



Walkers are Welcome

Fact sheet 4

Case study: Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

In summer 2006, Hebden Bridge Walkers' Action first proposed the idea of an accreditation scheme which would permit Hebden Bridge, and other towns, to officially announce that "Walkers are welcome". The idea quickly took off locally, and the following steps were taken.

1. Demonstration of local support. A petition inviting local people and visitors to Hebden Bridge to give their support to the ***Walkers are Welcome*** concept was launched in September 2006. On October 2nd the 250 threshold was crossed.
2. Formal endorsement of application for ***Walkers are Welcome*** status by local council. The Town Council formally endorsed the initiative at a meeting in October 2006; subsequently three local rural parish councils also gave their support. Calderdale MBC also backed the idea through funding the footpath waymarking project (see below).
3. Launch event. A very successful launch event ('Walkers' Day') was held in February 2007 with a mixture of activities, ranging from the official ***Walkers are Welcome*** status ceremony to workshops, stalls and short guided walks. About 100 people took part.
4. Advisory board. The first meeting of the Hebden Bridge Walkers are Welcome Advisory Board, comprising representatives of the local town and parish councils, business representatives and community organisations, took place in April 2007. It meets approximately twice yearly, and is responsible for overseeing the Walkers are Welcome scheme.
5. Marketing ***Walkers are Welcome***. Funding was obtained to produce a general marketing leaflet and window stickers for local businesses, and these were produced in time for the February launch. Several articles were printed in the local press.
6. Waymarking selected routes. Hebden Bridge Walkers' Action worked with Calderdale MBC to create three waymarked routes from the centre of the town.
7. Business support. Hebden Bridge shops, hotels, pubs and b&bs were written to in mid-October 2006, inviting their support. Several agreed to take ***Walkers are Welcome*** window stickers. A number made financial donations, as Business Patrons, Key Business Supporters or Business Supporters of the initiative.

For full information about Hebden Bridge's bid to be the first ***Walkers are Welcome*** town, please visit Hebden Bridge Walkers' Action extensive website, www.hbwalkersaction.org.uk.