



Dereham Walkers are Welcome

2 October 2017

Walkers are Welcome - to cake!

On the first day of Norfolk County Council's Cycling and Walking Festival, 24 people enjoyed a 5 mile walk round Dereham on Sunday, ending with tea and home made cake in a local garden. The walk, which took in Etling Green and Northall Green, was made possible with the substantial help of The Ramblers and The Conservation Volunteers.



Peter James from The Ramblers visited Dereham a week before the walk, bringing with him the brush cutter purchased by his Norfolk based colleagues, and used it to take out the nettles which would have made walking down one of the paths rather unpleasant.

A bigger potential problem was a stretch of path by Swanton Road, where the path - supposed to be wide enough to allow a horse and carriage to drive along - had been made narrow and dangerous by of a combination of a thorny and bramble ridden hedge on one side and a steep sided ditch on the other: what was left of the path sloped down towards the ditch, making walking past quite hazardous. With the permission of the landowner, 10 volunteers from Dereham Walkers are Welcome and The Norfolk Conservation Volunteers spent several hours on Friday cutting back

the hedge and levelling out the path. It may still not be passable for a horse and carriage, but it can now be easily used by walkers.



before



The Conservation Volunteers at work



after

These two improvements made it possible for the walkers on Sunday to walk down from Northall Green to The Neatherd in safety and with ease, enabling them to enjoy the delights of the two paths (and many more) as they passed between trees and hedges as if miles from any town.



The verdict on the tea and cakes was also positive!

Keeping paths clear for everyone to use has enabled Dereham *Walkers are Welcome* to arrange a number of public walks. The next one will take place on Wednesday 25 October: the walk will be 7 miles long, taking about 3 hours, starting with a ride on the Mid-Norfolk Railway to Thuxton and, after passing through the countryside south of Dereham, will end with a drink and cake at Dereham Station - and all for just £7.50. Full details (including how to get tickets and much, much more) are on the website www.DerehamWaW.org.uk, or you can contact Ken Hawkins via dtc.fpwarden@talktalk.net or on 07505 426750.

NOTE

¹ Walkers are Welcome (www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk/) aims to encourage and support towns and villages to

- be attractive destinations for walkers with top quality information on local walks;
- offer local people and visitors excellent walking opportunities within their areas;
- ensure that footpaths and facilities for walkers are maintained, improved and well signposted;
- contribute to local tourism plans and regeneration strategies;
- promote the health benefits of walking and increase participation; and
- encourage the use of public transport.

WaW as an organisation is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, and conducted a survey of its members, which indicated

- over 1,000 walks have been developed and published, culminating in over 6,000 miles of routes;
- we have helped to maintain thousands of miles of walking routes;
- our walking festivals represent over 100 days per annum, totalling over 500 walks and involving over 7,000 people each year;
- we have created twenty-two different types of walks;
- there are over 1,000 Walkers are Welcome HERE stickers displayed in retail and non-retail outlets across the country;
- we have made extensive use of social media to help promote walks and other related activities;

- over 70% of WaW towns and villages have their own websites;
- the use of public transport has been actively promoted, and made good use of both bus and rail; and
- local economies have earned substantial sums from local walkers and visitors who use our routes and attend walking festivals.