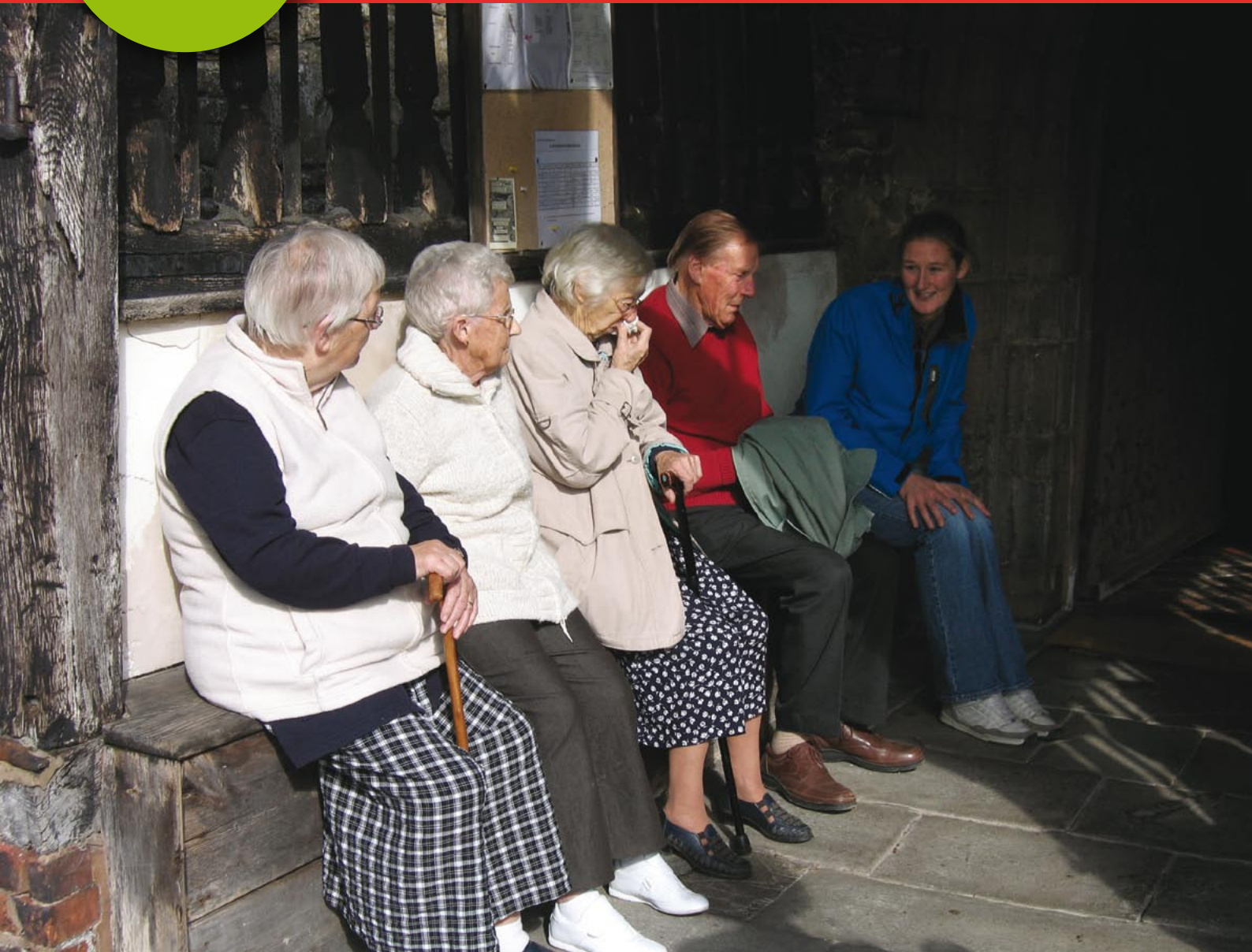




# Making it Sustainable



The idea behind the Walking for Life! project was not just about setting up and delivering walking and volunteering opportunities.

The project's main aim has been to create a legacy of increased physical activity opportunities for the people of Shropshire. The project has worked very hard to ensure such an increase in physical activity opportunities is as sustainable as possible.

In order to achieve this, a key component of the project has been to develop partnerships with a variety of organisations.

Since December 2006 Walking for Life! has made links, and developed partnerships, with a variety of groups and organisations e.g.:

- Community Mental Health Teams
- Day Centres for Adults with Learning Difficulties
- Countryside Access Team
- Healthy Living Centres
- Community Council
- Age Concern
- MIND
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- U3A (University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age)
- Senior Citizens Forum
- Local Authority Strategic groups e.g. Health and Wellbeing groups
- GP surgeries; GPs/Practice Manager/Practice Nurses/Patient Support Groups
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Parish Councils
- Women's Institute
- Alzheimer's Society
- Leisure Centres; local authority and private sector
- Exercise Referral Schemes
- Volunteer Centres
- Smoking Cessation Services
- Children's Centres
- Adult Learning and Education Programmes
- Carers Societies and organisations

Walking for Life! has linked with these groups and organisations with the initial aim of highlighting the benefits of physical activity to their service users, members, or employees.

Once the group or organisation has recognised the benefits of physical activity, the Walking for Life! project has worked to motivate and support the organisations to either develop their own activities, or promote the existing opportunities in the local area to their members, patients or service users.

## Sustainable Success?

### Walking for Health

Walking for Life! has had success in setting up sustainable opportunities through developing Walking the way to Health groups.

Almost all of the Walking the way to Health groups currently active in Shropshire are sustainable in that they do not require day to day support from the Walking for Life! project to continue.

The groups have all recruited very dedicated and committed volunteers who carry out all the organisational roles required to ensure their group can continue to run when the Walking for Life! project finishes in December 2009.



Making it Sustainable

Walking for Life! recognises that it is very important that all of the volunteers and Walking the way to Health groups across Shropshire continue to have access to support if they need it, and gain ongoing recognition once the project has come to an end.

Currently this support and recognition is mostly achieved through a bi-monthly 'County Walking for Health Networking Group' chaired by Walking for Life! The group provides volunteers with the opportunity to ask questions, solve queries, share ideas and update the other groups in the county with the successes of their groups.



In the early stages it can be difficult to set the line between supporting an organisation or community to set up an activity, and actually developing and delivering the activity yourself. Walking for Life! has experienced that if you initially take on most of the responsibility to get things started it may make it easier to hand over in the long term. It is much easier for an organisation, or volunteers within a community, to take on something that is already set up and successful, than having to put the time in to set it up in the first place.



## Conclusion

The key to success in terms of sustainability when working to develop physical activity opportunities is the strength of the relationships between yourself and the individuals within the organisation or community you are working with.

You need to enthuse, motivate and drive key individuals within an organisation or community. It is vitally important that you are passionate about the activity you are trying to set up and pass on that passion to the organisations and communities involved.



## Funder Finder

Funder Finder develops and distributes software to help individuals and not for profit organisations in the UK to identify charitable trusts that might give them money.

[www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk)



## Lottery funding

If you are looking for national lottery funding, the funding search on this site will direct you to the most appropriate lottery distributor.

[www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk](http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk)



## Voluntary and Community Sector Grants

Volcomgrants is a pilot Government website concerned with voluntary and community sector grants. It provides information on the grants available from 4 government departments: The Home Office; Department for Education and Skills; Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions; Department of Health.

[www.volcomgrantsni.gov.uk](http://www.volcomgrantsni.gov.uk)