

## **STROLLERS' GROUP REPORT 2025**

Not a lot of change from last year's report. Strollers have had another successful year; we currently have 30 members and are able to admit one or two more. Numbers on walks have usually been in the mid to late teens eg, 14 up to 18, although occasionally we get less, or more. New walks have been introduced, and some walks from the past have been re-introduced and improved. Also some current favourite walks have evolved and been tweaked, hopefully for the better!

Generally, details remain unchanged. Our walks take place weekly on Wednesdays from September until the end of July (except for the first Wednesday of the month, when there is a u3a General Meeting, and at Christmas and Easter there is usually a short break). Around Christmas or New Year, we often have a meal out together.

We continue to have some very pleasant outings using our senior citizens Centro passes (those who can!) on buses and trains, and we always endeavour to use public transport. Although our walks can be anywhere between 3 and 4 miles the pace is fairly gentle and the conditions easy enabling people of all abilities to join us. We often see historical, botanical or architectural landmarks along the way.

We regard the ideal number on a walk to be about 15; and about 20 to be the usual acceptable maximum, unless there is a good reason for it to be more or less eg cafe accommodation. The walk leader will have the final say.

On the walks, usually towards the end, we stop at a suitable venue for a drink, toilet stop, and lunch or refreshments and there is plenty of opportunity to get to know each other. Members find the walks help them to maintain a good level of fitness and the social interaction is an important and enjoyable part of the activity.

The walks are chosen and voted for at our democratic Planning Meetings held thrice yearly; Leaders and Backups are also chosen. We aim to have a mix of local walks and some further afield; some old favourites and some new walks. We are lucky to have some enthusiastic walkers who help with investigating new walks and/or leading or backing up walks which spreads the load.

A walks programme is produced for each session of walks and distributed to members, and also posted on the web-site, and weekly reminders are also sent out confirming the meeting place, details of the walk etc. A further e-mail is also sent out just before the walk confirming the names of the attendees, and whether the walk is now 'full' (they sometimes are!).

There is a log book maintained by Fiona Lewis, our 'Archivist' – this is where we keep descriptions and photographs of each walk prepared by that week's leader. The current folder is normally available for people to see at the Planning Meetings.

Informal' walks (outside the aegis of u3a) are often arranged, for example during August. Such walks are often a good opportunity to trial possible new walks to see if they may be suitable for inclusion in the official programme.

To conclude - we continue to be a very friendly group; new Strollers are all made welcome.

**David Hidson**

**Group Coordinator**