

Group Walks Finder: Using promotional codes and themes



About this factsheet

This factsheet explains how to promote your led walks programme more effectively, and to attract more participants, by using the special features and theme and festival codes in the Group Walks Finder in conjunction with led walks promotions.

This factsheet is of interest not only to walks editors but also to programme coordinators, publicity officers and other Ramblers volunteers interested in promoting led walks. It assumes you have a familiarity with the way the Group Walks Finder appears to the public and some experience of searching for walks. Specific guidance for walks editors assumes a basic familiarity with the editing system described in Factsheets GWF01-04.

As with the other factsheets, for brevity we have used the word Group to include both Area and Group as we recognise that some Areas run their own led walks.

Walk4Life and Active Nation branding



The Ramblers supports the various government-backed national campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles. We are a national supporter of Change4Life, the Department of Health's campaign in England (www.nhs.uk/change4life), which promotes both increased physical activity and healthy eating as part of the fight against obesity. We also support the similarly named campaign in Wales backed by the Welsh Assembly Government (www.wales.gov.uk/change4life). In Scotland we support the Scottish Government's Active Nation campaign, promoting physical activity for health in connection with the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (www.ouractivenation.co.uk).



As well as the obvious shared objectives between these campaigns and the Ramblers' aims to make walking more accessible to all, including promoting the health benefits, these are extremely positive and successful brands, and our partnerships give us many opportunities to promote the Ramblers more widely, also helping us build our membership.

All Ramblers walks of 5 miles (8km) or less listed on the Group Walks Finder are branded automatically with the appropriate logos:

- The Walk4Life logo in England.
- The Welsh language Walk4Life logo in Wales (once this becomes available).
- The Active Nation logo in Scotland.

There is a Walk4Life landing page at www.ramblers.org.uk/walk4life that includes a link to all the relevant walks. The walk details make clear that walks have been classified just on their distance and users should check the details carefully to see if walks are at a suitable pace and over suitable terrain for them. For simplicity the choice of logos is determined by the country where the Group is based rather on where the walk is taking place.

What should I do?

You do not have to take any further action other than to ensure walks details include distances in the correct field. The logos will be added automatically. Areas and Groups may also wish to use appropriate branding on their own locally produced materials. See the various Change4Life and Active Nation websites for details of becoming a local supporter or using logos and other materials.

“Special” categories

The Group Walks Finder has several built in special categories for walk listings which have been selected as particularly helpful to potential walkers. These are:

- Family walk
- Dogs permitted
- Buggy / wheelchair friendly
- Car free walk

Users can search for walks using these categories, for example specifically looking for family walks in a certain area, and it's possible to create pages listing only walks in one of the special categories. A single walk can be in more than one category, or even in all of them. If you offer appropriate walks we strongly recommend you use the special categories – if dogs are welcome on your walk, for example, it's important to say so otherwise people will assume they are not.

What should I do?

When compiling a programme, check to see if any of your walks qualify for one of the categories: see below for more details. Please take care to keep within the definitions below and avoid classifying walks that don't qualify. For walks editors, simply ensure you tick the boxes when entering single walks or select “Yes” from the drop down menu in the appropriate column when compiling spreadsheets.

Family walk

Walks in this category appear in Walks Finder listings with a special logo. These should:

- Be no more than 8km/5 miles in length and ideally around 5km/3 miles.
- Include “escape routes” if possible so walkers can leave early if children get tired. A Figure-of-8 route is ideal.
- Use good paths through terrain that isn't too challenging.
- Be in surroundings of interest to children.
- Be taken at a slow pace, accommodating children who want to stop and look at things along the way.
- Ideally, likely to be attended by more than one family so children can socialise with others of their own age.

For more advice on making walks appropriate for and attractive to children, see the factsheet Putting on walks for children under Led Walks at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/factsheets.

Dogs permitted

If dogs are welcome on your walk, please do say so – it will make a big difference to dog owners to know that they can bring their pets. If there is any other information you feel you need to add, for example if dogs will need to be kept on a lead for some or all of the walk, please add this to the longer description.

Buggy/wheelchair friendly

Please only tick this if you are confident the walk is accessible to wheelchairs and/or buggies/pushchairs and users of these will be made to feel welcome. Walks must be on level ground along paths with good surfaces, sufficient width and no difficult barriers, no longer than 8km/5 miles at an easy pace. Some routes will be accessible to pushchairs but not to wheelchairs. In this case you could tick the box but include an explanation in the longer description.

Car free walk

A car free walk should be easily accessible to a wide range of potential walkers without the need to use a car, even if some of your participants still choose to use one. The obvious way to achieve this is to start and finish at a transport interchange such as a station or bus stop, but you could also start and end a walk at a point in an urban area which large numbers of people could reach on foot from their home or workplace. If using public transport, make sure a convenient service is running at the time of your walk and try to time the walk to fit with the transport timetable. A Sunday walk from a bus stop with no Sunday service is not a car free walk!

Themed walks and festivals

The Ramblers runs a number of national events and festivals, projects and themed promotions involving led walks. Details of these can be found at www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer/festivals. Each of these is assigned a special code on the Group Walks Finder. It's easy for your Group to participate by running appropriate walks and ensuring they are listed with the right code – they will then be picked up automatically in any special online or printed walks listings. This is a great way to benefit from the additional national promotion and press work, encouraging more participants and more potential members to attend your walks, with the extra “buzz” of taking part in a bigger event. Your participation also helps us to deliver our charitable aims more effectively, to achieve more media coverage and to build the profile of the Ramblers as a whole.

What should I do?

If you're involved in coordinating walks programmes, have a look at the list of themed walks and events overleaf and consider how you could support as many as you wish, perhaps by building appropriate walks into regular programmes. There is of course no obligation to participate but it would benefit your Group to organise at least the occasional special walk. Additional promotional materials may be available for some of these projects: details of these are normally given when the project is announced through the volunteer web pages, or contact Central Office. In some cases specific materials are sent out to all Groups who have registered walks for a particular project.

For walks editors, enter the walk details as normal, perhaps including a reference to the theme or event in the longer description. Then add the correct code from the list to the Themed Walk box or column, or use the box on the upload screen to apply the same code to a whole spreadsheet, as outlined in Factsheet GWF03. Take care to copy the code exactly as it appears below, and ensure you use the code, not the full title of the project. Note incorrect codes won't be rejected but ignored.

Please only use codes on walks that conform to the requirements of the theme or event. We regret that due to administration time and costs we no longer accept walk listings for special events and festivals except through the Group Walks Finder.

Title	Code	Description	Dates	More information	Contact
Get Walking Weekend 2012	GWW12	Ramblers flagship national event: a weekend of short, easy, accessible led walks open to everyone.	25-27 May 2012	www.ramblers.org.uk/getwalkingday	Everyday Walking Team, Central Office
Festival of Winter Walks	-	Free fun walks for everyone over Christmas and New Year. No need to enter a code as all walks held between the festival dates will be themed automatically.	14 December 2011 – 2 January 2012	www.ramblers.org.uk/walkthemes/winterwalks	Everyday Walking Team, Central Office
Coastal Walking Day	COAST	Seaside walks across Great Britain marking the launch of the Coastal Path in Wales.	5 May 2012		Everyday Walking Team, Central Office
Get Walking for the Games	2012	Short led public walks to get more people active through walking using the energy and inspiration of the Olympic Games.	Until September 2012	www.ramblers.org.uk/2012	Everyday Walking Team, Central Office
Valentine Walks	VAL	Walks with a romantic theme.	11-14 February 2012		Press Team, Central Office
Bluebell Walks	BL	Seasonal walks to places with impressive displays of bluebells.	April – June		Press Team, Central Office
A walk in the woods	WOODS	A week of walks celebrating the wonder of British woodland.	3-9 October 2011		Press Team, Central Office
Rail Rambles	RR	Programme of guided walks from railway stations across Wales.	From January 2011	As above.	As above.

Regional and local themes and festivals

It is also possible to assign codes to accommodate regional and local initiatives, enabling pages to be created featuring a subset of walks either by one Group, or by a number of Groups, including Groups from different Areas.

This might be useful for a local walking festival or a special programme of walks supported jointly by a number of different Groups. A longstanding example is the Wessex Wanderer programme of walks from stations on the Weymouth to Bristol railway line, supported by numerous Groups and Areas in various parts of southwest England.

Another good use for this feature would be for a single Group with a special programme of walks linked by a particular theme or aimed at a particular audience, for example a hike 20s-30s Group with a separate programme for older (40+) members. If you think your Group could benefit from this facility, do think carefully about whether or not there are likely to be enough walks to justify it. Also note some “special” walks can be brought together on the system in other ways. For example a programme of family walks could be identified by using the Family Friendly special category described above.

What should I do?

As a programme compiler, think whether having a theme code could benefit you. If you decide it could, contact walksfinderhelp@ramblers.org.uk and request one. Please supply:

- A title
- A logo
- A brief description of the theme or event in no more than two sentences. This will be included on all walk details assigned to that theme.
- A web address where the public can find more information about the theme or event. This will be linked from all appropriate walk details.
- An end date.

If everything is in order, we will send you a theme code. As a walks editor, you should include this theme code in the relevant box for appropriate walks.

Unfortunately the system will not currently support more than one theme per walk, so a walk assigned to a national event cannot also be assigned to a local theme.

What next?

If you run into problems, first reread this and the other relevant factsheets carefully and check that you have understood and followed the instructions. If you still have problems please contact walksfinderhelp@ramblers.org.uk giving as much information about your problem as possible. If you're having difficulty uploading a file, please send us a copy of that file.