**ANNUAL REPORT (2021) OF BAILDON WALKERS ARE WELCOME TO BAILDON TOWN COUNCIL ECONOMY COMMITTEE. SPRING 2022.**

We are most grateful for the financial support of £500 per annum which Baildon Town Council has given to Baildon Walkers are Welcome over several years. This funding allows us to move forward securely without needing to make any charges to those who come on our walks. A statement of how the funding has been spent over the past year is provided with this report as a separate PDF.

We would be most grateful if the Town Council Economy Committee felt able to make a further allocation of £500 for the year ahead.

1. **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF OUR GROUP DURING 2021.**

The priorities which we set for our group in January 2021 have all been achieved, in many cases with assistance from partner organisations:

1. **Publications:**
2. Our FootNavs book, originally launched in 2020, was updated and made more family-friendly, and distributed, free of charge, to every child in the four Baildon Primary Schools under the new title of “Going Places on Foot from Baildon”. This was possible thanks to a grant which we successfully applied for from Bradford Council’s Climate Action Fund.
3. In Autumn 2021, we published a completely new book entitled “Six Walks for Self-Guiding from Bracken Hall and Shipley Glen. This is on-sale at several local café and retail outlets at a cost of £5.
4. **Training in Map Reading, Navigation, and Walks Leadership:**

Our two volunteer trainers have been able to offer three Map Reading and Navigation training courses during 2021, and one Introduction to Walks Leading course. The Bradford Council Climate Action Fund grant also paid for the purchase of maps, compasses, and clip boards for use in these training sessions and these resources will be available for further such training sessions planned for the coming year. Two of the training sessions were specifically organised for members of Baildon Runners; the others were open to anyone to attend. Feedback from these courses has been very favourable.

1. **Improvements to local walking routes:**

The following footways / walking routes have been improved in 2021:

1. New footway installed along Bingley Road on the route of The Welcome Way, thanks to co-operation with our neighbouring WaW towns, and to Bradford Council Highways Service.
2. Stepping stones across Gill Beck (a well-used right of way in Baildon) have been repaired and upgraded by volunteers from Baildon WaW and the Friends of Gill Beck
3. At the request of Baildon WaW, the footpath from Baildon centre to Tong Park reservoir has been improved by drainage and installation of a new stile by Bradford Countryside Service.
4. New or replacement roundels have been put up at key points on the route of The Welcome Way.
5. A replacement bridge and new gate have been installed in Gill Beck valley by Bradford Countryside Service at our request.
6. **Continuation of offer of Guided Walks.**

Once Covid regulations permitted, we resumed our offer of small-group guided walks, with numbers of participants controlled by pre-booking. On average our 10 walks leaders have (1 additional walks leader joined us in 2021), between them, been able to offer 3 of these guided walks per month. These walks have included 2 specifically for people affected by dementia; a Poetry and Mindfulness Walk; walks with a visit to a café during the walk; and a historical walk. These walks have been much-appreciated, and places on these walks are always snapped up quickly. We have come to realise the importance of these walks not only as contributing to physical health but also to mental health, as they offer the chance for people to walk and talk safely and to make new friends. Several of our “regulars” have either been recently widowed, and/or live alone; and/or are new to Baildon; and/or are experiencing the early stages of dementia.

Since October 2021, we have also resumed offering Second Saturday guided walks which are open to all-comers without pre-booking. We ensure that two leaders are available for these walks as the take-up number is not known in advance.

We continue update our “DIY Walks” for downloading and self-guiding on our website.

<https://baildonwalkersarewelcome.org/diy-walks/>

**B) PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH.**

All our guided walks are publicised via a monthly e-newsletter which goes to around 300 people; and via our website which is updated regularly – see [www.baildonwalkersarewelcome.org](http://www.baildonwalkersarewelcome.org)

and on our Facebook pages <https://www.facebook.com/baildonwalkersarewelcome/>

The use of an open Facebook page is proving particularly helpful in attracting people from nearby towns and villages to join some of our guided walks.

Bradford Council Visitor Officer has been most helpful in publicising our activities in Bradford Council e-newsletters.

**C) WORK WITH BAILDON TOWN COUNCIL.**

We continue to send reps to the Baildon Love our Loos meeting, as these are such a valuable resource for walkers.

We believe that Baildon WaW makes an important contribution to the visitor economy, bringing people into Baildon who then go on to use our cafes and pubs. Baildon WaW was invited by the Town Council to be part of a Working Group looking at promotion of Baildon as a visitor destination, and we are also represented on the Advisory Group for the Local Development Plan.

We decided during the year to start giving away our first-ever publication )from 2014) of “Four Walks around Baildon” without charge (as we had many surplus copies), and this has led to copies going to local hotels, Air B&B providers and a local camping / caravan site.

Although Covid closed off many of the community events at which we would normally have had a stall to promote our activities, we were pleased to have a stall at the Baildon at Christmas event at the beginning of December, and the committee members who staffed the stall were able to promote our walks and publications to people who were not already familiar with us.

**D) CURRENT COMMITTEE:**

Chair: Bob Davidson

Vice Chair: Chris Grogan

Secretary: Chris Flecknoe

Treasurer: Richard Freeman

Quartermaster: Paul Robinson

Website and newsletter editor: Chris Flecknoe

Facebook editors: Jan Thom and Bob Davidson

Dementia-friendly Baildon link: Pat Addinell

Eddie Nash

Mike Lawson

Barbara Walker.

**E) FORWARD PLANS FOR 2022.**

The committee has already agreed to:

1. continue with our programme of guided walks;
2. support a further new publication for autumn 2022 of walks for self-guiding from Baildon Railway Station;
3. arrange for an Asian Women’s Walking Group to visit Baildon for a guided walk;
4. offer further Map Reading and Navigation training;
5. contribute to the planning for the launch walk for the new Heritage Way from Bradford Cathedral to Ripon Cathedral, which will pass through Baildon.

*Chris Flecknoe. Secretary to Baildon Walkers are Welcome*