



Walking for Life! Project Overview



Project Overview

'Most people know that walking in the countryside is good for them.....but they often just need a bit of support to get started.'

We know:

- Shropshire is renowned for its beautiful countryside and network of public rights of way.

We also know that:

- Research has provided evidence on the benefits of the natural environment to an individual's health and well being.

For this reason... the Walking for Life! Project was created in order to improve the health and well being of the people of Shropshire through walking and volunteering opportunities.

Project Development

- 3 Year Project
- December 2006 - December 2009
- Developed as a partnership project between Shropshire Council Countryside Access Team and Shropshire PCT. The project met mutually exclusive targets in terms of increasing access to the countryside, increasing levels of physical activity, and improving health and well-being
- Funding from Sport England, Natural England, Shropshire PCT, Shropshire County Council Transport Planning Department
- Working Budget of £263,343 over 3 years
- Day to day delivery by project officer
- Guided by project Steering Group

Overall Aim

'To increase the physical activity levels of the people of Shropshire; in particular those who currently lead sedentary lifestyles and have more barriers to participating in physical activity and accessing the countryside e.g. people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, sensory impairment.'

Project Vision

'To provide a continuum of walking, volunteering and other physical activity opportunities in Shropshire's countryside and on people's doorstep in order to encourage all people, especially those who are sedentary or inactive, to get active and stay active.'

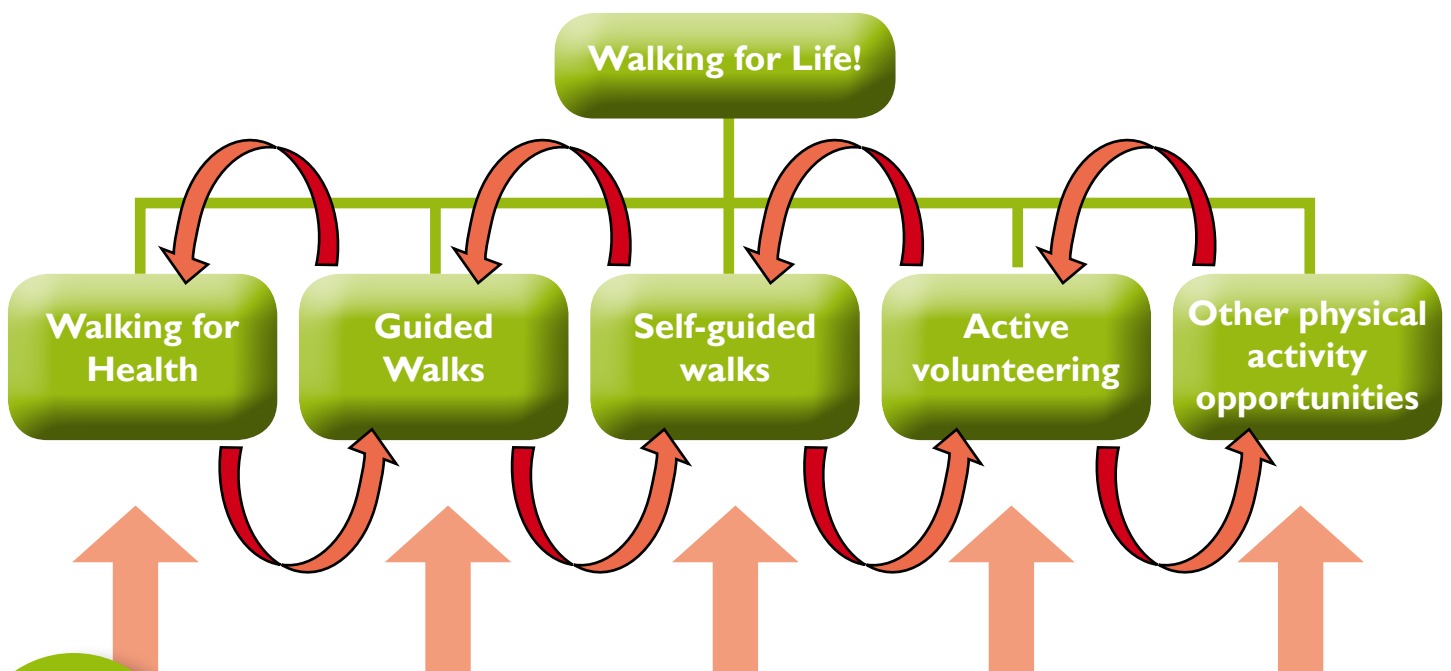
Visual Representation of the



Walking for Life! Project

The diagram below provides a visual picture of the continuum of walking, volunteering and other physical activity opportunities supported and developed by Walking for Life!

The arrows indicate movement of people, i.e. an individual may enter at any point, and may move in any direction along the continuum if they wish.



Walking for Life!

Key activities to be supported and developed by Walking for Life!

- **Walking the way to Health:** Walking groups accredited with Natural England's Walking the way to Health initiative aimed at beginners.
- **Guided walks:** any other walking groups e.g. The Ramblers, Outdoor Clubs, Church Walking Groups.
- **Self-Guided Walks:** Walk leaflets encouraging people to access the countryside independently or with family and friends i.e. not as part of a organised walking group.
- **Active Volunteering:** any organised volunteering activity that provides an opportunity for physical activity, provided by a variety of organisations e.g. Shropshire Council (Parish Paths Partnership), Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, National Trust.
- **Other physical activity opportunities:** walking is the perfect 'stepping stone' to other types of physical activity e.g. leisure centre activities, orienteering, and sports clubs.



Case Studies to demonstrate purpose of continuum:

'James'

'James' is overweight and has been told he has high blood pressure and should do some more exercise.

On the advice of his GP he joins his local Walking for Health Group and walks for about 60 minutes once a week.

This motivates him to try and walk more as part of his everyday life. After a couple of months he has lost some weight, feels fitter and has begun to thoroughly enjoy walking.

Through the Walking for Health group he finds out about another local walking group who walk a bit further and so he goes along to one of their walks.

'James' now walks with his local walking group and has become a member of the Ramblers Association; his blood pressure, weight and confidence have improved.

'Emily'

'Emily' suffers from mild depression and has been reading that exercising in the natural environment can help.

'Emily's' GP advises that she joins the local Walking for Health group, although she's never been that keen on walking she goes along anyway.

Through Walking for Health she finds out about a local conservation group which are looking for volunteers. 'Emily' has always been interested in conservation and so joins the group.

The satisfaction 'Emily' gains from the conservation work not only motivates her to keep going along to the group but also helps her to manage her depression.

'Carol'

'Carol' has been a member of her local Rambler's group for a number of years but has now been told she needs a knee replacement. After her knee replacement she is keen to get back to her walking group but initially can't quite manage the distance and terrain she used to.

As part of her rehabilitation her physiotherapist recommends she join the local Walking the way to Health group.

'Carol' is also given a number of leaflets showing local short circular walks with no stiles.

After 6 months 'Carol' has built the strength back up in her knee and can progress on from Walking for Health back to the shorter Ramblers walks.

For supporting documents please refer to 'Walking for Life! Toolkit' disc