

WALKERS ARE WELCOME TOWNS NETWORK

Towns and villages with something special to offer walkers



Newsletter March 2014

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Spring

How wonderful it has been during the last few weeks to see some better weather, nights drawing out and spring erupting with bulbs and blossom. The birds are singing again. Up on the fells and moors the curlews, lapwings and oyster catchers have arrived and their familiar calls echo the hills. Even the very muddy footpaths are drying up. Time to venture out on some longer walks and enjoy the countryside once again.

Get-Together 2014

Information has been added to our [website](#) about the 2014 Get-Together at St. Pierre, Chepstow. Their themes for the weekend will be Accessibility, A Warm Welsh Welcome and....Let's Have Fun. Whilst much of this is to be expected, the particulars of the Welsh hospitality certainly sound inviting. The Annual Get-Togethers are always great places for networking and being inspired. Remember that Chepstow are also inviting members to make a quilted square to be joined into a Walkers are Welcome Network quilt. See '[Rules for Square](#)'.

Events

I am reminded by one of our committee members of the benefits of being involved in local events to increase footfall with less work than a major event of your own.. Bradfield Walkers are Welcome organised 3 walks on March 11th to coincide with the commemoration events surrounding the 150th anniversary of the Great Sheffield Flood. The walks attracted 184 people who visited the sites along the route of the deluge. Details about the walk are downloadable as a pdf from their [web page](#).

Many areas are now coming together to arrange regional and area walking festivals. This centralises publicity and booking and with one or more walks starting in each town or village, everyone shares the benefits without over doing the hard work. There is some walking festival guidance 'Organising your first Walking Festival' and 'Walking Festival Toolkit' at the bottom of the newsletters and reports [webpage](#)

Don't forget to send in your event details, what, when, where and a little additional information for the [website events](#) and [facebook](#) and [twitter](#) feeds, we are here to help with your publicity. Please "like" us and "follow" us and we will reciprocate in the usual manner.

Health Walks

Last month we told you about some of Natural England's research into the benefits of walking. If your community does not already have a programme of health walks for residents, why not give this some thought. We recommend training some Health Walk Leaders, perhaps some Heartstart or First Aid training, risk assessments and insurance. Some helpful information is contained on the Walking for Health [website](#). Many funders are currently supporting health related activities. You may wish to partner with local organisations including doctors' surgeries or other health professionals working with dementia, physiotherapy, stroke rehabilitation and mental illness or local clubs and groups to help with the walks or steer walkers to your events. Regular once a week health walking groups on all different levels are very popular and sociable activities. Let us know if you need any further guidance and we can point you to a WaW town that has a regular walking for health group.

Old Footpaths

There are many old pre-1949 footpaths that were not entered onto the definitive map. We often hear older local residents saying where there used to be a footpath that they used as a child that is not on current maps and in use today. The Definitive Map will close to new Rights on Way on 1 January 2026. If you have old footpaths in your area which you believe would be useful and enjoyable to your walkers, gather evidence and contact your local Rights of Way authority to discuss a Schedule 14 Application. See [further information](#).

Partnership Working

Many WaW towns and villages are already making official and unofficial partnerships with other organisations that can help with WaW aims. This method of working can have tremendous success where the WaW group alone might have difficulty raising sufficient funds or authority. Here's a brilliant [example](#) where the Wainwright Society has taken over the promotion of the Wainwright Coast to Coast long distance trail which benefits so many towns along the route in Cumbria and North and East Yorkshire bringing thousands of visitors for the last 40 years. Sale of the Wainwright calendars raised £7,500 which will allow waymarking of the Coast to Coast trail plus substantial donations to local mountain rescue teams. Most authorities insist on waymarking, maintenance schemes, promotion and recognised benefits for long distance trails before they can be considered for entering on the Ordnance Survey Map. In this case the trail not only goes through two/three counties but also through two national parks and an AONB, you can imagine the red tape involved. Thank you to the Wainwright Society and everyone who bought calendars.

New Members

This month's newly accredited members are Ivybridge, Devon, Corsham, Wiltshire and Burley in Wharfedale, West Yorkshire. Congratulations to all.

In closing, a little reminder to complete your [Annual Return](#) which should be submitted before 31 March 2014.

Happy walking

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