

**Welcome to our Life newsletter.**

Urbanwalks brings you news and information on the walking & physical activity projects and initiatives that the company are involved with, plus we take a look at the inactivity and health issues in Britain today.

**FEBRUARY 2010**

newsletter

life

# Urbanwalks goes green!

**There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the great outdoors can have positive effects on many aspects of our health. It can encourage us to be more active by providing facilities to walk, cycle and play, but being in the outdoors also helps to reduce stress and generally improve mental health.**

**The characteristics of a person's living and working environment influences their physical activity. Recent research has suggested that the provision of open spaces, such as parks and other green spaces, for recreation may provide an important health resource especially in urban areas. Indeed, recent studies in England have shown that the amount of green space in an area is generally associated with better health including reduced mortality.**

**In a recent study commissioned by Natural England and undertaken by University of Bristol and University of East Anglia, it concluded that people who perceive easy access to safe green spaces report higher green space use, more regular physical activity and lower risk of obesity. Therefore, access to safe and convenient green space is likely to be an important environmental factor in public health efforts aimed to promote physical activity and reduce obesity.**

**Below are details of two walking projects that Urbanwalks have worked on to help increase the number of people that use local parks and green spaces in Solihull and Halton.**

**Solihull Park Walks**

Solihull Council commissioned Urbanwalks in 2009 to design a Solihull Park Walks booklet that provided circular walks around eleven local parks across nine



areas in Solihull, West Midlands. The eleven parks that were featured in the booklet were; Babb's Mill Park, Babb's Mill Lake, Cole Bank Park, Meriden Park, Elmdon Park, Elmdon Nature Park, Shirley Park, Malvern Park, Brueton Park, Hillfield Park and Dorridge Park & Wood.

The aim of the booklet was to encourage the local community to get out and walk more in the local parks and green spaces in Solihull, by offering a variety of circular walks of differing lengths to suit all abilities. The walks ranged in distance from one to two miles and some can be linked together to make longer walks. The booklet was also designed to encourage the people of Solihull to visit parks and green space out of their local area.

Urbanwalks worked on the project with Jagjit Lidher,

Step Into Solihull Manager at Solihull Leisure Services. The 'Step into Solihull' initiative is a Solihull wide campaign to get people aged 50 and over more active. The initiative encourages residents to keep fit through gentle exercise including Walking and Tai Chi.

Jagjit Lidher provided information on which parks they wanted in the booklet. Urbanwalks then mapped, measured, risk assessed and wrote the text for all eleven walking routes. We then designed the booklet following our generic branding but using Step into Solihull's corporate colours and delivered 10,000 colour copies for Solihull Leisure Services to distribute in January 2010.

The Solihull Park Walks booklet will be an integral part of the 'Step into Solihull' initiative.

### Halton Green Flag Walks

Three years ago Paula Parle, Health and Physical Activity Development Officer for Halton Borough Council's Sports Development department contacted Urbanwalks and commissioned us to design a Six Green Space Walks leaflet. The aim of the leaflet was to encourage the local community and council employees to walk more and use the local green space in the evenings and at the weekends.

Urbanwalks mapped, measured, risk assessed and wrote the text for all six walking routes. Urbanwalks then designed the leaflet in Halton Borough Council's corporate colours and delivered 10,000 colour leaflets for Paula Parle to distribute in Runcorn and Widnes.

Last summer Paula Parle contacted Urbanwalks again to inform us that since the Green Space Walks leaflet was last produced a number of Halton's parks have been awarded with the Green Flag award. Paula wanted a reprint of the original leaflet but wanted to change two of the old routes with two new ones so that all six walking routes in the leaflet would be in Green Flag parks.

Halton Borough Council now boasts twelve prestigious Green Flag Awards for its parks and nature reserves. Halton is ranked in the top six councils in England and Wales for the number of Green Flag Awards achieved. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales and is

run by the environmental charity, Keep Britain Tidy, Green Space and the British Trust Conservation Volunteers. The scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country.

Halton won its first Green Flag Award in 1999 for Pickering's Pasture Local Nature Reserve and the site has regained its flag every year since. The other Green Flag Award winners are Hale Park, Clinton Wood Local Nature Reserve, Hough Green Park, Victoria Park, Spike Island, Victoria Promenade in Widnes and Phoenix Park, Runcorn Town Hall Park, Rock Park, Runcorn Hill Park and Local Nature Reserve and Wigg Island Community Park in Runcorn.

The six Green Flag parks that were featured in the Urbanwalks leaflet are; Phoenix Park, Runcorn Hill & Wigg Island in Runcorn and Pickering's Pasture, Victoria Park, Spike Island and Victoria Promenade in Widnes.

Urbanwalks went out and remapped, measured and risk assessed the four old routes that were now Green Flag parks and the two new routes that were going to be included in the new walking leaflet. Halton Borough Council ordered 10,000 copies of the leaflet, which is now called Six Green Flag Walks in Runcorn and Widnes, and Urbanwalks delivered the new leaflets to Halton Borough Council for distribution in late 2009 and throughout 2010.

Urbanwalks have been designing walking routes and producing walking leaflets for Halton Borough Council's Sports Development department for the

last five years now and this is the fourth walking booklet Urbanwalks have produced in that time.



If you would like more information about the above projects or our parks and green space leaflets then please contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

# Department of Health promotes active travel to employees

With Active Travel becoming more popular due to the increase in the promotion of active travel throughout the UK. It's now seen by many people as one of the easiest and best ways to include and increase physical activity levels in a persons busy working day. Replacing private cars for transportation by walking and using public transport, which often involves walking to transport interchanges, is an effective and equitable means of increasing participation in physical activity.

With this in mind, Jane Newton, Head of Employee Health & Well-being for The Department of Health commissioned Urbanwalks to design five active travel routes for their employees to use when travelling from London to Leeds and vice versa.

The Department of Health has four main offices in London; Skipton House, Richmond House, New King's Beam House and Wellington House and one office in Leeds, Quarry House. On a regular basis employees commute from their office in Leeds to one of the offices in London or from their office in London to Leeds. Although this is not on a daily basis some members of staff have to make this long trip on a regular basis.

The active travel routes have been designed to encourage employees to walk from King's Cross Train Station to one of the four offices in London and from Leeds Train Station to Quarry House, with the aim of getting their 30 minutes of recommended daily exercise or to help them on their way to achieving 10,000 steps a day. The active travel walks from King's Cross Train Station to the London offices can take anything between 35 and 45 minutes to walk, this might seem a long time but travelling by tube for the same journey would take just the same amount of time.

The Department of Health are focused on encouraging employees to take the active option and not only enjoying the many benefits of being more active but getting them also to enjoy the many historical places in London that the walks take you through.

## Lunchtime Walking Routes & Exercise Sheets

Four years ago Urbanwalks was commissioned by the Department of Health to design and produce three



lunchtime urban walks for all four offices in London and their office in Leeds. The aim of the lunchtime walks was to get staff more active and to encourage them to move away from their desk and take a lunch break.

Last year the Department of Health also bought the Urbanwalks 'At Your Desk' and 'No Sweat' exercise sheets for all 3000 staff to use. Both exercise sheets were available to download from the health & well-being section on their intranet site.

**The active travel routes are a continuation of our partnership in working together to promote a happier and healthier working environment for employees at The Department of Health.**

If you would like more information about our active travel routes for the workplace then please contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

# Urbanwalks still active in the education sector

## Liverpool John Moores University get staff active at lunchtime

With more and more focus being placed on Workplace Health, Ian Beattie, Senior Lecturer in Sport Development with Physical Education at Liverpool John Moores University contacted Urbanwalks last year and asked if we could help get employees based at their IM Marsh Campus in Aigburth more active during their lunchbreak.

With funding available through Liverpool John Moores University's Human Resource Department and Centre for Staff Development, Urbanwalks was commissioned to map, measure, risk assess and design three lunchtime walks to promote a positive work-life balance.

Ian Beattie is no stranger to Urbanwalks and their physical activity solutions. In his role as Chair of the North West Health and Physical Activity Forum he has commissioned active travel routes for the North West Health and Physical Activity Annual Conference for the last two years.

Each lunchtime walk had a different aim with a view to encouraging as many employees as possible to be more active at lunchtime. Route One was from the University campus to Rose Lane where there are a number of great cafés and other eating outlets, staff can take a walk, sit down and have their lunch and walk back to campus all within one hour.

Route Two was to encourage staff to bring their own packed lunch and go for a walk to the promenade on

Otterspool Drive and sit down to eat lunch while taking in the views across the River Mersey and getting some valued fresh air. This walk would take around 10 - 12 minutes each way.



The third route was a circular 35-40 minute brisk walk to encourage staff to get their 30 minutes of recommended daily exercise. The route walked the staff through urban streets into Otterspool Park, which has a lovely woodland area then along the side of the promenade with views across the River Mersey and back along the urban streets to the University.

The three walking routes were then designed by Urbanwalks into a booklet format, which also provide two pages of 'At Your Desk' exercises for staff to participate in during the day. The three lunchtime walks booklet was launched to staff as part of an organised staff health day held on campus during December.

**Ian Beattie has received great feedback back from his Dean at the University and other members of staff and management on how great the booklet looks and what a great initiative it is to get staff more active.**

If you would like more information about our lunchtime walking routes for staff then please contact Urbanwalks on **0870 242 7507**

## Increasing physical activity in primary schools

# Rack House Primary School get their children walking to school

**Tracy Wood, Head Teacher for Rack House Primary School in Northern Moor, Manchester commissioned Urbanwalks last summer to map, measure, risk assess and design a six active travel walks leaflet to encourage parents to walk their children to and from school on most days of the week.**

Urbanwalks worked with the teachers at Rack House Primary School to set a classroom project for the children, who had to map out where they live and how they currently got to school. Once all that information was collated it was passed on to Urbanwalks who then planned where the six active travel routes would start, taking into consideration where the children lived and focused

on those that currently travelled to school by car.

Urbanwalks worked with a group of children from each year who helped to measure the walking routes, which allowed the children to take some ownership of the leaflet and got them talking and thinking about walking before the leaflet was launched.

**Rack House Primary School has Healthy School status and have a focus on:**

- Emotional Health & Well-being
- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating
- Personal & Social Health Education

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# Fun activities for PE lessons with Urbanwalks

**Acting Head Teacher, Anne Whitehead invited Urbanwalks to work with the pupils and teachers of Haveley Hey Community Primary School in Benchill, Wythenshawe, Manchester to deliver a programme of fun activities and circuit training ideas that could be used by the teachers on a weekly basis as part of their PE lessons.**

During week one, Justine Dingwall from Urbanwalks delivered a number circuit training classes to all years as part of their PE lesson, a number of different circuits were delivered dependent on the age group of the children. After each lesson the teachers were given an exercise sheet that displayed the circuit class layout and equipment needed to encourage the teachers to use it to ensure the children got as much exercise as possible during their PE lessons.

During the second week, Urbanwalks delivered a variety of fun games to each class, the games included hand and eye co-ordination, balance, stamina and team

work all using basic equipment such as: bean bags, hoops, balls, skipping ropes and cones. Once again the teachers were left with an A5 leaflet, which provided 15 different games for them to use.

All pupils and teacher really enjoyed the session and some teachers and teaching assistants were really motivated to do more during their PE lessons and after school clubs. Haveley Hay Primary School are now using the Urbanwalks School based exercise sheets and Games Leaflet at a newly started lunchtime Keep Fit Club that has been set up to provide the pupils with further opportunities to participate in fun games and increase their physical activity levels.

If you would like more information about our school activity solutions then please contact Urbanwalks on  
**0870 242 7507**

# Activity solutions for the home, office & school...

## Office-based Exercise Sheets



At Your Desk



No Sweat

The Office and Home-based exercise sheets are all available to buy of the shelf and cost as little as 25p per copy and reduce to 15p per copy depending on how many you buy. Please go to [www.urbanwalks.co.uk](http://www.urbanwalks.co.uk) and click on exercise sheets in the menu to access our price information and order form. Minimum order is 50.

## Home-based Exercise Sheets



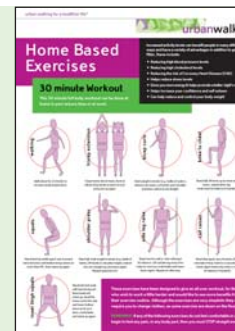
Warming Up & Cooling Down\*



Older People\*



Strength & Mobility\*

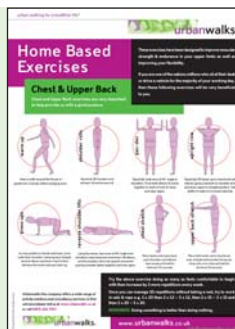


30 Minute Workout\*

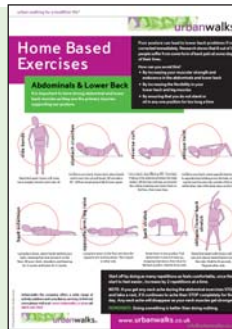
\*Double sided exercise sheet.



Arms & Shoulders



Chest & Upper Back



Abdominals & Lower Back

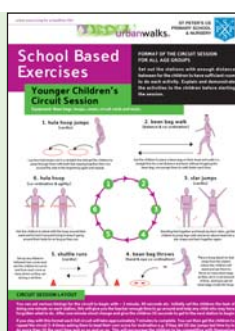


Legs

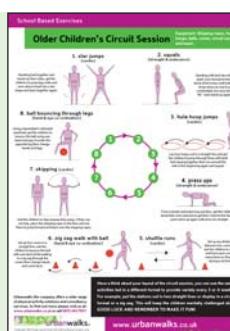
## School-based Exercise Sheets



Morning Mobility



Younger & Older Children's Circuits\*



\*Double sided exercise sheet.

Our School-based exercise sheets are all individually printed to order and can be designed to have your school logo included on the exercise sheet. Please call **0870 242 7507** for more information about this service and prices. Minimum order is 20.

# Practical solutions for inactivity...

## Urbanwalks Activity & Exercise Consultancy Service

Urbanwalks are able to offer a wide range of consultancy services. Urbanwalks have over 18 years experience of working within both the public and private sector with extensive knowledge in project management, partnership building and implementing change within the health and physical activity field.

Urbanwalks can also help you develop frameworks to implement a physical activity policy within your work force or community; provide support in reinforcing your message through launch days, promotional events, or one-to-one consultations as well as providing physical activity programmes and solutions.

## Urbanwalks Six Urban Walks Leaflet

The Six Urban Walks leaflet has been specifically designed to fill the gap in promoting local urban walks using a generic template. Each leaflet provides a variety of circular routes of differing length within the local everyday environment for both employees or local communities. The walks are mapped out and displayed on a professionally designed and practical fold-down leaflet or as an intranet based PDF. A bilingual booklet format is also available.

## Urbanwalks Three Urban Walks Leaflet

This shortened version has been designed for individual companies and the 1 or 2 day conference or exhibition market. Three local walks are mapped out and displayed in a leaflet as above or as a PDF file to be accessed via the client's intranet. The routes have been designed to get employees or conference delegates re-energised and refreshed by taking a short walk.

## Urbanwalks Active Travel Walks

The active travel walks have been designed to encourage employees to use walking as a mode of transport or to build in walking as part of their journey to and from work. These routes can be produced in a leaflet format or as a PDF, we also design single active travel routes for conferences in a PDF format, which aims at encouraging delegates to use public transport and the active travel route to and from the conference.

## Urbanwalks Activity Motivator

The aim of the Activity Motivator is to be available for one-to-one consultations to the employees of an organisation as part of their health at work campaign, this could be once a month or 2-3 times a year. During the consultation employees can ask the Activity Motivator any questions they may have about health, diet or fitness. The Activity Motivator will then prescribe a tailor-made programme of activity for them to follow, whether that's during their lunch break, at their local gym or at home. There are no fitness tests or exercises undertaken during this consultation.

The Activity Motivator is a fully qualified fitness specialist with over 18 years experience of working with people of all fitness levels from the already fit and healthy to those with medical conditions such as: Hypertension, Arthritis, Angina, Post MI and Obesity.

## Urbanwalks Home & Office-based Exercise Sheets

The Exercise Sheets are for home and office use and have been designed to give a whole or part body workout through a range of practical exercises. The exercises have been designed so that there is something for everyone, including older people, the young or inactive, and those people who suffer from medical conditions such as: high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, heart attack or stroke and obesity.

For more information about our products, activity solutions and consultancy services, please call us on **0870 242 7507** or visit us at **[www.urbanwalks.co.uk](http://www.urbanwalks.co.uk)**

