

Viv Boorman

I retired from teaching in 2003 I wanted to help in our local community. I was really lucky; I read an article on Health Walks and their benefits. Since I love walking and the outdoors, I decided to recruit volunteers to help me.

Initially we had only 3-4 walkers. We have grown to now offering 8 different intensity walks per week and have 350 walkers on our database. We have 75 volunteer walkers who have undertaken leader training.

Me and my fellow volunteers also organise coach trips, holidays, a picnic, pub walks, evening pub walks and a Christmas party.

I really feel that the group shows how adults can work together to provide a healthy and caring environment.

Most of our walkers are between 60 and 80 years old. 97% of walkers live within 10 miles of WHLTC. 90% of walkers reported that the walks had helped improve their fitness and they had gained extra friends and social contacts.

We run 4 different types of walks including the 'First Steps' programme.

Our Scheme has grown steadily from the beginning. In 2015 we were organising 6 walks a week from WHLTC. In October 2017 we started a Friday walk from WHLTC.

Our statistics reflect this growth.

- 2015 = 6433
- 2016 = 6531
- 2017 = 7393
- 2018 = 9245
- Record attendance = 104

Coordinating this is the most fulfilling activity that I'm involved in. The support of the leaders and the group is amazing.

Two walkers said:

"I joined Health Walks when I retired and it was the most positive activity I got involved in. I could never have envisaged how much healthier and enthusiastic I would feel about the future. It has become an integral part of my life. The organisation is second to none, friendly, sociable and safe. So much work is put in by the organisers beforehand and this is a key factor to the enjoyment and continuing growth of the group."

"Health Walks have been fantastic. At 80 to walk one hour at my speed is really great. Breathing deeply, blood circulation increased, chatting and laughing with lots of good friends who look forward to seeing one another twice a week. I've always loved and benefited from rambling but, as my partner cannot walk now, it seems unfair to go off all day on a long walk. A really brisk walk probably does me as much good."

Megan Horwood – CSM says:

“Viv has done a fantastic job in starting this scheme from scratch. She is a value to her local community, providing not only a safe environment to exercise, but also a friendly social hub for many. I cannot thank Viv enough for her efforts.”