



Walkers are Welcome

Fact sheet 1

The ***Walkers are Welcome*** idea

Walkers are Welcome towns and villages are places which have something special to offer walkers.

Obtaining ***Walkers are Welcome*** status, as a growing number of communities across Britain are doing, brings a number of benefits. It helps strengthen a town's reputation as a place for visitors to come to enjoy the outdoors, bringing useful benefits to the local economy. It helps to ensure that footpaths and facilities for walkers are maintained in good condition, benefiting local people as well as visitors. It can contribute to local tourism plans and regeneration strategies.

It also allows communities to benefit from the regular networking opportunities with other ***Walkers are Welcome*** towns, when experiences are shared informally and new ideas discussed.

The ***Walkers are Welcome*** scheme is different from most top-down accreditation schemes, in that it has emerged from, and is being promoted by, communities themselves. The idea, which was first discussed in 2006, became a reality when the Pennine town of Hebden Bridge became the first ***Walkers are Welcome*** town in Spring 2007, closely followed by Moffat in Scotland's Dumfries and Galloway region and by the north Wales community of Prestatyn & Meliden. More than forty other communities now either have ***Walkers are Welcome*** status or are actively working to meet the criteria.

These towns together have constituted themselves as the Walkers are Welcome Towns Network. It is this body (through its committee and its annual conference) which develops and controls the ***Walkers are Welcome*** scheme and oversees use of the logo. In other words, the ***Walkers are Welcome*** idea and brand is collectively managed by the communities themselves who are participating – real grassroots democracy in action.

The Walkers are Welcome Towns Network welcomes approaches from other towns and villages interested in working towards ***Walkers are Welcome*** status. There are six conditions to meet, outlined on a companion fact sheet.

For more information, visit the website at www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk

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