

All feedback is always welcome



WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Towns and villages with something special to offer all walkers
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Newsletter May 2017

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Message from our Chairman

Hello fellow Walkers are Welcome members,

I have some sad news. Long serving and exceptionally hard working members of the national committee, Sheila and Rob Talbot, have stated their intention to stand down at the AGM in October.

Rob has been our Webmaster for many years and has done a super job in keeping the website current and interesting. He's also co-ordinates the distribution of your Annual Returns to the relevant Mentor.

Sheila has established herself in the key role of "The Mentors' Mentor". She's worked really hard to bring the Mentors together as a group and to act as the central communication hub for all the Mentors. They have both been absolute stars, so you know what's coming.

We now have to find replacements for both Sheila and Rob so that a smooth handover can take place before the AGM in October. Rob and Sheila have given six months' notice for this reason and it is much appreciated.

Please forgive me if I "preach" a little. WaW is a fantastic idea and has grown, like Topsy, since it was formed in 2007. Like any national organisation it needs a central body to keep everything on the rails but any national central body needs the support of its members. Your national committee needs you now, as current events have provided a wake-up call. There is an urgent need, not only to find replacements for Sheila and Rob but also to set up a credible succession strategy for all the main officers; Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster and Mentors' Mentor.

Your committee will be discussing this at our meeting in May, and at future meetings.

It may be appropriate to remind everyone of the original thinking behind WaW. Most of our towns and villages are not in "honeypot" walking areas and the intention was (and still is) to band together to promote our areas as excellent areas in which to walk. The key words are "band together". We need to cooperate and there is no more important area in which to do this than at the national committee level.

In an organisation of well over 100 towns and villages there must be people who have the talent and know-how to help keep this wonderful organisation going into the next ten years and beyond. **Please, step forward and help.**

It is no exaggeration to say that without your input and support there is a real danger that the organisation may disintegrate. If you're willing to help, please contact any member of the committee via the website.

WaW is your organisation; it's up to you to help it survive. I think everyone on the national committee will agree with me when I say that serving at a national level is immensely rewarding for your town and for you personally.

Very best wishes and thanks.

Sam Phillips, Chairman

Parliamentary Elections

A word from our Patron Kate Ashbrook:

Since this general election is said to be all about Brexit, towns might like to ask their parliamentary candidates to pledge support for access payments in the new funding regime for agriculture.

Public money should give public benefit—and that should include paths and access which provide benefits to health and the local economy. So any scheme should include financial support for landowners who provide additional access or improvements to existing access. This might include new public-paths where people need them, new access points to access land, wider paths or mown headlands for people to use. No longer should there be payments to people just for owning land, those payments must provide public goods, and Walkers Are Welcome towns can demonstrate the immense value of putting money into access.

Post-Brexit farm policy must improve public access to land, campaigners say - see article [Farming UK](#)

Welsh Assembly

Huw Irranca-Davies, Welsh Assembly Member for Ogmore and Vice President of Ramblers Cymru spoke at the Assembly about the value of walking and of his pleasure of joining the #BigWelshWalk. This took place on on 6th May in Hinterland and **Devil's Bridge**. Watch his [speech](#).

Rural Tourism Inquiry

As Parliament was cut short by the call for a general election, the Chairman of the Rural Tourism Inquiry Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Neil Parish MP, wound up the proceedings with a letter to Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at Defra. The letter outlines the issues for which evidence have been collected detailed as:

1. Support for tourist businesses
2. Access to rural areas
3. Broadband and mobile connectivity
4. Funding and fiscal policies
5. Skills

See the full [contents](#):



Above: Two powerful messages about litter

Litter in our Countryside

It was interesting to see the article on BBC One [Countryfile](#) on 23 April about fly-tipping in the countryside, how much it costs to clear it up plus the wider consequences. There was also an article by presenter Adam Henson in the January edition of [Countryfile Magazine](#) with an emphasis on the dangers to livestock and the cost to farmers. The message was to ensure you know where your waste is going.

There has been a lot of dreadful headlines and photographs recently about the horrors of plastics in the sea. Four [dead sperm whales](#) were found with large amounts of plastic waste in their stomachs. The garbage included nearly a 43-foot-long shrimp fishing net, a plastic car engine cover, and the remains of a plastic bucket. We all want something done about this and vow to never throw waste into the sea or leave it anywhere to harm animals and our countryside. Perhaps you also campaign to have man-made fibres filtered from waste water and the use of polyester in clothing reduced.

Whilst we can get involved in international and national campaigns, it is important that we take care of our own areas at the very least. Most of us take part in national and local litter picking days and clear our lanes and footpaths of litter on a periodic basis. Many people carry a bag with them at all times to collect rubbish and take it home or to the nearest bin for responsible disposal.

The appearance of little black poo bags in trees and bushes is multiplying. Sometimes it feels worse that someone has bagged the item and then left it somewhat defiantly in the bushes for wildlife to find or one of your conscientious members to clear up.

Dog faeces can contain diseases that can kill or seriously hurt as demonstrated in the 'Two dead horses' above. Some diseases spread by dogs and farm animals can also seriously infect children, remember to wash your hands when you have been out in the countryside.

Why not think about a dog leaflet or advice sheet or poster, where to walk and enjoy the countryside with some simple advice and facts.

See our [dog fact sheet](#)

[Dog Walks & Dog Friendly Places](#) in Bingley



Pic: Along the Leeds to Liverpool canal, taken during a **Kirkby Stephen** visit to **the Bingley** group. You can now be part of the national bluebell survey. Upload your bluebell sightings on to the map whether they are in ancient woodland or your garden. Your records will help to monitor the status of the UK's bluebells and help to secure the future of this native plant. Woodland Trust [The Big Bluebell Watch website](#).

Members' News

Walkers are Welcome towns **Shotley** and **Tregaron** were included in this month's [Walkingworld newsletter](#).

The picturesque **Shotley** peninsula features in two novels by Arthur Ransome where his yacht 'Nancy Blackett' is based. His life and anniversaries are being celebrated as part of Visit England's 'Year of Literary Heroes', walks are included.

In celebration of 2016, the 80th anniversary of the trig pillar, [#Trigaron17 Walking Festival](#) in June includes opportunities to bag five trig points in this lovely area.

Local newspapers celebrated the **Snaith & Cowick's** family walk on Sunday 30th April raising over £300 for prostate cancer. It was the walking group's 10th birthday and the walk was in memory of one of their founder members. Also, this year's Town Mayor Individual Community Award went to the Chair of Snaith Walkers Are Welcome Group, Keith Greenwood. Congratulations Keith.

Meanwhile in Shropshire, Police and councils are calling for information as a saboteur is laying broken glass, tins, branches and twine along a public footpath near **Much Wenlock**. [Read more](#). Has anyone else experienced similar problems?

Bingley's first one day walking festival was viewed a success in their Telegraph and Argus newspaper.



Glyn Evans, **Llandovery** wrote to tell us about a visit from Pluguffan, France, who have been their twinned town for over thirty years. On 20th April, responding to overwhelming requests, they walked to the Mountain Lake "Llyn y Fan" to experience the majestic beauty and the legend of the Lady of the Lake, a Celtic tale.

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County Durham have had an official launch on 6th May with activities and walks.



Going Wild

Ordnance Survey (OS) has teamed up with Wild Night Out to launch this year's national wild adventure on Saturday 1st July. See their suggestions on their [website](#).

The Wildlife Trusts are inviting us to 'Go Wild for 30 Days' in June with a random act of wildness every day. There's a FREE pack to send off for [here](#).

Kirkby Stephen has been named 8th Wildest place in Europe by [Rough Guides](#) They will celebrate when they find anyone in this most sparsely populated area in England.

Happy National Walking Month,

secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk



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