

Route Cards

A route card serves as your safety net, detailing your plan and ensuring that someone else is aware of your whereabouts and has a clear understanding of your intentions if you're delayed or go missing.

There are multiple ways to inform someone of where you intend to go for your adventure. Below are three of the most common examples and all have pros and cons. What is important is that you (and your club) have a system that works in conjunction with a 'Late Back' procedure.

All methods should include:

- Who is in the group
- Contact information
- The plan for the day/route
- Start and finish time

They may also include:

- Possible alternatives/escape routes
- Recognised hazards – steep ground; difficult nav sections; possible spate rivers
- Vehicle registration and parking location
- A list of group equipment that is being carried
- Agreed 'no go' areas in winter due to avalanche hazards

Examples given below are:

1. A traditional paper route card (although it can be done digitally)
2. A digital route card on a mapping app
3. Annotated Map (can be digital or paper)



Photo credit: Mountaineering Scotland

1. Traditional Paper-Based Route Card (Manual Table Format)

This is a classic method. It involves filling out a table with key route details.

Example Table:

Date of walk:	Names of group members	Group organiser/contact
Start Time:		
Return Time:		Vehicle reg:

Leg	Grid Ref Start	Grid Ref End	Distance (km)	Time (hr:min)	Description	Escape Route
1	NN123456	NN134467	2.5	0:45	Follow path NE to col	Descend S to forest track
2	NN134467	NN145478	2.0	0:40	Steep ascent to summit	Return to col, descend W
3	NN145478	NN150460	3.0	1:00	Ridge walk SW	Continue to valley path

Pros: No tech or signal needed, forces the planner to look at details of the route, easy to share by leaving at club hut/base

Cons: Time consuming to fill out, not very easy to visualise the route, certain level of skill needed to understand it (for the person responsible for initiating late back procedure)

If filling out in paper form, then these can be left in a dedicated location in the club hut where the person(s) responsible for the late back procedure can access them. It is also possible to share them digitally on a 'group chat' or email.

2. Digital Route Card Using a Mobile App (e.g., OS Maps, Komoot, Outdooractive)



Many walkers now use apps that allow you to plan, annotate, and export routes.

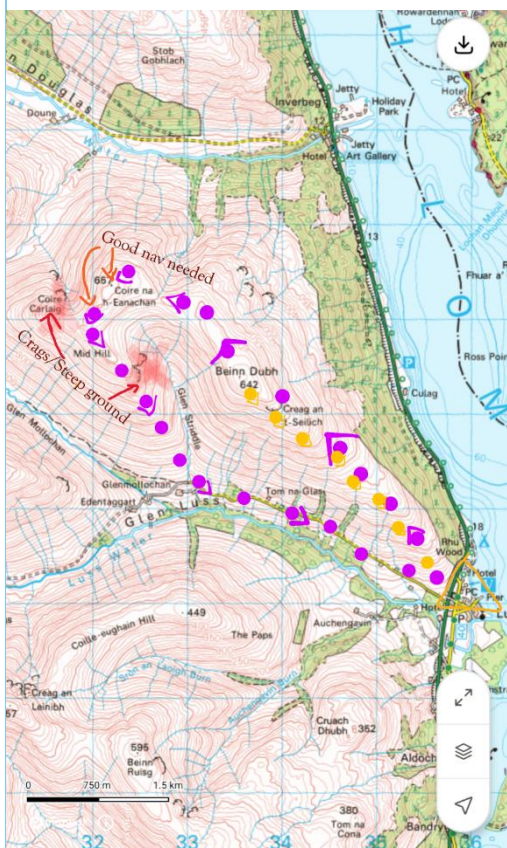
Example Features:

- Waypoints with notes
- Estimated time and elevation gain
- Offline access
- GPX export

Pros: Interactive, GPS-enabled, easy to update, easy to share with multiple people, quick to produce, easy to understand

Cons: You need the correct technology/app, battery-dependent, may require subscription, easy for planner to miss details on the map

3. Annotated Map Screenshot (Phone or Tablet)



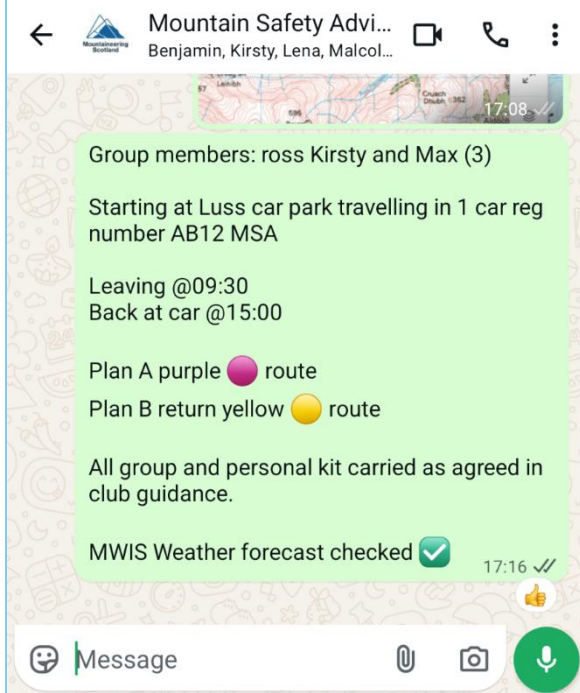
This method involves taking a screenshot of your route on a digital map and annotating it with key information.

Annotations might include:

- Start/End points
- Escape routes/ alternatives
- Danger zones (e.g., steep ground, river crossings)
- Estimated times

Pros: Visual, quick reference, easy to share with multiple people/groups, you can add additional hazards (specific risk assessment!)

Cons: Limited detail unless paired with a route card, relies on having software on your phone, relies on network coverage/wifi to share (unless you do it via Bluetooth locally)



Shared to a dedicated 'group chat' with additional information (see below). The message has been acknowledged by the person responsible for the late back procedure

