

Walk to Water

Staffordshire, West Midlands



Background

Natural England is funding a 3 year Green Exercise Programme comprising one demonstration project in each of the nine government regions.

The Walk to Water project began in January 2008 and is the demonstration project for the West Midlands Region. The project offers free green exercise activities in a recognised area of deprivation in Leek, known as 'Haregate'. Walk to Water targets the notoriously hard to reach groups that report low levels of physical activity including families living on the Haregate Estate, people with mental ill health, teenagers and older people.

Tailored activities include; health Walks around the estate; conservation work and countryside management along the Walk to Water route and on local green-spaces; outdoor adventurous activities in the area including den building and night hikes; early morning walks with a focus on the natural habitat and walking one way to the reservoir for activities or on guided walks.

As well as activities the project is looking to establish a grant scheme to support and empower local people to develop and deliver their own green exercise projects in the area.

Project highlights

The Walk to Water Health Walk leaves from outside Haregate community centre every Thursday at 2:00pm. The walks last for between 30 minutes and an hour and are taken at a moderate pace. The group is a chatty bunch who attend wind, rain or shine for the walk. One of our walkers has a keen interest in birds and enjoys passing on this knowledge to the others. The walking group has really opened up our walkers' eyes to the area that they live.

For the 5 Year anniversary of health walks in the Moorlands a celebration event was held at Tittesworth Reservoir. 22 of the walkers chose to do the Walk to Water route. It took us just over an hour and half in the lovely weather we had. Our regular health walkers all took part in the event and thoroughly enjoyed meeting walkers from other groups.

On the 28th May the Walk to Water project worked alongside Churnet View Middle School Holiday Club to hold a green exercise day for children. We walked from the school up to Tittesworth Reservoir along the Walk to Water route. The children completed a worksheet along the route and after lunch the children took part in a den building challenge! The activity engaged the children and project co-ordinator Laura was really impressed with how well they took to the

challenge. Over the summer the project will be holding a weekly green exercise afternoon for children, putting on activities such as wildplay, orienteering and cycling.

The conservation task group is set to start on the 21st June 2008. The group will be working on the walk to water route, on green spaces around Haregate and at Tittesworth reservoir.

Partners

The Projects key delivery partners are:

- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Severn Trent Water
- Staffordshire County Council
- North Staffordshire Primary Care Trust

We are working with many other local groups and organisations such as Churnet View Middle School, Leek College of Further Education, Borderland Voices (a local art and mental health project), Rethink, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Haregate Residents Association, to offer a wide range of people a wide range of activities.



Contacts

For more information and up to the minute events take a look at:

http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/site/scripts/services_info.php?serviceID=1469

For more information or to contact the project please e-mail;

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