



# WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Towns and villages with something special to offer all walkers  
[www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk](http://www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk) [secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk](mailto:secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk)

## Newsletter September 2016 – Health Matters

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*Pic: Old railways make excellent family 'Access for All' routes allowing for wheelchairs, buggies and children to ride safely while they learn to ride their bikes. Note disabled access gate.*

## Annual Get-Together 2016

**Have you booked your place? Time is running out.**

The 2016 Annual Get-Together in Lincolnshire on 15th and 16th October.

**The last date for guaranteed bookings is 16th September.**

If you have any problems in making your booking please contact [Gillian](#) OR [Julian](#)

The booking form is [downloadable](#) from our website membership section which includes full details of the walks and workshops planned to entertain us. This year's 2-day event is fantastic value at £35 and even includes free transport between venues, plus £12.95 for the Taste of Lincolnshire evening.

Lost the membership section **password**, just e-mail us.

One of the most interesting workshops this year fits into this month's subject of 'Health Matters'. Debbie North from their Local Access Forum will talk about 'Countryside for All' and the difficulties faced by wheelchair users. Debbie was the first female wheelchair user to complete the Coast to Coast Walk.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Admiral Rodney Hotel, North Street, Horncastle, LN9 5DX from 10.00 to 11.00 am on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October. If you just wish to attend this meeting only you may do so for free.

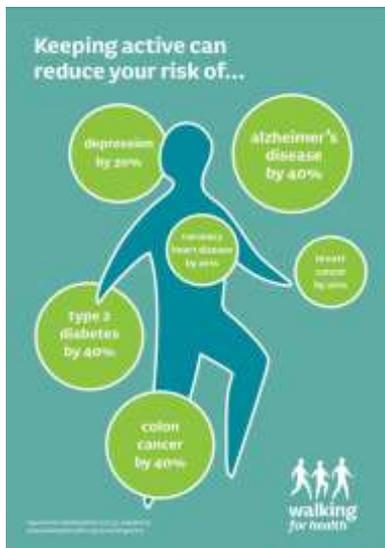
Agenda items should be received by the Secretary before 15th September. We would also love to hear from you if you are at all interested in becoming a Director or national committee member. AGM documentation will follow before 1st October.

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## Have you sent in your website nomination?

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### Walking Works



Every couple of months another report is published about the health benefits of regular walking. The Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, who run Walking for Health, have launched [Walking Works](#), an extensive overview of the mounting research into the life threatening consequences of inactivity, which concludes that walking is the answer.

'Supported by Public Health England, this new report demonstrates walking is the solution to getting the nation active, and shows how Walking for Health is already changing people's lives.' This is an attractive poster produced by Walking for Health which shows the highlights 'Keeping active can reduce your risk of ....'

- Depression by 30%
- Alzheimer's disease by 40%
- Coronary heart disease by 20%
- Breast cancer by 20%
- Type 2 diabetes by 40%
- Colon cancer by 40%

September is coincidentally [World Alzheimer's Month](#).

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**Bradford-on-Avon** - 'Walking is the best medicine' – Hippocrates

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### Mood Boost

Countryfile Magazine has published '11 countryside activities psychologists say will make us happier right now'. Apparently these are scientifically proven to lift the spirits immediately. So here goes .....

1. Stroll through your worries
2. Gaze up at the stars
3. Get muddy
4. Go to the woods
5. Write down your feelings
6. Volunteer
7. Eat outside
8. Get sweaty
9. Write three things you're grateful for each day
10. Meditate
11. Read an adventure story

[Full report](#) and related articles

### Losing your way

Perhaps more seriously 'new research reveals a surprising early symptom of Alzheimer's' is losing your way. A study published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease has found that whilst most people's first thoughts are of memory loss when they think of Alzheimer's disease, the study suggests that the earliest sign is navigation. [Summary](#) and full report link.

### 10,000 steps

Pedometers and apps designed for your mobile 'phone that measure either the amount of steps you have taken or miles have become very popular. The advice is to measure how many steps you are taking per day

and then increase the amount gradually. The average person walks between 3,000 and 4,000 steps per day. [NHS Choices](#) have issued a 10,000 steps per day challenge which equals about 5 miles per day. They are not suggesting that you do this as a 5 mile walk but include walking instead of taking the bus and climbing stairs instead of using the lift to build up a day of additional fitness with 10,000 steps aimed at a weight loss level accompanied by diet.

Interestingly, if you have joint problems, NHS Choices recommend swimming and always consult your GP if you have other health conditions. Many of us will have seen many of our friends and family that have had hip and knee replacements and gently ease themselves back into walking and full recovery.

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## Health Walks

There are a number of organisations that offer to put people in touch with local groups doing health walks. ['Change 4 Life'](#) list a number of organisations and schemes. ['Walk4Life'](#) also includes apps, walks and events.

The ['Walking for Health'](#) scheme as mentioned above undertakes to train volunteers wishing to start a 'Walking for Health' group in their area, this includes risk assessment, how to organise your walk and insurance and is usually free if there are trainers in your area. They also advertise your walks.

Helen Kenneally in **Chepstow** tells us about their scheme in Wales called Fit 4 Life. They meet every Monday for a walk about 3 miles on fairly level ground with no or very few stiles, in and around Chepstow although it isn't always easy to find somewhere level.

*'We have about 22 people who come along who were either former ramblers but have had hip or knee replacements, those that like to walk in company and several who are senior in years but want to keep fit. Also people who have recently moved and use it as an opportunity to discover our area. Several visitors including a young lady from Spain who was on an exchange visit joined us as well for a couple of weeks to improve her English and discover the Lower Wye Valley. We car share and if possible finish at or near a local cafe to support local businesses. It probably isn't different to anyone else but it's good fun. We had a huge amount of people, 232 plus, turned up for the health walk round Chepstow racecourse as part of their Walking Festival.'*



**Market Weighton** have been running their Walk 4 Life since January 2009. These walks last 1.5 hours and they have a cup of tea or coffee and toast in the church afterwards. Pictured are their three octogenarian walkers Bill, Walter and Ursula trying out the new boot scrapers in nearby Goodmenham. Looking good guys



**Kirkby Stephen** have their Dawdles walks, one hour per week on a Thursday morning in and around the town on low level plus car share to somewhere nearby for a change. Walks are designed to suit the time of year on grass, gravel or tarmac. Their highlight is coffee and cake at a local café.

Apart from enjoying the walk, whatever the weather, the most amazing outcome of health walks is always the social contact enjoyed by the participants along the way and at coffee. Alleviating social exclusion in rural areas is a good phrase for funding applications and always a top goal.

If you wish to start a health walk programme, the principles are much the same as any guided walk. Walk leaders with some training in risk assessment and first aid or heart start and insurance. A health questionnaire and a register, first aid kit and fluorescent jackets for roads. Make sure you know your participants health issues. Pace the walks for your walkers with warming up, stretching out for the heart and slowing to cool down

towards the end of the walk. Funding from local grants is usually quite easy in view of the health aspect or go with a national scheme.

Some towns have developed Prescription Walks working with their local GP surgery or other health professionals see the [factsheet](#) prepared by **Winchcombe**.

## Funding

[Charities Aid Foundation](#) has reported that 'it has distributed nearly £10 million in funding to a diverse range of national and local charities in less than a year. The money has been raised by the sale of carrier bags after the introduction of the plastic bag levy in October 2015 by retailers such as Aldi, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer.'

Here's a few more:

Tesco's Community Groups: [Apply for a Bags of Help grant](#)

[Morrisons Foundation](#)

[Waitrose Community Matter](#)

The Co-operative Community Fund operates on a regional basis.

A new small grants scheme up to £1,000 has been launched in August 'Celebrating participation in healthcare, NHS England'. [Guidance notes](#) and [Application Form](#) plus [project examples](#)

## Disabled Ramblers

We are sure that Debbie North will talk about some of the things that can help the less able to experience our countryside. We have mentioned that stiles can be a problem for health walks and there are some regional schemes' particularly in national parks and AONBs, to replace stiles with gates and disabled gates or better still no barriers at all. This is not always possible because of stock restrictions but 'Miles without Stiles' remains a good aim.

Have you thought about adding a seat occasionally particularly where there is a view. These can often be sponsored by local residents or their relatives. If you are worried about maintenance there are now plastic alternatives that are quite attractive or what about considering an art installation seat.

Level all weather routes are brilliant for wheelchairs and buggies, see the disused railway above. Or make a local route for buggies and wheelchairs using already suitable paths and pavements see [Brough Buggy Walk](#) leaflet.

The [Disabled Ramblers](#) organise 'walks' using Trumper Scooters. You may be able to identify a route in your area or encourage local residents to get out in the countryside on a Trumper Scooter with help from your group.

Have you thought about taking partially sighted people with or without carers or guide dogs out with your walkers? There is so much you can do with a little extra planning.



## Japanese Research Visit

We were delighted to welcome Yuko Shioji, a Professor of Anthropology and International Tourism at Hannan University in Osaka, Japan, with her delightful young daughter, Yoko. This was a research visit to investigate how footpaths in the UK are thought out, designed and maintained and, add to the rural economy.

Arrangements were made for the party to visit three WaW towns **Winchcombe**, **Wivilescombe** and **Dunster** where they received a very warm welcome plus of course lots of information. There was also a visit to **Nether Stowey**, a Provisional Member, to find out how they are going about becoming an accredited member.

Please read the full report on our [website news](#).

## Members' News

Also see our website [news](#).

### We seem to have lost the whereabouts of the Welsh banner, have you seen it?



We are always pleased to see **Melbourne's** facebook posts for their latest footpath maintenance project. In August they were busy renovating some [old metal fingerposts](#) that have come up a treat, what a lovely idea.



Not to be outdone, here's **Bradford-on-Avon** installing new waymarker posts and enjoying the work.

Meanwhile in **Alston Moor**, Epiacum (Whitley Castle) Roman fort, winner of the 'Best Countryside Project' at the Love Northumberland Awards 2016, has been signposted from the Pennine Way.

**Mytholmroyd** have been out checking route descriptions to Stoodley Pike from Mytholmroyd. Checking route for a new leaflet which will be printed later this year.



**Chepstow** took the Walkers are Welcome banner to Chepstow Show where it was most admired. One person that they would like to walk in every town. Obviously much encouraged.

The banner then travelled to **Deal** for the Phoenix Quilters Deal Show part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival.

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We are delighted to advise that **Don Davenport** from **Cromer** has joined the national committee. Meet him at the Annual Get-Together.

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## PM Back from Alpine Hike to Walkers' Warning

Having learnt that our new Prime Minister, Theresa May was on a walking holiday in Switzerland, our Patron, Kate Ashbrook has written to the PM in her capacity as General Secretary of Open Spaces Society highlighting some of England and Wales' walking infrastructure problems.

You can read Kate's blog and her letter on [OSS news](#).

**So now to get away from this computer and take a few thousand steps .....**

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