

# Walkabout Wrekin Walking for Health



## Background

Walkabout Wrekin Walking for Health project was established in 2001 providing a programme of weekly guided walks led by trained volunteers and is the local project for the national Natural England Walking for Health Initiative. Walks are graded for length, speed and gradients, and wheelchair / pushchair routes are identified. They will take 30 - 90 minutes depending upon the grading. People are encouraged to walk at a comfortable pace, and the walk leaders will adapt the walks to accommodate where appropriate.

Health benefits may be achieved through regular participation in a moderate level of physical activity, such as walking, when done for 30 minutes a day, on 5 out of 7 days each week.

## Aims

The scheme is aimed at the currently inactive members of the community and encourages physical activity increases for the wide range of physical, psychological and social benefits in a safe and friendly environment.

## Actions & Achievements

- Currently 18 walks per week on the timetable.
- 170 Walk Leaders
- 700 participants per month

New walks are regularly introduced, and the programme alters slightly twice yearly in line with British Summer Time changes. New walk leaders are trained in Telford by Cascade Trainers for WHI - this is a free course and includes 1st Aid training.

At their first walk, participants will complete a registration form including health questionnaire and will then receive a free Flex card for use in Telford & Wrekin Council Leisure Centres. If anyone has health concerns, or has not exercised for some time, it is recommended that they consult their GP.

The incentive scheme enables walk leaders and participants to benefit from a range of leisure activities on completion of ten walks.

Walkabout Wrekin is an accredited scheme with Natural England's Walking for Health Initiative and meets the criteria of offering led health walks for beginners ('entry level'); meeting WHI safety and insurance standards and providing monitoring information.

The current programme also includes walks for Carers, Asian Women, and Weight Management.



## Network

Walkabout Wrekin is delivered by Telford & Wrekin Council and PCT and has strong links with, Leisure Services, Park Management, Rights of Way Officers, Mental Health Services, Age Concern, Carer's Contact Centre, Centre for Voluntary Services, Shropshire Enablement Team, Senior Citizen's Forum, Shropshire Walking for LIFE! Project, The Green Wood Centre, Ironbridge Walking Festival, ASDA, Heritage Lottery Fund.

## The Future

Include:

- The development of Assistant Walk Leader training course
- Asian (translated) Walk Leader training
- Recruitment of Heritage Lottery Funded project officer
- Increasing the geographical cover of walks provision in the areas of high deprivation in Telford & Wrekin.
- Themed walks

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