

# Active Travel Case Study

**Project title:** East Lindsey Active

**Initiative:** Health Walk Scheme

**Target group:** Open to all East Lindsey residents, though the majority join the scheme through a health referral programme

**Setting and area:** Skegness, Ingoldmells and Mablethorpe – East Lindsey district

**Case study date:** January 2008 - December 2009



## Project overview

East Lindsey Active works with inactive people living in the most deprived wards of the Lincolnshire coastal area between Mablethorpe and Skegness, encouraging them to walk and cycle as part of their everyday lives.

The project's health walk scheme began in January 2008 and has successfully encouraged many local residents to become more active and start exploring their surroundings on foot.

The walk scheme is open to all residents of East Lindsey district. However, the majority of participants have joined the scheme through a pioneering health referral programme which operates out of a local Mablethorpe GP's surgery. Local GP's and other health professionals refer patients who could benefit from a course of exercise to a physical activity programme.

## Aims

- To encourage East Lindsey residents to participate in regular physical activity
- To introduce walking as a method of transport
- To address sedentary lifestyles and related diseases including obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and mental health issues.



## Contact us...

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## How people have benefitted:

- More people have started walking regularly since the project began
- 30 people trained as volunteer walk leaders

Whilst the health walk scheme is proving beneficial for the majority of participants, there are some who are really embracing the spirit of the walks and making changes to their everyday lives. Yvonne Allen, a member of the Skegness walking group had this to say about the scheme:

“In my younger years I was an avid walker and would think nothing of heading off into the beautiful Lincolnshire Wold’s with my local branch of the Ramblers Association for a ten mile hike.

Unfortunately during my forties and early fifties I was blighted by ill health, having first suffered from a stroke I then had to contend with ongoing troubles with my heart. I was forced to change my lifestyle and start taking things easier.

After seeing a leaflet in my local GP’s surgery advertising the East Lindsey Active scheme I popped along to one of the advertised walks to see if it would be suitable for me to join. Six months on and I feel that I am an integral member of both the Skegness and Chapel St Leonards walking groups. The opportunity to get out in my local natural environment has had a massive effect on my health and personal well-being. After completing a WHI training course I am now a qualified walk leader and have helped the walks co-ordinator lead some of the group walks.”

Staff within East Lindsey District Council are also starting to reap the rewards of regular outdoor activity. Bernice Wilson, East Lindsey District Council Physical Activity and Walks Coordinator comments:

“I am a very active person by nature, so I didn’t expect small amounts of low intensity exercise to have a great deal of impact on my own physical and mental well being. However I could not have been more wrong. The majority of my exercise is based around a structured training programme and the walks give me a chance to relax and enjoy my surroundings which is something I find difficult to do when I am concentrating on my heart rate or stride length during training.”



## Activities

- Regular led health walks
- Volunteer walk leader recruitment and training
- One-off themed walks

Patients can undertake 22 free sessions of physical activity and are able to choose from a number of options which include the healthy walks offered by East Lindsey Active. A number of walks are currently taking place in Skegness, Ingoldmells and Mablethorpe.

The East Lindsey Active project also provides training to enthusiastic walkers who wish to become volunteer walk leaders. Alex Woollen, East Lindsey Active Project Coordinator, explains:

“East Lindsey Active really encourages walkers to get involved with the project, above and beyond just taking part in walks. For some of the group this has meant undertaking the training required to become a volunteer walk leader. So far 30 people have trained and they are an invaluable resource to the project.”

## Sustainability

Project Coordinator Alex Woollen will continue to offer volunteer walk leader training in order to build skills among participants and ensure that the health walk scheme becomes embedded within the community, and can continue in the long term.

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## Local partnerships and support

East Lindsey Active is delivered by Sustrans in partnership with The Big Lottery, East Lindsey District Council, Natural England and NHS Lincolnshire.

## National partnerships and support

East Lindsey Active is a Sustrans Active Travel local project. Sustrans forms part of a Consortium of leading walking, cycling and health organisations being funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being programme, which provides funding to support the development of healthier lifestyles and to improve well-being.

The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004.

## What is Sustrans?

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Every day we are working on practical, innovative ways of dealing with the transport challenges that affect us all.

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