

Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Report for 2024 AGM

RWW Step Out Sheffield hosts walks at 25 sites across the city of Sheffield every week.

Walks 1,172 walks were enjoyed by 18,338 people.

Training 3 training sessions held. 20 people trained and 18 continue to volunteer.

Volunteer losses Sadly, 3 active volunteers and 3 retired VWLs died this year.

Current Volunteer numbers The total number of active volunteers is now 120, compared to 107 last year. Our two 90 years olds are still going strong! 8 volunteers have each now provided over 20 years of service and a further 7 will receive their 10-years' service award this year.

Accidents and Incidents. – Two accidents were reported to Ramblers Wellbeing walks. A safeguarding incident and a less severe accident were also recorded but not reported to Ramblers.

Sue Lee

Volunteer Walk Leader and RWW Step Out Sheffield Coordinator (08.04.24)

It is now eight years since we became a self-managed scheme. Becoming a Ramblers Wellbeing Walks partner three years ago has not made any difference to the way we deliver and manage our walks on the ground although there were a few hiccoughs initially due to Ramblers trying, unsuccessfully, to introduce electronic registration before either of us was ready. The cornerstones of our operation remain the same, namely:

- We are a non-discriminatory group - our walks are open to all and accessible to all so far as possible given Sheffield's topography.
- All our walks are led by trained leaders easily identified by their hi viz jackets.
- We usually offer more than one walk at each locality to accommodate all levels of ability with the longest walk lasting between 45 and 75 minutes.

We produced a new walks programme leaflet and launched a big publicity campaign which resulted in an increase in walker numbers despite us experiencing the wettest autumn on record. We worked with Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) to help develop a new electronic volunteer recruitment platform and consequently recruited more volunteers from outside the walks. RWW Step Out Sheffield joined the Sheffield Walking Forum to further promote our walks and, were subsequently invited to provide a 'walkshop' at the national Walking Forum which was held in Sheffield in March 2024. This helped raise our profile nationally.

We maintained our links with the University by hosting 5 medical students and 2 psychology students during the course of the year.

We hosted Ed Clancy, OBE, the South Yorkshire Active Travel Commissioner on a walk and he now actively promotes our walks within the SY Mayoral Authority. A promotional video is soon to be launched in which our walks feature.

In the summer of 2024, we'll be celebrating 25 years of walking. However, if we are to continue for a further 25 years it is essential that we futureproof our service by becoming a charity.

Unofficial report – not for minuting.

Whilst on the whole our walks are running really well, we do occasionally have staffing issues on walks due to illnesses and holidays. Two walks in particular are going through a tough time at present. One is Bolehills on a Monday morning, and the other is Endcliffe Park on a Tuesday afternoon. If anyone can help at either of these walks even occasionally, please get in touch with me in the first instance.

A huge thank you to all of you for helping to make my life easier.

In particular – passing on the registration forms of new walkers is much better and means I can update registers as we go rather than trying to revise 25 registers in one go at the end of each quarter. So, thank you for that. Also, thank you for letting me know in advance if your walk is being cancelled for any reason at all. As more and more people search on-line for information about walks, keeping the websites up to date is vitally important.

The quarterly results for 23-24 were very interesting. As you know, we had a miserable year weather-wise but in spite of this walker attendances remained at approximately 18.5 thousand across the year and remarkably, on 4 walks, the quarterly average number of walkers increased across all quarters. These walks were Ecclesfield, Grenoside, Norfolk Park, with a little help from psychology students who attended their walk in the final quarter, and Richmond. As far as I know this is the first time this has happened.

Since the last AGM Handsworth, Hillsborough, and Totley have celebrated their 20th anniversaries and Stockbridge will be joining them shortly. Firth Park, Grenoside, Ecclesfield, Norfolk Park and Woodhouse have already passed that landmark and this means that an increasing number of volunteers and walkers have now supported us for at least 20 years which is very commendable and underscores why our walks are so successful. People come for the companionship and the support that our walks provide for walkers and leaders alike. You are all doing a wonderful job, thank you so much.

While I'm on my feet I'd also like to thank the Committee for the administrative work they do. This is the 8th AGM of Step Out Sheffield so those of you who were volunteering when we became self-managed have had seven opportunities so far to join the administrative team to help manage one of the largest RWW walking schemes in the country. It is a disappointing fact that, apart from the first year, we have had vacancies on the Committee each year – equally it is understandable. Those of us who give our time to attend Committee meetings are acutely aware that we must make decisions in the best interest of the group as a whole and unfortunately, because we are a very big group (120+ volunteers) we can't hope to please all the people all the time. However, I'd just like to say a huge thank you to all the Committee for their work on behalf of Step Out Sheffield with particular thanks to Kath who has done an awesome job with the minutes and to Francis who very kindly stepped up as transitional Chair when Dorian left us very suddenly last autumn. And finally, if anyone would like to join the committee to help with the smooth running of our scheme – there will be another opportunity for you to step up later in this meeting. Please don't be shy.