

Strategic plan 2025 - 2026

The core purposes of Walk Alton are to:

1. **Increase participation in walking** by engaging with people and breaking down the barriers to walking.
2. **Improving access to walking opportunities** through promoting local groups to address people's needs and providing resources to plan and map walks.
3. **Support the environment** through initiatives such as car sharing and supporting the survey and maintenance of footpaths.
4. **Support the visitor economy** by fostering links with local businesses and promoting Alton as a Walking destination.
5. **Promote Wellbeing** by demonstrating the mental and physical benefits of walking and encouraging more people to get active.



Walk Alton committee: Caroline Miller (Chair), Helen Dudley (Secretary), Ros Lynch (Treasurer), Don Hammond, Kat Guenioui, Ann McKee, Sue Hatton, Ian Stokes, Jenny Tiala

1. Increase participation in walking

Areas for development

- a) Undertake qualitative research to identify the needs of those not engaged in walking, and to identify the barriers stopping them from walking.
- b) Help people discover walking opportunities through Walk Alton media: Website, newsletter, posters, leaflets, social media
- c) Evolve our social media channels to create a safe and engaged 2-way dialogue with our walking audience, where walkers celebrate their experiences and encourage others to take part
- d) Collaborate with other walking groups in other areas to learn and share best practices for engaging walking audiences

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Identify the needs of those not engaged in walking and the barriers stopping them from walking	Identify a diverse selection of non-walking audiences we can connect with, for example community groups, clubs, schools, etc Prepare promotional materials and research questions to engage these non-walking audiences	Complete by May 26	All targets under section 1 to be progressed by a Task and finish Group Lead Ian S	Increased engagement with Walk Alton channels Unmet walking needs and barriers identified

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Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
	Recruit participants and schedule presentations and focus group sessions with the selected audiences Consolidate feedback, identifying unmet walking needs and barriers to walking.		With Ann, Ros and Caroline	Plans agreed to address unmet needs and to remove barriers
Help people discover walking opportunities through Walk-Alton media	Launch a campaign to encourage people to visit our website, join our mailing list and join our social media channels (and join the Alton Town Council Festival mailing list) Review how we make optimum use of our leaflets	Complete by Nov 26	Task and finish Group as above Don to lead on leaflet printing and distribution	Significant increases in Walk Alton website visits, social media followers and Newsletter mailing list
Evolve our social media channels to create a safe and engaged 2-way dialogue with our walking audience	Develop a regular and planned posting schedule on social media to build engagement Experiment with alternative types of content to drive engagement e.g. videos, Interviews with Walk Leaders, Forthcoming events, personal stories, historical insights etc Encourage social media comments and consider how we engage and moderate replies to stimulate engaged and safe conversations. Evaluate whether we need a presence on social media channels other than Facebook and Instagram in order to reach a broader audience?	Complete by Nov 26	Task and finish Group as above	Strong engagement with positive with comments on most posts

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Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Collaborate with other walking groups to learn and share best practice	Identify other walking groups in other areas we could collaborate with and learn from Approach a target set of groups to share best practice and develop events sponsored by more than one Group.	Complete by Mar 26	Caroline	Strong mutually supportive collaboration with other groups in other areas

2. Improving access to walking opportunities

Areas for development

- Ensure all Group walks are published on the Walk Alton website Calendar
- Continue to develop and encourage engagement with the bi-annual Walking Forum to share Group plans and insights and ensure all walking needs are addressed.
- Finding ways for people to easily access and map walking-routes
- Build a comprehensive library of recommended self-guided walks on the Walk Alton Website
- Support Alton Town Council with the planning of annual Walking Festival
- Grow a strong community of trained Walk Leaders and backmarkers

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Walk Alton Website Calendar is a comprehensive source of all planned walks in the area	Ensure all Groups know where to send details or updates to their planned walks Promote the website calendar as a definitive schedule of walks	Update every month	Kat	
Walking Forum is an effective body valued by all its participants, and open to all organisations that champion outdoor pursuits	Consult Forum members on their views about the Forum Record and publish insights and key-discussion points shared at Forum Meetings Publish and promote the Forum on the Walk Alton Website	Consultation by May 26, changes completed by Oct 26	Helen	Strong engagement in Walking forum from all local Groups
Finding ways for people to easily access and map walking-routes	Consider ways to provide map reading and route-finding training and establish the level of need from our community	By Jan 26	Caroline, Ann	Increased interest in Walk Leading for 2026 Festival

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Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Build a comprehensive library of recommended self-guided walks on the Walk Alton Website	Develop a list of target walking routes that address the range of walk types, lengths, locations and interests of our community Arrange for these routes to be walked and logged Publish walks on the Walk Alton Website	Dec 25	Sue, Caroline	45 Walks live on Website
Support Alton Town Council with the planning of annual Walking Festival	Form an Alton Walking Festival working group Agree and execute a plan with ATC Engage walk leaders in defining and agreeing the programme of walks	May 26	Helen, Ann, Caroline	Successful Walking Festival programme
Grow a strong community of trained Walk Leaders and backmarkers	Plan and provide Training for leaders and back-markers in the Alton Walking Festival, and Walk Alton sponsored Walking Groups Actively recruit new walk leaders and back markers Promote co-leading of walks as an approach for new or prospective walk-leaders to build experience and grow confidence Consider how we can create an engaged community of walk leaders, sharing routes, insights and best practice	April 26	Don with Ian F	Strong pipeline of new leaders for Festival and walking Groups

3. Support the Environment

Areas for development

- Look at ways of car sharing for our regular groups
- Work with Cycle Alton on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Promote initiatives to encourage residents to walk rather than drive to Alton Town Centre
- Support the surveying and maintenance of local footpaths

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Reduce the use of private cars to reach the start points for group walks	Trial different car sharing schemes for Walk-Alton sponsored Groups – including models used by Ramblers and other groups. Experiment with WhatsApp. Continue to encourage walk leaders to use public transport where available	May 26	Caroline, Don, Helen	Reduced single occupancy vehicles arriving at walk starts
Promote initiatives to encourage residents to walk rather than drive to Alton Town Centre	Map and promote the Town's paths as safe walking Routes to the Town Centre Support Alton Town Council actions to recruit footpath wardens and volunteers to maintain the Town's paths	Dec 25	Caroline, Helen with Cycle Alton	
Support the surveying and maintenance of local footpaths	Publicise the work of other groups in this field – e.g. County Council, CPRE, Footpath wardens, Alton Ramblers, Cycle Alton Encourage walkers to promptly report issues with footpaths	Nov 26	Helen, Kat	Increased reporting and volunteering

4. Support the Visitor Economy

Areas for development

- Continue to develop pro-walking initiatives with local businesses: pubs, cafes, tourist venues etc
- Continue to develop the Walking Festival discount scheme

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Continue to develop pro-walking initiatives with local businesses: pubs, cafes, tourist venues etc	Collect feedback and insights from venues who already have pro-walking initiatives Evaluate if we can promote these existing initiatives more Evaluate how we can value the benefit of these initiatives to the venue operators, walkers and the local economy Connect with and encourage pro-walking initiatives with new venues	April 26	Each Committee member to build relationship with 2-3 local businesses Caroline to propose engagement framework	Strong pro-walking supporting form a wide portfolio of local businesses
Continue to develop the Walking Festival discount scheme	Learn from the feedback and insights from the 2025 scheme Plan and implement a 2026 scheme, which engages with as wide a set of local venues as possible Consider how we can move to a digital discount scheme using mobiles, whilst still being available to non-smartphone users.	April 26	As above	As above

5. Promote Wellbeing

Areas for development

- Engage with local health professionals to evidence and promote the mental and physical health and wellbeing benefits of walking.
- Promote and support local walking Groups with a health and wellbeing agenda

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- Engage relevant local community Groups to promote the benefits of walking and to increase participation of those who could benefit

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Produce an up-to-date leaflet and webpage highlighting the health and wellbeing benefits of walking and promote this to those who will most benefit	Engage relevant health professionals for insights and content – doctors, counsellors, etc Develop, review and publish content Distribute to target audiences	May 26	Jenny with support from Caroline	Clear understanding of community needs and engagement with relevant Groups and professionals.
Support local wellbeing Groups	Help promote Alton Gentle Walks Ensure adequate supply of Wellbeing Walk qualified walk leaders	May 26	As above	Positive feedback form leaders of these Groups
Engage the Local Community	Attend relevant Town Health events Promote the benefits of walking to relevant groups, e.g. retirement and care homes etc	May 26	As Above	Increased engagement with all relevant walking Groups and media

6. Walk Alton Operational Priorities

Areas for development

- Maintaining a good financial position and fundraising
- Maintain a current constitution and key policies
- Maintain and develop a high-quality committee
- Build a network of volunteers who can help us deliver our plan

Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Maintain a good financial position	Produce audited accounts for annual general meeting Produce budget for 2026 and reconcile and update quarterly	Nov 26	Ros	Accounts approved by AGM

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Target	Actions	Deadline	By whom	Success Criteria
Maintain a current constitution and key policies	Update our Constitution Ensure we have adequate policies to manage our operations and related compliance matters, for example insurance and data protection.	Nov 25	Helen	Constitution approved by AGM
Fundraising	Identify sources of funding and suitable projects to match Ensure ongoing costs are covered	Jan 26	Ros	Adequate funding identified to cover forecast budget.
Maintain and develop a high-quality committee	Continue to recruit high quality committee members looking at gaps in our skills base Ensure multiple members of the Committee have the skills and knowledge to fulfil our ongoing commitments, for example website development, social media etc	Ongoing	Caroline	Strong Committee with pipeline of interested candidates
Build a network of volunteers who can help us deliver our plan	Encourage walkers and walk leaders to volunteer to support our work on specific projects	Ongoing	Caroline	Sufficient volunteers willing to help deliver our plan