

Walking for Health in Devon

November 2015

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'Walking for Health in Devon' is the name of the network of Health Walk Schemes across Devon that are supported by the local organisations and led by Active Devon.

Together, our aim is to grow the number of people walking and volunteering with a local health walk scheme, in targeted ways, to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of people in Devon.

Welcome to our first newsletter, helping to keep you up to date with the latest walking news and development occurring throughout our network in Devon. We will send these out four times a year. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful.

Volunteer Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed the volunteer survey in October 2015. Five entries have been drawn at random and have received a £25 M&S voucher. Well done!

The responses really help us shape the way we support you. Thank you for all of the comments and feedback we have received. It's assisted the development of this newsletter and some of our plans for 2016.

Eden Community Weekends

The Eden Project is offering free entry for Walking for Health volunteers on the weekends 5th - 6th December and 2nd - 3rd January 2016. This is a great excuse to head down to Cornwall and have a relaxing day out.

For more information about the Eden Project click [here](#).



Pic: The Eden project

The offer is available for yourselves and immediate family members (maximum of one extra adult and three children aged 16 and under).

If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity please email your local coordinator and they will issue you with an ID badge which needs to be presented on the day.

Save the Date

Active Devon and the local organisations supporting your Health Walk Scheme are planning a Devonwide volunteer network and activities event on **June 6th 2016**. It will be a great

day with an opportunity to meet other volunteers, try some activities and enjoy a lunch together. Further details will be shared in due course but remember to save the date to make sure you don't miss out.

New Walk Development

East Devon Walk this Way have linked with Honiton Memory Café and offer a walk once monthly with those who use the café who include those suffering from dementia and their carers.

Walking has been shown to have great health benefits for those with dementia including decreasing cognitive decline. Walking for Health in Devon will be piloting some



Pic: Honiton's walkers from the Memory Cafe

dementia friends sessions and hopes to make our network and walks a safe and supportive environment for those with dementia.

North Devon has launched a new walk in Braunton, which started last month. A Trainee GP in the area has become a walk leader and is leading the walks every week. It is great to have the backing from a health professional and we are always looking to link with local health practices. The walk is a grade one, so ideal for those who are not very active at the moment but are looking to increase their activity levels or those who are recovering from illness or injury. We are looking forward to seeing the Braunton walk develop over the forthcoming months.

Network Development

Active Devon and partners have been supporting Walking for Health in Devon for one year now. During this year we have been able to launch 18 new grade 1 walks - helping the least active to get active.

This takes us up to an amazing 114 opportunities to take part in a health walk in Devon each week. The map below shows the location of our current walk schemes and indicates the walks that have been developed over the past year (blue pointer).



Pic: Walk schemes in Devon - click to enlarge

We have produced a promotional film that we have been showing at events and shows around the county, you can view the film [here](#).

A few of the events we have attended over the year to talk about and promote Walking for Health are; RD&E Members Say Event, The Devon County Show, Torbay Hospital 'Living with a beyond cancer' event.



Pic: Promoting at RD&E Members say event

Hannah Colston, Senior Development Manager at Active Devon has also delivered an online broadcast, on a Health Channel, you can view the broadcast [here](#).

Walking in the News

Brisk walking is better for keeping weight off than going to the gym!

Recent research from the London School of Economics discovered people who walked a lot had lower BMIs and smaller waists than those who took part in regular sport.

Dr Grace Lordan, who led the research, compared people who said they regularly did half-an-hour of fast-paced walking to those who did the same amount of heavy housework, manual labour and sports like rugby.

“Given the obesity epidemic and the fact that a large proportion of people in the UK are inactive, recommending that people walk briskly

more often is a cheap and easy policy option.” - And we agree!

Linking with the Ramblers in 2016

Walking for Health in Devon offers walks ranging from 10 to 90 minutes. However we realise some walkers are ready to push themselves further and are looking for more challenging walks.

We are working with the team at the Ramblers to explore ways in which we can support people looking to step up their fitness the opportunity to walk with their local Ramblers group, this will include 30% off the yearly membership fee with Ramblers, among other things. We'll also be encouraging Ramblers groups to offer more short walks (if they aren't already) to make the progression easier.



Pic: North Devon Ramblers Nice & Easy walk

By creating this link we will also be able to encourage Ramblers walkers who would like a step down in activity level to join a health walk. We are aware of some great examples of where links are being made already, so our main aim is to support and encourage this.

If you have any comments or would like to submit something for our next newsletter email rebecca.russell@devon.gov.uk. To keep up to date with the national news visit the main website: www.walkingforhealth.org.uk