

Walkers are Welcome - Report to HTC Meeting 1st April 2021

Walkers are Welcome Henley (WaW) is part of a nationwide initiative to encourage towns and villages to be 'welcoming to walkers'. We aim to strengthen Henley's reputation as a place for visitors to come and enjoy the outdoors. This should benefit the town's businesses; walkers in the English countryside spend around £6 billion a year, generating more than £2 billion in income and supporting up to 245,000 full-time jobs.

Henley is an ideal place for walking with two long-distance paths, the Thames Path national trail and the Oxfordshire Way which pass through the town. It is on the edge of the Chilterns, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) and the hub of a rich network of well-marked paths. We have a host of cafés, hotels, pubs and B&Bs.

Commercial organisations in the town such as cafes, pubs, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs and sports shops which support the organisation and pay a small annual subscription will be eligible to display "Walkers are Welcome" stickers. Commercial partners will be expected to comply with minimum conditions eg B&Bs and accommodation providers should have facilities for drying clothes and footwear and cafes and eateries should provide covers for muddy boots.

As with many other organisations our activities have been curtailed during the last 12 months but we are planning to run walking festivals in May this year, and also in the autumn. We also hope to join in the local litter-pick. We are working with HTC on the development of signposts round the town indicating local walks. We are also looking into working with the Slow Ways project for walks between towns; and National Tree Week.

We will be shortly publishing in The Henley Standard a series of suggested walks in the area.

We are grateful to the Town Council for the grant given to us to enable us to develop our activities.

We are looking for additional members to join our committee and also new commercial partners; if you could be interested in either or both please contact me.

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Chair WaW Henley
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