

# WALKERS ARE WELCOME CIC

Towns and villages where Walkers are Welcome

<https://www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk>

Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock MP  
Secretary of State,  
Department of Health and Social Care,  
39 Victoria Street,  
London  
SW1H 0EU  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Dear Sir:

I am writing on behalf of Walkers are Welcome CIC, a network of 100 towns and villages covering England, Scotland and Wales. Walkers are Welcome aims to promote physical, mental and economic well-being to our members' communities through walking.

At a time when large numbers of the public are being encouraged to engage in walking for its physical and mental benefits, many of our members have been trying to help with information about walking. However, the restrictions that are in force have meant that walking clubs have had to cancel their regular walk programmes and festivals.

I am asking you if it is possible that organised walking clubs, i.e. those who carry insurance and have proper risk assessments in place (which take into consideration Covid-19), could be allowed to have more than 6 people per walk. The benefits of doing this will be:

- People joining organised walks will discover routes that they did not know existed.
- Experienced walk leaders, familiar with their locality and the Countryside Code, will be able to pass on their knowledge, thereby reducing conflict with landowners, whilst providing a safer walking experience.
- Walks can be organised which are local, therefore reducing distant travel by people heading for walking honey pots, such as AONBs and National Parks.
- As hospitality venues open up, walkers are always looking for places to have refreshments during or after a walk, thereby helping small businesses economically.

Inexperienced walkers will discover the benefits of joining clubs and, hopefully, they will continue to walk with the club after the restrictions have been lifted. In this way, the good habits of walking and its associated benefits will continue, resulting in a healthier population.

Walking clubs are made up of responsible people, who have been following Government guidelines since they were introduced. I believe that even with larger numbers (of up to 25) social distancing is relatively easy to maintain on a countryside walk. Also, because people are walking side-by-side or in a file, there is extremely little face-to-face contact.

I hope that you will take time to consider this request despite your hectic schedule, as I believe that it will be of benefit to so many people, in many different ways, now and in the future. I am available to discuss this with you or your advisers and can be contacted via the email address above or on 07977-463049.

Yours faithfully,

Barry Fewster  
Chair  
Walkers are Welcome CIC