



WAW spreads to the far corners

Congratulations to Unst in the Shetland Isles for becoming the 71st member of the network. WAW towns and villages are now spread across the land, from Hayle and Liskeard in Cornwall to the very north of Scotland, and from Deal in Kent to New Quay in the west coast of Wales.

Check out the map on the WAW towns section of the website www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk

New ideas for next year

At the request of conference delegates, the committee agreed to work on the following ideas:

- Update the website with a search facility to make it easier for walkers to find somewhere to go, add a Facebook page and a forum / blog, add more examples of good practice and generally tidy the site up;
- Update some administration processes, to speed up the application process and give clearer guidance.

WAW in TGO

The November issue of TGO (The Great Outdoors) magazine has a 3-page article about WAW. Although not every town and village got a mention, a good number did and the article will help to raise the profile of WAW generally. Thanks to Geoff Kitt for providing them with information.

Next year it's Ross-on-Wye!

Put the weekend of 20-21 October 2012 in your diaries now. The next annual WAW gathering will be in the beautiful riverside town of Ross in the Wye Valley.

Conference 2011 feedback

New friendships were formed and delegates went home buzzing with ideas after the Annual WAW Conference in Market Weighton.



Our hosts proved that they do indeed make walkers welcome and we experienced Yorkshire hospitality at its best. The weekend started with a choice of walks, a short health walk and the more strenuous Londesborough Loop, a 7 mile section of the Yorkshire Wolds Way National Trail.

They even arranged for a rare visitor to the UK, a white stork, to be feeding by the path, which excited the twitchers amongst us!

A hearty dinner followed at Langlands Garden Centre (they know how to eat well in Yorkshire!) where we all got to know each other before heading back to our B&Bs.

Sunday's activities included talks, workshops and the AGM. Members were asked to name their top 3 successes in 2011 and although the number of towns present was disappointing, the range of ideas and achievements was truly amazing. The full list is attached below and makes interesting reading. I think we all left with new ideas and someone quoted that hearing about what others had achieved had given him the confidence to aim higher in his own home town.

New committee for 2011/12

A new committee was voted in at the AGM as follows:

Kate Ashbrook - Chairman
Nigel Botting - Secretary (Market Weighton)
Geoff Kitt - Treasurer (Moffat)
Sam Phillips (Ross-on-Wye)
Ann Sandell (Kirkby Stephen)
Sheila Talbot (Winchcombe)
Naomi Wrighton (Wellington)
Randal Metzger (Otley)

More committee members are needed, so if you would like to find out more before committing yourself, please email nigelbotting@btinternet.com or ring him on 01430 879 820.

The committee meets face to face twice a year (at the annual conference and again in April), with four other meetings held by telephone conference, so it shouldn't take up too much time.



WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Here are the 'Top Three Successes' from the towns and villages that attended the conference. We hope that you will find some inspiration from the huge selection of ideas and adopt them where you live. The committee will be using some of this information to put together national press releases.

Promotion

- Moffat have had a professional video made
- Provided ring-binders for all the pubs and cafes, containing details about walks and the website.
- Offered work experience in design and promotion to a university student
- Provide questionnaires in overnight accommodation to get feedback
- Taking over the TIC from the council
- Making good use of clever branding to raise awareness
- Invited Country Walking magazine to open the Winchcombe Way – resulted in a 5 page article in CW, BBC TV & Radio covered the story. 1000 Guide Books sold since May.

Funding and Sponsorship successes:

- Go Outdoors sponsored event
- Local boot manufacturer sponsored walking festival
- WAW town branding on a local lorry
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty provided funding
- Local brewery provided £1 off vouchers for walking festival
- Applying for a Lottery 'Awards for All' grant

Rights of Way:

- Upgraded the local stretch of the Coast to Coast route
- Added decking to a dangerous bridge
- Bought two sets of tools so that more volunteers can get involved
- Replacing gates with stiles to make 20 miles of paths stile free
- Getting all the local gates and stiles up to scratch before the local rights of way budget disappears
- Making use of a disused railway

Walks

- Richmond combines its walking festival with a book festival, which attracted 3,000 people
- Walking for Health schemes attracting 300 people per month, with 35 trained walk leaders
- Chesham are trying to attract Londoners, as they are at the end of the tube.
- Providing information for bus and steam train walks
- Providing information for history walks
- Linking with Arts Festival and other town activities
- Adding extra days to the walking festival to encourage people to stay longer
- Set up a walk to link 3 nature reserves
- Piggyback on other local walking festivals
- Offer walk leaders to accompany visiting groups
- Created a new 42 mile figure-eight walk with the town at its centre
- Set up a walk suitable for disabled Trampers, it is now on the Disabled Ramblers website.
- Offer walk leader training and first aid courses for all walk leaders.
- Linking with other WAW towns to offer exchange visits.
- Expanding the number of walks in the local guide book
- Led a British Food Fortnight walk to a beef farm, then lunch at the pub where they sell the meat.



WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Improving the town/village

- Designed and funded a visitor information board in the town centre
- Sponsoring a bench at the spot that is the beginning, middle and end of the Winchcombe Way.
- Tidying up the town so it looks loved
- Provided sign boards at the entrances to the town and within the town
- Local students designed and built a seat
- Planted a new wood and improved the footpath to it.

Social events:

- A Christmas lunch and a Barn Dance
- An evening walk with a supper afterwards
- Inviting European twinned towns to take part in walking activities
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Here are a few highlights from Market Weighton...

Giant Bradley, Britain's tallest man



The Londesborough Loop



And finally the committee is delighted to announce that four Walkers are Welcome vice-presidents have been elected in recognition of their vision and hard work, they are: Andrew Bibby, John Woolmer, Peter Corkill and Malcolm Wilkinson.

www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk

Hebden Bridge – Moffat – Prestatyn – Mytholmroyd – Church Stretton – Bishop's Castle – Richmond - Market Weighton - Kilsyth - Cilgerran – Pentrefoelas – Otley - Rhuddlan – Tadcaster – Martley – Deal - Penmaenmawr - Haltwhistle – Llanfairfechan – Holywell – Kirkby Stephen – Winchcombe – Llandrindod Wells – Pickering – Ross-on-Wye – Ilkley – Llandysul & Pont Tyweli – Great Malvern – Kingsbridge – Leyburn – Llangollen – Wiveliscombe – Newton Stewart – Huntly – Pateley Bridge – Corby – Tomintoul – Chesham – Marsden – Bradfield – Cleobury Mortimer – Dunster – Hayle – Kirkintilloch – Longborough – Wellington – Knaresborough – Melrose – Kings Stanley & Leonard Stanley – Dufftown – Guisborough – Tregaron – Pocklington – Bromyard – Devils Bridge - Market Rasen – Stroud – Jedburgh – Bala – Newport – Bradford on Avon – Stocksbridge – Knighton – Kington – Hartland - Brampton – Colne – New Quay – Much Wenlock – Liskeard - Unst