

walk this way

Walkers Winter 2016 Newsletter Issue 5



Wokingham Health Walks

Welcome to the winter edition of the Wokingham Walking for Health newsletter.

Let me take this opportunity to wish everyone associated with the Walking for Health programme, a safe and prosperous 2016. Your support of the programme is greatly appreciated and the strength lies with our loyal group of walk leaders along with our walkers.

January is a time when people begin to assess their lifestyle and it is quite common for us to draw up New Year's resolutions that contain some form of dieting or physical activity increase. As part of Walking for Health, I am sure that you know the benefits of regular exercise and activity and there is the need for commitment and discipline when we look to improve our physical health.

A study published in the British Medical Journal by Hanson & Jones (2015) asked, "**Is there evidence that walking groups have health benefits?**" Over 1843 participants were involved in the study which concluded that outdoor walking has a wide range of health benefits including reducing blood pressure, body fat, cholesterol and reduces the risk of depression.

The UK's Chief Medical Officer also encourages adults and older adults to partake in regular physical activity. People participating in 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise, such as Health walking, can reduce their chances of:

- Type II Diabetes by 40%
- Cardiovascular Disease by 35%
- Falls, Depression and Dementia by 30%
- Joint and Back Pain by 25%
- Cancers (Colon and Breast) by 20%

All great news for our walking community and in future issues, we would like to share your stories of success to how the Walking for Health programme in Wokingham, has improved your health and wellbeing.

I wish all our volunteers, walk leaders and walkers, a safe and prosperous 2016.

Glenn

Wokingham Walking for Health



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Winter Safety Tips

We have been rather fortunate to enjoy a mild December in regards to the temperature. Absent were the cold frosty mornings however January is making up for the mild weather with ground frost and lovely rain!

Many of our walks are experiencing high levels of flood water and muddy conditions and it is vitally important that you are prepared for the ground and weather conditions.

The Ramblers www.ramblers.org.uk have kindly provided advice on how to combat the UK winter.

- Wear comfortable clothes and sturdy, comfortable footwear suitable for the conditions and terrain.
- Several thin layers of clothing are better than one thick layer. You can take off layers as you warm up, or add them if you get cold.
- Take a good waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers.
- Wear a hat and gloves, and take a scarf – the Berkshire wind can find its way into every gap!
- A small backpack is more comfortable to walk with than an ordinary bag.
- For longer walks, take food with you or high energy snacks like flapjack, chocolate or dried fruit and nuts, and possibly have a flask with a hot drink. (keep it in the car for when you finish the walk)
- Consider taking a mobile phone (charged and switched on) and/or make sure someone knows where you've gone and when you expect to be back.
- Consider wearing some reflective clothing if you are walking on roads after dark and remember to walk facing the traffic.



Supporting you to
get active and stay active

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support run Walking for Health, helping more people – including those affected by cancer – discover the joys and health benefits of walking.

The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no. 1093577, Scotland no. SC039799) www.ramblers.org.uk
Macmillan Cancer Support is a registered charity (England and Wales no. 261017, Scotland no. SC039907, Isle of Man no. 604) www.macmillan.org.uk

Recent Social Events

The evening of Wednesday 16th December was the annual Wokingham Health Walkers Dinner Dance held at Sonning Golf Club.

It was an evening enjoyed by over 90 people with everyone wearing their best bib and tucker, a pleasant change from the usual attire of walking boots and jackets!! The Golf Club served a delicious 3 course meal which was followed by a disco. The D.J., Martin Aust, played an excellent selection of music, and the dance floor was full most of the evening. The Chairman of the Health Walks Social Committee, Brian Hughes, presented Martin with a small gift as a token of our thanks for his entertainment over the years.

Before the music started Brian read a very amusing poem (written by our resident poet Jean Hill) about the Health Walkers social events of 2015. It was a very successful year, and thanks must be given to Valerie and Peter Astill for giving so generously of their time helping with the organisation of these events.



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HEALTH WALKS PROGRAMME OF SOCIAL EVENTS FOR 2016

EVENT	DATE AND TIME	VENUE
Breakfast walk	Friday 4 th March at 8 am.	Henry Street Garden Centre
Spring walk, quiz and buffet lunch	Saturday 9 th April at 10 am.	Barkham Village Hall
Summer walk and hog roast	Saturday 16 th July at 6 pm.	Barkham Village Hall
Autumn Barn Dance with Fish and Chips supper	Saturday 15 th October at 7 pm.	Barkham Village Hall
Christmas Dinner and Dance	Wednesday 14 th December at 7 pm.	Sonning Golf Club

For more information contact Social Chairman Brian Hughes: bd.hughes4@ntlworld.com

Volunteers wanted for a new group 'Friends of Woodford Park'

Would you, yes you, like to help other volunteers with practical activities to improve the Woodley area?

Even if you are not able to offer help in weeding shrub beds or planting, your input can help in other ways. We value your ideas on what you may like to see in the park and ideas on how to attract sponsorship or donations. Woodley Town Council's Leisure Committee gives their full support to the **'Friends of Woodford Park'** group.

The park is an important asset offering community space right in the heart of Woodley. The park is used and enjoyed by sports groups, dog walkers, children's play areas or those who use it to walk to the town centre. The park can offer so much more, a place to relax, a place to encourage birds, a place with more seating with attractive bedding.

So are you interested?

If you would like to join the group or need more information you can contact Woodley Town Council, Kevin Murray on 0118 969 0356 or Kevin.Murray@woodley.gov.uk or David Provins 0118 969 3698 or david_provins@hotmail.com (Underscore between David_Provins)

With spring just around the corner, now is the time to get involved with the 'Friends of Woodford Park'!



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Spotlight On....

Arborfield Cross

The walk, which takes place every Thursday at 10am, is entirely in the countryside to the south-west of Wokingham. It has started from The Henry Street Garden Centre car park for the past 15 years and is one of the more well-attended walks in Wokingham, attracting 50-60 walkers frequently and nearly 80 on one occasion last year.

The walk incorporates local lanes, pleasant woodland and fields before returning to the garden centre.

As with many country walk, the ground conditions in winter can be challenging in places, however we walk an alternative open-country route where the ground is a little easier to negotiate.

After the walk, many walkers congregate in the garden centre's café for coffee or tea. We have a reputation for re-arranging the furniture in the outside, under-cover area so we can all sit round in a single group for chatting and laughing. After coffee, the last few walkers to leave have an unwritten obligation to put the tables back where we found them!

Henry Street (the founder's name, not his residence) Garden Centre is a family-run business and they have always welcomed us. On the tenth anniversary of the walk, they made a cake for us and called in the local press to record the occasion. The garden centre is the location of an annual breakfast walk, starting at 8:00am and finishing with breakfast in the café. We also have a Christmas lunch there every year.

Both walks are of much the same distance, just over 3½ miles. The normal walk has some slight ups and downs but the winter walk is completely level.

Peter Astill

Arborfield Walk



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Walk Leaders Required

The Wokingham Walk for Health programme relies heavily on the goodwill and service from a number of committed volunteers. Without their commitment, many of the walks would not take place or they would need to be scaled down. Whether you are an experienced walker or new to the programme, we are always on the lookout for new volunteer walk leaders and back markers.

You will receive full in-house training and be rewarded with a first aid qualification. (To be completed after the one day training). The programme has an experienced walk coordinator who designs the rota for the walks and you will be fully supported by Wokingham Borough Council Walking for Health coordinator. Walk leaders receive a uniform and the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the programme.

The next walk leader training course will take place in May 2016

For more details contact Glenn at Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk or contact 0118 974 3729

Walk Leader Courses for 2016

Course Dates

Friday 27 th May 2016	Ashridge Room, Cantley Park, Wokingham	9:30am to 3:30pm
Friday 28 th October 2016	Ashridge Room, Cantley Park, Wokingham	9:30am to 3:30pm

By the end of the course you will:

- Understand what Walking for health is about
- Understand the benefits of walking and physical activity
- Get to know the role of a walk leader
- Information on mental health and learning disabilities
- Have access to follow-up support and resources to help people make the most of their skills, including a Volunteer Walk Leader manual
- Be confident to lead a health walk in due course (following the guidance that goes with the progress card)
- Have met and shared best practice with other walk leaders
- Know the role of back markers. A back marker is a trained leader who walks with the back of the group of walkers, making sure no-one gets left behind.

If you would like to attend a future course, please contact Healthwalks@wokingham.gov.uk or call 0118 9743729



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