

Application for full *Walkers are Welcome* status - Dereham, Norfolk

Please complete the following form, and send it electronically to secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk

The signed hard copy application form and any additional material should be sent to the *Walkers are Welcome* Treasurer, Geoff Kitt, c/o Glendorch, Sidmount Avenue, Moffat, DG10 9BS

Date of Provisional Membership and amount: 21 August 2015, £55

1. **Name of town/village:** Dereham
2. **Population:** 17,800
3. **Name of the organisation coordinating the WaW initiative (steering group etc):**
Dereham Walkers are Welcome
4. **Please list the people working on your WaW steering group and their position held, plus a few words on what area of interest they represent and if they are walkers:**

name	position	walker?	interest
Tim Birt	IT	walker	interested individual, local businessman
Neil Cliff		walker	U3A
Stefan Clifford			Breckland District Council
Ken Hawkins	Secretary	walker	interested individual, Footpath Warden Dereham Town Council
Andrew Middleton			Norfolk County Council
Kate Millbank		runner	Councillor, Dereham Town Council
Sue Rothwell		walker	interested individual, U3A
Dorothy Sneesby	Treasurer	walker	interested individual
Martin Sneesby		walker	interested individual
Jean Stratford			interested individual, Girlguiding

5. **Please give the names of two people who will be WaW contacts.**
 - a) Ken Hawkins
 - b) Dorothy Sneesby
6. **Address:** 26 Hillfields, Dereham NR19 1UE
7. **Phone:** 01362 691455
8. **Email:** dtc.fpwarden@talktalk.net
9. **Website address:** DerehamWaW.org.uk (in preparation, name acquired)

Please indicate briefly below how you believe you have met the six criteria. (If you wish, you can send your answers on a separate sheet of paper.)

10. **How have you demonstrated popular local support for becoming a WaW community?**
 - We have customised the *Walkers are Welcome* form and obtained 957 signatures.
 - Our application is endorsed by a number of community bodies in Dereham - Dereham Antiquarian Society, Dereham Business Forum, Dereham Society,

Dereham U3A, Dereham Windmill and Mid Norfolk Railway. Specific comments are

- Dereham Antiquarian Society: “The Dereham Antiquarian Society is very pleased to support the bid to make Dereham a ‘Walkers Are Welcome’ town. We have had a very good response from the public visiting Bishop Bonner’s Cottage Museum who had heard about the bid and they have shown their support by signing the survey form. Our visitors have also eagerly snapped up the pack of town and district walk leaflets published by you last summer. In the past our Society helped publish a Heritage Trail leaflet for the town, that is now out of print, we hope that we can work with you to develop a new trail that could be part of the Walkers Are Welcome scheme for the town. We have a wonderful town surrounded by lovely countryside rich with history and wildlife this scheme will be a great help in making it more accessible to everyone.”
- Dereham Business Forum: “Dereham Business Forum supports Dereham becoming a ‘Walkers are Welcome’ Town. Not only does Dereham have numerous rural footpaths for people to enjoy, but this market town also makes for enjoyable walking, with ample places of interest to be noted, such as historic Bishop Bonner’s Cottage and the spring of Saint Withburga. The town also has an abundance of welcoming hostelrys which can provide walkers with anything from a quick drink to a hearty meal or an overnight stay. The Walkers are Welcome scheme would assist in attracting people to Dereham and thus contribute to the local economy. With a plentiful number of local businesses in this picturesque market town, the Dereham Business Forum believes that the Walkers are Welcome Scheme would help to improve the sustainability of Dereham and the surrounding villages.”
- Dereham U3A: “I am certainly happy to support the proposal for Dereham to become a Walkers are Welcome town. This initiative, which would encourage people to enjoy walking in and around the town, is important, not just for health and for the local economy. Promoting the increased usage of public rights of way for visitors to the town will necessitate - and justify - keeping paths well signed, in a good state and free from obstructions, benefits not only for visitors but also for local residents - including U3A walkers.”
- Mid Norfolk Railway: “The Mid-Norfolk Railway is proud to support Dereham as a Walkers are Welcome town. We are delighted to hold a supply of the ‘Walks Around Dereham’ leaflet and make them available to all our visitors in the hope that a heritage train journey will be just the start of a more comprehensive visit to our town.”
- Funding for the pack of *Dereham Walks* guides was awarded by Breckland District Council on the basis of a public voting process; we see this support, and the reception that the guides have had from people (some 2000 packs distributed to date), as evidence of local support.

11. How have you demonstrated that there is official endorsement from your local council for WaW status?

- Our application is endorsed by all levels of government in Norfolk - Norfolk County Council, Breckland District Council and Dereham Town Council; Dereham Town Council town councillors also requested and then participated in five walks covering all public rights of way in the town during 2014.
- Norfolk County Council is promoting *Walkers are Welcome* throughout the county, and is represented on our Committee. It has also offered a small grant to assist the application process. Norfolk County Council (Norfolk Trails Team) formally endorses the Dereham Walkers are Welcome scheme and has made the

following statement. “Norfolk Trails manages 1200 miles of walking, cycling and bridle way routes around Norfolk, including the Wensum Way near Dereham. We are committed to providing well managed and maintained walking routes and work closely with local communities and volunteers to help maintain, promote and improve our the trails, including support for Walkers are Welcomes schemes around the county (e.g. Cromer WAW). Walking is an important economic driver in rural areas and a coordinated community led approach is the perfect way to help these communities to promote themselves to the wider market via this scheme. We can offer advice on marketing and training of volunteers to help Dereham become a successful WAW town.”

- Breckland District Council has offered support and publicity as we move towards launching *Walkers are Welcome* in Dereham. Lynda Turner, the Council’s Executive Member for Place, has provided the following statement. “At Breckland Council we have put on record through our corporate plan a commitment to working with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of all of our residents, and in particular, to support older people to remain active and participative within the community. ‘Walking’ is an activity that can help us to achieve all of the above, and as such any work undertaken that helps to both signpost and encourage our residents and visitors alike towards accessing the footpaths that link the parishes of our beautiful district can only be something that we as a council fully endorse. Therefore, on behalf of Breckland Council, I’d like to express our full support of the Dereham ‘Walkers are Welcome’ Application.”
- Dereham Town Council has formally endorsed our application and paid for our provisional membership. On 9 June 2015, the Town Council agreed that the Council subscribe to Walkers are Welcome from 2015. On 11 August 2015, the Town Council agreed that Councillor K Millbank would become a committee member for Walkers are Welcome. A statement from Kate reads as follows. “It is my sincere pleasure to write this in support of the Dereham ‘Walkers are Welcome’ bid. Ken Hawkins has worked tirelessly to promote the wonderful array of footpaths in and around Dereham, taking groups of councillors and other interested parties on walks to see for themselves where work was needed and paths needed to be reinstated etc, ensuring that work is followed up by the councils involved and going around himself with others clearing paths. This work has promoted the well-being of locals as well as putting Dereham on the map for walkers and tourists alike. Now that a Walkers are Welcome committee has been set up things are moving forward a pace, the support from the people of Dereham has been established with the gaining of the signatures needed and various events planned including the official launch as soon as accreditation has been received. My fellow Town Councillors and I are all in agreement in our support for this project.”

12. What will you do to ensure that your community adequately markets its status as a WaW town/village?

- The *Walkers are Welcome* initiative has been publicised through the Dereham Business Forum, and is working with other groups keen to market the town for tourism under the title *Visit Dereham*. The *Dereham Walks* guide features in the leaflet being produced.
- Once accredited, it is planned to hold a ‘launch’ event as a public meeting, to promote and explain *Walkers are Welcome* and seek more members of the Committee.
- We will maintain contact with the Eastern Daily Press (EDP) and Dereham Times (part of the same group), which has an office in Dereham and is already stocking the *Dereham Walks* guides.

- We will then work with Business Forum and *Visit Dereham* colleagues to ensure that the *Walkers are Welcome* status features wherever appropriate in publicity for the town.
- We will include *Walkers are Welcome* logos on future walk guides (hard copy and electronic).
- We will seek to have the *Walkers are Welcome* logo on all roadside 'Dereham' signs at the town boundaries.
- We will investigate attendance at Dereham Carnival and/or other events.

13. What have you done, and what will you do in future, to ensure that facilities for walkers are available locally and are maintained in good condition?

- The Footpath Warden walks all paths several times a year.
- The Footpath Warden reports to each meeting of Dereham Town Council's Heritage & Open Spaces Committee, which meets 5 times a year.
- In 2015, funding of £1000 was obtained via Dereham Town Council, from Breckland District Council, for *InterACTIVE Walking*, a project to increase local activity. This money enabled the publication of a pack of *Dereham Walks* Guides (4 walks) - 3000 hard copies, also available on line - which encourage reporting of difficulties as well as general feedback.
- The Footpath Warden, with support from others, undertakes appropriate maintenance to keep paths open, and reports all problems to Norfolk County Council as Highways Authority.
- One restricted byway which had been unavailable for some years because of severe growth of trees and bushes was cleared by a trio comprising the former Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Footpath Warden, the Town Clerk having gained the consent of the landowner for the work.
- Some of the Committee are members of The Ramblers and one of them is actively working with Norfolk County Council and other stakeholders to promote maintenance work by volunteers across the county; it is anticipated that Dereham will benefit from this work.

14. How are you promoting usage of public transport?

- The pack of *Dereham Walks* guides includes information about getting to Dereham using public transport.
- One of the walks describes how the local bus service can be used to shorten the walking route if desired (the comparative paucity of bus services in the area preclude many opportunities to use public transport as part of the local walks).
- A further walk guide is planned to link with the Mid Norfolk Railway, using a 'train out, walk/cycle back' approach.
- A further walk guide is planned which uses a 'bus out, walk back' approach; we plan to invite the local bus service operator Konect to sponsor this.

15. How do you intend to ensure that your community maintains its interest in WaW status in the longer term? How will you contribute to the growth of the WaW Towns Network?

- Current work will continue - activity of the Footpath Warden, reporting processes, maintenance work, etc.
- A website is in preparation, to be launched after accreditation is received.
- Further walks are being considered to add to the *Dereham Walks* guides - a town walk (proposed liaison with Dereham Antiquarians which produced such a guide some years ago), and walks linked to use of the Mid Norfolk Railway service which operates between Dereham and Wymondham.

- Consideration will be given to holding public walks from time to time.
- Contact has already been made with the two other active *Walkers are Welcome* towns in Norfolk (Aylsham and Cromer), and these contacts will be maintained, and if possible extended to develop a Norfolk WaW forum.
- Opportunities to participate in county wide walking festivals and similar events will be taken wherever possible.
- National developments will be monitored, and opportunities to participate will be taken up where appropriate.
- Further supporters will be identified at and following the public meeting planned for the launch of *Walkers are Welcome* after accreditation is received.

Please also answer these two questions:

16. Please summarise in a paragraph what makes your community special for walkers:

- Dereham is located in the centre of Norfolk, with good public transport and road links within and beyond the county. The First express bus X1 connects Peterborough to Lowestoft via Dereham and other towns along the A47. More locally, Konect buses run to outlying towns and villages, while the Mid Norfolk Railway provides a link to Wymondham and the national rail network. Being central, virtually anywhere in the county can be reached within an hour by car, so giving access to the extensive and popular coastline, as well as the Peddars' Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail and the ever increasing Norfolk Trails network. Dereham lies just south of the Nar Valley Way and the Wensum Way, both of which are Norfolk Trails, and has a well signposted connection to them at Gressenhall. Dereham itself offers a good range of different types of public walking routes, including many footpaths and restricted byways, though most are apparently little known to judge by the positive reactions of people to the *Dereham Walks* guides. These include urban routes through the town, stream side paths across water meadows and field edge paths out in the country. Dereham also has some excellent open spaces, most notably the very well used Neatherd Moor, which is fed by a number of adjacent restricted byways. The town itself has all the services you would expect of a market town - shops, cafés and other eating places, as well as interesting places to visit (such as Dereham Windmill, the Mid Norfolk Railway and Bishop Bonner's Cottage and Museum).

17. Please advise us of any proposed WaW launch or other forthcoming events linked to your application for WaW status.

- to be arranged once accreditation is achieved, current target June 2016.

IMPORTANT: YOU SHOULD NOT PROMOTE OR MARKET YOUR LAUNCH UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN AWARDED WaW STATUS. REMEMBER THAT THE COMMITTEE MEETS ONCE A MONTH – IT MAY THEREFORE BE AT LEAST A MONTH BEFORE YOU HEAR BACK FROM US.

18. For website purposes, we will require a high resolution photograph, website and contact details together with 90 words describing your town (please focus on walkers) that you would like entered when accredited.

- photograph attached. The caption should read as follows. Clockwise from top left: Dereham Windmill; Dereham Footpath 19; Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum; Crossing the Mid Norfolk Railway; The former Jolly Farmers' pub
- 90 words: Dereham is a substantial market town located in the centre of Norfolk, with good bus and road links within and beyond the county. Close by are the Nar Valley Way and the Wensum Way, while The Peddars' Way is only a little further

and the Norfolk Coast Path is within an hour's car travel. Dereham itself has a full range of services - shops, cafés and other eating places - as well as interesting places to visit (such as Dereham Windmill, the Mid Norfolk Railway and Bishop Bonner's Cottage and Museum).

Name of Mentor: Helen Pitman **Have they endorsed your application:** yes
Helen has said "Thanks for the update Ken. This, in my opinion, makes the application even stronger for accreditation and demonstrates a real commitment from townsfolk for Dereham to become a Walkers are Welcome town."

This form should be signed by the named contact and by the Chair or Secretary of the coordinating organisation

Signature of named contact: Ken Hawkins (electronic)

Position: Secretary

Second signature: Dorothy Sneesby (electronic)

Position: Treasurer

Date: 27 April 2016