



KIRKBY STEPHEN & DISTRICT WALKERS ARE WELCOME Annual Report 2022

The year has been almost 'business as usual' recovering from COVID restrictions with popular Staycations as many people have been reluctant to rush abroad. Unfortunately, much of the hospitality industry has been slower to recover with changing habits of refreshments and dining out. The cost-of-living crisis will undoubtedly impact on them further over this coming winter. The King's Arms has yet to find a tenant or buyer but we have seen the eagerly awaited opening of the Old Forge, good luck to Dave, Chris and Charlie.

We were delighted to receive the official announcement that the Coast to Coast is going to be a National Trail, taking three years to complete. We will all rejoice when a new footpath to Nine Standards and beyond will overcome the flooded beck and bogs that make this section so notorious. Unfortunately, we do not currently have sufficient Bed and Breakfast accommodation in Kirkby Stephen to cope with the demand of this long-distance trail during the season, having lost many rooms in the last year or so. A business opportunity.

Rights of Way repairs have become challenging with Cumbria County Council's low maintenance budgets, let alone improvements. We are looking forward to developments under the new Westmorland and Furness Unitary Authority. Some good news with the new footbridge in Hartley Lane next to the March Poetry Path stone. We have also been lobbying to try to get the uphill section from this bridge upgraded. Yorkshire Dales National Park are doing a great job within the Westmorland Dales areas. A big thank you to Stainmore Railway volunteers for the brilliant repairs to their footbridge.

We are grateful to Ian and Rachel Gowing of Pennine View Caravan Site for the new Permissive Path from Jubilee Park car park to High Stenkrith which should prove invaluable in bringing additional visitors to Jubilee Park. The path will also allow for disabled access to High Stenkrith that has previously been prevented by the steep steps. We look forward to seeing the town council's Management Plan for the park come to fruition.

There is also a newly opened Permissive Path to the Fox Tower and Mount Ida at Brough which is proving popular for a longer route. Brough Parish Council have

erected new walking information interpretation panels in Market Brough with a new leaflet 'Short walks and stops around Brough and Church Brough'.

Our Dawdles weekly health walks have been more popular than ever this year. We have run new Legstretcher longer walks once a month since spring and these will come back again next March.

We also provided walks for Access the Dales Walking Festival in April and Westmorland Dales Day in July. We ran a Faraday Connection walk for Heritage Open Days and celebrated Sir Andreas de Harcla as part of the Battle of Boroughbridge 700th anniversary with our friends at Boroughbridge Walkers are Welcome and Adrian Waite of AW History. We organised a celebration at Jubilee Park for our regular walkers for the Queen's Jubilee (R.I.P.) and installed a Treasure Hunt for the weekend. We organised a lantern making workshop using recycled materials at the Fun Palace event.

We now have ten Blue Plaques within Kirkby Stephen Conservation Area explaining a little about the fascinating history of our buildings with information accessed through QR codes to Upper Eden History Society's website. These plaques will be featured as part of our new leaflet Kirkby Stephen Old Ale Trail. All our leaflets are available in the Upper Eden Visitor Centre.

There has been some excellent publicity for Kirkby Stephen and the Upper Eden for walking in our countryside in Country Walking, Visit Eden, Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Walk This Way national newsletter covering Kirkby Stephen Poetry Path, Eden Benchmarks, the Loki Stone, Wild Boar, Michael Faraday, The Watercut, Smardale Viaduct and Nature Reserve. We are also grateful to the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald for our regular news articles and publishing our walk programmes.

Now able to meet once again with like-minded organisations, representatives attended Walkers are Welcome Northern Get-Together at Meltham, the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Forum at Ravenstonedale, Access the Dales disabled hub openings at Tebay and Nateby, the North Pennines AONB Tourism Forum at Melmerby and the Walkers are Welcome Annual Get-Together at Alton.

We are pleased that there is to be an upgrade of the High Street Zebra crossing and action to prevent the rat run along Croglam Lane. Lobbying to bring a Changing Rooms disabled toilet to Kirkby Stephen and to fix the Electric Car Charging points at the Christian Head car park are ongoing.

Nov 2022

Additional thanks go to those groups and organisations that have worked with us this year:

Dawdles walk group walkers
Kirkby Stephen Town Council
Brough Parish Council
Nateby Parish Meeting
Hartley Parish Meeting
Eden District Council, Eden Tourism Team
Cumbria County Council, Countryside Access Department
Cumbria County Council, Highways Dept.
Councillor Phil Dew
Westmorland Dales Landscapes Partnership
Kirkby Stephen Community Arts
Shelia Gordon, Lady Anne's Way
Pennine Journey Supporters Club & David Pitt
Cumberland & Westmorland Herald
Upper Eden Visitor Centre
Northern Viaduct Trust
Walkers are Welcome CIC
Nateby & Wharton WI
Helbeck Hall
Upper Eden History Society
Yorkshire Dales National Park
North Pennines AONB
Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Walkingworld
Coast to Coast Packhorse
Appleby Tourist Information Centre
Village Verges and Mike Sunderland
The Black Bull, Nateby
The Bay Horse, Winton
The Kings Head, Ravenstonedale
Church Gallery
Access the Dales and Debbie North
Cumbria Tourism
Friends of Settle-Carlisle Railway & John Carey
Settle-Carlisle Development Co
Country Walking Magazine
Dr Neil Hudson MP
John Strutt Conservation Foundation

And everyone that we have unintentionally forgotten to mention.

Why not let us know if there is anything you believe that we can do for local and visitor walking that we might not have already thought of.



Fox Tower, Westmorland Dales Day by Andy Bryan

With thanks to this year's group:

Dave Stewart	Andy Bryan
Debbie Williamson	Chrissie Halsall
John Murray	Neil Cleeveley
Ester Sloggett	Kathy Lucas
Liz Cook	Nick Trentham
Rachel Griffiths	Cathie Tinn

A very big thank you to Andy Bryan who is resigning as Treasurer and Maggie Hough who has volunteered to replace him.

Ann Sandell – Chairman
<https://www.facebook.com/waw>

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