

Contents

1. Progress so far	4
2. Plans for our festivals	6
3. The Festival of Winter Walks	8
4. Walk About <i>Let's get active</i>	9
5. How you can help make our festivals a success	10
6. Festivals award and showcase	12
7. One Team <i>Festivals support</i>	13
8. Next steps	15

Foreword



Hello,

I started at the Ramblers in February as the new national walking festivals programme manager. Since starting in post, I've had lots of conversations with volunteers about our festivals, on the phone, over email and through joining group and scheme walks. I have also established a volunteer advisory group, who have been central in providing ideas to shape the direction of our festivals. Please keep reading for more information about our plans for Festival of Winter Walks and Walk About, which have been shaped by these conversations.

The purpose of our GB walking festivals is to inspire people to join our wonderful walking community. I'd like to start by thanking all of you for your fantastic festivals work to date, as well as taking the opportunity to publicly thank players of People's Postcode Lottery for their continued support, which is allowing us to make our festivals bigger and better.

Together we offer a range of opportunities to get more people walking, from health walks to 24 mile hikes, and we should bring these to many more people. By working together, stretching ourselves and trying new things, we'll be taking important steps towards achieving our vision of a country where everyone, everywhere, can enjoy walking.

Back in January, we shared the dates for the Festival of Winter Walks (23 December 2017 – 7 January 2018) and we are now pleased to announce the dates of Walk About:

Saturday 26 May - Sunday 3 June 2018.

Whether you're organising something for one day, the whole festival period or anything in between, your efforts are very much appreciated.

One thing you've told us is that we need to communicate the things we'd like you to do before and during the festivals as early as possible, giving you the time you need to respond. So this year we are dramatically bringing forward our festivals communications.

In response to your feedback, we're also launching the festivals award and showcase this year. So please have a read through the information below and supporting forms and consider whether you would like to apply for an award for either or both of the festivals.

For the Festival of Winter Walks we have six months to create something truly memorable and close to a full year for Walk About. Together as one team: let's make it happen.

Best wishes,

Patrick Scott

Walking festivals programme manager

Would you like to receive further support to make our GB walking festivals bigger and better?

Then please drop us an email to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

ONE TEAM

We are all part of One Team:



We are one team, inspiring thousands of new people to join our fantastic walking community through festivals

Let's make these festivals our best yet!

We need your help to:

1

Use our festival themes to help promote the festivals.

2

Do something different to create a buzz around the festival. Perhaps host a social event to make people feel welcome.

3

Why not recruit a dedicated volunteer festivals coordinator to help make the festivals bigger and better?

4

Do your walks appeal to new walkers? Try to put yourselves in their shoes.

5

Help us to measure impact by taking a walk register or by asking people for their feedback.

1. Progress so far

We spent time speaking to people to find out what impact Walk About 2016 had. We're pleased that the festival helped inspire new people to join our walking community.

We're looking forward to building on the success of Walk About 2016 to make our festivals bigger and better than ever.

After this year's Festival of Winter Walks we'll be evaluating its success. We'll share the findings with you. We're trying new things with both our festivals, so we'll be capturing what works well and looking at areas where we can improve.

We learned lots following Walk About 2016 and by talking to our volunteers about the festival.

 **150**
new members joined the Ramblers as a result of Walk About

You said

We did

We need to allow much longer lead in time in order for groups, areas and schemes to properly plan for the festivals.

We took the decision to postpone Walk About in 2017 to give you a year to plan a bigger and better Walk About in 2018.

We need to involve groups, areas and schemes more in the planning of the festivals.

We undertook a full evaluation of Walk About 2016 to capture your views and feedback. We have put your views at the heart of the programme and have set up the new volunteer advisory group to shape the direction of festivals.

We need to increase publicity around festivals.

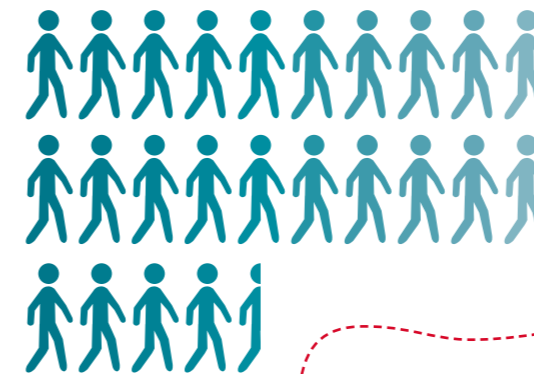
We are investing heavily in developing the festival brand and communications. We know that local promotion is also essential, so we will continue to support you to promote your festival locally.

What we achieved with Walk About in 2016



9 days of walks

24,500 people joined Walk About group walks

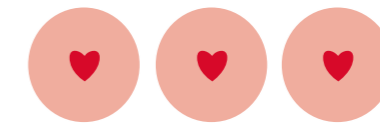


195,000 miles walked by people on group walks

The equivalent of walking



14,469,000 calories burnt



The equivalent of **361,725** jammie dodgers!

'The Ramblers group motivates me to get out of bed on a grey day and be active!'
Rachel, festival walker

4,096 people logged **22,948 miles** of walks using our online tracker



21% of groups report new members joining as a result of the festival



75% of Walk About participants would recommend group walks with the Ramblers



Walking makes Ramblers feel **19%** healthier

'It is always fun to walk with friends and meet new people in the fresh air, looking out for wildlife and wild flowers, and discovering new routes.'
John, festival walker



2. Plans for our festivals

Without your help, we wouldn't be able to grow our festivals, making them bigger and better than ever. By working in partnership with our 26,500 volunteers, 106,000 members and 88,000 scheme participants, we know we can achieve great things.

Here's a taste of what we can achieve together:

1. Encourage members and scheme participants to recruit thousands of new people for Walk About.

A big effort to encourage members and scheme participants to spread the word about festivals will be made in the spring 2018 issue of *Walk* magazine. Imagine if 10% of our membership and scheme participants did this? That would be some 38,800 new people joining us for Walk About.

2. New people join in with our festivals in at least half of our groups and schemes.

During Walk About 2016, 21% of groups reported recruiting new members. Through the Festival of Winter Walks and Walk About, we would like to see 50% of groups and schemes recruiting new walkers.

3. New members. 300–400 new members recruited through our festivals.

With your help and support we can reach more people.



38,800 We could see 38,800 new walkers join us for Walk About if 10% of us brought two new people along to the festival



With our **26,500 volunteers**, **106,000 members** and **88,000 scheme participants**, we can achieve great things.

3. The Festival of Winter Walks

Saturday 23 December 2017
– Sunday 7 January 2018

This year, thanks to generous funding from players of People's Postcode Lottery, we are working to refresh our Festival of Winter Walks brand so we can encourage more people than ever to join us for a winter walk.

We'll be working with a creative agency to create new branding which we can all use to promote the festival. As soon as the branding is ready, we'll share this with you.

The theme of this year's festival will be New Year's resolutions.

We'll be encouraging people to give the gift of walking by joining one of our winter walks during the festival or by purchasing a Ramblers gift membership for family or friends.

And what better way to kick off the New Year than with a resolution to start walking more?

Walking with a group or scheme gives people the chance to make new friends, boost their mood, and get some all important exercise. We're encouraging people to start their resolutions early by attending a walk over the Christmas period. People often join a gym in the New Year, but one month's gym membership can purchase a whole year's subscription to the Ramblers.

The Festival of Winter Walks



4. Walk About

Let's get active

Saturday 26 May – Sunday 3 June 2018

Walking is accessible, free and medically one of the best prescriptions for improving physical and mental health.

We know that long term health conditions are on the rise as a result of inactivity. According to Diabetes UK, diabetes is the fastest growing health threat of our time and the number of people living with the condition since 1996 has more than doubled to over 3 million people in the UK.

This makes walking more important than ever.

Busy lifestyles can make it hard to find time for exercise, but walking can easily be built into everyday life. As Dr Muir Gray points out in his short *Walking Cure* booklet, small steps added each day can make a vital difference to improving health and wellbeing.

So our message to everyone about Walk About 2018 is:

- Walk more, live longer.
- Build more walking into your busy schedule.
- If you're taking your first steps, why not join a short health walk? Or if you're ready to step up, join a Ramblers group walk.
- Above all else: let's get active.

the Ramblers Walk about Britain



Walking is **accessible, free** and one of the **best prescriptions for improving physical and mental health.**

5. How you can help make our festivals a success

Use our festival themes

We would like all areas, groups and schemes to use our themes for the Festival of Winter Walks and Walk About – this will help us build a strong collective identity that will inspire new people to join our walking community during the festivals.

1



2

Hold a social event

Do something different to create a buzz around the festival. Perhaps host a social event to make people feel welcome. We would like each walk held during the festivals to end with a social event, in a manner of your choosing, where new people are made to feel welcome in a fun and friendly atmosphere. This could be as simple as tea, coffee and biscuits at a community venue; or something grander, such as an event with speakers and entertainment. To make this even more exciting, we're encouraging all areas, groups and schemes to run a number of walks during the festivals that finish at one destination at roughly the same time. This would be the perfect chance to hold a fun social event for all walkers, for example a mass picnic. We've seen this work with great success for the popular Herts Area Walk Day, which has been running for five years.

Recruit new volunteers to help

Help us make the festivals bigger and better by recruiting a dedicated volunteer festivals coordinator to help drive your work forward. To help, we've included a template volunteer role description, which you can adapt. Please let us know who you've recruited and pass on their contact details so we can provide additional support and make sure they receive appropriate communications.

3



Hold a **social event** after walks during the festivals and do something **different** that will help **create a buzz and bring new people on board.**

Think about new walkers

Put yourself in the shoes of a new walker when you're developing your festival walks. In order to recruit new people, it's important to think about how you can appeal to new walkers – this could involve putting on shorter, more accessible walks, or creating strong local advertising campaigns linked to the theme that are engaging and inspiring.

4

Help us to measure impact

We need your help to gather data so we can measure the impact our festivals have. This is important so we can let players of People's Postcode Lottery know how their money is making a difference and will allow us to monitor the success of our festivals. This can be as simple as taking a walk register and asking people for their feedback.

5



6. Festivals award and showcase

The sky's the limit when good ideas, creativity and the talents of volunteers are boosted with funding. That's why, thanks to your feedback, we've introduced our new festivals award and showcase funding.

We're inviting areas, groups and schemes to apply for an award of up to £1,000 to organise a special festival event or activity to get more people walking during the Festival of Winter Walks or Walk About.

The funding could be used in all sorts of ways:

- Hiring a community hall for an event that celebrates walking.
- Engaging a local celebrity.
- Running a number of walks to finish at the same place, with a social celebration at the end.
- Producing an eye-catching festivals leaflet to drop across your local area.

Areas, groups and schemes already rely on the time and talents of volunteers for the festivals. We know you come up with lots of great ways to help promote the festivals.

Our festivals award and showcase is all about giving an additional boost to the amazing work that already goes on.

For the Festival of Winter Walks, we will fund **5 local showcase activities** and for Walk About, **12 local showcase activities**.

So what are your ideas? Big or small, we look forward to reading your proposals.

Guidance for applying for the festivals award and showcase, including all deadlines, are available on our website www.ramblers.org.uk/festivalawards.

The local showcases that are successful in securing funding will be shared with all areas, groups and schemes, helping to inspire others to try new things.

We will offer funding up to

£1,000

to give a powerful boost to volunteer-led activities



7. One Team: festivals support

Would you like to receive further support to make our GB walking festivals bigger and better? Then please drop us an email to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com. Let us know what you are planning to do, and how we can help you achieve it.

Here's a summary of some of the support we are making available for areas, groups and schemes.

We'll continue to develop festival resources and respond to your requests, so do keep an eye on the website and get in touch if there's something specific you'd like.

1. Communications and branding

To support your branding and communications work, we will share branding and communication toolkits for Festival of Winter Walks in the autumn and for Walk About in the winter, which will include:

- Template posters and flyers, which you can adapt and then print.
- Template press releases.

As well as providing you with communication tools to support your festivals work locally, we are undertaking a range of work that will support publicity and help recruit new people, including:

- For a week in December we will be featured as the People's Postcode Lottery charity of the week. We'll be making a buzz around this and will use it as an opportunity to let more people know about our festivals.
- We will be creating a range of graphics and templates to help support publicity around the festivals, that you can use and share.





2. Festivals award and showcase

A key part of the role of Ramblers staff is in capturing, showcasing and sharing models of good practice around festivals. We'll be sharing case studies to help inspire new ideas. The toolkits will showcase some of the best ideas and approaches out there and be made available for all areas, groups and schemes.

Once we've handed out the awards, we will look at ways to share good practice.



3. Getting more people walking with the Ramblers

We have a dedicated membership acquisitions officer, whose role is to work with you to help turn walkers into regular participants in our member and non-member programmes (e.g. Walking for Health schemes and Let's Walk Cymru).



4. Telephone support

We appreciate there will be situations where you'd like to speak to a member of staff about festivals. We'd love to hear from you.

We would really like to work as one team. If you'd like further information or advice please get in touch.

Call 020 7339 8537 or email volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com

Do you believe in working together and wish to receive further support to make the most of our GB walking festivals?

Then please drop us an email to volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com. Let us know what you are planning to do, and how we can help you achieve it.

8. Next steps

Now is a really good time to start thinking about what you'd like to do as part of Festival of Winter Walks and Walk About. You may want to plot some ideas within your group and start discussing your festival plans. At all times, we're here to help. The GB walking festivals advisory group will continue to meet and help ensure your views are at the heart of what we do.

Together as one team: let's make it happen.

Dates	Action
Sunday 20 August 2017	Festivals award and showcase. Deadline for Festival of Winter Walks awards.
Tuesday 29 August 2017	Decisions on awards for Festival of Winter Walks.
Sunday 24 September 2017	Festivals award and showcase. Deadline for Walk About awards.
Monday 2 October 2017	Decisions on awards for Walk About.
October - 22 December 2017	Preparations and partnership work to prepare for Festival of Winter Walks, including sharing toolkits and other support resources.
Saturday 23 December - Sunday 7 January 2017	Festival of Winter Walks.
January - May 2018	Preparations and partnership work to prepare for Walk About, including sharing toolkits and other support resources.
End of March 2018	2017 impact report delivered to People's Postcode Lottery.
Saturday 26 May - Sunday 3 June 2018	Walk About.
July - End of September 2018	Full evaluation of walking festivals, capturing both the Festival of Winter Walks and Walk About.

We are **One Team**,
inspiring thousands
of new people to
join our fantastic
walking community
through festivals.

**Call 020 7339 8537 or email
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