

# ***Walk with Braveheart***

## ***Evaluation Report***

### ***2014- 2016***



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## **Executive Summary**

This evaluation was conducted to analyse and evaluate the Walk with Braveheart project over a 2 year period. Data for this evaluation study was compiled from the period February 2014 - February 2016, during which period funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, NHS Forth Valley and The Robertson Trust was in place.

The results of the evaluation, captured in the full report, demonstrate the effectiveness of the walking programme in meeting and exceeding project targets and supports future development. We hope that the Evaluation Report will be useful to potential funding bodies as well as key existing organisational stakeholders.

### **Evaluation Process**

A Questionnaire was used to evaluate the walking programme, as this is a simple way to gain specific information from a large group. All Braveheart walkers and Walk Leaders were asked to complete questionnaires.

The questions asked link to the Paths for All's New Walker Form which each new walker is given when they join the project; this contains key information regarding the walker, including any health problems they may have. Braveheart also asked a number of specific questions relating to the organisation's evaluation requirements. The Board of Trustees and staff team worked with the Walking Development Officer to finalise the questionnaire.

A total of ninety five questionnaires were returned and then analysed during the month of June 2016.

A Focus Group was then organised during July 2016 to gain a more qualitative insight into the opinions of service users and volunteers. The Focus Group consisted of six randomly selected walkers from our walker database and three Walk Leaders who were asked to take part. All who took part in the Focus Group gave more in depth feedback about their experience on our Braveheart walks, following on from filling in the questionnaire.

The focus group was held at the Braveheart office at Falkirk Community Hospital, lasting approximately 1.5 hours. During this time, a number of questions were asked to both Walkers and Walker Leaders to open the discussion. The result was that in depth discussion took place throughout this time, with many important points raised.

## **Key Findings of The Evaluation**

1. Why people walk with Braveheart:
  - Prefer walking to other forms of exercise
  - People feel healthier after walking
  - Enjoy the chance to be sociable and meet new people
  
2. Significant increase in number of walkers and number of Walk Leaders over 2 years:
  - From 4,764 walkers in 2013/2014 to 5,533 walkers in 2015/2016 (16% increase)
  - 25 New Walk Leaders trained
  
3. Walkers expressed satisfaction with the quality of service:
  - 79% of walkers would highly recommend Braveheart to family/ friends.
  - "Braveheart is a very welcoming organisation. The Walk Leaders are terrific and the company makes you feel safe which you often don't feel walking on your own. Eva works really hard on the Monthly walk- planning, organising and ensuring our safety." Stenhousemuir walker.
  
4. Walk Leaders feel supported and consulted:
  - "It has been great to see many friendships develop over the years until now it feels that we are now one big Braveheart family." Ian, Walk Leader.
  - "Every experience I've had with Braveheart has been positive- there aren't any downsides at all!" Robert, Walk Leader.
  
5. Key benefits of the walks included:
  - Physical- "Braveheart walks give people of all ages and fitness the opportunity to mix together and to improve their health. I think many of our walkers would really miss Braveheart if they did not have it in their lives." Jean Glen, Walk Leader.
  - Social- "The social aspect is so important to combat loneliness- walking by yourself is not the same, and unless the weather is truly atrocious, it gives us fresh air and exercise on a regular basis." Moira, Dawson walk.
  
6. Having continuity of funding supported the retention of volunteers and staff and helped build the walking programme.
  - "With volunteering with Braveheart for many years, I enjoy seeing the walks going from strength to strength." Stanley Stewart, Walk Leader.

## Conclusion

Walking has been demonstrated, both through the body of research available, and through this evaluation to be of great benefit to people's health and wellbeing. The benefits expressed by walkers in this evaluation include a range of outcomes including feeling better physically and mentally, keeping well, improving and maintaining fitness, losing weight and making new friends.

## Recommendations

1. Seek long term funding to maintain, further develop and extend the walking programme.
2. Develop more linkages and referral routes with the NHS for patients with long term health conditions.
3. Develop new, shorter walks for people who are most inactive.
4. Implement the good suggestions raised through the evaluation.
5. Continue to evaluate the walking programme on a regular basis.

## **Introduction**

From early beginnings as an Ageing Well Demonstration Project to examine the benefits of health mentoring in the area of cardiovascular disease, Braveheart developed into a thriving voluntary organisation supporting people with health conditions to live well. The importance of keeping active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week is well known, but people with health conditions can lose confidence and may be unsure how much activity is good for them and so Braveheart participants asked for a led walking programme.

Established in 2004, the walking programme successfully encouraged people with health conditions to take regular exercise, as the walks were designed specifically for their level of fitness and pace. Walkers felt comfortable, they formed friendships, improved their self esteem, improved their fitness and just kept right on walking!

In February 2014, Walk with Braveheart secured 3 years funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), and The Robertson Trust, which has given Braveheart stability to employ a worker and support and train volunteers.

A key objective of the project was to increase participation of large numbers of older, inactive adults and boost their confidence enough to allow them to participate regularly in walking in the natural environment. Results have been excellent showing an incredible increase of 16% walkers attending our walks over the previous two years.

The project aimed to specifically target the following key groups: older age groups, women and those experiencing long term health conditions, including mental health issues. This was achieved with 71% of walkers being over 55 years, 78% women and 48.6% living with long term health conditions.

The project aimed to involve a minimum of 40 local people in regular volunteering, quality training and development, learning experiences and community action to help to build the skills and confidence of the volunteers. This was achieved with 55 volunteers taking part in the project and 30 of these volunteers also taking part in additional training and development activities such as Safety Outdoors and Strength and Balance training. Braveheart also aimed to consult with volunteer walk leaders and walkers to continuously develop, monitor and evaluate the project. Consultation, evaluation and joint planning was a priority for the project and the Development Officer held six weekly meetings with volunteers throughout the programme as well as visiting the each of the walks on a regular basis. Evaluation processes included completion of questionnaires, focus groups and one to one meetings with volunteers.

The walking programme also aimed to help to create sense of community, reduce isolation and improve people's levels of physical and mental well-being, helping to reduce

preventable health problems. This was achieved with many walkers commenting on the benefits of the walks including the value of the social element, the opportunity to increase and maintain fitness levels and many reported significantly higher levels of wellbeing through walking.

A number of new partnership links were developed through the walking programme including Inner Forth Landscape Initiative and Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Council Rangers. During the project, new developments were initiated including 30 minute & 1 hour weekly walks, and 45 minute & 1.5 hour monthly walks. Monthly walks throughout the year proved to be very popular and successful. Walk with Braveheart now welcomes over 4,000 attendances each year.

This report is the result of an evaluation process, which gathered data from the project from 2014-2016 and consulted with both volunteers and service users to gain their valuable feedback on the project.



## **Evaluation Process**

The evaluation has been conducted to analyse and evaluate the Walk with Braveheart project over a 2 year period. The evaluation findings were taken from February 2014-2016, when funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, NHS Forth Valley and The Robertson Trust (starting October 2014) was in place.

## **Evaluation Methods**

Questionnaire- See Appendix 1

A Questionnaire was used to evaluate the project as this is a simple way to gain specific information from a large group- Braveheart walkers and Walk Leaders. Questionnaires were handed out to all walkers and Walk Leaders, who were then encouraged to hand them back as soon as they could, during the month of June 2016.

The questions asked link to the Paths for All's New Walker Form which each new walker is given when they join the project; this contains key information regarding the walker, including any health problems they may have. We use this data to objectively evaluate health improvements reported by service users. Braveheart has also asked a number of specific questions relating to the organisation's needs. The Board of Trustees and staff team worked with the Walking Development Officer to finalise the questionnaire.

**Month of evaluation: June 2016**

**Questionnaires gathered & analysed: 95**

Focus Group- See Appendix 3

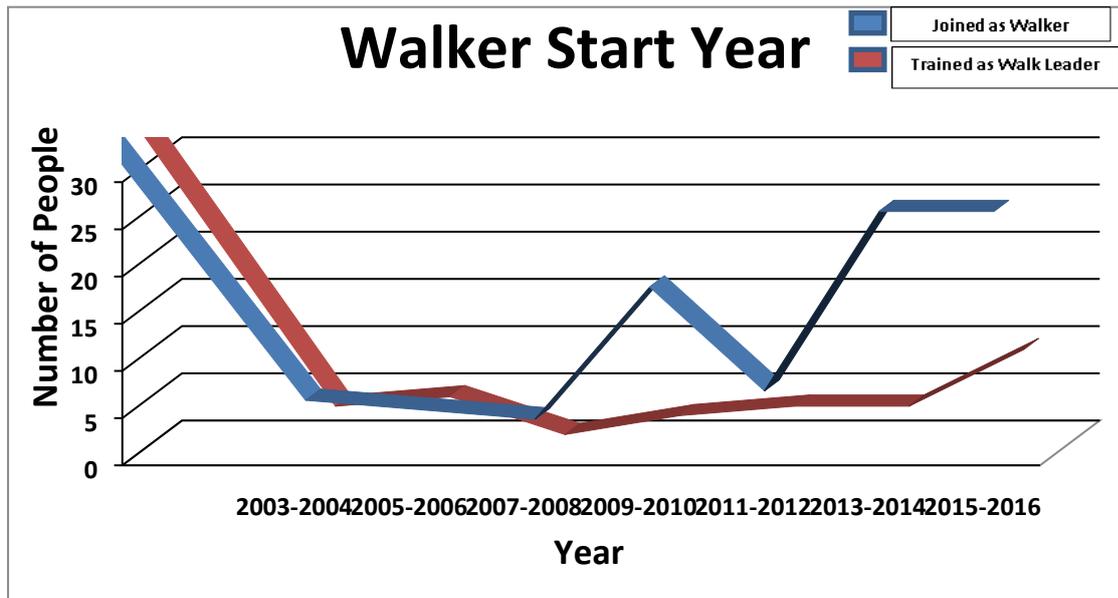
A focus group of 6 randomly selected walkers from our walker database, and 3 Walk Leaders were asked to take part in this focus group. All those who agreed to take part were willing to give more in depth feedback about their experience on our Braveheart walks, following on from filling in the above questionnaire.

The focus group was held at the Braveheart office at Falkirk Community Hospital, lasting around 1.5 hours long. During this time, specific questions were asked to both Walkers and Walker Leaders. In depth discussion took place throughout this time with many important points raised.

# Questionnaire Results

## Questionnaire introduction

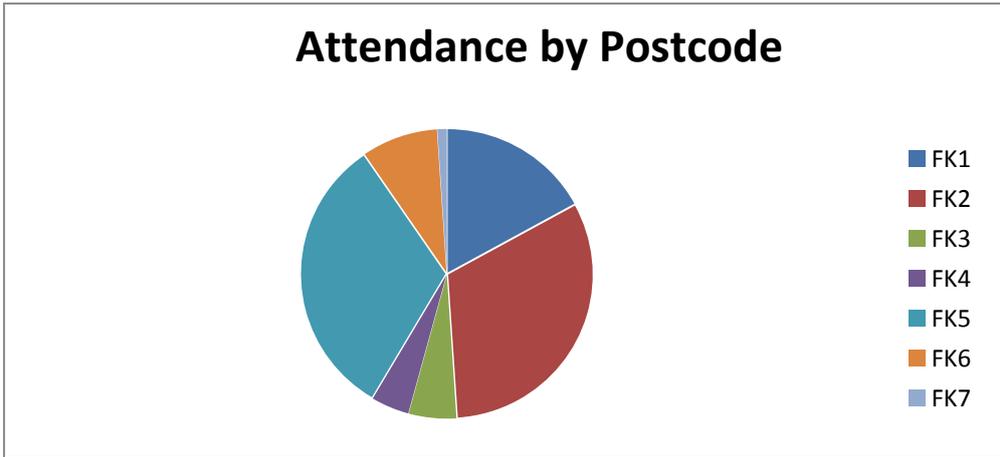
Analysis:



## Discussion:

\*These figures are analysed from the individuals who returned their evaluation forms, therefore are currently active within our walking project and were attending the walks over the month of June when our evaluations were conducted\*

Walker Start Year graph highlights a spread of walkers who joined early on when Walk with Braveheart first launched, to our current funding years. This helps gather feedback from a variety of individuals who are both experienced on our walks, or those who have not long joined.



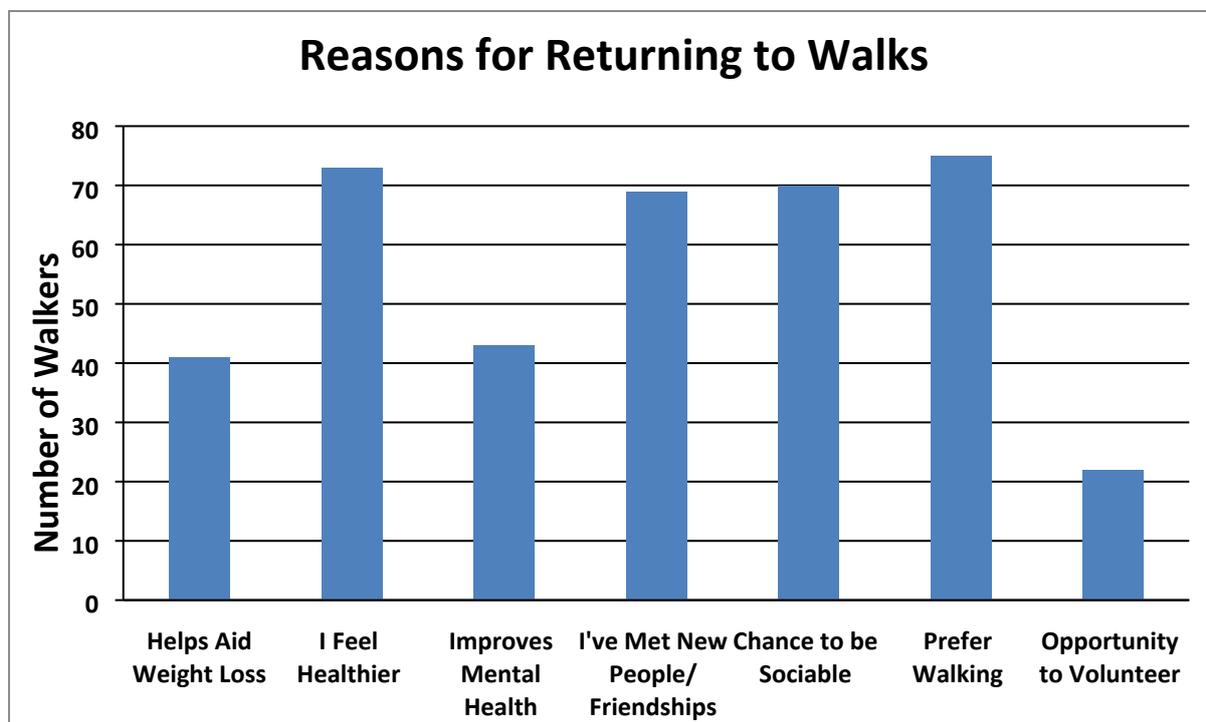
**Discussion:**

As highlighted on Attendance by Postcode graph, we received the greatest number of forms (30) back from individuals who attend our Stenhousemuir/ Larbert walks; these walks are well attended across this large postcode area of FK5. We also received equal number of evaluation forms from postcode area FK2 covering our Dawson & Polmont walks which have an attendance of around 12 walkers + each week; taking into account walkers living in this area may attend our other walks nearby.

Sixteen forms were returned from postcode FK1; Braveheart currently only have walks in Callendar Park within the FK1 area, which are both well attended, however these figures highlight there may be a need to provide more walks throughout the FK1 area. Postcode areas FK3/4/6 &7 had the lowest number of returned forms; we currently only have a walk in Bonnybridge (FK4) and are aware that we have 5 walkers who travel from the Grangemouth area (FK3) to join Braveheart walks. This highlights that there is interest for walks within these areas and perhaps more promotional work is required to boost numbers on current walks.

## Question 1

### Analysis:



### Discussion:

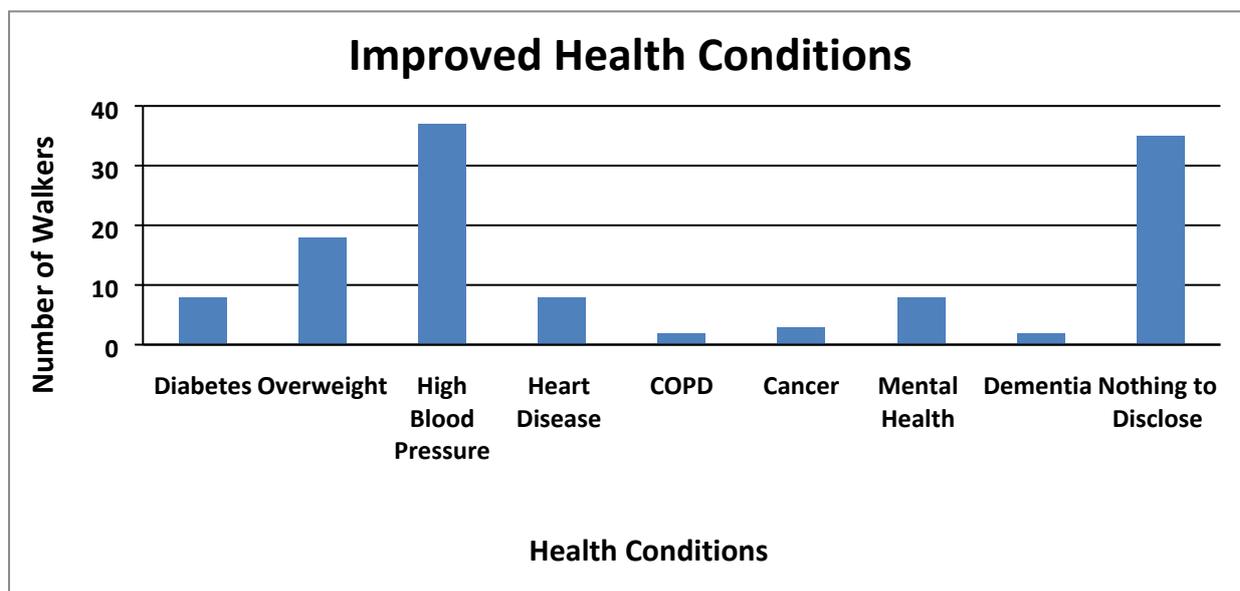
Many of our walkers highlighted up to 3 main reasons for returning to our Braveheart walks; with 'Prefer Walking' as the top reason with 79% of walkers ticking this box. 'I Feel Healthier' is another main reason for people returning to our walks with 77% of respondents ticking this option. This highlights the importance of physical fitness and how positive it makes everyone feel.

'Chance to be Sociable' (74% of walkers) and 'I've Met New People/ Friendships' (73% of walkers) were again voted very high. This signifies that the social aspect of our walks is very important to most of our walkers and, linked to the comments given throughout the evaluation forms, many walkers say they wouldn't be where they are today without the walks. They say that the walks give them a reason to get out and about, meet new people and be physically active whilst doing so.

Walkers/ Walk Leaders were encouraged to add any additional comments they may wish. Please refer to Appendix 2.

## Question 2

### Analysis:



### Discussion:

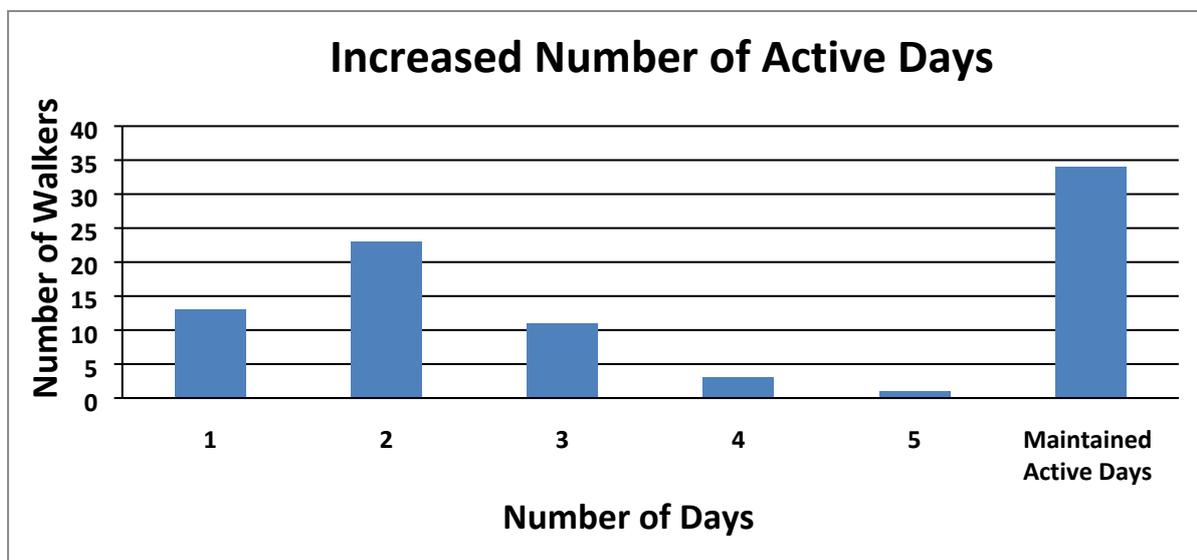
Walking is a great exercise for many reasons; research shows that this free, simple and easy form of exercise is ideal for people of all ages and fitness levels. Regular walking has been shown to reduce chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke and some cancers, by up to 50% (NHS Choices, 2016).

39% of Braveheart walkers highlighted that their High Blood Pressure has improved since joining the walks, with 19% of our walkers stating our walks have helped them lose weight. Braveheart also supports individuals with various different long term health conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease. From the above findings it highlights the importance and value of the walking project as we support many walkers with these conditions to improve their quality of life through a simple form of exercise. Eight walkers with a mental health condition also disclosed that this condition has now improved since joining our Braveheart walks. Research documents the many physical and social rewards gained from walking including improvement to mental health. The above findings are walker's opinions of their improved health.

Walkers/ Walk Leaders were encouraged to add any additional comments they may wish; please refer to Appendix 2.

### Question 3 & 4

#### Analysis:



#### Discussion:

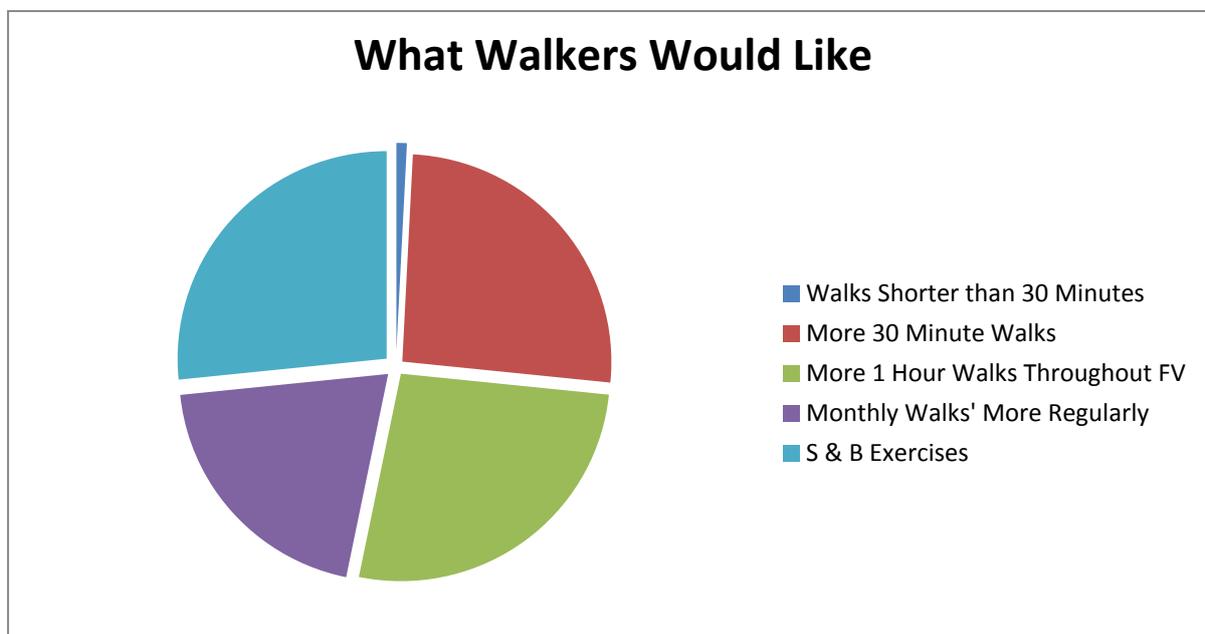
Braveheart has enabled 34 walkers to maintain their level of fitness across both our Weekly and Monthly walks; It was found that these individuals who maintained their active days were already walking for more than 3 days a week. Braveheart supports and gives the opportunity for these individuals to maintain their activity levels on a weekly basis.

Braveheart has also supported 54% of walkers to increase their frequency of walking by 1-5 days. 24% of individuals have now increased their frequency of walking by 2 days a week with the support of Braveheart, closely followed by 11% of individuals increasing by 3 days. Maintaining regular activity as people age is conducive to keeping well for longer.

5% of walkers decreased their frequency of days walking (4% of walkers initially walking 7 days, and 1% of walkers walking 4 days before joining Braveheart, then decreasing their number of days walking). This could be down to walkers becoming less able as they age, however Braveheart has now developed 30 minutes walks, in addition to 1hour walks, which supports and enables these walkers to stay active and suits their level of fitness and ability. Braveheart introduced a series of half hour walks in 2015 to incorporate people who were less able to walk a distance of 2.5 miles.

## Question 5

### Analysis:



### Discussion:

35% of walkers would like to see more 1 hour walks throughout Forth Valley, and equally like to incorporate Strength & Balance in to our Walk with Braveheart programme. Thirty two walkers highlighted the requirement/ interest for more 30 minute walks within our programme. 26% of individuals would like to have Monthly Walks more often than just once a month.

## **Question 6**

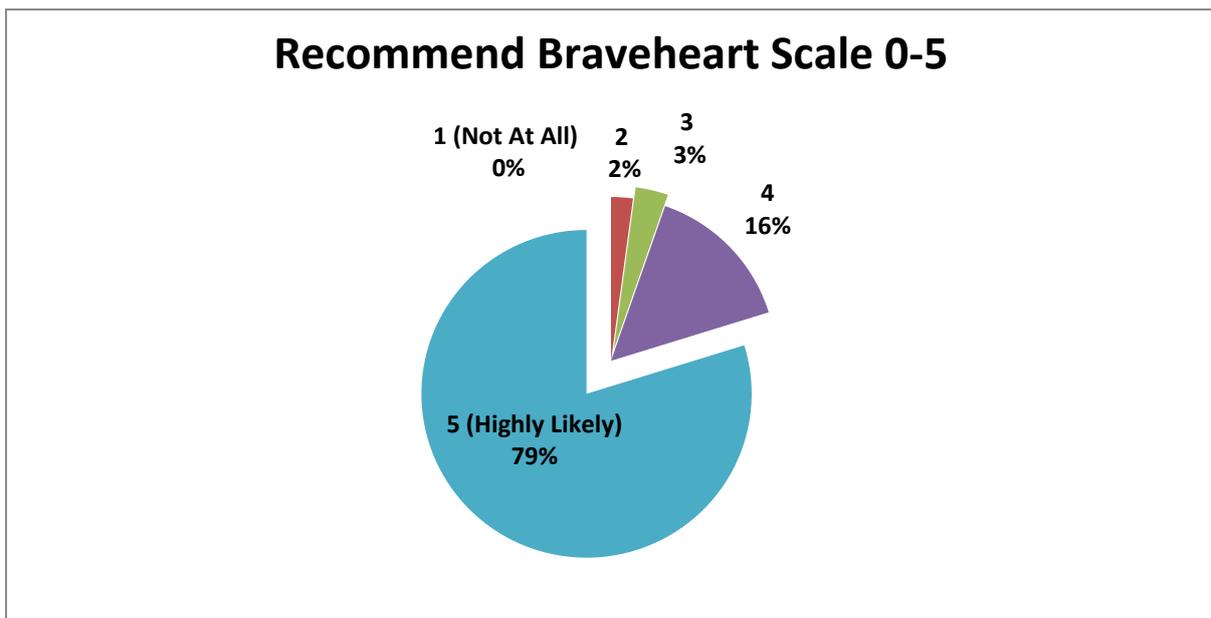
Walkers/ Walk Leaders were encouraged to add any additional comments they may wish, linking on from question 5 above; please refer to Appendix 2.

Main points highlighted:

- Walk Leaders do a great job
- People are happy and can't think of anything to change
- People highlight how they find the walks great for both physical and social health
- Perhaps more walk route options on various walks
- Middle length walks for those in between 1hour and 30 minute walk fitness

## **Question 7**

**Analysis:**



**Discussion:**

79% of walkers who completed who completed our evaluation forms, would highly recommend Braveheart to a friend! The remaining 21% of walkers scored 2-4 on the scale, as highlighted above.

## **Question 8**

Walkers/ Walk Leaders were encouraged to add any additional comments they may wish to their overall experience on our Braveheart Walks; please refer to Appendix 2 and 4.

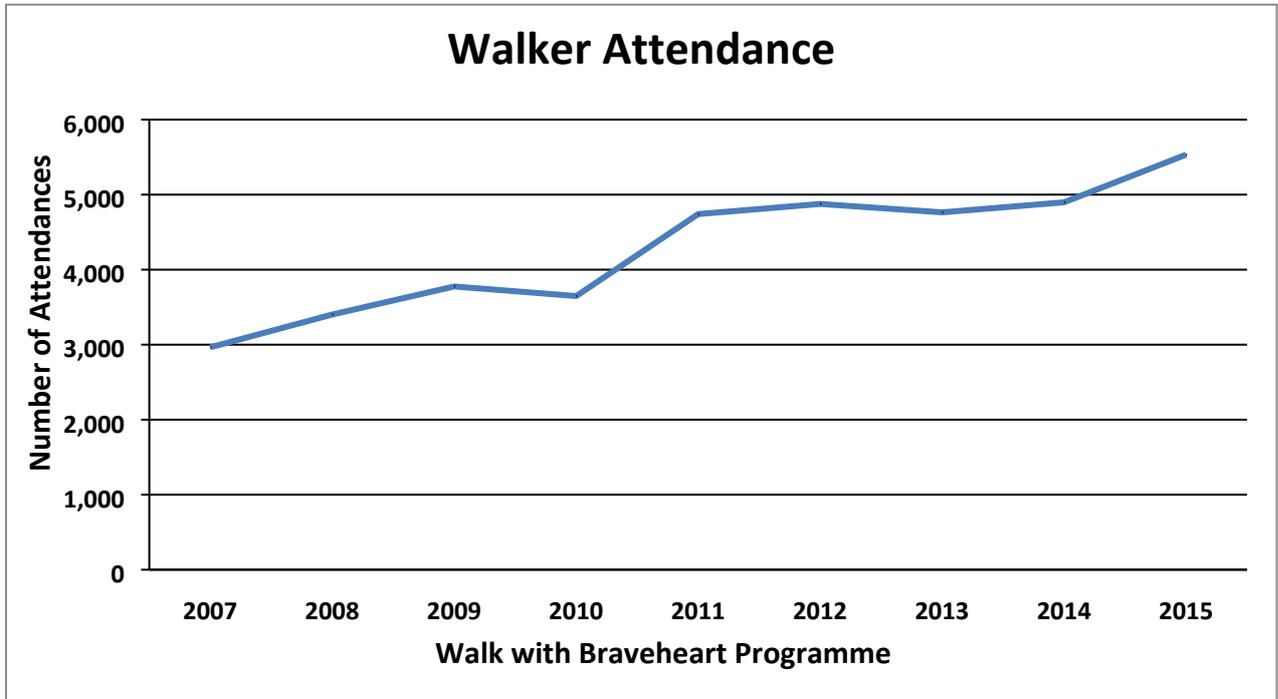
Main points highlighted:

- Many positive remarks with regards to Walk Leaders
- Many people highlight how beneficial the walks are for both their physical and social health
- The walks are a great opportunity to meet new people and get 'out and about'



# Walker Attendance Analysis

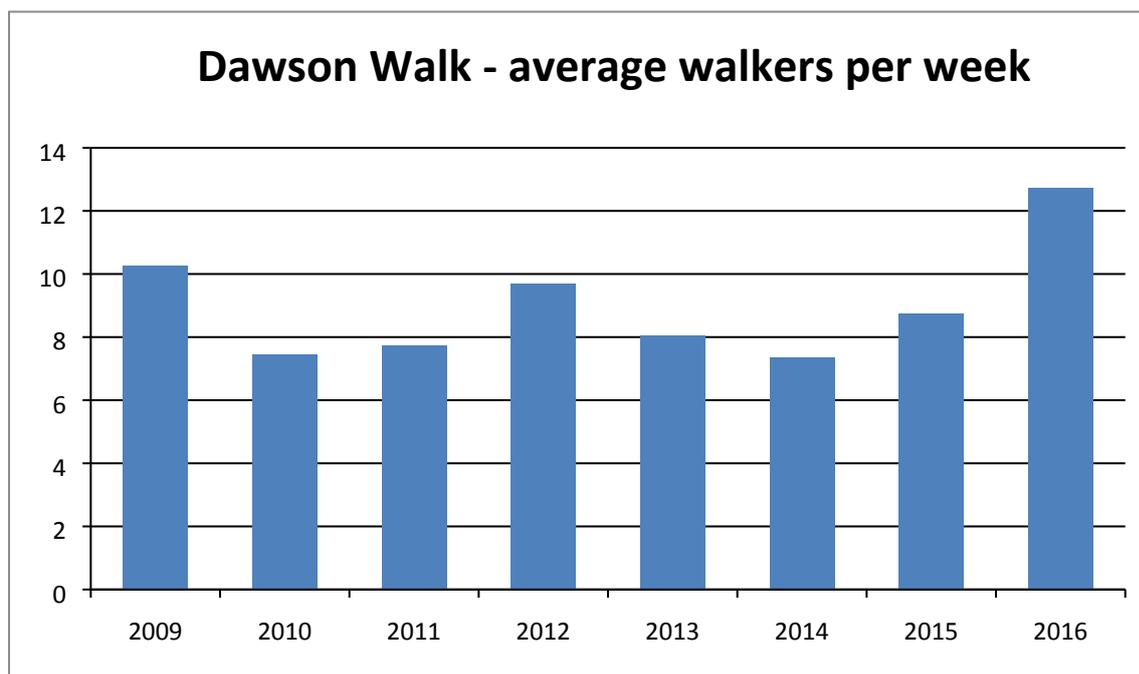
Figures taken from our walker database



\*Figures are taken from 2007 as this is when date register details were inputted in to our online system with Paths for All and recorded up to the end of December 2015\*

Historically, the Walk with Braveheart programme shows highs and lows in walker attendance numbers. We can see that from 2012 to 2014 there was a steady attendance of walkers, however no increase occurs until 2014. With no Development Officer in post from 2012 to February 2014, this highlights the commitment and enthusiasm from Walk Leader to keep the walks running. In the period from February 2014 to end of January 2016, we see a significant increase in walker numbers from 4,764 attendances in 2013/14 to 5,533 attendances in January 2016, an increase of 16%. During this period WWB was funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and The Robertson Trust.

## Dawson Walk Attendance



Braveheart provide various Weekly and Monthly walks for individuals of all abilities; our walks range from 30 minute to 1 hour Weekly walks and 45minute to 1.5 Monthly walks. Braveheart's walking timetable runs from Monday- Sunday with both morning and afternoon walks, including two night walks during the summer period.

Our weekly Dawson walk, so called as it operates in the Dawson area of Falkirk, started in 2009 and takes place every Wednesday at 10.30am from outside Carron Co-operative. Our walkers report thoroughly enjoying the various different routes from this walk start point, such as visiting the Carron Works or Dollar Park. The above table shows a steady increase in average number of walkers attending our walk each week. This again highlights an increase during 2015 from the previous 2 years, with a significant increase in 2016, with average walker attendance of 13 each week.



# Focus Group

## Question 1

Tell us about your overall experience with the walking programme?

-As a walker?

-As a Walk Leader?

## Answers

Walkers-

- Visited places never knew existed
- Social
- Welcoming & friendly
- Half hour walks good for older people and those unable to do 1hour walks
- Walkers appreciate Walk Leaders

Walk Leaders-

- Support is 1<sup>st</sup> class
- Stability for programme- things are moving on
- Leaders feel consulted with everything that is going on within Braveheart

## Discussion

The overall experience of walkers in the focus group was very positive. See appendix 3. Walkers found the walks welcoming and friendly, highlighting the social aspect of the experience as beneficial.

Walk Leaders were also very positive about the walking programme highlighting it is progressing and that they feel well supported in their roles.

## **Question 2**

How could we improve?

### **Answers**

- Could have a meet & greet for walkers
- When someone new starts- need time to spend with them
- Send a New Walker Pack- phone for a welcome pack
- Walk Leaders roles to introduce new walkers
- NHS referrals could be improved
- Monthly walks- 2 level of walks
- People don't know they can donate towards hired bus
- Follow up when people leave walks/ haven't returned for many weeks
- Delay in delivery of RNIB support on walks

### **Discussion**

The Focus Group came up with a number of good ideas to improve the service including a welcome pack and a meet + greet for new walkers. They also highlighted that NHS referrals could be improved.

### **Question 3**

How could we improve the walks?

#### **Answers**

- Variety of walk routes on all Weekly walks
- Highlight walks designed for people with long term health conditions/ inactive- 30 minutes walks for example
- Monthly walks- shorter option on all

Refer to Appendix 3

#### **Discussion**

The participants felt that shorter walks for people who are less active are most important and that some variety on weekly walking routes would be good, if possible.

#### **Question 4**

Have the walks benefited you personally? If so, how?

#### **Answers**

- Helped fitness and general wellness
- Wife had Type 2 Diabetes, husband was heavy smoker- really benefited them both from a health point of view
- Structured part of week- physical activity & huge part of social life
- I wouldn't get up for a walk on my own- structured opportunity
- Social friendships- most loyal companions
- Safety
- Helped when not well and when husband died- great support
- Family concern- support from group

#### **Discussion**

Participants highlighted health benefits of walking including improved fitness level and feeling better. Also strongly highlighted was the group support and social benefits of the walks as well as the safety of walking in a group.

### **Question 5**

How would you like to see the walks develop?

Anything additional?

### **Answers**

- Progression of fitness
- More links with patients with Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, Asthma/ COPD
- Historical/ wildlife (bats) /photography/ bird watching walks with talk from Rangers- perhaps 3/4 times a year
- Slower walks
- Strength & Balance workshops

Refer to Appendix 3

### **Discussion**

Participants felt that we should have more referrals from the NHS for people with health conditions. Slower walks for the less able and Strength & Balance workshops to improve mobility were suggested.

## **Question 6**

Thoughts on Social Enterprise:

Day trips- where? cost? other ideas?

### **Answers**

- Yes to day trips
- 200 club- £5 a year from everyone. 1<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. Need a licence
- Sponsorship (refer to appendix )

Participants thought we should try out day trips as a way of bringing in funding. Sponsorship and fundraising ideas were also raised.

## **Key Findings**

1. Why people walk:
  - Prefer walking to other forms of exercise
  - People feel healthier after walking
  - Chance to be sociable
  - They have met new people/ friendships
  
2. Increased number of walkers over the 2 years:
  - From 4,764 walkers in 2013/2014 to 5,533 walkers in 2015/2016 (16% increase)
  
3. Walkers happy with quality of service:
  - 79% of walkers would highly recommend Braveheart to family/ friends.
  - "Braveheart is a very welcoming organisation. The Walk Leaders are terrific and the company makes you feel safe which you often don't feel walking on your own. Eva works really hard on the Monthly walk- planning, organising and ensuring our safety" Stenhousemuir walker.
  
4. Walk Leaders feel supported and consulted:
  - "Every experience I've had with Braveheart has been positive- there aren't any downsides at all!" Robert, Walk Leader.
  - "It has been great to see many friendships develop over the years until now it feels that we are now one big Braveheart family" Ian, Walk Leader.
  
5. Key benefits of the walks:
  - Physical- "Braveheart walks give people of all ages and fitness to mix together and a chance to improve their health. I think many of our walkers would really miss Braveheart if they did not have it in their lives" Jean Glen, Walk Leader.
  - Social- "The social aspect is so important to combat loneliness- walking by yourself is not the same, and unless the weather is truly atrocious, it gives us fresh air and exercise on a regular basis" Moira, Dawson walk.
  
6. Funding has helped maintain and increase the Walk with Braveheart Programme.
  - "With volunteering with Braveheart for many years, I enjoy seeing the walks going from strength to strength" Stanley Stewart, Walk Leader.

## **Conclusion**

Walking has been demonstrated both through the body of research available and through this evaluation to be of great benefit to people's health and wellbeing. The benefits expressed by walkers in this evaluation include a range of outcomes including feeling better physically and mentally, keeping well, improving and maintaining fitness, losing weight and making new friends.

## **Recommendations**

1. Seek long term funding to maintain, further develop and extend the walking programme.
2. Develop more linkages and referral routes with the NHS for patients with long term health conditions.
3. Develop new, shorter walks for people who are most inactive.
4. Implement the good suggestions raised through the evaluation.
5. Continue to evaluate the walking programme on a regular basis.



## Appendix 1



### Walk with Braveheart Evaluation

It is important we evaluate this project and your help in this is much appreciated  
Please fill in our evaluation form as truthfully and in as much detail as you can.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ Year you first joined Braveheart Walks \_\_\_\_\_

Year trained as Walk Leader (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What are the main reasons for you continuing to attend Braveheart Walks?  
Please tick as many as appropriate.**

- Helps to aid weight loss     I feel healthier     Improves my mental health  
 I've met new people/  
friendships     Chance to be sociable     Prefer walking to other exercise  
 Opportunity to Volunteer

Other, please give detail \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. When initially starting with Braveheart, did you have any diagnosed condition/s that  
you can say have now improved with attending Braveheart Walks?**

- Diabetes     Overweight     High Blood Pressure     Heart Disease  
 Chronic Obstructive  
Pulmonary Disease     Cancer     Mental Health Issue     Dementia

Other, please give detail \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Before joining Braveheart walks- How many days a week were you physically active  
for a total of 30 minutes or more?**

- 0 Days     1 Day     2 Days     3 Days     4 Days     5 Days     6 Days     7 Days

4. With now being a Braveheart walker/ Walk Leader- How many days are week are you physically active for a total of 30 minutes or more?

0 Days    1 Day    2 Days    3 Days    4 Days    5 Days    6 Days    7 Days

5. How would you like to see our Braveheart walks develop?

- Provide walks shorter than 30 minutes    Provide more 30 minute walks
- Provide more 1 hour walks throughout Forth Valley    Provide 'Monthly Walks' more regularly
- Simple exercises to build your Strength & Balance during our walks

6. What would you like to see develop with our Braveheart Walks, if not mentioned in question 5:

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7. How likely would you be to recommend Braveheart to a friend, on a scale of 0-5, where 0 is not at all likely and 5 is extremely likely; please circle

0   1   2   3   4   5

8. Any other comments you would like to make about your experience on our Braveheart walks:

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**Thank you for completing this evaluation form**

The Braveheart Association is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Charity No: SCO 34617

## **Appendix 2**

### **Questionnaire Question 1**

Additional Information:

"At 84 years of age, trying to keep mobile & fit" Muriel, Dawson walk.

"Visit places I didn't know existed, out in the country especially" Una, FVRH walk.

"Knee replacement 10years ago, keen walker. Joined walk to be sociable" Bob, Bonnybridge walk.

"Has benefited me as I felt very isolated. This has helped me tremendously" Andrea, Dawson walk.

"Opportunity to see local area I've not already seen" Sandra, Monthly walks.

"It keeps arthritic knees moving" Irene, anonymous.

"Re-couperation after illness" Sheila, anonymous.

"Recently lost husband and wanted to get back into habit of walking" Sheana, Dawson walk.

"To see areas of locality I've never visited before and discover history I wasn't aware of" Ronald, Monthly Walks.

"Opportunity to visit other places on walks" Pat, Stenhousemuir walk.

"Always liked walking, used to hillwalk" Jessie, Stenhousemuir walk.

"Opportunity to help other groups" David, Volunteer WL.

"Give something worthwhile back to the community, keeps brain ticking over, and thoroughly enjoy" Stan, Volunteer WL.

## **Questionnaire Question 2**

Additional Information:

"Ankylosin Sponducitis"

"Re-couperation after Cancer treatment"

"Circulation problems in legs"

"Hip replacement/ osteoarthritis"

"Need more exercise"

"High cholesterol"

"Shingles"

"Back problems causing stiffness"

"Anxiety/ depression"

"I have arthritis, walking keeps me supple and moving"

"Can't say Keith's condition (Dementia/ Alz) has improved but important to keep him mobile for as long as possible; he enjoys the companionship".

## **Questionnaire Question 6**

Additional Information:

"Surprised it wasn't advertised more at the oncology clinic at FVRH as an aid to recover"

Sheila, Dawson walk.

"Happy the way it is" William, Monthly Walks.

"I feel that what Braveheart offers is superb. I genuinely feel what there are so many choices I can't think of anything else to suggest" Eileen, Dawson & Monthly Walks.

"The short walks are too slow for some (who just don't want to do the 1 hour walks) sometimes- by splitting them in to 2- one going a little further and a little faster is a good idea" Anne, FVRH & Monthly Walks.

"Social aspect is very important especially to people who live alone, and may feel lonely or isolated- people benefit from having a chat and sitting down with a tea or coffee- improves social health" Maureen, Callendar Park walk & Health Mentor.

"Monthly Walks on other days- some regular walkers have commitments on a Tuesday" Joan, FVRH & Monthly Walks.

"I'd like the walk to follow different routes; same walk each week is a bit dull" Susan, Polmont walk & staff Walk Leader.

"1 hour walks reasonably flat at a reasonable pace" Margaret, FVRH, Linlithgow & Monthly Walks.

"Continue going the way we are- trying to make walks available for as many people as possible" Robert, Dawson & Monthly Walks- Walk Leader.

"Very short walks for disabled or elderly people" Joan, anonymous.

"More knowledge of our environment and nature" Irene, anonymous.

"I feel the Walk Leaders for a great job- but it wouldn't be fair to expect them to be on call 7 days a week" Cathy, Bonnybridge walk.

"Can't see anything wrong with present formula" Isabel, Stenhousemuir & Linlithgow walk.

"Dementia friendly walks" Jane, Stenhourmuir walk- Walk Leader.

"More involvement with GP's and practice nurses to encourage more people to attend the walks. As has happened in the past picking up people from their house- a lift to the walk and return when finished" Stan, various walks- Walk Leader.

## **Questionnaire Question 8**

Additional Information:

"Really enjoying walks and social part and friends made" Janette, anonymous.

"Good to meet new people. Have a choice of what walk to take" Irene, anonymous.

"Becoming for popular as group becomes more well known, much busier than in earlier years"  
Audrey, anonymous.

"The walks are wonderful. Especially the coffee with friends afterwards. Leaders front and back do a great job" Morag, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"I think it is a very good thing and if I didn't have the walk I would probably not be out. I also have increased my social life through Braveheart" John, anonymous.

"I love walking with Braveheart, met some good people and have good fun while walking" Paula,  
Walk Leader.

"Enjoy coming and all Walk Leaders are helpful and very chatty" Anne, anonymous.

"A big thank you to all volunteer Walk Leaders" Iain, Callendar Park/ Polmont walks.

"I just hope Braveheart continues as I would really miss the friends I have made and hope to meet more" Margaret, anonymous.

"Really relaxing and good socially" Frank, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"The time and effort put in by Leaders is greatly appreciated. Each walk is not only fun but also beneficial health wise and on many occasions informative regarding the history of the areas visited"  
Una, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"Helped me out to walk and make new friends" Carol, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"Enjoy Braveheart walks very much, staff very helpful" Tom, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"It is good for people who live alone. You mix with other people and they are all nice" Lily, FVRH  
walk.

"They are really good for you" Maurice, Walk Leader.

"Great opportunity to get out and about" Lorna, anonymous.

"Happy to have met many new people, both walkers and Walk Leaders" Helen, Walk Leader.

"The social aspect is so important to combat loneliness- walking by yourself is not the same, and unless the weather is truly atrocious, it gives us fresh air and exercise on a regular basis" Moira, Dawson walk.

"Braveheart walks give people of all ages and fitness to mix together and a chance to improve their health. I think many of our walkers would really miss Braveheart if they did not have it in their lives" Jean, Walk Leader.

"I love the walks since retiring, it has filled a void. Great setting out in the fresh air (even when raining!) enjoying the walking and the company. Thanks also to the organisers and Walk Leaders, much appreciated" Alison, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"Have discovered many local areas which I didn't know existed" Jessie, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir walks.

"Good social event. Was a life savour when I was made redundant, I was able to get out the house to meet people" Janice, Bonnybridge/ Monthly walks.

"I have enjoyed my time with Braveheart having met so many interesting and friendly people as well as helping me keep fit" Charles, Walk Leader.

"A great way to keep fit and interact with others while doing so" Jacqueline, Walk Leader.

"I have enjoyed all aspects of the walks, Leaders etc are very friendly and supportive" Agnes, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"Hope that funding is made available for these to continue and develop, to be able to offer more walks" Sandra, Monthly walks.

"More leaders on walks, better as it can be broken in to shorter walks as needed" Nahid, Walk Leader.

"Have seen the good these walks do. Walkers improving their fitness and managing longer walks. For many it's a chance to socialise and important we give this opportunity" Carol, Walk Leader.

"Feel safer in numbers; can go places I wouldn't venture on my own- thanks" Evelyn, anonymous.

"Met so many nice people" Janette, Walk Leader.

"Very friendly, thoroughly enjoy and I'll continue until I 'kick the bucket'. Dr thinks it's a great thing"  
Bob, Bonnybridge walk.

"Braveheart is a very welcoming organisation. The Walk Leaders are terrific and the company makes you feel safe which you often don't feel walking on your own. Eva works really hard on the Monthly walk- planning, organising and ensuring our safety" Margaret, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"Always enjoy company, our Leaders are always obliging" Marge, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"Leaders are well prepared, friendly and supportive" Ann, anonymous.

"They are well organised with good leadership and take you to places of interest and scenery to enjoy" Jane, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir/ Monthly walks.

"It has been great to see many friendships develop over the years until now it feels that we are now one big Braveheart family" Ian, Walk Leader.

"Gives people a purpose to get out of the house, especially living alone" Pat, FVRH/ Stenhousemuir walks.

"I love it, can't fault it" Eileen, Dawson/ Monthly walks.

"All walks weekly/monthly have been a positive experience" Maureen, Callendar Park/ Monthly walks.

"Really enjoy being a Leader and a walker; this is something I would like to continue when I retire. Think this could be offered to all age groups- perhaps through a GP referral or recommendation from a health professional" Susan, Staff Walk Leader.

"Volunteers and everyone at Braveheart provide a great service in helping to keep us all fit and active and the social aspect is great" Margaret, FVRH/Stenhousemuir/Linlithgow/ Monthly walks.

"Every experience I've had with Braveheart has been positive- there aren't any downsides at all!"  
Robert, Walk Leader.

"Good exercise, good company" Joan, anonymous.

"I enjoy my walks very much and if I want more there are always walks I can join in our area and I know I will be welcome. I always make them known to all my friends" Catherine, Bonnybridge/ Monthly walks.

"Rewarding" Isobel, Stenhousemuir/ Linlithgow walks.

"I would like to see the Bonnybridge walk build up numbers as they have remained the same for quite a number of years. Walk started in March 2006 the same time as Stenhousemuir" Stan, Walk Leader.

"Enjoy the company while walking" Jean, anonymous.

"Have enjoyed meeting lots of people" Irene, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"Have only been on 3 walks so far- it's very interesting" Sheila, Dawson walk.

"Thoroughly enjoyable and good social side" William, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

"My fitness level has improved greatly since joining Braveheart but I feel the walks no longer meet my needs on occasion" Joan, FVRH/ Monthly walks.

### **Appendix 3**

Date of Focus Group: Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2-3.30pm.

Focus Group Selection:

All Braveheart Walk Leaders were invited to our Focus Group, highlighting that 3 was an ample number for us to work with, the following Walk Leaders Volunteered to take part:

- Brian Robertson- Trained 2010
- Linda Stocks- Trained 2012
- Charles Colliar- Trained 2006

Ten randomly selected walkers, from our walker database, were contacted by telephone and invited to attend our Focus Group. Six walkers were available and willing to join our Focus Group.

#### **Focus Group Question 1**

Tell us about your overall experience with the walking programme?

-As a walker?

-As a Walk Leader?

#### **Answers**

Walkers-

- Visited places never knew existed
- Social
- Welcoming & friendly
- Half hour walks good for older people and those unable to do 1hour walks
- Walkers appreciate Walk Leaders

Walk Leaders-

- Support is 1<sup>st</sup> class
- Stability for programme- things are moving on
- Leaders feel consulted with everything that is going on within Braveheart

## **Focus Group Question 2**

How could we improve?

### **Answers**

- Could have a meet & greet for walkers
- When someone new starts- need time to spend with them
- Send a New Walker Pack- phone for a welcome pack
- Walk Leaders roles to introduce new walkers
- NHS referrals could be improved
- Monthly walks- 2 level of walks
- People don't know they can donate towards hired bus
- Follow up when people leave walks/ haven't returned for many weeks
- Delay in delivery of RNIB on walks

## **Focus Group Question 3**

How could we improve the walks?

### **Answers**

- Variety of walk routes on all Weekly walks
- Highlight walks designed for people with long term health conditions/ inactive- 30 minutes walks for example
- Monthly walks- shorter option on all
- Camelon- new walk
- Walking in reverse routes

#### **Focus Group Question 4**

Have the walks benefited you personally? If so, how?

#### **Answers**

- Helped fitness & general wellness
- Wife had Type 2 Diabetes, husband was heavy smoker- really benefitted them both from a health point of view
- Structured part of week- physical activity & huge part of social life
- I wouldn't get up for a walk on my own- structured opportunity
- Social friendships- most loyal companions
- Safety
- Helped when not well and when husband died- great support
- Family concern- support from group

#### **Focus Group Question 5**

How would you like to see the walks develop?

#### **Answers**

- Progression of fitness
- More links with patients with Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, Asthma/ COPD
- Historical/ wildlife (bats) /photography/ bird watching walks with talk from Rangers- perhaps 3/4 times a year
- Slower walks
- Strength & Balance workshops

Places we have visited/ not yet visited that we could have walks/talks from-

- Blackness
- Antonine Wall
- Bonnybridge
- Dalgety Bay
- Donne Castle
- Drumpelliar
- Kennetpans
- Kincardine/ Clacks Bridge

## **Focus Group Question 6**

Thoughts on Social Enterprise:

Day trips- where? cost? other ideas?

### **Answers**

- Yes to day trips
- 200 club- £5 a year from everyone. 1<sup>st</sup>/ 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. Need a licence
- Sponsorship (refer to appendix )

Sponsorship ideas-

- INEOS
- Whisky Bonds
- Alexanders Coaches
- Devon Coaches
- Bannantynes
- The Bairns
- Falkirk Wheel- high profile
- Sports Direct

## **Appendix 4**

### **Case Studies**

#### **Walker otherwise known as Sarah FVRH, Stenhousemuir & Monthly Walks**

Sarah joined our walks in 2011 with her late husband, after hearing about the walks through a friend- who also walks and is a Leader with Braveheart. Sarah's late husband was a keen walker so thought they'd both try the walks out; she states that it may have been hard to join on her own however everyone was so welcoming and friendly; she 'appreciates the Walk Leaders as they do a great job supporting all walkers and they are ever so kind'.

Sarah states she never 'regretted anything' after joining the walks, and walking with Braveheart flagged up her late husband's illness- breathlessness during walks which led to the diagnosis of lung cancer. Sarah continues to attend the Braveheart walks each week as they give her a purpose to get out and about and be sociable; she states that she wouldn't get out much if there were no walks.

The chance to be sociable, especially joining everyone at the cafe after the walks for a cup of tea and a chat, are what Sarah enjoys most on a week to week basis. She enjoys exploring Larbert woods and finds herself more outgoing, has the confidence to chat to people more and it 'does her good'. If Sarah were to sum up Braveheart walks in 3 words, she would say: enjoyable, friendly & sociable.



## John McColl

### Bonnybridge walker

Following on from his retirement, John joined the walks in 2003 when Braveheart's Bonnybridge walk started. He spotted an advert in the local Falkirk Herald about Braveheart's new walk starting in his hometown. John didn't know anyone before joining the walks however he had nothing to do and wanted to get out and about in his local area, and meet new people.

When John started on his first week he met Walk Leader Stanley Stewart and Walking Co-ordinator Gail who warmly welcomed him to the walk; he has made many good friends over the last 13 years of walking with Braveheart and meets up with Walk Leader Maurice- who initially started as a walker then trained in 2008- on a week to week basis for a cup of tea and a catch up.

John was diagnosed with Dementia back in 2014 and he finds the walks extremely beneficial as it helps him keep a routine and continuously meet new people. John thoroughly enjoys the company and keeping active; he also states it's easy for him to talk openly to his friends on the Braveheart walk, than to a group he doesn't know. John strongly highlights that 'Braveheart is keeping us alive'.



## Walk Leader Charlie Colliar

### Trained 2006

Having retired from the Fire Service after 33 years I felt I was now in a position and had the time to take on new opportunities. Up to this time I had not heard of Braveheart but I found out about it through an article in the Falkirk Herald in 2007 where they were looking for new walk leaders. Having always enjoyed walking I contacted the then Walking Co-ordinator. After she had explained the role of a walk leader I felt I possessed the necessary skills to become a walk leader and so I volunteered to attend the upcoming training day. Shortly after my initial training I helped set up the first evening walk in Middlefield Falkirk starting at the Falkirk Football stadium and going to the sea lock on the Forth and Clyde Canal (being an evening walk it only runs from March to October). This walk is still going although it now is called the Helix park walk and although the route has changed slightly from the early walk it now has the benefit of passing the iconic Kelpies which had 1 million visitors in their first year. As well as this walk I also help out on other Braveheart walks throughout the Falkirk District.

I found the initial training day very interesting and equipped me with the necessary skills to become a walk leader. The training included background to the Braveheart organisation, risk assessment, first aid and CPR. Over the years I have attended various other training courses including First aid training and CPR refresher training which is essential for walk leaders as well as outdoor safety training, all of which I have found interesting and useful in my role as a walk leader.

Having always enjoyed walking I find the Braveheart walks enjoyable. On the walks I have the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life many of whom have had health issues and are walking to maintain or improve their health. Additionally it gives many of the walkers a chance to meet other people and afford them the opportunity for social engagement, which for some is limited in their normal day to day life. During many of the walks the world has been put to rights and overall I have found that there has always been a lot of laughter.

As regards to myself I have got a lot of satisfaction from the walks over the years and as well benefiting from the walking for my own health I enjoy the outdoors and meeting people and would recommend it to people, who like me enjoy walking and meeting people.



## **Walk Leader Martin Stewart Trained 2015**

Martin noticed Braveheart's advert for recruiting new Walk Leaders within Falkirk Community Hospital, and following on from retirement he was looking to find something active to fill his time while his wife continued working. Martin was used to an active working life after serving many years in the Navy.

After completing his training in Stirling, Martin got stuck in to the walks shortly after and took the lead on our Linlithgow Loch Walk. After a few weeks of leading this walk, along with cutting out biscuits and the odd sandwich between meals Martin has lost 4kg in weight and is feeling great. His doctor states the only thing he will die of is old age!

