

# "HAPPY TO WALK - WALK TO BE HAPPY"

## REPORT TO GRAMPIAN 50+ NETWORK CONFERENCE

6th MARCH 2015



The enthusiastic energy of Grampian 50+ Network has proved to be a major inspiration in developing a Walking Strategy for Older People in Aberdeenshire. Alan Melrose of Alan Melrose Consultancy Ltd has been appreciative of the co-operation the staff have received in developing the strategy. Most groups participated in the process which took place between September 2012 and February 2015 - all committed to promoting walking among older people in Aberdeenshire.

***"Happy to Walk" is indeed alive and well.***

## **The project delivered the following outputs from January 2013 to February 2015:**

- First Aid - 6 courses, 52 students receiving certificates
- Completion and distribution of the Walking Group Welcome Pack
- Initial development of new website and an e-marketing approach and support to the members of the Website Development Group
- Professional advice and support given to groups and members as required
- Assisted in the 50+ Network Development Day with "Outside the Box" Consultant
- Assisted in the planning and preparation of the Network Walking Strategy Conference.
- "Looking After Each Other" (LAEO) - 3 courses with 27 students
- Initial development of the Banff/Buchan Walking Network
- 7 New groups developed and supported and in membership of the Network; Methlick, Aboyne, Stonehaven, Ballater, Inch, Huntly and the Garioch Men's 50+ Walking Group.



***First walk of the new Inch 50+ Walking Group in February 2015***



*"I enjoyed the day and feel more confident in Map Reading and use of the Compass"*

- Map Reading and Navigation Courses - 6 courses, 73 students
- Planning, preparation and delivery of the Donside Walking Network Project
- Developed a new Health walk in Rhynie in partnership with NHS Grampian and COAT (Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust)
- Delivered a pilot 'Leadership Skills Course' with Portlethan and Skateraw, topics included; Leadership Skills, Group Management, Hazards and Risk Assessment, Being a Walk Leader
- Roll out of the above 'Leadership Skills Evenings', with 7 sessions taking place and 81 members attending.
- Identified possible new 50+ Network committee members
- Developed a Resources Booklet and a new discount card
- Developed an Intergenerational Project to promote Walking Groups and Network
- Developed a 'walks database'
- 2 networking events for Contacts
- Developed a Guidance Sheet for Group Contacts
- Various workshops; Welcome Pack, Resources, Walking Holiday, Health walks

These outputs are evidence of the Networks Walking Strategy delivering against its key Project indicators. In particular:

- The groups have indicated that more Older People are taking part in walking on a regular basis. New promotional work still being carried out will continue to increase the number of older people walking on a regular basis, both as members of 50+ walking groups but also independently.
- Evidence has been gathered of movement between groups, both health walks and 50+ groups, in the pilot Donside Networking Project. This experience has been brought to the initial development of the Banff and Buchan Walking Network where similar developments are expected to develop over time.
- 7 new 50+ groups are now in membership of the Network and 1 new Health walk group has been delivered.
- Assistance to the Website Development Group, Work Groups, Conference Planning, Resource Booklet, Welcome Pack etc have all contributed to more volunteering involvement of the member groups. Additionally, more people are volunteering within the groups as a result of the Walking Strategy.

**In Summary, the Network Walking Strategy has provided;**

- Increased opportunities for older people to be physically & mentally active through outdoor activity
- Increased volunteering opportunities for older people
- Improved links between health walks, network groups and other providers
- Improvement in the Health and Wellbeing of Older People in Aberdeenshire

Report by Alan Melrose of Alan Melrose Consultancy Ltd  
email: [alan@walkdeeside.com](mailto:alan@walkdeeside.com)