



Notes of Walk Alton Forum Monday 15 September 2025

The meeting was attended by the following organisations:

Walking group representatives (3-5, 5-10, Alton Ramblers, Alton Women Walkers, Evening Walks, Wellbeing Walks, U3A, Walking Men's Church), ACAN, Alton Society, Wey Valley Community Rail Partnership, Cycle Alton, Hampshire Countryside Service, Social Prescribers, Walk Alton team

Apologies from Alton Town Council, Binsted PC, Chawton House, CPRE Hampshire, Four Marks Wellbeing Walks, Gentle Walks, go@north, Long Distance Walkers Association

1 Chair's report

Caroline Miller, the new chair of Walk Alton, introduced herself and the new committee members: Sue Hatton, Ian Stokes and Jenny Tiala. Since taking up the chair Caroline had been working with colleagues on a refreshed strategic plan and she outlined the core purpose of Walk Alton:

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 would be developing prioritised actions to deliver against these aims and the draft plan would be shared for consultation during October. The aim was to sign it off at the Annual General Meeting on 27 November.

2 Talk by Andy Dawson, Community Engagement Ranger with Hampshire Countryside Service (HCS) covering North East Hampshire

Andy explained the role of HCS (part of Hampshire County Council) is to look after over 3000 miles of rights of way across the county, primarily:

- Drainage and surface work
- Waymarking and signage
- Vegetation cutbacks
- Determining the definitive width of paths
- Legal matters, much to do with landowners

To keep on top of issues HCS uses a reporting tool CAMS (Countryside Management Access Service). Andy took us through how the system works, with the front end being a web portal that members of the public should use to report any issues they come across on footpaths and bridleways etc eg fallen trees. Since January 2243 issues had been reported, and in the same period they had dealt with and cleared 2357.

Andy and his colleagues rely heavily on volunteers to help them clear issues, and in the past year volunteers had given them 12,000 hours of support, equivalent to a full time team of 7.5 people. Andy couldn't stress enough how grateful they are for that support and they always welcome more. Volunteering is a fun day out, and Alton Ramblers Maintenance team got a big shout out for the huge work they carry out (some 700+ hours). dealing with a large number of the tasks in an area that covers 378 miles of paths.

There was discussion about the town paths that are not official rights of way eg connecting paths and alleyways around the town. Alton Town Council are looking for volunteers to keep an eye on those paths and help with reporting and clearance activities.

How to report a problem on a footpath: [click here](#) Don't forget to take a photo, it helps HCS with triaging the problem.

Footpath volunteering opportunities contacts:

Hampshire Countryside Service for both local work and across wider Hampshire [sign up here](#)

Alton Ramblers Maintenance Team, contact Paul Naish via the Ramblers website link [here](#)

Alton town's paths - Natalie Beckell at ATC (email: community@alton.gov.uk)

3 Local organisations

There was a quick round up from the representatives in the room. Just a few notable developments:

5-10 walking group is being renamed 5-15 as it will now be offering some longer walks up to 15 miles. From the New Year there will be two walks a month, a longer walk on the first Saturday of the month, and a shorter one on the middle Wednesday each month.

Evening walks – the four pilot walks on the Thursdays in August had been successful despite inclement weather. Next year they will be launched during the Walking Festival and will be looking to find new ways to reach new audiences.

Alton Town Walks – had been very successful during the recent Heritage Day. Two new walks - a Regency Walk and a Regency Pub and Brewery Walk - have been added to the catalogue.

Cycle Alton – a new leaflet and map was soon to be launched highlighting the town's paths and cycle routes with the aim of encouraging use of these in preference to driving into town. Stickers and signs were also being put in place to help direct people to town. Funding for more walk and cycle

friendly initiatives was available from EHDC's climate change fund.

Future meetings

Walk Alton AGM 27 November, 7pm at Goldfinch

Walk Alton Forum meeting 9 March, 7pm at Goldfinch