

# WALKERS ARE WELCOME TOWNS NETWORK

Towns and villages with something special to offer walkers



## Newsletter February 2014

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### Update

Our thoughts are with all those that have experienced flooding problems. As the sun shines, we are all hoping that this is at last an end to this lengthy period of appalling weather. How we all long for those sunny days of last summer.

There was no newsletter in January but several other communications. Our Treasurer sent out a reminder about subscriptions and [Annual Returns](#) now being due. There is a team of committee members standing by to read all the Annual Returns, help where needed and pick up all the innovation, they will probably be contacting you very shortly. We sent out a reminder of the website membership area password. Please ensure that you update us with changes in contact details for two persons to ensure that we can keep you informed and don't forget to share the password and newsletter with your colleagues.

We contacted you about your proposed Walking Festivals. We have again persuaded Country Holidays to publish all WaW Walking Festivals and we put them all on the website. Obviously, we need the details of what, when and where plus some basic information to be able to promote your events. Don't forget [facebook](#) and [twitter](#)

Chepstow provided details of their [quilt project](#) that they are hoping to make up for the 2014 Get-Together in October. Initial Get-Together details are available on a [special website page](#) which will be updating periodically, we hope to see as many as possible there to share ideas and for networking opportunities which is so important.

### A Bill for Public Paths

The [Deregulation Bill](#) is currently in the House of Commons. It may have a boring title but it contains important clauses about public paths. It aims to speed up, streamline and remove some of the controversy from the process for claiming paths for the definitive map. It is urgently needed because the government intends, on 1 January 2026, to close the definitive maps to claims for pre-1949 unrecorded ways. If we don't claim these routes in the next 12 years we could lose these highways forever.

The bill follows the recommendations of Natural England's stakeholder group on unrecorded paths, of which our patron, Kate Ashbrook, is a member (on behalf of the Open Spaces Society). The group consists of representatives of path-users, landowners and local authorities. It reached unanimous agreement on the package of measures for claiming paths.

Provisions in the bill include giving authorities powers to reject applications for claims which do not pass a basic evidential test, enabling authorities to negotiate with landowners a suitable diversion for

a claimed route over his land, and empowering the applicant to appeal to the magistrates' court for redress against a laggard local authority.

It is in everyone's interest that the bill should proceed swiftly through Parliament and on to the statute book. Please urge your MP to support the bill and to resist any attempts to broaden its scope which could result in the hard-won consensus falling apart.

## Rights of Way and Public Transport

County Councils and Unitary Authorities have been consulting and setting budgets for the coming year resulting from large cuts in the finance they receive from government. Many areas will have seen cuts in Rights of Way budgets or rural bus subsidies which will affect not only our daily lives but what we offer to our walking visitors going forward. If you have seen adverse cuts, please let us know, with this information we will be able to paint a nationwide picture.

## Best Practice

On a much brighter note, here's a brilliant example of best practice from Tregaron. The beautifully produced 'The Cambrian Mountains your next walking destination' promotional film which makes you feel like running off to Wales today, watch it on [YouTube](#)

## Natural England

Natural England continues to play a role in identifying and promoting the benefits of a healthy natural environment for people's health and wellbeing. In particular, they seek to review evidence, share knowledge and best practice, and work with others to grow the evidence base. Their Health and Natural Environment Digest, Winter 2013-14 contains a number of links that provide information that will be useful in lobbying, in supporting funding applications or in just a better understanding of our industry.

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment [webpage](#)

Personal Well-being across the UK, 2011/12 and 2012/13 [map](#)

Measures of National Wellbeing [graphic](#)

Greening Dementia [report](#)

Improving the public's health-local authority [resource](#)

Health Profile [data](#)

Walking Works/Walking for Health [reports](#)

Cortisol sampling, stress and the effect of nearby greenspace [resource](#)

There are lots more data so we will revisit this again.

## Website additions

We have added a new page to the website entitled '[Reports on National Executive Business](#)' where you will find all the Annual General Meeting stuff if you are interested and were not able to travel to Swaffham. The AGM is held every year at the Annual Get-Together.

A 'Walking Festival Toolkit' produced by Walking with Offer has been added to our [factsheets](#)

## New Members

The latest members to be accredited are Ironbridge Gorge, Modbury, Golgar and Slaithwaite. We all wish them every success and send our congratulations.

<http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?RID=49802A> resource for local authorities

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