



Dereham Walkers are Welcome

13 February 2018

New and expanded free *Dereham walks* pack published



Using the public rights of way in and around Dereham

How to use this guide

Dereham Walkers are Welcome offers you the warmest of welcomes to walking in our town. We have surveyed the fourteen suggested walks in this pack, and walk them regularly to ensure they are in good order. In total, they cover almost every public right of way within the town, plus a number of tracks which are not yet rights of way, but are in process of being established. In addition, many of the walks use paths from adjoining parishes, but all can be started and ended in Dereham. The directions and maps refer to the rights of way by their official numbers, though you won't see these on the signs anywhere. The walks have been carefully checked to make sure the directions are clear, and every effort has been made to ensure that all information is correct at the time of writing, but things can change, so you are urged to make your own judgements - do not follow the directions without thought.

Note: The main directions are shown in ordinary type; notes in italics give additional information or indicate short cuts, but are not part of the walk.

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Dereham Walkers are Welcome has just delivered the first boxes of a new and expanded pack of walks to the Library.



[photo 876 - Ken Hawkins of Dereham Walkers are Welcome delivering the packs]

Back in 2015, Dereham Town Council secured a grant from Breckland District Council for preparing 3000 packs of *Dereham Walks* guides - each free pack holding 4 walks from the town centre. Over the next 18 months, all of those packs were taken, leaving the Library constantly asking when more were going to be available.

The original walks were prepared by the Council's volunteer Footpath Warden, Ken Hawkins, who had gone on to be involved in getting *Walkers are Welcome*¹ accreditation for Dereham. Dereham Walkers are Welcome, accredited in May 2016, has since organised a number of successful public walks, many in association

with other local organisations including Dereham Windmill and the Mid-Norfolk Railway. Walks have traditionally ended with a hot drink and a piece of cake, bringing walkers to local businesses including *New Flavours*, *Yaxham Waters* and *The George Hotel*. Other businesses in the town have also recognised the value of welcoming walkers and some 30 display *Walkers are Welcome* stickers in their doors and windows.

Some of the walks used Konect services to 'bus out, walk back', to Mattishall or North Elmham, or the Mid-Norfolk Railway to 'train out, walk back' to Thuxton or Yaxham.

Dereham Walkers are Welcome has also spent time in clearing overgrown vegetation and fallen trees from local paths, sometime leaving an 'Improved for you by Dereham Walkers are Welcome' plaque as a mark of its work; on occasions, this work has been undertaken jointly with The Ramblers or The Conservation Volunteers. A further improvement has been made by the collection of litter from some paths.

As well as arranging walks and undertaking path maintenance, work was going on to update the walks pack and expand it to 14 walks. All the walks - the original 4 and the 10 new ones - can be reached from the town centre. Some require a short car or bus journey to a start point, while 3 are 'train out, walk back' using the Mid-Norfolk Railway, and 4 are 'bus out, walk back' on Konect bus services.

The new packs are now available in the Library, where they have been welcomed by the staff, to meet the steady stream of requests. Margaret Cranmer, Library Manager, said “These walk guides will be well received by the people of Dereham and complement our Well Being and Healthy Libraries promotion.” She added “There have been so many people asking for them”, echoed by library worker Biggi Haebe who said “We have been looking forward to these, and so have a lot of people.”



[photo 868 - Margaret Cranmer of the Library, with Catherine Hawkins and Sue Rothwell from Dereham Walkers are Welcome, examine the new packs]



[photo 873 - the packs on display]

Dereham Walkers are Welcome is also working with other locations in the town to increase the number of places where the packs can be collected. They are entirely free, thanks to grants from Dereham Town Council and Tesco's *Bags of Help* fund (and to all the people who voted their support in Tesco last year).

All of the walks are also available on the Dereham Walkers are Welcome website - www.DerehamWaW.org.uk.

NOTE

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 celebrated its 10th anniversary last 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;
- it had helped to maintain thousands of miles of walking routes;
- its walking festivals represented over 100 days per annum, totalling over 500 walks and involving over 7,000 people each year;
- it had created twenty-two different types of walks;
- there were over 1,000 Walkers are Welcome HERE stickers displayed in retail and non-retail outlets across the country;
- it had made extensive use of social media to help promote walks and other related activities;
- over 70% of WaW towns and villages had their own websites;
- the use of public transport had been actively promoted, and made good use of both bus and rail; and
- local economies had earned substantial sums from local walkers and visitors who use WaW routes and attended walking festivals.