

Walking for Health Bristol



Walking for Health Bristol
BCC Sports Services
Colston 33
Colston Avenue
Bristol
BS1 4UA
www.bristol.gov.uk/healthwalks
www.whi.org.uk

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To whom it may concern,

Walking for Health is an initiative that aims to get people walking for their fitness and wellbeing through regular led walks programmes.

There are over 25 Walking for Health groups in Bristol and many of these groups have enjoyed visiting Troopers Hill Local Nature reserve over the years particularly after the upper accessible pathway was put in and the interpretation boards were installed.

Bristol groups grade their walks from 1 heart – 4 hearts. One Heart being a beginner walk of less than 1 mile to Four Hearts being a longer walk of up to 4 miles which may have inclines and uneven ground or possibly a couple of stiles. Troopers Hill can offer 1 – 3 heart routes depending on whether walkers stay on the top of the site using the paved pathway or whether they explore further using mud pathways and steps.

Most of our Walking for Health Groups that are already familiar with Troopers Hill approach the site from the top coming in through the field. From this entrance point less able walkers can stay on the top of the hill while more mobile walkers can explore the slopes of Troopers Hill further. The group splitting into 2 therefore caters for a walk group of mixed abilities.

If the steps on Troopers Hill were improved more of our less able (1 – 2 heart) walkers would be able to access more of the hill.

I was out walking with the new Brislington walking group the other day around Bristol docks. This group started in July this year and regularly attracts 20 – 30 walkers. The group is of mixed ability with many walkers preferring longer walks of 3 - 4 miles but also at least 5 or 6 that find inclines difficult and prefer to walk around 1 - 2 miles.

During our coffee break I asked the group for ideas for the next Autumn programme of walks and Troopers Hill was mentioned. A new walk leader for the group commented that Troopers Hill would be a bit difficult to grade as it is only a short

walk from Brislington but has some very steep slopes. This group would be approaching the Hill from the bottom / River Avon direction.

Improved steps would make a walk on Troopers Hill more manageable for more of this group.

One new (elderly gentleman) walker with the Brislington group said he used to visit Troopers Hill regularly as a boy but hadn't been there in over 20 years.

We have now scheduled to take this group to Troopers Hill this November and we hope most of the group will be able to manage the slope / steps up from the river.

Walking for Health Bristol would be pleased to publicise Troopers Hill improved access to all its groups, partners and networks. I am sure completion of this work would attract groups that have yet to visit Troopers Hill as well as opening up more of the site to existing walkers.

Nicola Ferris

Sports Development Worker (Health Walks and Green Exercise)

