



Shropshire's
**GREAT
OUTDOORS**



Outdoor Partnerships

Report for Public Health 2016/17



Shropshire's Great Outdoors is good for you!

Contents		Page
1.0	Summary	3
2.0	Introduction	4
3.0	Activity in 2016/17	5
3.1	Walking for Health	5
3.2	Shropshire Wild Teams	7
3.3	Volunteer Rangers	9
3.4	Parish Paths Partnerships	11
3.5	Community Payback Scheme	13
3.6	Shropshire's Great Outdoors	14
3.7	Social media	14
4.0	Meeting Public Health and Adult Social Care Outcomes	15
4.1	Active Aging	16
4.2	Chronic Disease Management	17
4.3	Everybody Active Every Day	17
4.4	Public Health Outcomes	18
4.5	Adult Social Care Outcomes	23
5.0	Next Steps	27
6.0	Conclusion and Recommendations	28
7.0	Further Information	28

1.0 Summary

Public Health allocated the Outdoor Partnership's Service £200,000 funding in 2016/17 to develop active volunteering and improve outdoor recreation provision.

Through this funding, volunteering, route and site improvements and Walking for Health participation is increasing, especially in the over 65s and research shows that the work is:

- Increasing physical activity, including for those who were previously 'inactive'
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Providing facilities that encourage everyone to be more active more often
- Promoting opportunities to easily get more active

The funding enables the Service to better deliver against Public Health England's **Everybody Active Every Day** vision by:

- Creating a more active society through volunteering and Walking for Health
- Improving partnership working between health and environmental professionals
- Delivering 'making every contact count'
- The development of active environments, with easier access and easy to follow trails

We deliver against **Public Health Framework Indicators**:

- PHOF 1.16 Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons
- PHOF 2.12- Excess weight in adults
- PHOF 2.13i- Percentage of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week (increase)
- PHOF 2.13ii- The percentage of adults classified as 'inactive' (decrease)

Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships-

Key facts and figures 2016/17

- ✓ 1,177 volunteers, mostly 55+ years old
- ✓ 1,818 people took part in Walking for Health, with 56 active groups, 30% joined this year and numbers are growing
- ✓ 26% of new starters are inactive, compared to 3% of participants
- ✓ 64% of Walking for Health participants are over 65, with 20% being over 75
- ✓ 47% have one or more long term conditions
- ✓ 52% of Walking for Health participants claim to do 150 mins of physical activity per week
- ✓ There were 51 Wild Team volunteers, 5 of whom went on to find work
- ✓ 375 Parish Paths Partnership volunteers are involved with the 71 active groups- mostly retired men, with 16% more hours committed
- ✓ 103,000 users researched outdoor activity using the Shropshire's Great Outdoors website
- ✓ 170 stiles were replaced by gates to make access to the countryside easier for those with limited mobility
- ✓ 2 schools got involved in the Healthy Outdoors for Schools pilot, benefiting 376 children

Outdoor Partnership also contributes to **Adult Social Care outcomes**. As a result of volunteering, Walking for Health and the provision of parks and sites and easier access:

- People get more involved in their community

- Make more friends and become more sociable
- Feel better in themselves
- Keep active longer
- Have a better quality of life

All of this means that the Outdoor Partnerships Service is helping people to remain independent longer, reducing reliance on Adult Social Care provision.

In 2017/18, following the resignation of one of the Walking Coordinators, the Walking for Health scheme will now be coordinated by two members of staff, with other funding recruiting a new Volunteer Ranger Coordinator and an assistant for the Wild Teams. This is to increase numbers of over 50s involved in volunteering on parks and sites and to increase the capacity of the Wild Teams, benefiting more people.



2.0 Introduction

The Outdoor Partnerships Service in Shropshire Council received £200,000 funding from Public Health in 2016/17 to develop active volunteering and improve outdoor recreation provision across the county through Rights of Way, Open Access Land, Country Parks and Heritage Sites. Our priorities are to improve people's health and wellbeing and to support local communities to get active outdoors. We also support the natural environment and tourism economy, through the management and development of recreational access in Shropshire. Active volunteering includes:

- Walking for Health - volunteer-led guided walks, mostly for those over 55
- Shropshire Wild Teams- conservation volunteering for those with physical or mental health issues
- Parish Paths Partnerships and Wardens- practical work to maintain and promote Rights of Way
- Volunteer Rangers- on-site conservation volunteering

Some pilot work was also carried out to test our involvement with other target audiences:

- Healthy Outdoors for Schools
- John Muir Award for the Community Payback Teams
- Walking in the Workplace

This report demonstrates how the funding has been effectively invested to help achieve Public Health and Adult Social Care preventive outcomes, working towards a 'Happy, Healthy, Green, More Active Shropshire'. The work significantly contributes to the Public Health England's vision to get 'Everyone Active Every Day'. These outcomes are additional to any statutory obligations of the Service and would not be achieved without additional external funding.

3.0 Activity in 2016/17

There was increased activity in all the Outdoor Partnership schemes funded through Public Health, except Volunteer Rangers, which has suffered from insufficient staff capacity in recent years. This is why some of the Public Health funding will be redistributed to enable a dedicated coordinator to be employed.

3.1 Walking for Health

Walking for Health has been actively promoted by Shropshire Council for 13 years. Mick Dunn left us at the end of 2016 and the scheme is so successfully delivered by the volunteer walk leaders that we feel it can now be managed by the other two Walking Coordinators. The schemes have been split into north and south. Funding for these posts in 2016/17 was from the Public Health Dept. Funding has been committed by the Public Health Dept. to ensure this service continues in 2017/18 but the future of the work after this point is uncertain.

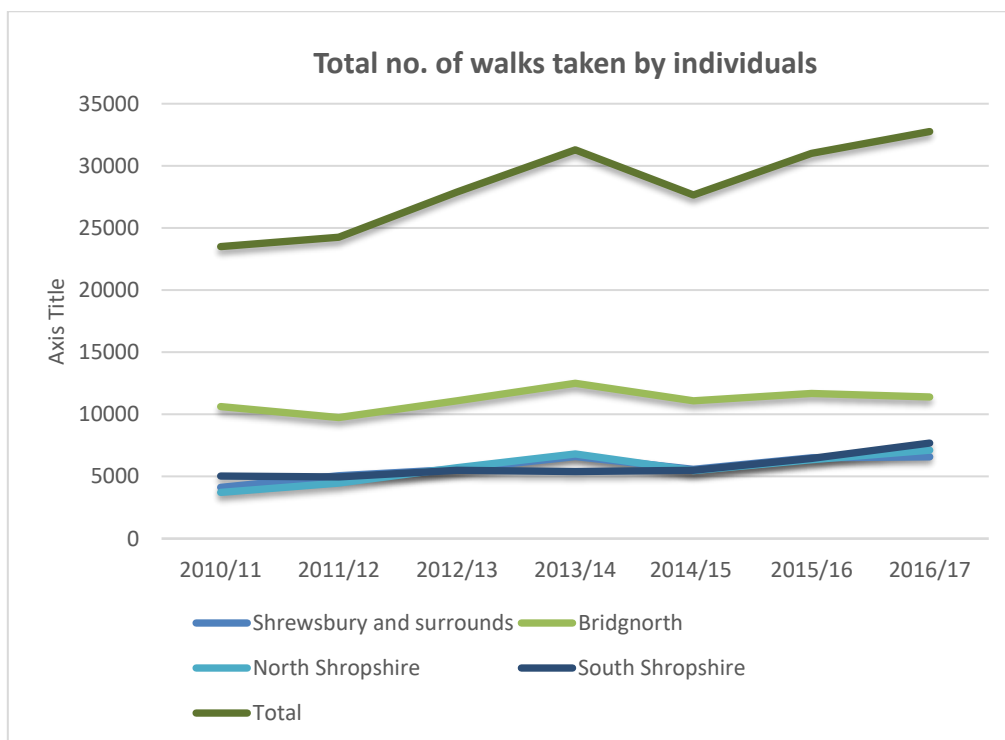
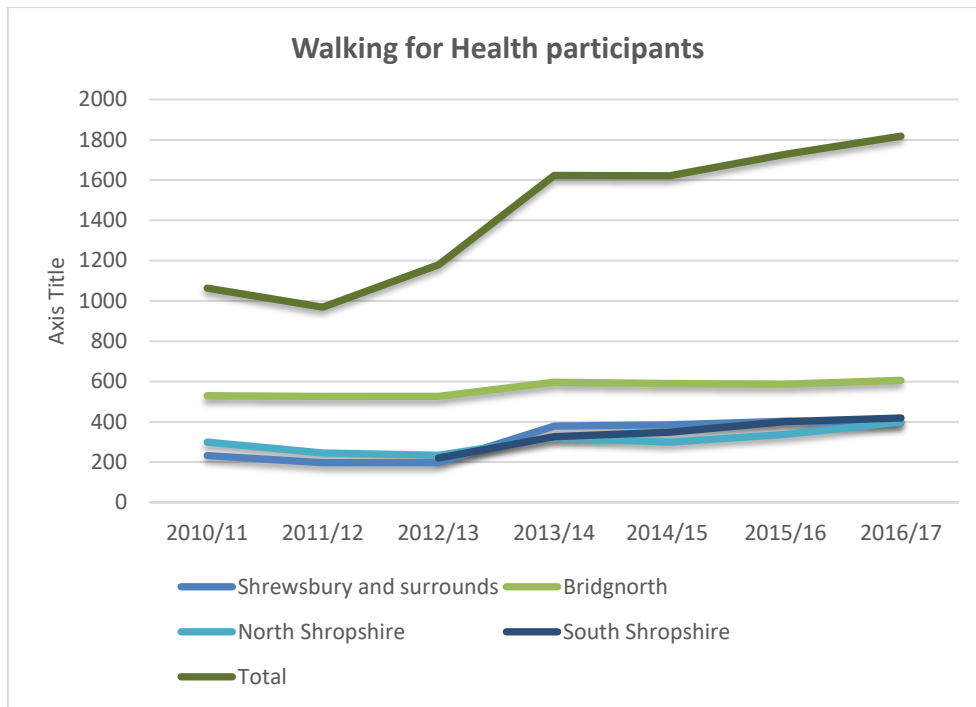


Key achievements

- 56 active groups throughout Shropshire (7 new groups in 2016/17)
- 1,818 participants, with around 700 walking weekly (a 5% increase on the previous year)
- 338 active volunteer walk leaders
- 63 new walks leaders trained
- 30% of participants joined this year, which is higher than the national average

Participants were most likely to be over 55 (86%) and female (58%). Only 5% were referred by a GP or health professional, so most walk of their own accord.





The number of walks taken by individual has steadily increased year on year, with almost 40% more walks taken since 2010/11.

Ongoing support from the Co-ordinators remains important, especially for the development of Level 1 and 2 walks, promotion of existing groups and creation of new groups.

"The Walking For Health Group in Oswestry are a great benefit to the service users who attend Avalon Day Opportunities. The service Users are encouraged to take part in a healthy activity whilst being part of the group and local community. The staff and the other members of the walk have been extremely supportive to our group. The Service Users look forward to this every week! Many thanks for all your hard work and long may it continue."

Avalon Day Care

"I am particularly grateful for your help at our Diabetes Awareness Programmes. We hold these around the county and I recognise that I have asked you to lead a 20 – 30 minute walk from various challenging starting points, and with a wide range of abilities! I realise that this causes you significant extra work in scoping out an appropriate route and doing the full risk assessment, for a large diverse group. The participants seem to have enjoyed the walks and it shows them that there really are no barriers to being more active – which is especially important with Diabetes."

Wise and Well Team

3.2 Shropshire Wild Teams

Shropshire Wild Teams provide volunteering opportunities in countryside management and other outdoor activities for people who most need support. The project especially caters for people with physical disabilities and mental health issues including those receiving support from health or care services. The Wild Teams are co-ordinated by a full-time officer.

The teams travel around Shropshire's amazing landscapes taking on projects such as:

- Ground clearance
- Habitat management
- Footpath maintenance
- Hedge laying
- Gate installation
- Wildlife survey work

Volunteers can also take part in other activities such as walking, basic map reading, natural navigation and bushcraft, including foraging and tracking skills (and any other preferences voiced within each team).

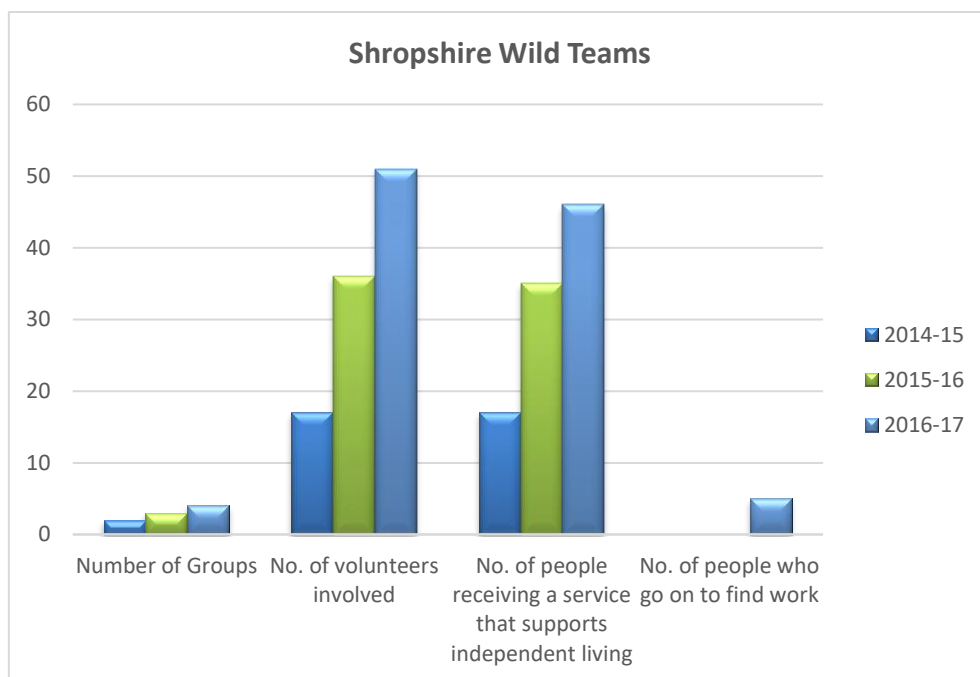


The Project Officer supports team members to develop their skills and introduces them to the network of outdoor professionals, as well as familiarising them to new landscapes and environments. As individual and group confidence builds the Project Officer will support the group

to become self-sustaining, and then take a step back from direct on the ground support while the team continues to run as the local Shropshire Wild Team for their area.

Key Achievements

- Volunteer numbers have grown to 51 over the past 12 months.
- Four teams currently running, based around Craven Arms, Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Bridgnorth.
- 5 people have gone on to find work.
- 3,217 volunteer hours have been committed through the work of the Wild Teams. This is up 35% in the past 12 months.



The nature of the project and the personal issues the volunteers are experiencing means the Wild Teams are resource intensive and numbers are necessarily small but the benefits can be fantastic, including:

- Increased personal and social confidence
- Overcoming depression, anxiety and agoraphobia
- Reduction in self harm incidents
- Skills development

"I am proud to be part of the Bridgnorth Zombie Army. I have made a lot of friends in the group and it is helping me make friends and socialise a lot more than I am used to. It's a positive for me mentally and physically. It make a change to make friends instead of enemies. I look forward to Thursdays because I am doing something positive with my life and I really enjoy the work. I have seen a lot of the Shropshire Wilderness. I have made a lot of friends."

Wild Team Volunteer

"As a support worker within a CMHT I regularly support service users to attend. I have seen many good outcomes of increased confidence, sense of pride through achievement, and increase in self-worth. This has led to several attendees being able to be discharged from CMHT support due to the benefits attending has brought.

One attendee in our group was able to secure paid employment as a direct result of attending. The Wild Team is a great resource that mental health services can benefit from. "

CHMT Support Worker

3.3 Volunteer Rangers

Shropshire Council owns and manages some of the most iconic heritage sites in Shropshire, from The Mere at Ellesmere and Severn Valley Country Park, to heritage sites such as Llanymynech Limeworks and Snailbeach Mine.

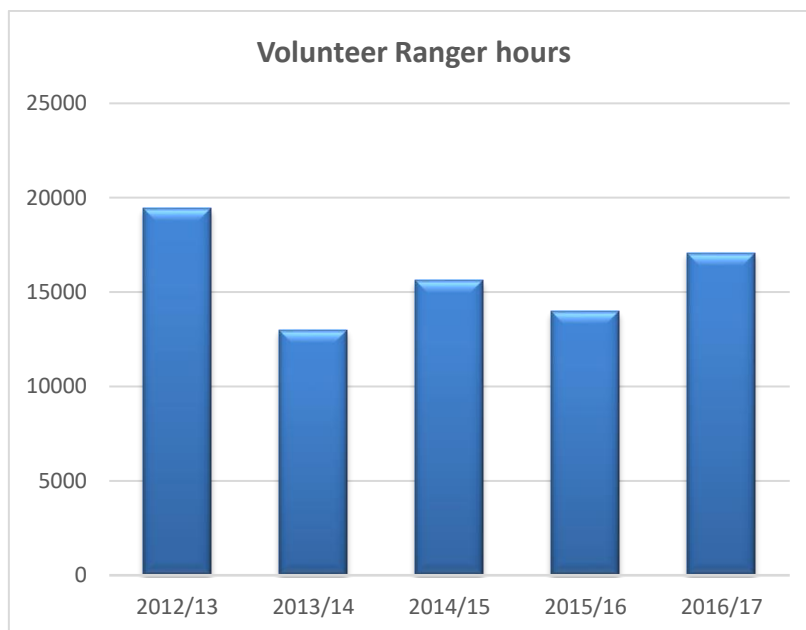
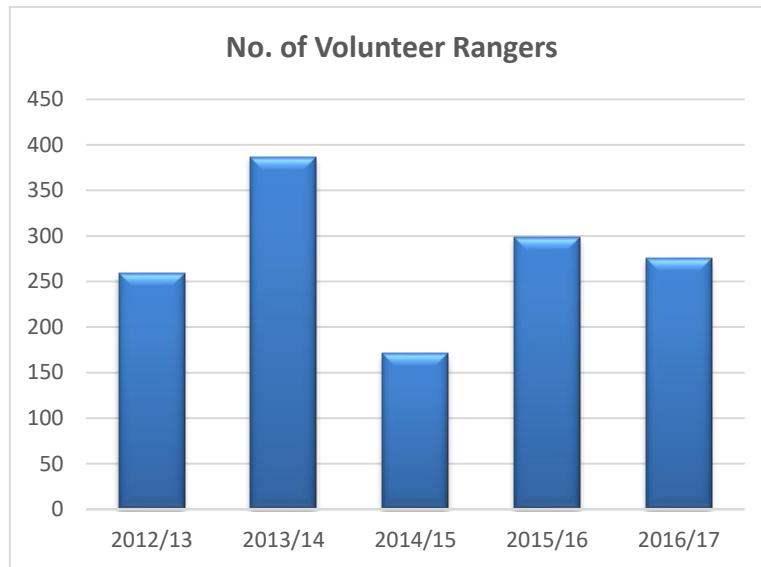


Support for volunteering has varied across the county depending on staff capacity. At Severn Valley Country Park, where there has been more sustained officer support, a committed volunteer team meet weekly and are integral to the successful management of the site. There are now 23 regular volunteers, making this the largest Outdoor Partnerships volunteer group across the county. In the north of the county, staff time has been diluted across a high number of urban greenspaces. These were allocated to the Environmental Maintenance department in 2016/17, with a view to them being offered to Town and Parish Councils. This should improve the capacity for volunteer support on the Country Park and Heritage Sites in 2017/18.

Further staff capacity has been secured through an apprentice at Severn Valley Country Park and a student placement is due to start in September 2017 at The Mere.

Key Achievements

- There are 260 volunteers helping manage the sites. Numbers have reduced from last year following the handover of the urban greenspaces.
- 15,989 hours of volunteer time was committed, equivalent to 8 full-time members of staff. Over 14,000 were in the south of the county. This is a remarkable achievement given the capacity issues of the team.



Customer feedback

“Through the Shropshire County Council website, I was put in touch with Shaun Burkey in response to my enquiry regarding the possibility of installing a memorial bench on Brown Moss.

He could not have done any more to help me. From suggesting possible sites on a map, along with photographs of these positions, he has arranged the whole operation, along with help from his colleague Mike Simms. He has kept me informed throughout, and today sent photos to show the bench in its beautiful spot. I really am so very impressed by the effort Shaun made to make sure everything went smoothly.

Brown Moss was loved by my parents throughout their lives, and I cannot think of a better memorial than this. Hopefully it will be enjoyed and appreciated by many other locals too.”

Resident

“Just to say thank you to you and your smashing team for a great Trail Race yesterday. The course was lovely and all the Marshalls were great, very encouraging!!! I thought the event was well organised and I will definitely be back.”

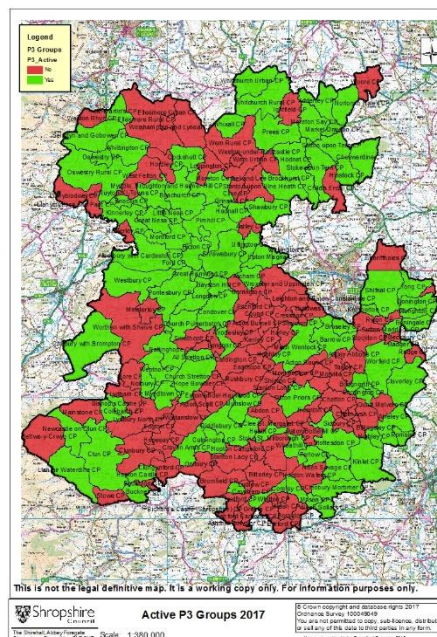
Participant in the Severn Valley Trail Run

3.4 Parish Paths Partnerships

The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme has been running for over 20 years in Shropshire. The scheme encourages local groups of volunteers to help manage and maintain their local network of Rights of Way network through a variety of activities. The Outdoor Partnerships Team supports this through the supply of tools, training, materials, expert advice and small grants.

The benefits if this are numerous, including:

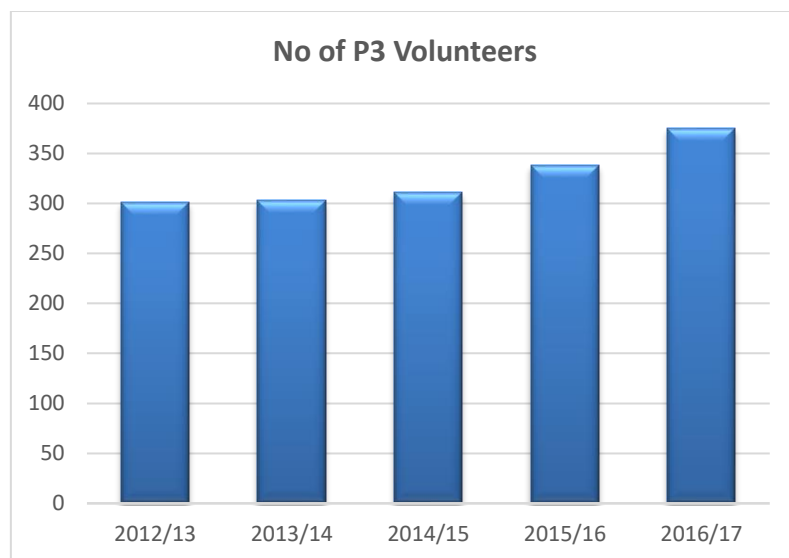
- Assistance in maintaining a huge network of paths that otherwise would fall into disrepair
- Local prioritisation for maintenance
- Benefits to participants in physical and mental health
- Economic benefit through an improved tourism resource locally and information for visitors
- Increased opportunities for others to enjoy the network locally, with the health benefits that arise from this
- Ability to draw in funding that otherwise would not be available to Shropshire Council



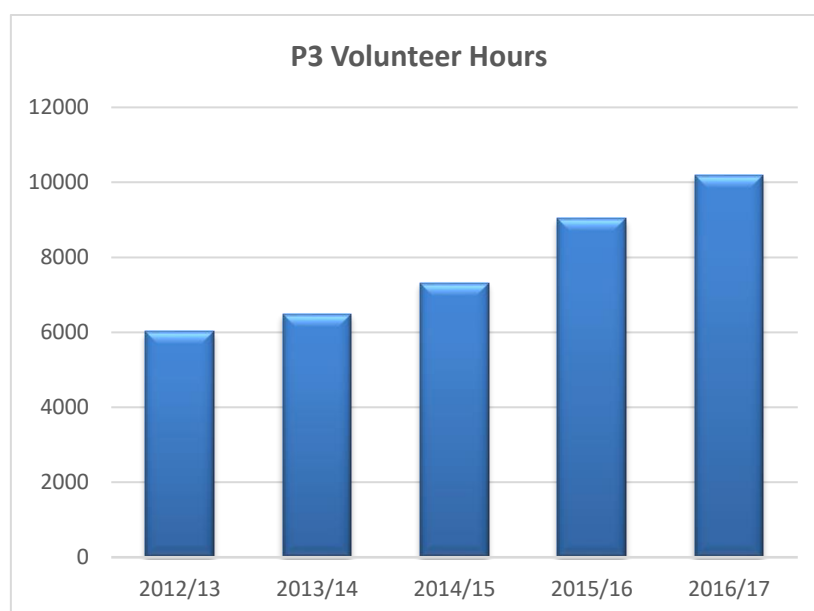
P3 support is a shared role between the Parish Paths Partnership Officer and the Area Rights of Way Officer. The success of this scheme shows how helpful it is to have a full time dedicated member of staff.

Key Achievements

- The number of volunteers involved with Parish Paths Partnership groups has grown to 375 in 2016/17.



- Group numbers have increased to 71 active groups from 55 at the end of 2012/13. This is despite losing some previously active groups, which is inevitable as people move away or become unable to tackle the more physical tasks.
- Recorded hours of activity have increased from 8,320 to over 10,000, this is an increase of 16% compared to last year's figures and it is worth noting that not all volunteer's hours are reported back to us.



Customer Feedback

"I attended, for the first time, the Parish Paths Partnership AGM at Nesscliffe Village hall near the end of last year. It was a wonderful and well organised day. The Shropshire Council Officers were brilliant and enthusiastic. It was an inspiring event. Thank you!"

Comment from the User Survey

"In the last two years our P3 group has grown from three to thirteen keen volunteers. This has come about through encouraging local walkers to help out when they can, whilst others have noticed the improvements and been motivated to join the group. Much of our work is focused on the Shropshire Way and the Walkers are Welcome leaflets around Bishops Castle. We now have four volunteers trained to use the brushcutter and we have all learnt new skills and become fitter in our outdoor gym."

"We have put in sets of steps, repaired and replaced stiles, installed a number of kissing gates and cut back an overgrown hedgerow along a section of the Shropshire Way on the edge of town. Thanks to Helen and David from SCC Outdoor Partnership for providing vehicular access across farmland and the skills training."

Bishop's Castle P3 volunteer



3.5 Community Payback Scheme

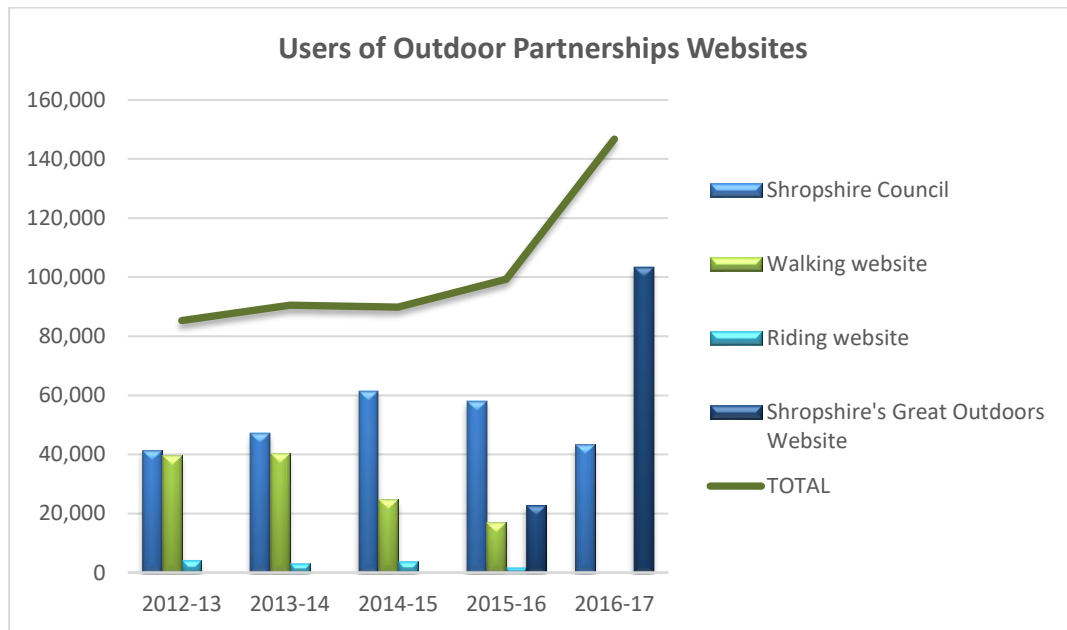
Outdoor Partnerships has spent the past three years working closely with Warwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company. They have contributed 7,295 hours to parks, sites and Rights of Way management, equivalent to £56,536 of labour.

A pilot scheme was introduced in 2016 to introduce the John Muir Award to participants. In total 23 people took part in the award to a varying degree, completing a total of 65 days. However only 11 participants achieved the required number of days to gain an award. The majority of participants entered into the spirit of the scheme but due to a variety of factors could not commit to enough sessions.



3.6 Shropshire's Great Outdoors website

The new 'Shropshire's Great Outdoors' website was officially launched at Easter 2016. Since then we have seen over 100,000 users, which far exceeds the number of people using our website previously and we have had some excellent feedback. 76% of people using it are under 45 years old which is very different from the 61% over 55s that reply to the User Survey or volunteer with us. We need to make sure that marketing is targeted at the younger age groups as well as the people we commonly work with.



This means that many more people are finding walking, cycling and riding routes and being made aware of the volunteering and other opportunities across the county.

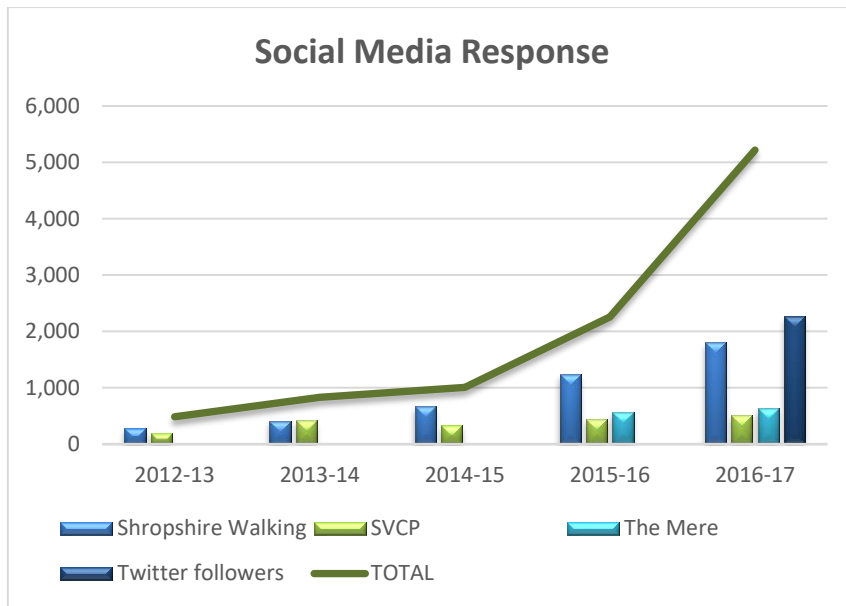
Customer Feedback

"Having lived near Bridgnorth for a number of years I have always enjoyed the Shropshire countryside and local walks. Imagine my pleasure on recently finding your website Shropshire's Great Outdoors. Having now tried some of the walks my congratulations to whoever has pulled together this little treasure trove of information. I know we are often free in our criticism of SCC but this website is, in my opinion, excellent. The level of information, ability to drill down by different criteria, and its understated health message are just right."

Resident

3.7 Social Media

Social media continues to become more and more popular, reflected by the growth in people 'liking' our Facebook pages and following us on Twitter.



The volunteer groups are increasingly creating their own Facebook accounts for their groups as well.

4.0 More people, more active, more often-

Meeting Public Health and Adult Social Care Outcomes

“Being physically active significantly reduces the risk of several major health conditions and can assist in the treatment and management of various conditions. Regular physical activity improves control of blood sugar in patients with type 2 diabetes; it plays an important role in cardiac rehabilitation and can help people with peripheral vascular disease walk further before the onset of leg pain. It is also beneficial in rehabilitation programmes for stroke and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients.

Physical activity is also beneficial for mental health, and it can be as effective as antidepressants or psychotherapy in treating mild or moderate depression, particularly in the longer term. The charity Mind recommends that ‘ecotherapy’ — outdoor physical activity — should be recognised as a clinically valid treatment for mental distress.”

Walking for Health ‘Demonstrating your impact’ report 2016¹

By engaging in walking and being supported to live active lifestyles, Outdoor Partnerships is helping delay onset of and manage chronic conditions and encourage active aging, resulting in a reduction in demand of health and social care services. It is not known how many of those taking part are current users of care services and it is anticipated that the activity is preventative and supports an ‘active ageing’ agenda.

The activity is all free of charge and open to all. More detail is shown under each of the outcomes below.

4.1 Active Aging

“Older people are less physically active. Physical activity has particular benefits to older people, yet activity levels decline notably with age. Staying active keeps older people healthy and independent for longer, strengthens bones and reduces the risk of falls. Active older adults are 30–50% less likely to develop functional limitations than inactive people, and can reduce their risk of hip fractures by up to 68%.”

Walking for Health ‘Demonstrating your impact’ report 2016ⁱⁱ

Active volunteering and Walking for Health in Shropshire is helping:

- More people be active- 1,177 volunteers and 1,818 walkers be more active for longer
- Older people be more active- 62% of all Walking for Health participants are over 65 (compared to 53% nationally), with 20% over 75.
- People to be active more often- 31% of walkers claim they are doing the required 150 minutes of exercise per week, with 87% saying that being involved with Walking for Health had resulted in at least a moderate increase in activity.
- Improve people’s health- 93% of participants felt that Walking for Health had improved their health.

Evidence from surveys of Parish Paths Partnership volunteers shows that participation

- increases activity levels,
- makes volunteers feel more part of the community and
- helps people make friends, as demonstrated by this quote from one of the volunteers:

“Last Friday, I was past the gate we installed (my wife wanted to see what the latest madness was that I had been up to). We were looking at the gate and there was an elderly gentleman in the field, walking with the aid of a stick. He had a big smile on his face and asked if we knew who had put the gate in. I explained that we had and about the P3 groups. He said that we had made his day as it was 15 years since he had been able to get into that field which was just a few minutes walk from his house. He asked that thanks to be passed to all concerned and encouraged us to keep up our marvellous work.”

P3 Volunteer

Walking for Health national and local surveys demonstrate that improved social interaction is the most important reason people get involved, closely followed by improvements to health. This is reiterated by local stories of those who have been recently widowed, for example, gaining tremendous solace from the groups and becoming part of a supportive network.

4.2 Chronic Disease Management

Physical activity plays a key role in the effective management of many long-term conditions. In Shropshire, 47% of participants join Walking for Health stage 1-3 walks with one or more long term illness. This is slightly higher than the national figures of 35%. These include

- 22% with high blood pressure, 6% with heart disease,
- 5% with diabetes,
- 7% with cancer and
- 7% with asthma.

Walking for Health helps people manage these conditions and all the active volunteering activity will help contribute to the delay or prevention of the onset of long term illness.

The work of the Wild Teams is specifically address those people with physical and mental health issues, who are users of existing services. There have been remarkable improvements to individuals, as shown by the quotes below. Five of the volunteers have gone on to find work.

Being part of wild teams has been instrumental in my recovery following a mental health problem last year. I had lost pretty much all my self confidence and self esteem. Working with a team on a variety of worthwhile environmental tasks has not only helped to rebuild my confidence it is also teaching me new skills which i can take with me when I return to work. Simon is genuine and very supportive in his role and wild teams is an important part of my week.

Volunteer

Partnership volunteering activity is in line with the following NICE guidance:

- PH8 2008 Physical activity and the environment
- PH17 2009 Promoting physical activity for children and young people
- PH41 2012 Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation



4.3 Everybody active every day

All Outdoor Partnership volunteering activity funded by Public Health supports the Public Health England's common vision to get everybody active every day, driving a radical shift in the take-up of physical activity at scale – and making it a routine part of daily life in Shropshire.

Active society: creating a social movement

Walking for Health, Parish Paths Partnerships, Volunteer Rangers and the Shropshire Wild Teams all help create fulfilling, fun, active groups that increase levels of activity and increase the feeling of community. By working with other organisations within the environmental and health sector, the work is helping reinforce the importance and benefits of physical activity to society.

Moving professionals: activating networks of expertise

The team has introduced 'making every contact count' as part of the training for volunteers and with staff.

The team engages with health professionals in secondary and community care to encourage the signposting of their customers to our Service. They also work with environmental professionals to encourage the prioritisation of healthy activities and the importance of the outdoor environment for physical and mental health.

The development of our country parks and heritage sites and promoted, easier access routes to encourage more people to get active is an integral part of the work we deliver, including the replacement of stiles with gates wherever possible. A further 170 stiles were replaced with gates in 2016/17.

Active environments: creating the right spaces

The Outdoor Partnership Service aims to develop public parks and access to the countryside, making it as easy as possible for everyone to get active locally. Public Health funding helps improve the infrastructure and management of the environment beyond the statutory minimum, with ease of access being a key focus. This might be in the form of gates instead of stiles or the development of easy to follow trails that are specially waymarked. The Walking for Life routes were checked and upgraded in 2016/17 as part of this work and these can be found among other walks in the 'health walks' category on the Shropshire's Great Outdoors website:

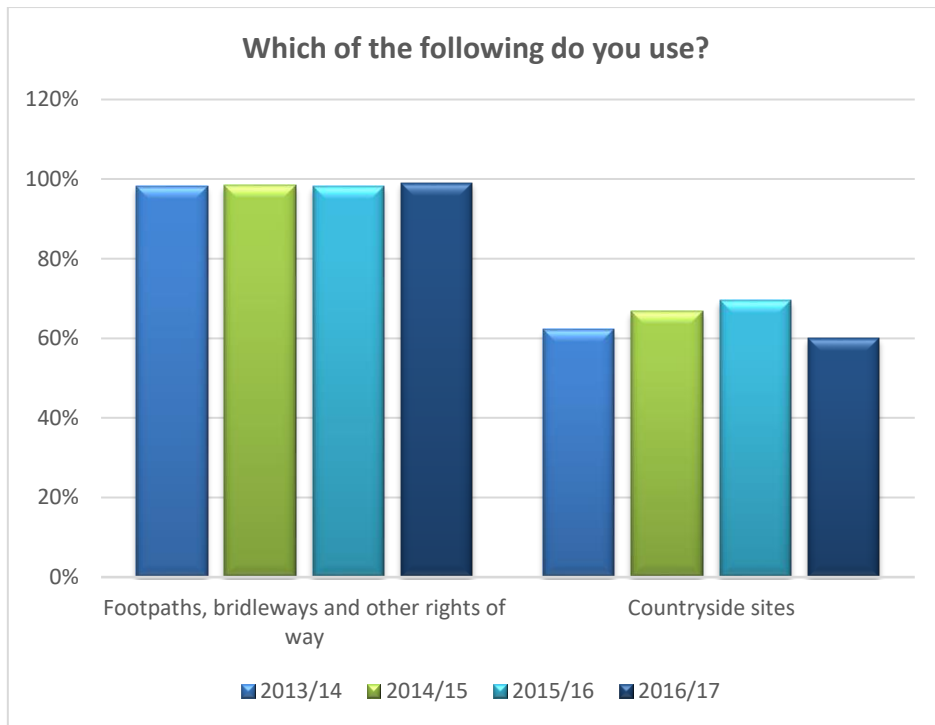
<http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/walking/>

4.4 Public Health Outcomes Framework Indicators

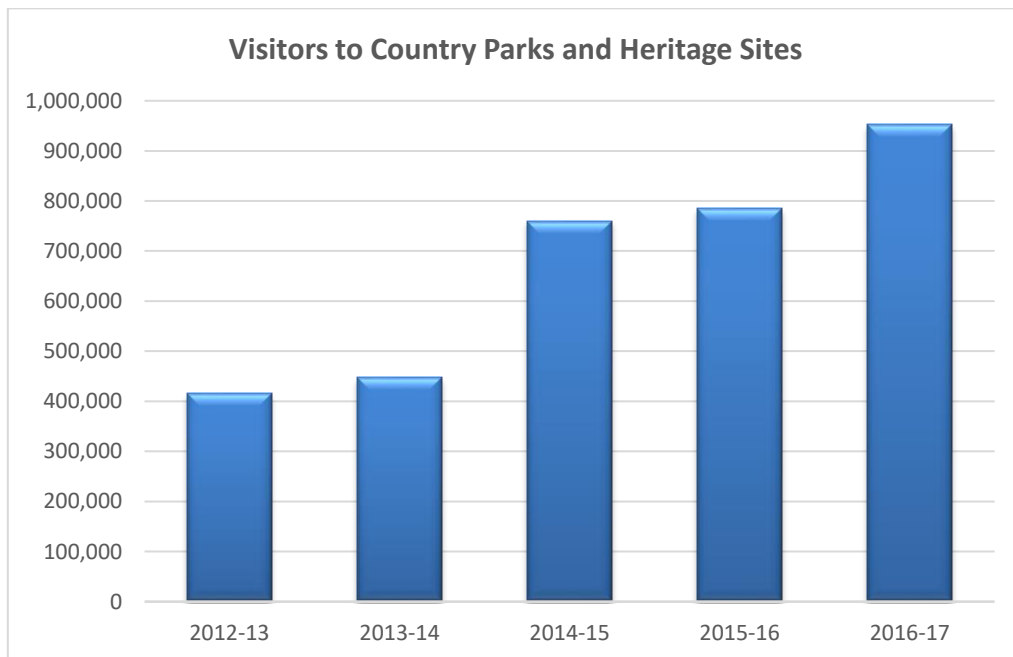
This activity is directly contributing to Public Health indicators. A number of surveys have been undertaken to demonstrate this and some examples are shown below.

PHOF 1.16- Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons (data source: Shropshire Annual User Survey, Parish Paths Partnerships Survey and national MENE survey)

There were 602 respondents to the 2016/17 Annual User Survey. 99% of these used Rights of Way, and 60% Countryside Sites.

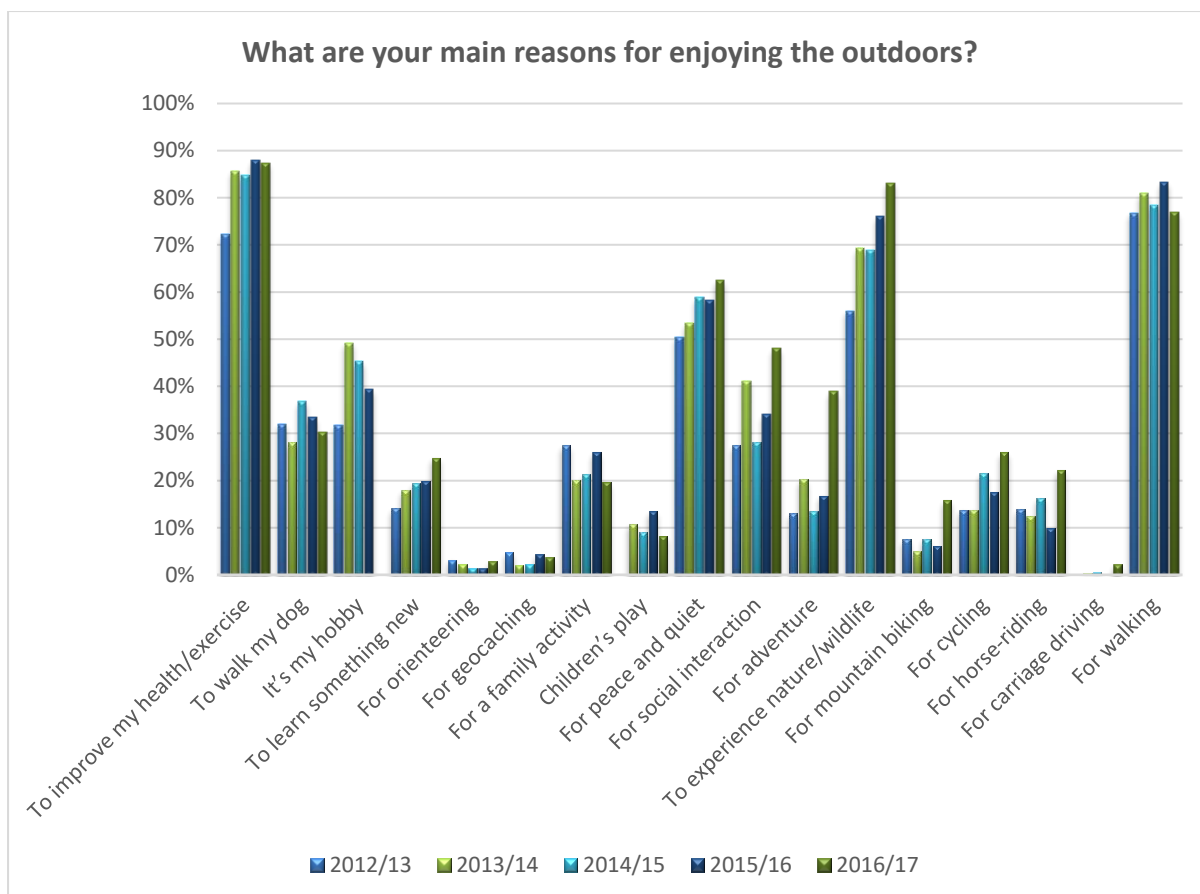


The fall in users of the Countryside Sites reflects the increase in responses from cyclists and 4x4 drivers, rather than a drop in visitors, as shown in the graph below.



There has been a marked increase in the use of Country Parks and Heritage Sites, which is reflected in an increase in visitor numbers recorded over the past four years.

87% of respondents used these facilities to 'improve my health/ exercise' and there has been a steady increase in this as the motivation for use from 72% in 2012/13.



The MENE data reflects this trend with 60% of people frequently visiting the natural environment in Shropshire weekly.

A significant proportion of those taking part in Walking for Health in Shropshire have chronic health issues. The table below shows the number of people with health issues when they become involved with Stage 1-3 walks with Walking for Health. 23% have high blood pressure, 8% asthma and 6% heart disease and diabetes.

37% of walkers in Shropshire had one or more long term illness compared to 35% nationally.

Chronic Disease	Total	Percentage
Diabetes	92	5%
High Blood Pressure	380	22%
COPD	15	1%
Heart Disease	78	5%
Asthma	122	7%
Cancer	116	7%
Total Shropshire	1720	

The following table shows that 62% of joiners in Shropshire are over 65, with a remarkable 20% over 75. This is an older demographic than that experienced nationally, with only 53% over 65. It also

makes clear that Shropshire Walking for Health is playing a significant role in helping older adults remain active.

Age at signing up	Total	Percentage
16-24	13	1%
25-34	35	2%
35-44	47	3%
45-54	106	6%
55-64	409	24%
65-74	721	42%
75-84	294	17%
85+	57	3%
Not Disclosed	38	2%

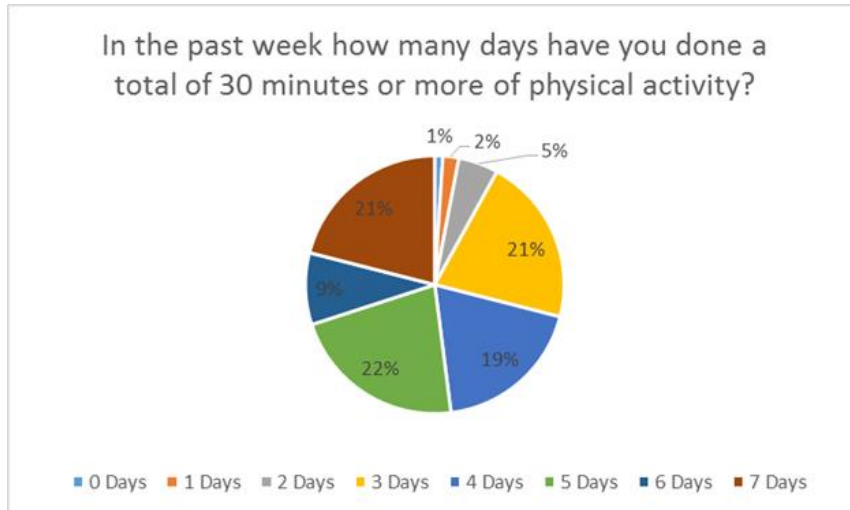
PHOF 2.12- Excess weight in adults

Regular walking can help contribute to weight loss, with someone weighing 300lb burning around 460 calories/ hour when walking at 2.5mphⁱⁱⁱ. Active volunteering session can take several hours and will also be using calories and potentially helping reduce or stabilise weight. Whilst this has not been monitored in terms of calories, there have been almost 32,761 walks taken by people through Walking for Health and nearly 40,000 hours of volunteering across the Service, which should be helping tackle excess weight.

PHOF 2.13i - Percentage of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week in accordance with UK CMO recommended guidelines on physical activity (increase)

26% of new walkers were inactive before joining Shropshire Walking for Health, demonstrating that we are successfully engaging those who will gain most through increased activity. In the Shropshire Walking for Health Survey in 2015 (shown below) completed by those who are actively involved in Walking for Health only 1% were inactive.

69% of new walkers reported not meeting the required level of 150 minutes of physical activity in 2016/17 in Shropshire, which is similar to national figures showing 14% and 64% respectively. In the 2015 survey only 48% of active participants were not meeting the required level, demonstrating a 20% drop between the two groups.

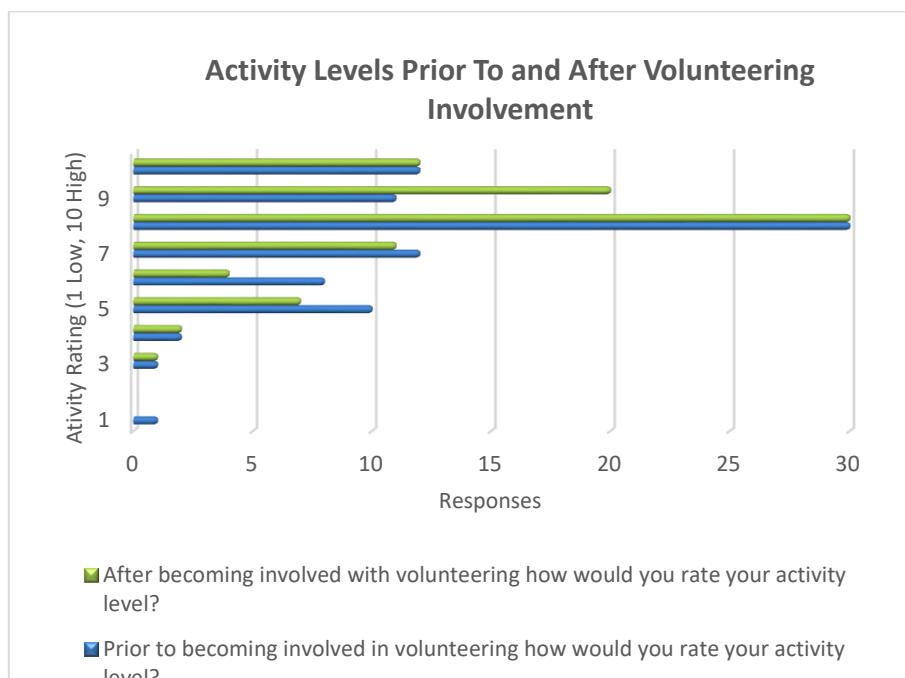


Levels of participant activity- Shropshire Walking for Health Survey 2015

1,177 volunteers completed approximately 40,000 hours of volunteering in 2016/17. Whilst this averages 34 hours each per year, we suspect that this under represents the time actually spent. It provides a regular contribution towards volunteers own physical activity level in addition to the wider benefits of volunteering, such as self-esteem and social connection.

Over 97% of walkers who participated in the survey cited as a benefit of the walks that they have made new friends, and over 91% said they have fun, over 50 % said they feel healthier and 100% said they would recommend it to a friend. As the majority of participants are over 65yr, this means that participation in WFH is making a contribution towards reducing social isolation, and loneliness.

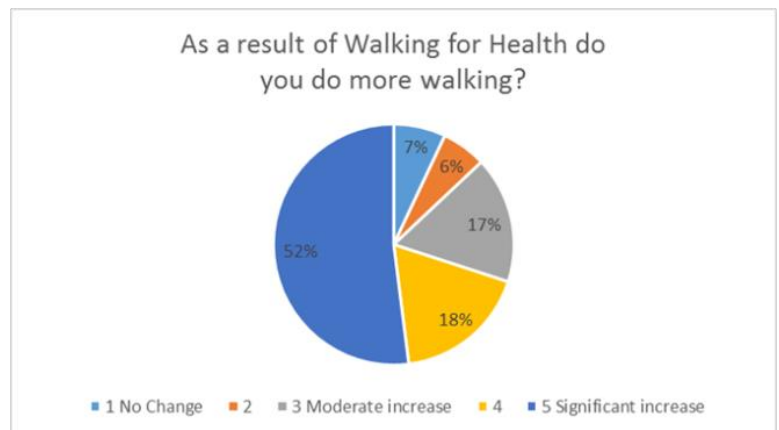
The graph below demonstrates the increase in activity levels of P3 volunteers before and since volunteering; demonstrating how active volunteering is increasing physical activity levels and addresses the risk of decreasing physical activity that is associated with older adults.



Regardless of activity levels at the start, the trend is that volunteers become more active: more people, more active, more often.

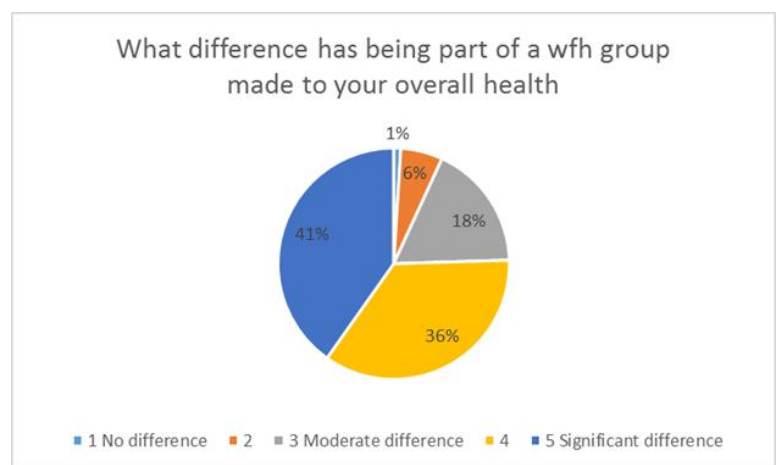
PHOF 2.13ii - The percentage of adults classified as "inactive" (decrease)

26% of new walkers joining the Walking for Health scheme are inactive, compared to only 3% reporting doing 30mins of physical activity or less a week in the Walking for Health participant's survey in 2015.



In addition the survey showed that 87% of people said that being involved with Walking for Health had resulted in at least a moderate increase in activity.

93% of people felt the Walking for Health group had improved their health.



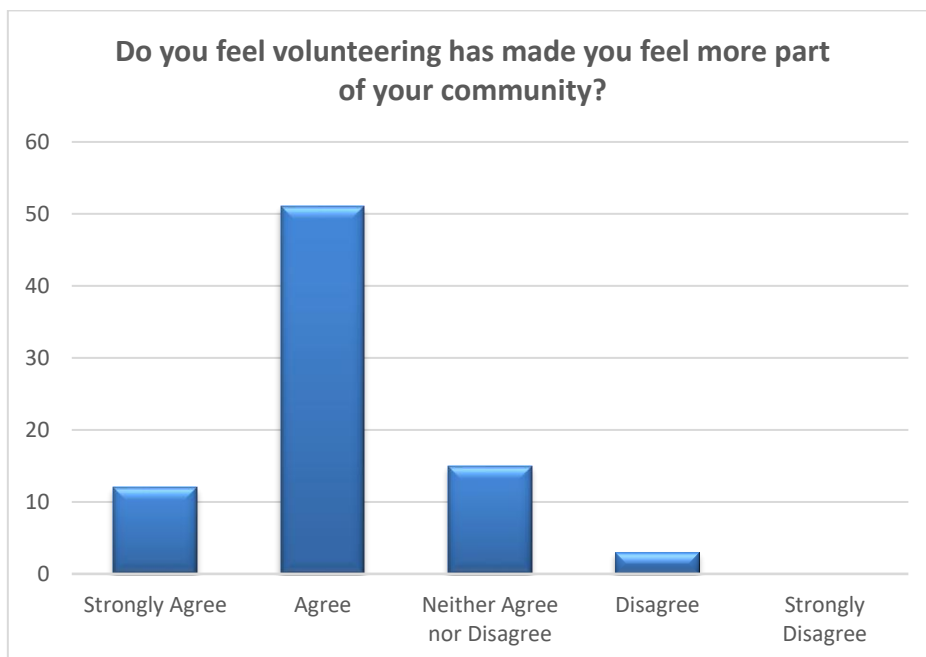
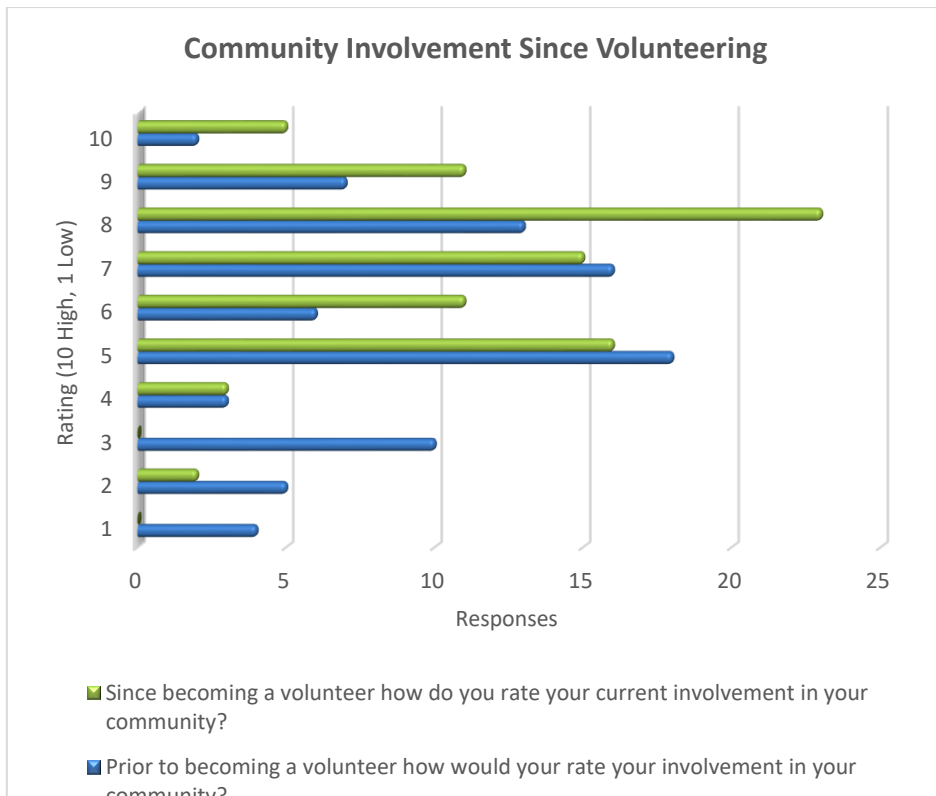
4.5 Adult Social Care Outcomes

By helping keep people physically and socially engaged active volunteering within Outdoor Partnerships and Walking for Health are contributing to the Adult Social Care preventive outcome;

“More people remaining independent in their own homes for longer and reduction in dependency on Council services, promoting greater confidence, self-esteem and quality of life for the individual.”

Some of the evidence to support this is mentioned below.

Registration forms sent out to new P3 groups asked whether being part of P3 improved their community involvement and social interaction, thus helping with active aging and sense of self-worth. The responses are shown below.



The benefits are backed up by a survey conducted with the Church Stretton Walking for Health participants, who said what coming on these walks meant to them:

- 'Helps you feel good'
- 'Friendly welcoming people'
- 'Caters for all abilities, cost free, regular and well organised. Friendly, good way to make new friends'
- 'Good way to make a lot of friends in the area and keep fit at the same time'

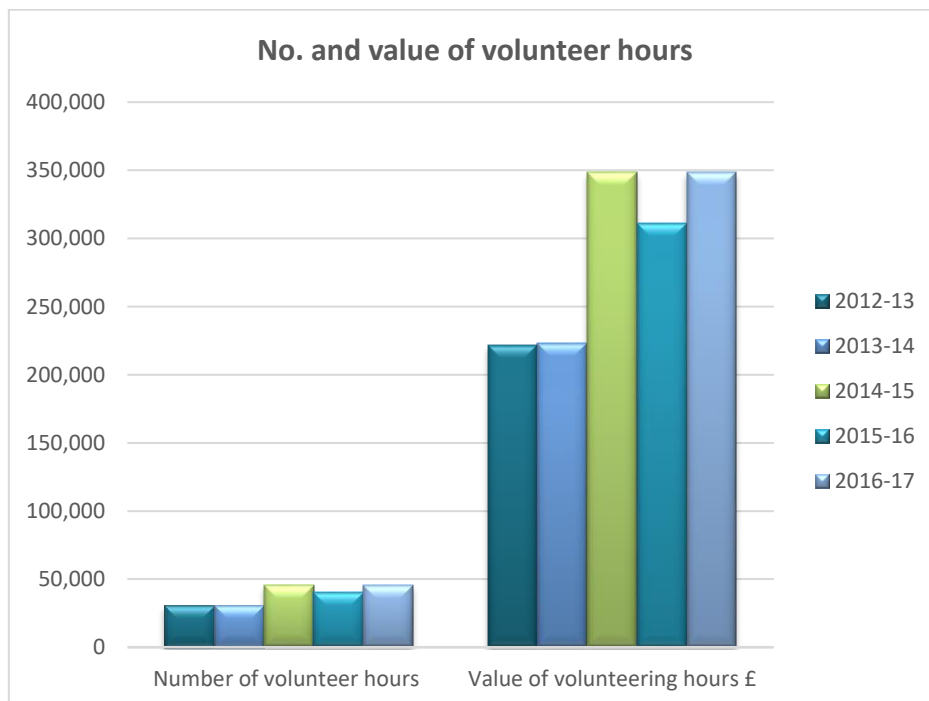
- ‘Regular exercise has improved my joint movement and flexibility’
- ‘Walking for Health offers a non – walker the opportunity of an easy way to join a walk where they will find encouragement and friendship’
- ‘Easier to walk with company’
- ‘Open to all varying ability and health’
- ‘You can turn up when you wish.’
- ‘Healthy and friendly. A nice form of exercise’.

Increased levels of volunteer recruitment in the county.

The Outdoor Partnership team relies on a range of dedicated residents from across the county to help deliver the Service. Without these fantastic volunteers the level of Service delivery would be significantly lower. In return, the team provide training, co-ordination and support but increasingly these groups are working independently, setting their own priorities locally, with minimum input from the team.

By volunteering to do physical tasks in the outdoors and to lead walking groups the volunteers are also helping themselves and others keep more physically active, more often and the volunteering programmes are therefore contributing to the Public Health ‘Everybody Active Every Day’ agenda and helping improve health and wellbeing locally.

The number of volunteer hours and the value of that time as grown from 2013-14. Volunteers are contributing the time of 20 full time members of staff.



There are a wide range of volunteering opportunities and other activities co-ordinated by Outdoor Partnerships that keep people physically and/ or mentally active:

- Local Access Forum

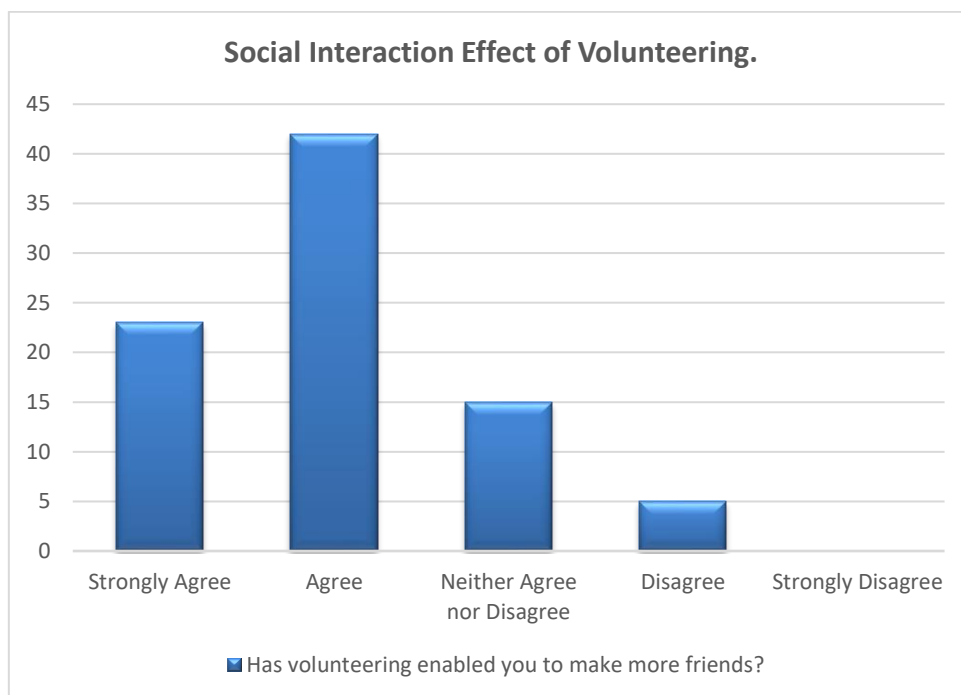
- Walking Forums
- LEADER Local Action Group
- Volunteer Rangers
- P3 Volunteers and Wardens
- Shropshire Wild Teams
- Walks leaders
- Walking for Health
- Corporate volunteering

The team would like to note their heartfelt thanks to everyone who volunteers with us.

Increased choices for individuals promoting better quality of life through increased social opportunities within the community.

The volunteer groups offer a range of choices for individuals, along with a support network within the local community. Individuals have reported that this makes a significant difference to their quality of life. Walking for Health walks leaders were discussing the support given to those recently widowed and the benefits it can bring to who are grieving.

Research carried out in 2015 with P3 volunteers demonstrated the importance of the P3 groups to individuals, with over 60% saying they have made more friends.



Enable individuals to have a wider range of choices in the activities they pursue

The Service works with 17 Day Centres, support services and Community Centres across the county on preventative activity, to support their preventative agenda and add to the quality of life of their service users.

5.0 Next Steps

Walking for Health schemes in Shropshire have been running for over 12 years and it is felt that they have reached the 80:20 point where a great deal of effort is being expended to secure the last 20% of participants. The scheme will be managed by two Walking Co-ordinators this year. Support will be focused on increasing participation in existing groups and First Step walks for those who are inactive, along with volunteer Walks Leader training and support.

A new approach to developing active volunteering across the service has been agreed for 2017/18. This includes the recruitment of a new Volunteer Ranger Co-ordinator and a Wild Team Assistant. The priorities will be:

- Getting inactive over 50s more active as a result of volunteering and Walking for Health
- Supporting people who have physical and mental health problems to become more active, utilising the outdoors and through supported volunteering
- Involvement in the Social Prescribing pilot for Oswestry

To enable us to better meet these priorities, the Parish Paths Officer will take on the role of Active Volunteering Co-ordinator and will lead on co-ordinating active volunteering across the Service, this includes:

- P3
- Volunteer Rangers
- Walking for Health walks leaders
- Shropshire Wild Teams

The new approach will include:

1. Organising a new monthly team meeting for all those involved in working with volunteers, to include:

This meeting will cover all aspects of volunteering and help co-ordinate activity, including:

- Training
- The Volunteer Manuals
- Public health budget
- Promotion, including the e-newsletters, social media and websites
- Recruitment of new volunteers
- Work programmes
- Tools
- Better joint working across teams
- Health and safety
- Adherence to the Shropshire Council Volunteering Policy

2. Managing the Public Health funding.

3. Developing externally funded projects, working with relevant officers.

4. Managing the new Volunteer Ranger Co-ordinator. The new post will be county wide and focused on the recruitment of new volunteers and the development of new groups for parks and sites, and increased support for existing Volunteer Ranger groups.

The Wild Teams Officer will be expanding the capacity of the Wild Teams with a minibus to replace the mess van. A new Wild Team Assistant will be employed to help with this.

Work on the improvements to Rights of Way and the Country Parks and Heritage Sites will continue, with more focus on income generation following the reduction in Government funding.

6.0 Conclusions

The Outdoor Partnerships Service is working with 1,177 volunteers and over 1,800 Walking for Health participants. 62% of these are over 65 years of age and 37% have one or more long term illness.

The Service is aiding Public Health and Adult Social Care outcomes by:

- Increasing the amount on physical activity for these groups, from 14% inactive to 3% and from 68% of people reporting insufficient physical activity to 48%
- Shropshire Wild Teams are offering more intensive support to those within the social services system and demonstrating multiple benefits, including two men discharged from mental health services
- Working collaboratively, with health and environmental organisations to contribute to public health preventive agenda
- The service also keeps open the Rights of Way network and manages access and activities in Council owned Country Parks and Countryside Heritage Sites. These are important resources for Public Health and ensure there are opportunities for everyone to be more active, more often in our great outdoors.



This activity will not be possible without the continued support of the Public Health Department.

7.0 Further Information

For further information please contact Clare Fildes, Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager

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01743 255067

ⁱhttps://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Demonstrating%20your%20impact%20-%20Q4%20201516_2.pdf

ⁱⁱhttps://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Demonstrating%20your%20impact%20-%20Q4%20201516_2.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://www.fitnessforweightloss.com/how-many-calories-do-i-burn-walking/>