

walk notts festival

01-31 MAY 2025

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01-31 MAY 2025

Our Aim

To **promote walking and wheeling initiatives and activities across Nottingham City and County** during National Walking Month; helping to encourage residents and organisations to integrate walking and wheeling into their strategies, policies, practices and daily lives.

Our Approach Extensive promotion; engagement with partner networks and communities; celebrating what's already happening; encouraging new activities; sharing stories:

Extensive Promotion

- ▶ **Reaching people in their homes** through local TV and Radio (Notts TV, Radio Nottingham), NG Magazines, and Active Notts social media (Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn).
- ▶ **Through Partnership Networks** Presentations to community engagement group meetings, and via email through partner networks
- ▶ **In-person at community venues in priority areas.**

Highlighting Existing Initiatives

- ▶ The Walk Notts website and Active Notts social media showcased existing walking/wheeling groups, routes, and initiatives, creating a central hub of information.

Encouraging Participation in New Initiatives

- ▶ Partner organisations, family hubs, schools, community groups, and residents were actively encouraged to either integrate walking/wheeling into their existing activities or organise new, special events.

Sharing and Learning

- ▶ Outcomes and experiences from the festival were shared widely through networks and social media. A crucial part of the approach involved gathering insights, reflecting on what happened, and using these learnings to inform future steps and influence policy.



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Festival Highlights: What Happened?

Significant reach and engagement across Nottingham City and County

Publicity Reach Widespread coverage in digital, print and broadcast media; community networks; and 'in-person' presence:

Print & Broadcast

- ▶ **69,000 people** were reached via NG magazines.
- ▶ Radio Nottingham reached an estimated **962,000 listeners***
- ▶ Notts TV reached **300,000 viewers***

* average monthly audience; source Google

Digital Presence

- ▶ **1,444 clicks** on the Walk Notts website
- ▶ **29.6k views** and **595 content interactions** on Active Notts Facebook
- ▶ **5.5k views** with **283 content interactions** on Instagram
- ▶ **5044 LinkedIn impressions** from posts about the festival.

Community Networks

- ▶ Thousands of people and groups were engaged through direct meetings and a wide range of social media channels and newsletters from partners such as the Tackling Loneliness Collaborative, various Local Design Teams, Local Council and University communications, Family Hubs, GP surgeries, and health organisations like Healthwatch and Double Impact.

Public Events

- ▶ The Walk Notts team had a physical presence at major local events, including the Notts County Show (**16,500 attendees**), the Feel Good Festival (**2,300 attendees**), and The Green Hustle, allowing for direct interaction with the public.



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Festival Engagement & Participation

Numerous activities and community involvement:



Enabling Fund

- ▶ **27 community and voluntary groups** received support from the Enabling Fund, helping them to organise activities.

Programme of Events

- ▶ The official Walk Notts Festival Programme featured **33 regular walks** and **67 special events**, with many other unlisted walking meetings and special interest walks also taking place.

Walk Leader Training

- ▶ **8 new Walk Leaders** were trained by Ridewise, enhancing local capacity.

Team Support

- ▶ **The Walk Notts Team actively attended and supported a significant number of walks** throughout May, strengthening community relationships and fostering a sense of shared purpose.



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Increase in steps

Many people counted their steps during the festival showing a tangible increase in movement

Event-Specific Averages:

- ▶ Participants at the Notts County Show averaged **6,000 steps per person**.
- ▶ The Killisick Friendship group averaged **656 steps per person**.
- ▶ Men and Women That Matter walk achieved **5,024 steps per person**.
- ▶ Ramblers Wellbeing walks recorded **2,112 steps** (short walk) and **2,768 steps** (longer walk).
- ▶ A Health Inequalities Oversight Partnership meeting incorporated a walk of **1,533 steps per person**.

Long-Distance Challenges

- ▶ One day of the Walk Notts with Transforming Notts Together (TNT) journey saw participants walk an impressive **23,000 steps per person**.

Team Challenges:

- ▶ The Active Partnership Team collectively walked a staggering **6,384,580 steps** virtually from Newcastle to Kuwait.
- ▶ The Healthwatch Team also walked a significant **2,124,441 steps**, integrating walking meetings into their routine.
- ▶ Bassetlaw CVS (BCVS) walked **5,881,965 steps** during May



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New Infrastructure & Resources

The festival prompted the development and launch of new infrastructure and supportive resources

Physical Enhancements

- ▶ Installation of **new park benches**.
- ▶ Creation of **new Nature and Heritage Trails in parks**.
- ▶ New trails such as the **Balderton Trail** and **Trent Vale Trail** were promoted.
- ▶ Neighbourhood scans of walkable communities were planned and an Accessibility Audit filmed.

Digital & Informational Tools

- ▶ A **Walk Notts report** was incorporated into the Rapid Health Impact Assessment Framework.
- ▶ A **Walk Notts leaflet** for Guided and Wellbeing walks was developed.
- ▶ The **Walk Notts Website** was developed, in partnership with Notts Guided Walks, serving as a central information hub.

Networking

- ▶ An informal **National Walking Voices network** was established to share learning across diverse projects.



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Diverse Activities & Inclusivity

The festival showcased a wide range of walking and wheeling activities, designed to appeal to diverse interests and abilities

Flagship Journeys

- ▶ The Walk Notts with TNT 15-day walk, covering 76 miles and visiting 92 Places of Welcome across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, highlighting community support.

Inspired Initiatives

- ▶ **Inclusive Recovery Cities** incorporated walking into their inaugural celebrations, leading to the training of walk champions within their recovery networks. **Over 45 people** participated in parts of routes from Clifton and Bulwell to the Arboretum.

Variety of Themed Walks:

- ▶ Including Bat, Bird, Bug, Foraging, Alphabet, Bear Hunt, Prayer, Forest Bathing, Litter Picking, Heritage, Bluebell, Art in Nature, Obstacle, Buggy, Treasure Hunt, Mindfulness, Nordic Walking, Dog walks, Netwalks, Step Challenges, Walk to School, and the engaging Walk Notts Bingo Cards.

Health support walks

- ▶ **Cancer, Heart, Mental Health and Menopause Peer support groups** integrated walking into their activities

Broad Participation

- ▶ The festival successfully engaged a wide spectrum of the community, including Family Hubs, Schools, University Students, CVSs, Local Design Teams, Councillors, various Mental Health, Heart, and Cancer Support Groups, Memory Cafes, Facebook Groups, Friendship Clubs, Community Groups and Hubs, Sherwood Forest Community Trust, Place Based Partnerships, Leisure Centres, Libraries, Ramblers, Borough and District Councils, GP practices, and Ramblers Wellbeing Walks. **Efforts were made to involve diverse age groups, culturally diverse communities, and individuals living with disabilities or long-term health conditions.**



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Key Learnings - What Worked Well

The festival provided valuable insights to enable more effective promotion of walking and wheeling. What worked well overall:

Incentive:

The Festival provided a reason for organisations and individuals to integrate walking and wheeling into their work practices and daily lives.

Partner Collaboration:

Partners worked together together to support the Festival promoting it through their networks and collaborating on new initiatives.

Collective Effort:

This partnership working demonstrated what can be achieved when various organisations, groups and individuals collaborate.

Strategic Insights:

The Festival provided insight into which organisations are open to integrating walking and wheeling into their strategies, policies, and practices, as well as those that are not, thus guiding future efforts.

Growth of Advocates:

The festival helped grow the network of walking and wheeling advocates, known as the Walk Notts Crew, reaching **297 members**.

Evidence Collection:

Photos, footage, and observations were successfully captured, highlighting factors that enable or hinder people from walking and wheeling, particularly in priority areas and groups. This also showcased what organisations are doing to support these activities.

Network Strength:

The broad reach of communications, social media, and existing networks proved effective in spreading the message widely.

Sparking Conversations:

The insight and evidence gathered during the Festival is now sparking conversations with partners about how to convert one-off events into strategy, policies and practices, enabling walking and wheeling to be part of every day life.



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Learnings about what worked well, or not so well, in terms of

People, Places, Resources

People



Messaging from Trusted Sources

It's important for people with long-term health conditions to hear positive, reassuring messages about physical activity - especially from trusted sources like healthcare professionals and disability charities - emphasising that it's safe and beneficial for their physical and mental health.

Trusted Leadership:

The presence of a **trusted leader with drive, courage, and imagination** was paramount. People were more willing to participate if led by someone they trusted, often within existing groups with shared interests. This "enabling from within" approach proved more effective than external intervention.

Phased Engagement:

A "one step at a time" approach was effective: understanding residents' needs, providing safe meeting spaces, assisting with access, building trusted relationships, and then gradually integrating physical activity.

Capacity Building:

Organisations that were involved gained confidence, leading to what will hopefully be sustained engagement.

Relationship Building:

Targeted promotion and discussions in partnership meetings fostered excitement and brought more individuals and groups on board.

Holistic Benefits:

The festival highlighted how walking and wheeling positively impact physical and mental health, reduce social isolation and pressure on healthcare, strengthen teamwork in workplaces, and draw people into towns, open spaces, and parks. It also serves as an excellent first step for inactive individuals to become more active.

What Didn't Work So Well

Several areas were identified where **engagement could be improved and barriers addressed:**

People



Engagement Gaps:

The festival saw less engagement than hoped from specific groups, including schools, universities, healthcare professionals, housing schemes, and certain geographical locations.

Lack of Direct Contact:

Messages sometimes failed to reach key decision-makers or passionate leaders, hindering group involvement.



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People, Places, Resources

Place



Safe Starting Points:

The importance of beginning activities from a 'safe space', often where groups already gather, was evident.

New Perspectives:

For some groups and individuals, venturing out of local spaces provided valuable new perspectives.

Local Community Building:

Shorter, more accessible walks helped connect communities and showcase shared spaces.

Public Transport:

Reliable public transport options are vital for accessibility, especially for those with health conditions or with limited financial means.

Place



Environmental Barriers:

Walks showed that residents avoided certain areas due to concerns about anti-social behaviour (ASB), inadequate lighting, uneven pavements, unsafe road crossings, lack of dropped kerbs and benches, and gravelled paths.

Public Transport Limitations:

Accessing some places solely by public transport proved difficult from certain areas.



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People, Places, Resources

Resources



Strong Brand & Belonging:

The Festival's physical and social media resources created a strong brand, fostering a sense of belonging among participants and enabling groups to share their involvement.

Visual Encouragement:

Sharing photos and videos of groups actively participating encouraged others, as they could see "people like them" engaging, boosting their confidence.

Enabling Fund Impact:

The small Enabling Fund (up to £100 per application) was crucial in helping groups to put on events.

Consistent Social Media:

Regular social media posting maintained a high profile and spread the word, with stories and photos generating high engagement.

Co-production:

Co-designing resources like the Walk Notts Bingo Cards with community groups ensured they were relevant and enabled a sense of ownership.

Community Leadership:

The festival empowered community leaders to develop knowledge and experience in supporting walking and wheeling activities within their groups.

Walk Notts website provided a useful source of information as to walking routes, groups, training and resources to support walking and wheeling.

Resources



Perceived Risks & Bureaucracy:

Some groups hesitated to get involved due to perceived risks, lack of walk leader training, or the amount of paperwork required for events.

"Build It and They Will Come" Misconception:

Organising new events in unfamiliar spaces without an existing presence or trusted leader often failed to attract participants.

Initial Setup Workload:

The first year involved significant effort in setting up the website, bingo cards, flyers, programme, social media, and evaluation processes. This highlights the need to start planning earlier for future festivals.

Website Usability Issues:

Initial user feedback on the Walk Notts website prompted last-minute changes to improve navigability and contact options for advertised walks.



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Looking Ahead: So What?

The learnings from the Festival will directly inform future work

Future Festival Organisation:

Feedback will be incorporated into the planning and organisation of next year's Walk Notts Festival.

Knowledge Sharing:

Learnings regarding People, Place, and Resources will be shared in partnership meetings and with community partners across the system.

Targeted Engagement:

A more targeted approach will be developed for schools, universities, healthcare, workplaces, housing schemes, and previously less engaged geographical areas, with an aim to bring them into the Strategic Partnership.

"Talking Spaces"

Will be held on Active Practices and Active Early Years settings, and Walk Notts Festival learnings will be incorporated into the Primary School Conference.

Influencing Planning:

Learnings and footage will be integrated into Neighbourhood Scans and Active Design workshops for urban planners.

Ongoing Communication:

A comprehensive communications plan will be developed to continuously share learnings and best practices in walking/wheeling strategy and policy.

Case studies

- ▶ **Men and Women That Matter**
mental health support group linking with healthcare
- ▶ **Killisick Best Years Hub**
Friendship group for independent living scheme residents
- ▶ **Butler's Hill community engagement group network**
Local partnership meeting group
- ▶ **Inclusive Recovery Walk**
Incorporating walking into alcohol and drug abuse peer support groups
- ▶ **Nottingham Forager**
Special interest groups bringing people to walk in a different way
- ▶ **Kirkby Family Hub**
Early Years setting integrating walking
- ▶ **Diversify activity walk Rufford**
Trusted community groups in deprived areas creating opportunities for them to experience new places



Click the YouTube logo to see videos of all these case studies on the Walk Notts Festival channel.

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Voices from the Festival

The true impact of the Festival is echoed in the powerful testimonials from participants and partners

"I've absolutely loved it. Can we do it again? Once a month? Normally we all sit in the same seats in the lounge but going on the walk today has helped me to meet different people." **Friendship Club member**

"Those Bingo Cards really helped me take my children out today – they loved looking for everything and didn't complain once." **Mother**

"I've never been on a Netwalk before. It was great to get out of the office and create further connections with each other." And "It's a great opportunity to give the brain a rest and revitalise ready for the afternoon." **Place Based Partnership members**

"Our members loved using the Nature Trail totem poles as part of our Mindfulness walk." **Charity leader**

"I was amazed at what the group could do. Some of them really struggle with their mobility but going together as a group really helped them to do far more than they've done before." **Community hub leader**

"I really got in the zone with picking up litter – it's so satisfying." **Litterpicking walker**

"I used the pedometer to see how many steps per day I could do. I aimed for 1000 and the pedometer helped me to ensure I did this every day. I have felt motivated and have enjoyed the challenge. I will keep using it to see what else I can achieve!" **Independent living scheme resident'**

"I went in my wheelchair today but want to walk a bit next time." **Best Years Hub member**

"Going for a walk has really changed the dynamic of our group – we talked about what we can do and want to do rather than what we're struggling with healthwise." **Heart Support Group**

"Walking alongside someone really helps with your mental health. Not everyone wants to sit in a room and talk. Being out in nature really helps. It's helped me come off my antidepressant medication. I'm not scared anymore." **Men and Women That Matter**



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Voices from the Festival

"we walk for a bit and then sit on the benches, then walk a bit more to the next benches, the other group keep walking but this is more our pace, I don't talk to many people in the week so it's good to talk as we go round, find out that my aches and pains are the same as everyone else's, all in it together." **Wellbeing walks participant**

"Walking from one Place of Welcome to another on our Walk Notts with TNT journey has helped us to showcase the amazing work that's being done in the community as well as allowing us to discuss how we can help groups going forward." **Transforming Notts Together**

"Thanks for encouraging us all." **ABL Your Health Notts**

"I'd of been at home smoking watching TV on the sofa, glad my support worker told me to come, I want to do more of this the fresh air and nature just makes me feel better you know." **Participant IRC One step at a time recovery walk**

"The Walk Notts Festival has come to an end, leaving behind a trail of happy walkers and lasting memories. The Walk Notts team have done an outstanding job creating a festival that truly celebrated our wonderful region. Ridewise has been delighted to be a part of this, joining in the fun and promoting the joy of walking across Nottinghamshire. It's been wonderful to see so many people connecting with their surroundings and each other. The festival's impact is clear – a stronger, healthier community, all thanks to the dedication of the Walk Notts team and the collaborative spirit of everyone involved." **Helen Hemstock, CEO Ridewise**

