

Case Study: Healthy Walks in Arun

Programme Code: ARUN/WFH

Overview:

Healthy Walks in Arun is a Freedom Leisure scheme. The programme consists of 8 different walks, led by 36 volunteer walk leaders across the district, with some months seeing over 700 attendances. The walks are designed to combat social isolation, encourage sedentary people to move more, build confidence, make friends and improve an individual's health and wellbeing. All walks are free of charge and do not need to be pre-booked.

Our walking scheme strives to be inclusive. We have shorter and longer routes to help participants progress. Within the Littlehampton Walk, a wheelchair friendly route is incorporated.

Although a great way to improve physical and mental health, many people also come along for the social aspect. Many additional events have been organised by the leaders off the back of the walks, including meals out, quiz nights to raise money for charity and regular trips to the theatre. The walks offer people so much and play a vital part in their livelihood.

Pre-Covid, our walking programme was recognised on a county level. We are incredibly proud of our Healthy Walks in Arun volunteer walk leader Sian Fletcher, who won the Active Champion award at the Active Sussex Sports Awards. Sian has been volunteering with us for 10 years and has made a phenomenal impact on the community, not only running the Ferring walk each week with attendances that reach over 60 people but constantly going above and beyond, organising new walks for her groups, arranging walking holidays and raising copious amounts of money for charity. Sian is a true pillar of the Arun Community!

Within Arun, we have a Walk Coordinator to manage the programme itself but the delivery is carried out solely by volunteers. They do the most incredible job. An example of their dedication is as follows. We started one of our walks in Rustington 7 years ago, at the beginning we had between 10-15 walkers each week. This has now grown to 40-50 with a record number of 56 participants attending in July. Much of this is down to the six leader's hard work of building up a fantastic rapport and maintaining relationships with current walkers, keeping them coming back week after week but also being a huge driving force behind continuously promoting the walk and welcoming new participants.

Feedback:

"I joined the walking programme when my husband passed away. I had become very lonely and needed something to help me find my confidence again." Current Walker

"The walks have given me a new lease of life, I love the walking, the fantastic friends I have made and the extra social events. I don't know where I would be without my walks. The leaders are absolutely fantastic and a credit to Freedom Leisure and Healthy Walks in Arun" - Current Walker

Outcomes:

- 7 weekly walks
- 3 monthly walks
- 2 inclusive walks (wheelchair and buggy friendly)
- Specially organised walks with the South Downs Rangers
- 36 volunteer walk leaders
- 700+ attendances per month



Themes of activity completed (tick appropriate box):

Active Sport

Active Young People

Active Ageing

Active Communities

Active Health

Active Workforce

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