



Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership Walkers Are Welcome Accreditation

What is Walkers Are Welcome?

Walkers Are Welcome is a nationwide initiative launched in 2007 to be 'welcoming to walkers'. There are more than 100 accredited Towns and Villages and the scheme has assisted with their communities' economic, physical, health and mental well-being through walking.

The scheme encourages towns and villages to:

- Be attractive destinations for walkers providing 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 developed, maintained, improved and well signposted
- Contribute to local tourism plans business growth and regeneration strategies
- To be nationally and internationally recognised as the best source for walkers looking for excellent locations for walking trips and holidays in the UK
- Promote the health benefits of walking and increase participation from all sections of the community
- Encourage the use of public transport

To achieve accreditation, we have to:

- Demonstrate popular local support from the community and local businesses for the concept** – evidence of signatures of support from 5% of the population, businesses and local organisations.
- Demonstrate that the local council formally endorses the application for Walkers are Welcome status** – This can be demonstrated by the parish councils passing a resolution in support, being represented on the steering group, and making a financial contribution where possible.
- Demonstrate a commitment that the local public path network will be maintained in good condition** – For example, this could be: ensuring that the local footpaths are walked at least once per year; that any problems are reported to the relevant authority/organisation; that efforts are taken to make improvements and extend the opportunities for walking; etc.
- Demonstrate that there is adequate marketing of the town's Walkers are Welcome status** – For example, signs/map in the centre of villages advising casual visitors of walks they can undertake; waymarked walks starting from town centre; leaflets readily available; local shops encouraged to display **WALKERS ARE WELCOME HERE** stickers.
- Demonstrate how the town encourages the use of public transport for walking activities** – This can be demonstrated, for example, by including clear public transport advice on marketing leaflets or lobbying for improvements.
- Demonstrate the mechanisms in place to maintain Walkers are Welcome status.** This can be demonstrated through having a well-balanced and committed WALKERS ARE WELCOME steering group from within the community



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What is in scope for Pewsey & The Vale Walkers Are Welcome?

We will (at least) annually check the walking routes that we promote – the 18 walking leaflets from the Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership, 9 walking leaflets from Bedwyn Footpaths Group and the Pewsey Vale circular route from the itineraries project. Additionally, we may include the walking routes from Crown & Anchor in Ham and the King Alfred Trail in Pewsey.

We will report any issues we find to Parish Councils. We will replace or add waymarkers, with the landowners' permissions as and when required.

We will encourage the development of local walking groups to help in the maintenance of the rights of way.

We will promote the Walkers Are Welcome accreditation, should we achieve it.

We will encourage pubs, accommodation providers, cafes, shops and other organisations to provide facilities for walkers.

Current Status:

We are well positioned to achieve accreditation:

- We have banking and insurance provided through PCAP
- We are in contact with Parish Councils and Wiltshire Council through PCAP
- We have contacts across the Vale businesses through PVTP
- We have the ability to publicise Walkers Are Welcome through PVTP
- We have an enthusiastic Steering Group

We are aiming to achieve this accreditation by mid-2021.

Benefits:

- Better maintenance of the rights of way network
- Help for Parish Councils to meet their responsibilities for the rights of way network
- Improved quality of walking for locals and visitors
- Publicity for the Vale
- Help with our economic recovery after Covid
- Support our residents' health and wellbeing by promoting walking
- Support our public transport system through more use of trains and buses