



# **Parks for Health**

**Walking Tour Guide**



The Islington and Camden Parks for Health (PfH) project is one of eight Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) projects chosen across the UK that are finding new ways to manage and fund parks and open spaces across entire towns and cities.



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## Acknowledgements

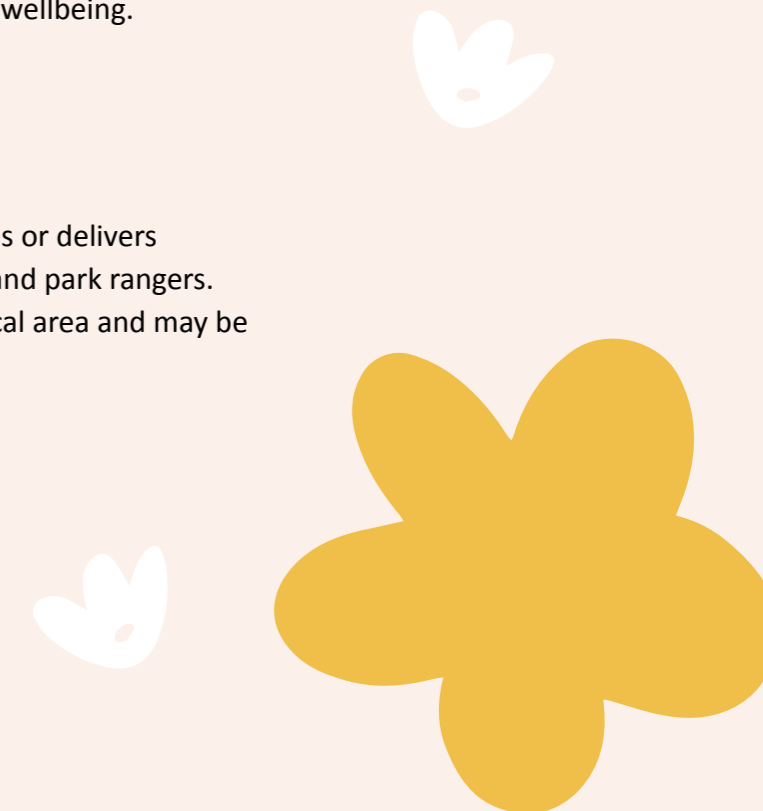
We would like to thank contributors Shirley Fortune and Jill Dalton. Together, they have utilised their experiences as practitioners in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to contribute to this guide.

## How to use this guide?

You can use this guide to help develop and deliver a walking tour or trail in your local area and to engage your communities in the value of parks and green spaces for health and wellbeing.

## Who is the guide for?

This guide is for anyone who currently organises or delivers walking tours in parks, such as Friends groups and park rangers. As well as, those who are interested in their local area and may be interested in leading their own walking tours.



# Introduction

The [popularity of walking tours](#) has risen with people wanting to immerse themselves in local cultures and contribute to the local economy of different locales.

A walking tour with the correct development and management will provide those involved with an increased sense of community and wellness.

Walking is a great way to improve your health, get acquainted with your local area and contribute to motivation. The NHS provides a [webpage](#) on all the different ways that walking for our health and wellbeing benefits people. This guide will provide guidance and tips to create impactful walking tours and trails.

Throughout this guide you can find Shirley's top tips on the different elements of doing a walking tour/trail. This includes developing a tour, doing a tour and an example of a walking tour in Camden.



## ***Walking tour***

***A tour completed by foot that covers cultural/historical sites or features, typically in an urban setting and is led by a tour guide.***

*Source - The Oxford Dictionary*



Our guide to

# Developing a walking tour

## Research

- ✿ Remember you are building a story about a particular topic or subject - you can make it as exciting and creative as you like.
- ✿ Pick a subject area you are passionate and interested in - this could be alternative histories, sports, local geography etc.
- ✿ Use local libraries, read books and speak with local and national experts to build the story you want to tell.

## Plan your route

- ✿ Think about how far geographically and how long your route will take - attendees will not want to walk too far or for too long.
- ✿ You can use online mapping tools to plan routes - see OnTheGoMap which can plot walking routes, even on paths in parks.
- ✿ Make sure you plan in rest stops for snacks and for toilet breaks.
- ✿ Be mindful of attendees physical abilities - make sure that routes have level surfaces for wheels.
- ✿ If there is a particular point of interest related to your walk that could extend the time of your walk and distance walked. You can find a point in the walk to stop and discuss the information.
- ✿ Attendees may not have a visual stop, but they can still benefit from local area information.
- ✿ Practice the route and ask for feedback.

## Promote your tour

- ✿ Use an event promotion website to sell tickets. Even if tickets are free it is helpful to know who is attending so you can count attendees in and out
- ✿ Create content for promoting your tour - include date, time, where attendees should meet and how to find who they are looking for. Pictures always help!

Our guide to

# During a walk

## Standing positions

- ✿ If there is a Top Visual Priority (TVP), such as a landmark, make sure you stand where everyone can see it.
- ✿ Depending on the time of year or time of day, make sure the group does not have the sun in their eyes.
- ✿ Don't block pavements or paths! There should be room to get a buggy behind the group.
- ✿ Be assertive. The group won't know what is expected of them, so be comfortable to ask them to move.

## Introduction to a walk

- ✿ Always introduce yourself.
- ✿ Advise that you will use designated crossings, but that everyone is responsible for their own safety.
- ✿ Advise how long the walk will take and where it will finish.
- ✿ Give a brief summary of what the walk will be about e.g. if there is a theme, describe it and why you chose it.
- ✿ Advise of any obstacles e.g. steps, steep slopes.

## Guiding between stops

- ✿ Use designated crossings where available, even if it means going a little out of your way.
- ✿ Check regularly to make sure the group is keeping up; slow down if needed to ensure the group remains together.

## Delivering a stop



- ✿ Only start when everyone is ready, and in the position you want them to stand.
- ✿ Keep eye contact with the group at all times.
- ✿ Never turn your back to the group when pointing something out.
- ✿ When indicating something, be specific, i.e. not 'over there', rather 'on your left above the blue door'.
- ✿ Sound engaged; vary your tone; pause for effect if appropriate.
- ✿ Keep hand movements to a minimum – for indicating only.
- ✿ Keep stops within 5 minutes ideally; if they go on too long, you may lose your group's attention.
- ✿ Wrap up a stop clearly rather than drift to an end; link to your next stop.

## Conclusion to a walk



- ✿ Thank people for attending.
- ✿ Advise them where the nearest transport links, loos and cafés are.
- ✿ Give a brief summary of what you have shown them on the walk.
- ✿ Tell them about any other walks you may wish to promote.

## Case study

# Example of a walking tour in Camden

### Bloomsbury Square to Square Walk

This walking tour started with a welcome and introduction, which explained to the group the key points of the walk, how long the tour would last and any specific safety information that was important.

We then gave an overview of the locations we were going to visit, which included eight stops: Russell Square Gardens, Queens Square, Brunswick Square/Coram Fields, St George's gardens, Tavistock Square, Gordon Square, University Complex and Bedford Square.

In each area we discussed the architecture.

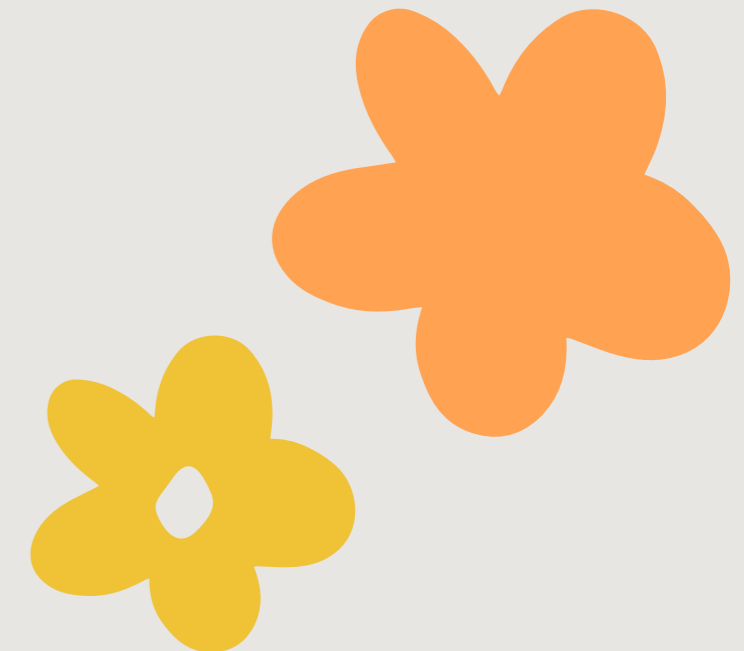
monuments and landscape, and talked about the notable buildings, people and events associated with the area.

In our first stop at Russell Square Gardens, we explained to the group about the history of this 19th century public square and pointed out its lawns, vegetation and ornamental fountain. We offered some key facts such as how it forms part of the Bedford Estate and that the garden was designed by Humphry Repton in 1806.

It's always good to point out interesting facts when hosting a walking tour. On this walk

we brought the group's attention to the tree that was planted in memory of T.S Eliot and the plaque in memory of Ewan McColl, a communist, writer and musician who was also the father of the singer Kirsty McColl. Bringing in fun bits of trivia is a great way to keep groups engaged!

After visiting the various stops on the tour, we ended the session by asking the group if they had any questions and comments. It's always helpful to make sure the group get a chance to find out more before ending the tour.





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