Sep 2025





## In aid of Body & Soul, Rainbow Mind/City, Hackney and Waltham Forest Mind

27 Sep - 28 Sep 2025



### 2 DAYS | UK | TOUGH

Push yourself to the limit on this unique night time trek through the South Downs National Park. Following part of the famous South Downs Way, you'll battle fatigue, the elements and the demanding terrain of one of southern England's newest national parks. You'll negotiate the rolling chalk hills and cliff tops of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head.

Walking until morning, you'll cover a distance of 30km, including the famous white cliffs of the Seven Sisters, before ending your gruelling hike on top of England's highest chalk cliffs. In 2016 the National Park was granted International Dark Sky Reserve status, making it one of the best places in the country to view the night sky. As dawn breaks, your hard work will be rewarded with breath-taking views across the South Downs.

- Trek the South Downs National Park overnight
- Negotiate rolling chalk hills and cliff tops
- A 30km trek.....at night!
- Watch the sunrise over the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters
- Enjoy a celebration breakfast after your challenge

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Sat 27 Sep

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#### **Saturday evening: Arrival and preparation**

The adventure begins this evening at approximately 11pm in Eastbourne where you will meet your challenge leaders and crew for registration and a pre-trek safety briefing.

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### DAY 2 Sun 28 Sep

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#### **Through the Night**

As darkness falls, we set off from Eastbourne across the fields and hills of the sleepy South Downs, with our route lit up by torchlight and stars. For many, trekking through the night will be one of the most challenging aspects of the journey as our senses become more attuned to the enveloping darkness.

The terrain becomes more challenging and fatigue sets in as we follow the course of the Cuckmere River towards the coast. We'll draw on hidden reserves of energy to battle through the tiredness.

Crossing the rolling chalk hills of the Seven Sisters we then enter the most spectacular, and most challenging part of the walk, past the Belle Tout Lighthouse and on to our journey's end at Beachy Head and Eastbourne.

A new day dawns on the spectacular vista of chalky white hills and sea views. All being well, we will arrive at the finishing line in time for sunrise and a well-earned breakfast!

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#### **NB**

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, or other unforeseen circumstances. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary, however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances though, your challenge leader will have the final say.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.  
The costs below are per person.

### SELF FUNDER

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*Pay a registration fee of £45.00 when you book  
Then a balance of £169.00  
(5 weeks before your challenge)  
Raise as much as you can for your charity.*

### MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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*Registration fee of £45.00 when you book  
Raise a minimum of £345.00 for your charity.*

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Fundraising advice
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance

### On your challenge

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- Checkpoint snacks and drinks
- Hot breakfast at the end of your challenge
- All challenge management before, during and post event
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
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### On your challenge

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- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

- Travel to and from the challenge start/finish point
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

### THE DETAILS

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#### Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 7 weeks before departure (by 09/08/2025), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 26/10/2025). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

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#### Typical group size

The typical group size is 30 - 50 participants

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### Why book with Charity Challenge

- The very best walking leaders, who are fully qualified, highly experienced, knowledgeable and fun. They will do everything to help you complete the challenge and have a great time doing it.
- For every participant we donate money to a local conservation charity in order to protect the beautiful route that we use.
- Celebration breakfast at the finish.
- The highest quality night-time charity trekking experience on the market!

### Level of Difficulty

The South Downs at Night challenge is graded as **tough**. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, who have taken part in other trekking challenges and now wish to test themselves in a slightly more challenging environment and with the added challenge of trekking at night.

You can tell your supporters that on your South Downs at Night Challenge you will be:

- Trekking for around 6-8 hours, starting in the evening and finishing the following morning.
- Covering a distance of 30km on demanding terrain across the South Downs.
- Testing yourself with the steep ascents and descents along the stunning cliff tops of the Seven Sisters. A section made all the tougher as it arrives in the last few miles of your trek.
- Tackling the unique challenge of trekking at night. A test for both your physical and mental resolve.

### Training

The South Downs at Night Challenge is a long, sustained, overnight event covering varied terrain with steep ascents and descents when following the cliff tops. Therefore it requires a good level of fitness and you should not underestimate the importance of training beforehand. Even if you are active and exercise regularly, it's good to adapt your training towards your chosen challenge. This is vital in building strength, cardiovascular stamina and muscle endurance for the endurance challenge ahead.

We recommend you start training as early as possible, ideally at least 4-6 months before your challenge. Make sure you check the distance, ascent and terrain of your challenge and create a training plan that builds up to this. Whilst you could start with short walks in your local area, it's important to build up towards walking the distance of your actual challenge and being out and active for several hours at a time. Make sure you also check the type of terrain your challenge will take place in and plan your training to include similar terrain. Whilst an hour in the gym can help, you should ideally be training in a similar environment to that of your actual challenge and for several hours at a time.

For challenges that involve steep terrain such as hills or mountains or even the coast, make sure you have training days that include similarly steep sections. Building up the muscles for both ascents and descents is important and can make all the difference in enjoying your final challenge. It is normal for knees to ache when building these muscles up and we would highly recommend training with walking poles to help ease the pressure on your knees. Make sure you set up your walking poles so they're a good length for you first – most outdoor stores will be able to advise on this and there are plenty of tutorials available online.

Training with the kit you will be using on your challenge is important so you can test it out beforehand and make sure it's fit for purpose. This includes wearing in any walking boots or shoes and experimenting with the socks you wear so you don't get blisters on your challenge. Make sure you also get used to walking with a backpack with at least 2 litres of water in. It's very important to test out your waterproofs (both jacket and trousers) in the rain as there's nothing worse

than finding out your waterproofs leak 2 hours into your challenge!

For challenges taking place at night, practicing walking at night with your headtorch is also useful although not essential. You should only do this on routes you are very familiar with where there is no risk of getting lost or put in danger. This will prepare you for being comfortable with walking with reduced visibility and using your headtorch.

A healthy balanced diet is as important as your physical training. Make sure you fuel up on energy giving carbohydrates and muscle-repairing proteins before a long training session and test out the snacks you plan to take on your challenge as you walk. Not everyone gets on with energy gels, but most people can benefit from a slow energy release banana or a quick sugar hit from a jelly baby!

We provide plenty of additional information and guidance in your personalised login area, including warm up, stretching, cardiovascular training, exercise intensity, cross training, resistance (weight) training, cool down and the hazards of over-training.

### Group Size

Our minimum group size is 30 and groups are typically made up of between 30-50 people. There will be one challenge leader for approximately every 10-15 participants.

### Group Management

This is a leader-led challenge and you will be accompanied by our challenge leaders at all times.

We employ experienced and fully qualified walking leaders to accompany and lead you. The leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading challenges throughout the UK. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying safety equipment and first aid kits with them at all times.

This challenge is designed and run as a team event and we encourage everyone taking part to support each other throughout the trek. This challenge is not designed as a race for individuals.

Partway into the challenge you will have begun to spread-out into your natural walking speeds. For larger groups, once you reach the first 'checkpoint' you may be allocated into a small group and designated a walking leader. These leaders will then be responsible for your safety. If you have any problems or need to join a faster or slower moving group, then please speak to your leader.

If you wish to walk together with friends, colleagues, family etc then this is no problem. Please just ensure that you all keep together and reach the checkpoint at the same time so that we can ensure you all get allocated together.

Your leaders will be aware of several important cut-off times at locations that we need people to reach by a certain time so the group can complete the challenge. Your leaders will manage the group pace and keep you informed about these and your options if they think you might be struggling to achieve these times. In certain situations, you may be asked to finish early. You will be accompanied by a leader should this happen. We ask everyone to respect the leaders' decisions. They are made with the group's safety in mind.

Please note that this route will not be marked by event arrows, nor is the event designed as an event for individuals to race. It is designed to be a team event, with like-minded people, all raising money for charity, supporting each other throughout the challenge.

### Weather

As you know, the weather in the UK can be highly unpredictable and at times erratic, so being prepared is the key! Please check the weather forecasts to ensure that you bring suitable clothing and equipment for your challenge. We recommend you come prepared for any weather, which means bringing waterproofs and warm layers even if rain isn't forecast.

We will monitor the weather in the lead up to your challenge and make adjustments to the itinerary as required to ensure your challenge can take place as safely as possible. If a significant change has to be made to your challenge itinerary due to the weather, we will inform you as soon as is reasonably possible.

It is very unlikely that we will need to make significant adjustments to your challenge because of rain. Strong winds may require us to take a lower level route at times. Your experienced challenge leaders will manage this to ensure everyone is kept safe and their decision will be final.

In the event that lightning is forecast, we will still plan for the challenge to go ahead but will monitor the situation and make you aware of any change of plans. If there is already thunder and lightning when a challenge is due to begin, then the challenge will not begin on time. We will ask you to wait to see if the weather improves. Once we have a clear 1 hour window during which there has been no lightning/thunder AND there is also no further lightning in the forecast we would begin the challenge. If there is any thunder or lightning at any time on a hill or mountain challenge then the challenge will end and we will start to descend immediately.

For challenges taking place during a heatwave, we will ensure there is plenty of water available for you to keep your water bottles topped up or, if this isn't possible, we will advise you where you may need to carry more yourself. In extreme cases, we may need to adjust the itinerary to ensure the group can walk at a more suitable pace and have more rest breaks.

### Terrain

Despite its location in the UK, the difficulty of this trek should not be underestimated as it includes one long night of hiking, with tough ascents and descents. The route is predominantly on good paths, but it's the variation of boggy footpaths or loose limestone gravel along the cliffs that make this challenge even more demanding. You should also consider that all terrain becomes a little bit more difficult when walking at night as your field of vision is significantly reduced.

### Challenge Timings

**Please note: Precise details and timings will be made available in your Final Details that are sent out 1 month prior to the challenge.**

Your challenge begins in the evening (usually around 11pm) with registration near Eastbourne. Here you will get to meet your leaders and listen to the all-important safety briefing.

Having trekked through the night we will finish our trek as the sun rises over Beachy Head for a celebration breakfast before departing.

You will be walking for approximately 6-8 hours, which makes your trek a very long night. You can expect to arrive at the finish at around 6-8am. At the finish there will be a hot breakfast available before you depart.

**Please note: Whilst we shall do all we can to stick to this finish time, please make sure you book flexible return tickets as delays can occur and we cannot guarantee a precise finishing time or be held responsible for any missed transport.**

### Getting to and from the Challenge

We will confirm the exact event registration location no later than 1 month prior to the start of the challenge. Registration will be in the town of Eastbourne which is easily accessible by both car and train.

The challenge is a circular trek finishing back in Eastbourne.

**Please note: We will send you precise instructions about how to get to the registration point, and the timings of the event, one month prior to the challenge. We reserve the right to use alternative registration points and finishing points when necessary.**

### Accommodation

No accommodation is provided for this challenge. We would like to encourage all participants whenever possible to book a few extra nights in the local area to fully enjoy their challenge and to put money back into the local communities. There are lots of excellent accommodation options to suit all budgets in Eastbourne. For a full list of accommodation choices in Eastbourne please check out the [Visit Eastbourne website](#).

### Food & Drink

You should ensure that you have eaten a hearty dinner and filled up your water bottles before arriving at registration in the evening.

Snacks and water will be available at checkpoints throughout the night.

We would encourage you to bring your own sweets, snacks etc to get you through your challenge according to your own tastes.

At the finish line there will be a hot breakfast to help you celebrate.

The drinking of alcohol the night before the challenge is strongly discouraged for your own health and safety during this tough challenge.

If you have a severe allergy or dietary need, such as a severe nut allergy, please ensure you provide as much detail as possible about this when booking on the challenge (e.g. whether you need an epipen, whether it is an airborne allergy or not etc). If you have informed us of any allergies or special dietary needs as part of the challenge booking process, we will endeavour to ensure appropriate meals and checkpoint snacks are available to you. However, we would encourage you to also bring your own favourite snacks with you to ensure your energy levels stay topped up throughout the challenge. Please be aware that it may not always be possible for us to cater to special dietary or allergy needs – we will get in touch if this is the case.

### **Clothing and Equipment**

This is a tough challenge and to give yourself the best chance of successfully completing it please make sure that you have consulted the kit list carefully and that you have all kit marked as essential. No spare kit will be provided on the challenge.

#### **Footwear**

The most appropriate footwear for this challenge is a pair of walking boots.

Walking boots provide more ankle support than shoes and can help protect you from ankle twists and sprains. They also have much better grip than your average sports trainer. Boots generally have stiffer soles that can better protect your feet from rough and rocky terrain, providing more comfort when you're walking on uneven terrain for any length of time. In bad weather, walking boots can also keep your feet drier and warmer.

Many people prefer to wear a trail shoe instead of boots as they find that they are lighter and more comfortable. Trail shoes are fine to wear, but please make sure that they have good grip on the soles. Sports trainers are not appropriate on any of our non-urban challenges.

If you are buying new footwear, it is important that it is the right fit for your feet. We recommend seeking advice from your local outdoor retailer and trying several different brands and models out to find the pair that you find most comfortable. Remember to check how waterproof they are.

It is particularly important that you make sure that your footwear is well worn in, that you have tested them out with suitable walking socks and that you have any blister plasters that you may need.

#### **Waterproofs**

As the weather can change quickly in the UK, it is important to make sure that you bring an appropriate waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers. Make sure you test these out before your challenge to check they can keep you dry for several hours at a time – you don't want to find out your waterproof jacket leaks partway into your challenge!

#### **Walking Poles**

We highly recommend bringing walking poles to help you look after tired knees on steep ascents and descents. Your

leaders will be happy to show you how to use them on the challenge, or you can check online in advance for videos on how to set them up for your height and the best way to use them.

### Personal First Aid

Your leaders will carry an appropriate group first aid kit on the challenge, but it is a good idea to bring personal first aid items along for yourself. These may include blister plasters or physio tape, any personal medication and any knee or ankle supports.

If you carry an epipen, please make sure you bring two and that your leaders know where they are kept.

### Head Torch

As this challenge runs through the night it is vital that you bring with you a good quality head torch along with spare batteries. Good quality head torches can be expensive, so rather than buying one it is possible to hire a very good quality one from Outdoorhire for £6. (Please click [here](#) for more info)

You will also need to consider bringing clothing and kit appropriate to the weather on the night of your challenge. Remember that the weather and temperature on the coast can vary significantly from that inland. This may mean bringing hats and gloves as well as extra layers to keep you warm.

As a Charity Challenge participant, you will get members only benefits and/or discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including [Outdoorhire](#), [Cotswold Outdoor](#), [Snow + Rock](#), [Water to Go](#), [Sporttape](#) and [Nomad & MASTA](#).

Please be aware that because of the environment that this challenge takes place in our leaders may ask to see the vital parts of your kit. Participants found without kit marked on the kit list as essential may not be allowed to take part in the challenge.

### Toilets

There will be no toilets available at the registration point at this time of night. As we are trekking through the night, there will be no toilet facilities during the challenge and such facilities will be limited to the great outdoors! There will be toilets at the finish point.

### Money

During the trek there are no opportunities to spend any money. At the end of the trek, Eastbourne does have several nice cafes, pubs and restaurants that you may wish to relax in before travelling home. We would advise you should need no more than £20.00, excluding your joining and returning home travel costs.

### Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set

up 'Challenge Safe', a thorough safety management system. 'Challenge Safe' formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

Here are a few important points that you should be aware of:

- The terrain on the challenge is often rocky and in wet conditions can be extremely slippery. Please make sure that your walking boots have good grip. Trainers are not appropriate as they lack grip.
- Trekking at night is by its nature a hazardous activity. A powerful, good quality headtorch is absolutely vital.
- Due to extra risks posed by trekking at night we always use a higher ratio of leaders to maximise safety. It is very important that you always listen to your leaders at all points and obey any decisions they make.
- The weather at night can be very different to during the day. Please make sure you carry an additional warm layer, waterproof jacket and trousers and a hat and gloves.
- 6-8 hours is a long time to be out on a trek, especially overnight. Ensure that you eat lots throughout the night and keep yourself hydrated by drinking lots of fluids.
- Trekking along cliff tops in the dark requires an extra level of care. Whilst the footpath is set away from the cliff tops you should be aware of where the path is going at all times.

### Emergencies

Your leadership team is trained to deal with emergency situations in remote areas and will be carrying mobile phones and radios in case the emergency services need to be contacted. The event is not run as a race and you will never be encouraged to walk at a pace 'beyond your ability'. There will always be a wide variety in people's walking abilities which will be carefully managed by the leader team. This team will keep the group together for maximum safety and set a sensible pace for all to achieve this challenge within the planned time frame. Should you find yourself unable to continue for any reason, then our support team, including our support vehicle, will be able to assist you coming off the challenge.

### Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss these with your family doctor or specialist in advance and then discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader.

### Insurance

We don't offer insurance for our UK trips, as any medical emergencies would naturally be covered through the NHS. Therefore, the main thing that you will not be covered for is cancellation. You can see our cancellation policy within our terms and conditions [here](#). If you wish, you could look into your own policy that covers cancellation for travel within the UK.

### Responsible Tourism

Charity Challenge believes that all of its challenges, whether in the UK or overseas, should have a positive impact on the communities we visit. We are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and always aim to make sure that we minimise our impact on the local environment.

You can help us to achieve this goal by:

- Adopting a policy of 'leave no trace'. You can read more about this [here](#).
- Taking all litter off the trek with you, including fruit peels and skins.
- Using public toilets when available and taking any tissues from 'wild wees' home with you.
- Stick to the footpaths at all times and avoid walking on their edges, to help prevent erosion from spreading.
- Only using the car park(s) designated for your event, and not parking on the local streets.
- Keeping noise to a minimum when passing houses in residential areas.
- Refraining from bringing glowsticks with you on our night challenges. This prevents them from becoming litter on the mountains when they are dropped.
- Leaving rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them. Please don't take these home with you.
- Avoid transporting and introducing invasive species by cleaning your outdoor gear regularly.
- Contributing to the local economy by paying for parking, staying an additional night in the local area or enjoying a local meal out.
- Being patient and understanding if at points you have to wait or slow down due to others being on the same path.

We ask you to think carefully about any memorial type activities you may plan for your challenge. We fully appreciate the emotional importance our challenges have for many of our participants and encourage you to mark that special moment in your own way, whilst ensuring that the natural beauty and protection of the environment you're in is maintained. Leaving photos or other memorabilia or writing on stones is contrary to the leave no trace principle. Remember: 'Take only memories, leave only footprints'.

For more details about our responsible tourism policy then please click [here](#).

### Plan ahead to avoid travelling home tired

Walking until morning, you'll cover a distance of 30km, including the famous white cliffs of the Seven Sisters, before ending your gruelling hike on top of England's highest chalk cliffs. In 2016 the National Park was granted International Dark Sky Reserve status, making it one of the best places in the country to view the night sky. As dawn breaks, your

hard work will be rewarded with breath-taking views across the South Downs.

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE

## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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