

**WILTSHIRE WALKS**  
**OurWALK Digital Walking App**

**Executive Summary**

The Community Engagement Manager, working in partnership with the Wiltshire History Centre, Public Health Wiltshire, Wiltshire Ramblers and the Open University, is seeking to develop a mobile phone application to enable local people to create their own healthy, local history walks in the Wiltshire area. The Application will be available to download on smartphones and it will list local walks and walking groups in the area. Users will be able to map and create their own walks, add content such as history, car parks, shops, pubs and promote these walks via social media. A funding bid has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support the cost of developing the application and a contribution is now sought from the Melksham area board.

**Proposal**

The history walks proposal is set out in the Wiltshire Project Bank on the 'Our Community Matters' website and is attached as **Appendix 1**. The proposed specification for the application is set out in **Appendix 2** (subject to further development and testing with users). The Melksham area board is being requested to allocate £1,000 to support the development of the application and the delivery of the project.

It is proposed that the app will map local walks and link this to local information (including materials held at Wiltshire History Centre) creating a series of history, landscape and wildlife walks as well as family treasure hunts. The app will make it simple for local community groups to create and manage their own walks; adding waypoints on a map with short information articles about the sites on route. Users who download the app will then be able to enjoy the walks and – if they wish - join their local walking group or meet up with other local walkers. Over time it is hoped that the app will list hundreds of well maintained, safe walks in the area suitable for all ages and abilities. The app will include a social network, allowing users to add comments and notes about the walk that can be viewed by the wider user community.

The app will target health issues by logging each users' walks and providing that information in a simple to use dashboard, making it easy for people to track their own health goals or exercise plans. The app will also be useful for linking up people at risk of loneliness with local groups, social walks and likeminded individuals. Health trainers and other professionals will be able to refer people to the app for rehabilitation following diagnosis of certain conditions and track the progress of patients.

The Open University is acting as academic sponsor for this project, bringing extensive knowledge and learning about the development of digital health solutions. They will also assist with the development of the app and the involvement of users that is planned before launch. The Community Engagement Manager will oversee the management of the app and its promotion to local communities, parish councils and walking groups in the area.

**Reasons for Proposal**

The mobile app directly addresses several key JSA priorities: loneliness and isolation; healthy lifestyles; mental health and positive activities for older people, providing free, sustainable activities for all with proven health and cultural benefits.

**Recommendation**

That Melksham area board supports the development of the OurWALK app and allocates £1,000 towards its development, subject to match funding being received from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**Rhys Schell**

Melksham Community Engagement Manager

## **WILTSHIRE PROJECT BANK**

### **Local history walks**

*“Cardiovascular disease is one of the major causes of death in under 75s in England.” –  
Wiltshire JSA*

A history walk can bring the past to life, telling the story of a community and the people who have lived there over the centuries. Walking is an excellent way to look after your heart and stay fit and active into older age. Combining history, walking and healthy living, what is not to love about local history walks?

#### **In a nutshell:**

A local history walk is produced by a community. Usually, this involves researching the history of a place, its significant events, its historic buildings, landscape and wildlife. Volunteer researchers, use existing archives but also collect photos and materials from residents and plot these on a map, before linking this up with a circular walk. These walks can be available to download and print from the internet, to buy in the village shop or to use in a special mobile phone app. History walks are cheap to create and once they exist they exist forever.

#### **What makes this project special?**

When a village comes together to create a history walk it is great because it helps record and document local history in a way that makes it available for everyone. It helps communities capture historical documents and photographs that may exist in attics and bottom drawers, taking these and putting them online forever. Producing a local history walk brings people together and creates a healthy activity that can be enjoyed by everyone. If many villages and towns create history walks then soon there will be a whole network of walks available across Wiltshire. This will encourage more visitors and tourists boosting local trade for local shops, restaurants, pubs, bed and breakfast and hotels. It will also get more people out into the countryside, enjoying positive healthy activity.

Local history walks provide gentle, low-impact exercise that's easy, free and available to everyone – here's why walking rocks:

- History walks strengthen your heart and lower your risk of disease.
- History walks help you lose weight and get fit.
- History walks can help prevent dementia.
- History walks tone up your legs, bums and tums.
- History walks can boost vitamin D and make you feel more relaxed.
- History walks are great for everyone, families, young and old.
- History walks can boost your energy levels.
- History walks help us record local history and tell the story of our communities.
- History walks will increase your appreciation of where you live.
- History walks can bring in tourists and visitors.

## OurWALK V.1.0

### Draft specification for Mobile Application

OurWALK (working name), is a mobile application designed for IOS and Android devices, providing users with the ability to map their local walks, add content and share with a community of users. The proposed features of V 1.0 of the application are detailed below.

#### User interface

- Standard Users - walkers/general public who download to their device
- Walk Admin - a user who creates a social walking group
- OurWALK Admin – users with access to backend data and settings.

#### Scope/scale

- Anticipated that users could total 5,000-10,000 in Wiltshire alone
- Scalable to offer facilities to other counties and countries.
- Paid app (minimal download fee) to generate income to cover hosting and future development
- Fees for host admin facility (not individual walk admins).

#### User functions

- Friendly intuitive user interface on the home screen – find a walk, create a walk, join a local walking group, find a walking companion, view your dashboard, etc
- Sign-in with social accounts – Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc.
- Ability to find walks on a map with a postcode search, or auto GPS ‘find walks near me’ function. *KEY FEATURE*
- Create a walk facility – simple interface with step by step instructions *KEY FEATURE*
  - Record a walk
  - Add a walk map based input
- Add Waypoints
  - Add way finders, text and images. *KEY FEATURE*
  - Add info and way points. *KEY FEATURE*
- Ability to download walk for areas where 3G/4G is non-existent (users can pre-download and still do the walk with GPS)
- A ‘start walk’ function that tracks progress, speed, distance, calories burnt, etc. This requires users to configure their own app - weight/height/gender/age, etc
- A compass (using built in device compass and maps) and route finder function.
- Ability to add waypoint markers with info – photos, history, narrative entries. *KEY FEATURE*
- Info points – views, photo points, places to eat and drink, parking places, etc. *KEY FEATURE*
- Users can add waypoints for their group, approved by group admin
- Possible sound files for narrative – guided walk function. *OPTION*
- Guided tour feature – follow the route at home before walking.
- Ability to click a ‘done this walk’ button and collect walks in a personal diary - (possibly some reward/incentive function, badges, etc)
- Ability to set ‘personal goals.’
- Ability to ‘favourite’ walks
- Ability to add comments – ‘this stretch is very muddy in winter, bring your wellies’

- Group comments
- Individual walk comments
- Waypoint comments
- General Comment
- Right of Access issues
- Lost and Found
- Group Alert
- Comment categories
- A social share facility – Facebook, Twitter, etc (I have just completed this great walk with OurWALK with link to app and a promo image). *KEY FEATURE*

## Backend admin functions

- See new comments and moderate comments
- Add updates and alerts ('there is a bull in this field at the moment so please take care')
- Promote walk function – social share 'Stuck for ideas this weekend? Why not do this great walk with OurWALK' – maybe custom messages? *KEY FEATURE*
- Broadcast messages to community – 'Version 1.2 release – new features'
- Video tutorial - link to YouTube
- Support links
  - Walking Groups
  - Council based links/numbers etc
  - Emergency contacts
  - Admin details
  - Log Walk issue (for example walk closed symbol, walk open symbol)
- Track statistics – miles walked, walks completed, number of walkers, calories burned, most popular walks, etc. Broken down by walk, by admin and in totality across the app– for performance monitoring. *KEY FEATURE*

## Post V 1.0 features

- Adding Treasure points on walks (to encourage families/young people)
- Walking challenges, collect special items, etc.
- Charity walks – 'sponsor me' function
- Ability to generate sponsorship/advertising - claim/buy a waypoint
- Ability to sell related items – shop front.

## Development principles

- Key focus on user experience
- User involvement in development and testing – work to involve different categories of walkers and users
- Academic input from Open University
- Partnership project lead by Wiltshire Ramblers but delivered by Wiltshire Council communities team
- Social enterprise model
- Self-sustaining financially
- Promotional materials for hotels, B&B, libraries, TIC, etc.
- Social media campaign materials
- Promotional banners and materials for use at events, locations.