

## Application for Walkers are Welcome Status

**1. Name of Town/Village**

Kirkby Stephen

**2. Name of sponsoring organisation**

Kirkby Stephen Town Forum

**3. Contact**

Ann Sandell

**4. Address**

Walkers are Welcome Steering Group  
Kirkby Stephen Town Forum  
Community and Council Centre  
17 Market Street  
KIRKBY STEPHEN Cumbria  
CA17 4RG

**5. Phone:** 017683 71325  
017683 71976 ( home)

**6. Email:** [ccc@kirkbystephen.f9.co.uk](mailto:ccc@kirkbystephen.f9.co.uk)  
[ann@asandell.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:ann@asandell.orangehome.co.uk) (home)

**7. Position in organisation** Chair

**8. Website address** [www.kirkby-stephen.com/](http://www.kirkby-stephen.com/)

**9. How have you demonstrated popular support for becoming a WaW community?**

Kirkby Stephen Town Forum held a Walking Exhibition on St Luke's Fair Day 25 October 2008 to launch the initiative and start the collection of signatures of support with relevant local press coverage.

We have collected 180 signatures of support from the Kirkby Stephen area. Many accommodation providers and related businesses have joined the mailing list.

**10. How have you demonstrated that there is official endorsement from you local council for Walkers are Welcome?**

Kirkby Stephen Town Council considered this to be an appropriate initiative and minuted 'It was agreed that the Town Council would support the application' at their meeting on 2 September 2008.

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At a subsequent meeting of the Town Council on 6 January 2009 'It was resolved to approve the recommendation to pay the annual membership fee of £20 and supply the group with a list of public seats in the parish. Councillors signed the petition to show support for the initiative.'

Minutes can be seen on [www.kirkby-stephen.com/](http://www.kirkby-stephen.com/).

Councillors Margaret Albon and Jackie Scarr have been appointed by the Town Council to the steering group.

The Upper Eden Community Plan group Project Officer, Libby Bateman has joined the steering group.

The Cumbria County Council, Countryside Access Ranger, Tony Burns has joined the group.

Eden District Council's Economic and Tourism Development Manager, Andrea Hines has joined the group.

The steering group is a sub-committee of Kirkby Stephen Town Forum, business and residents association working in partnership with Kirkby Stephen Town Council and other agencies.

### **11. What will you do to ensure that your community adequately markets its status as a Walkers are Welcome town/village?**

We have considered our first steps as follows:

All shops, food outlets, accommodation providers and council agencies will be encouraged to welcome walkers, consider their needs and display a WaW sticker on their door or window.

The WaW logo will be shown on the new Kirkby Stephen mini-guide being published for this summer and future Eden District Council, Cumbria Tourism and Kirkby Stephen publications.

The town signs at the 3 main entrances to the town are being updated with Britain in Bloom and Calor Village of the Year information, the Walkers are Welcome logo will be included.

There will be press releases and a launch once accreditation has been granted with partnership tourism agencies will be included.

The Kirkby Stephen council website will be updated with the news together with Visit Eden, Visit Cumbria and Cumbria Tourism websites. We will go on to develop Walkers are Welcome pages for the Kirkby Stephen council website, [kirkby-stephen.com](http://kirkby-stephen.com), that will include full details of what the area has to offer walkers from the countryside, walks, public transport links, facilities, services and accommodation.

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We have been given a display map of our area showing all rights of way and path identification numbers which we are planning to display in the Kirkby Stephen Tourist Information Centre alongside walk publications and WaW information. We are applying for funding for further town display boards.

A yearly walk programme collating already available and new walks will be published. Ideas include walks specifically aimed at different interests, Cumbria Wildlife, using the Settle to Carlisle railway, Heritage and orienteering etc.

**12. What have you done, and what will you do in future, to ensure that facilities for Walkers are available locally and are maintained in good condition?**

We have just started the process of asking accommodation providers to fill in an online questionnaire to ascertain what facilities they offer for walkers including drying rooms, packed lunch and transport. see [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sR4QPzcb\\_2bFRvoTFpS5QmBg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sR4QPzcb_2bFRvoTFpS5QmBg_3d_3d)

This will enable us to collate information of facilities already available and identify what further facilities should be encouraged. We are promoting Quality in Tourism Walkers Welcome accreditation for accommodation providers. The new local accommodation provider's database will also be used to provide information to accommodation providers in the form of newsletters. Examples include where to advertise, green tourism, new walk leaflets and local information.

We have a very good Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue team and air ambulance that is supported by the local communities.

There is a rolling 4 year survey and maintenance programme for Kirkby Stephen and the surrounding parishes operated by Capita on behalf of Cumbria County Council. Kirkby Stephen's was done during 2008 and all repairs carried out as identified.

The Countryside Access Team are putting rights of way problem reporting on a website which will go live on line shortly, this will be much easier than the current process of telephoning the Highways Hotline or Capita. This should also ensure that the right personnel pick up the information direct.

The Countryside Ranger has joined the steering group to help with any problems and offer advice. He undertakes to solve highlighted problems and way marking.

We are surveying all Kirkby Stephen footpaths in turn accessing any current maintenance needs, picking up any litter and noting any future development required. 15 stretches of rights of way have been surveyed so far leaving a few odd sections to do. A small amount of maintenance problems have been identified and reported. We felt it is important to survey all paths before

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accreditation so that we were able to record the starting condition and familiarize ourselves with every yard. Our paths are generally in very good condition and it has been useful to see them in winter.

Cumbria County Council has agreed funding to upgrade the footpath from Kirkby Stephen West station to Kirkby Stephen East Station at the southern edge of the town. This is to be completed during the 2009/10 financial year. Funding has also been allocated for a feasibility study for a cycle track from Brough to Kirkby Stephen alongside the road from the north which would include safer walking access along the main road.

We have devised a Rights of Way Problem Report Card which is available at the Tourist Information Centre and the Community and Council Centre; supplies will be distributed to accommodation providers. The cards are to be used by walkers to fill in and report any problems that they encounter on route and are then returned to the Community and Council Centre for action. The information is saved for the Kirkby Stephen Walkers are Welcome steering group to enable monitoring. This has been funded by Eden District Council. Any reported problems in surrounding areas will also be dealt with.

There is a current investigation into national walks. Kirkby Stephen has two, the Coast to Coast and Lady Anne's Way. The Pennine Way runs close by and there is also a national bridleway and cycle routes.

### **13. How are you promoting usage of public transport?**

We already have a walk brochure linked to our community Plusbus and other leaflets feature starting positions using public transport. All future publications will detail public transport availability. There is also a Settle to Carlisle Railway linked walk programme.

Kirkby Stephen is served with a variety of public and private hire transport. Our community Plusbus, subsidized County transport to nearby towns and countryside in between, private bus routes aimed at tourism, private taxis and our famous Settle to Carlisle Railway all add to the variety available.

We have recently investigated railway links into our area from the South aimed at weekend visitors. Accommodation providers are being questioned as to whether they would pick up or drop off at stations and bus stops. Public and private transport information will appear on our new web pages and is available locally at The Tourist Information Centre, Library and Community and Council Centre.

### **14. How do you intend to ensure that your community maintains its interest in WaW status in the longer term? How will you contribute to the growth of the WaW Towns Network?**

The Kirkby Stephen Walkers are Welcome steering group will ensure maintenance of current standards and go on to make improvements and promote

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the status. The group is supported by many other organisations that have various interests in making this a success either for the good of walking, increased visitors to the area or statutory obligations.

Kirkby Stephen has always been a walking destination and we wish to improve and promote what it has to offer visitors and walkers. Tourism growth has been identified as vital to the future of our community.

Kirkby Stephen will be the first town in Cumbria to be awarded Walkers are Welcome status. We will encourage other towns in Cumbria to work with us and obtain their own accreditation and have promotional links. We are already working with St. Bees which is pleasing as they are at the beginning of the Coast to Coast route and we are in the middle. We have made contact with Richmond, Yorkshire our nearest WaW town and will be working with their WaW organisation to promote each others facilities.

We will link our websites to the Walkers are Welcome website.

**15. Please summarise in a paragraph what makes your community special for walkers.**

Kirkby Stephen is surrounded by spectacular countryside and offers a very great variety of different types of walking to suit all ages and experience with many still undiscovered and unspoilt areas. Winner of Cumbria in Bloom 2008 and Calor Cumbria Village of the Year 2008, Kirkby Stephen is a pro-active vibrant community and there is always a warm welcome from the very friendly local people.

**16. Please advise us of any proposed WaW launch or other forthcoming events linked to your application for WaW status.**

We will arrange a Walkers are Welcome launch once accreditation has been granted. We will, in the meantime, consider appropriate publicity and continue with our plans.

**Signature of named contact:**



**A V Sandell**

**Second Signature;**



**M J Walker**

**Secretary – Kirkby Stephen Town Forum**

**27.03.09**

