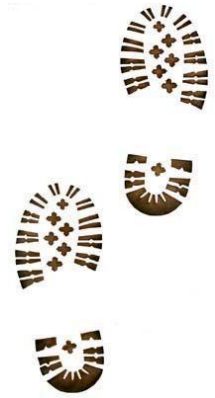
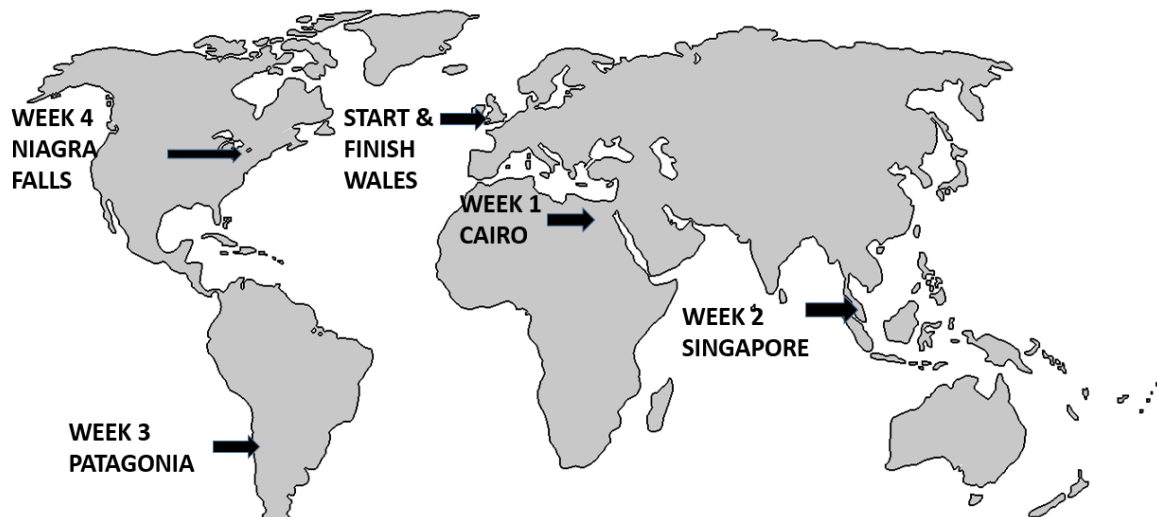


All Wales NERS Virtually Walk Around the World



NERS Walk Around the World July 2020



560 participants walk 38,000 miles



**Cynllun Atgyfeirio Cleifion
i Wneud Ymarfer Corff Cymru
Wales National Exercise
Referral Scheme (NERS)**

The Invite

On the 1st of May, a group of exercise referral clients in Ceredigion took up the challenge to virtually walk the Welsh coastal path. Some people were walking around their kitchens, some in their gardens and some when they went out locally for their daily exercise. As the weeks passed more people joined the challenge. It was soon clear it was motivating people to be active and they all enjoyed feeling part of a bigger group despite the challenges that the lockdown enforced upon everyone.

May came and went and people wanted to keep going, the feedback was too good to stop. So, as June came we kept virtually going all the way around the British coastal path. In 8 weeks the team of over 40 walkers had achieved amazing results and made it all around the British Isles.

For July, we have an even bigger challenge, we are going to take on the world! Many counties in Wales are going to join us to become a huge welsh walking group in order to make sure we have the best chance of achieving our goal.

We would love you to join us and be part of our virtual team.

It is simple to take part as it just involves a weekly email to your exercise referral specialist, with a total of your weekly steps. This can be recorded on a pedometer, phone or Fitbit, or we work on the ratio of 2000 steps is roughly a mile. We will then send you out a weekly update of where we have made it too.

It is fun and light hearted and everyone just does what they can. Every step counts.

If you would like to join, just reply to this email and start recording steps from Wednesday the 1st.

Ymunwch a ni,

Dawn Forster
Cydlynnydd Cerdded er Lles
Walking for Wellbeing Co-ordinator

Mobile: 07866 985753

Week 1

Hello walkers!

Diolch, thank you everyone for joining us on the 'Walk around the World' challenge.

The response has been amazing and we now have 11 counties across Wales and hundreds of walkers which makes our challenge much easier to face!

Every step helps us along on our journey and also helps you keep your fitness levels up. Did you know walking is one of the best forms of exercise and you use on average 1/3 of your body's muscles with every step!

So the update you have been waiting for:

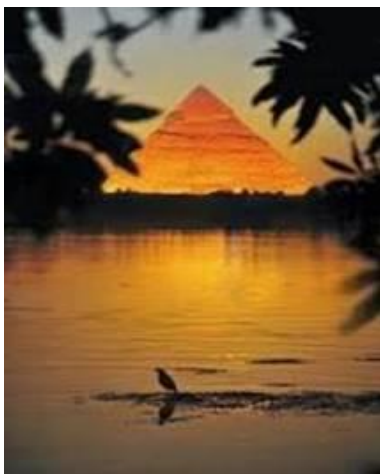
After we all met up in Cardigan we whizzed down the M4 and picked up our walkers from counties in the East.

In no time at all we left our beloved homeland of Wales behind us and decided we wanted to head to sunnier climates.

We enjoyed delicious Crepes in Paris and Fondue in Switzerland. But still we kept going strong.

In our first week, after quick stop to rest our weary legs in the refreshing Mediterranean sea we ended up covering well **over 3000 miles** and in.....

Cairo



An amazing achievement for the first few days of July and it is great to hear the challenge is motivating so many people to move more. Here is a quote from John in Swansea:

"My steps. I've tried hard and think I've done well considering I had more or less given up hope. Lol. Feeling better for having this motivation from you. Thank you so much"

So who knows where our adventures will take us next?

Keep stepping whenever you can and thank you again for being part of the team challenge.

Cadwch yn ddiogel,

Dawn & Team

Week 2

Shwmae walkers,

Week 2 of our 'Walk around the World' adventure has been one of the best weeks yet. With 12 counties in Wales taking part our huge group is quite a sight to behold, clocking up almost 8,000 miles.

Everyone has been putting their best foot forward and reporting back amazing steps – well done pawb.

So here is our weekly update:

After wiping the camel dung from our boots and leaving the majestic Pyramids of Giza behind us, we decided to head East at full speed. In no time at all we had made it into India and decided we needed take a slight detour to experience the beauty of the Taj Mahal and wow, it took our breaths away.



A spicy curry for those that could handle it and we carried on into beautiful, diverse Nepal. Resting under the banana palms we soon had to shield from an almighty snowstorm. Good job we packed for all weathers. Whilst rafting down Nepal's icy rivers we were faced with the most majestic sight ever. Everest herself....



If only we had more time, we could have hot footed it to the top, but maybe that challenge is for another day. We continued on, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia. Our energy was contagious until it all got too much and we were called to relax in Splendid.....

SINGAPORE.

The bright lights and hustle and bustle of the big city was all a bit much for us. After a refreshing Singapore Sling in Raffles we headed out to the sun drenched beaches for a well-deserved sunbathe until we begin again.



So keep going team, you are all fantastic and helping yourself stay fit and healthy by walking when you can. Research has shown that walking improves your mood and lowers anxiety, which is something we all need at times.

Thank you Shan for your comments last week, you made the whole team smile.

“Fantastic! I hope all of you realise that you have done immeasurable good with this virtual walking idea. Please don’t stop it, even when we get back to some degree of normality, it would be such a pity to let it go. There are times when I just can’t get myself down to the gym, but knowing that this challenge is on going and that Sarah and co are on U tube means I have the chance to have the most amazing support whenever I am able to take advantage of it. It provides such a psychological boost as well.

What an awesome bunch of people you all are. Not sure whether you have been included as key workers but from my perspective, you definitely are! Without your support I know I would be a much unhappier and unfit person. Solitary confinement is considered a form of torture in some situations but I do not feel alone with all this support.

And for those of you that can’t get out for whatever reason and you want to help us get to Australia, have a look at these walking video’s which will inspire you to walk indoors.

Seated Walking https://youtu.be/WI_qLHm8FHU

Standing Walking Indoors <https://youtu.be/Ng5CrAQzzaM>

Keep your comments and photo’s coming in and keep an eye out for kangaroos.

Very best,

Dawn and the NERS team.

Week 3

Hello to our fantastic virtual walking community,

So week three and everyone is working even harder than ever and taking more and more steps, despite the rain we had last week.

Well done all. Da iawn I gyd.

Together we have walked close to 10,000 miles and welcomed new walkers and also the Vale of Glamorgan NERS team have joined in too. Great to have you on board.

So where have our feet taken us this week after we finished relaxing in tropical Singapore?

As we were all enjoying the beach life so much we decided to do some Island hopping through the archipelago of beautiful Indonesia. Plunging our tired bodies into the warm seas and sleeping on deserted beaches, it was hard to leave, but we knew we had a goal to achieve. We promised to return one day and made ourselves keep putting one foot in front of the other.



Befriending some sailors we jumped on some sailing boats and made it to yet another continent – Australia.

After some close encounters with crocodiles and the biggest spiders we have ever seen, we all voted to head to the Great Barrier Reef. For some this had been a lifelong dream. And yes, we took a break for a deep sea dive. Wow, it was breath-taking.



In fact we got so carried away with the deep sea diving, we kept going, further and further, through the warm South Pacific sea until we hit land again and we were in South America! (well it was either swim or grow wings!) As the jagged mountaintops came into view, so did a beautiful pod of whales.



As we climbed onto land and explored further we began to feel strangely at home, did we really hear someone speaking Welsh? – could this be ‘Little Wales beyond Wales’?

Yes, our final destination this week is **Patagonia**



Fantastic effort everyone and keep enjoying walking and the health benefits it is bringing you. Especially in the beautiful sunshine.

I look forward to seeing where our journey takes us next week.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the ‘West Wales Walking for Wellness’ Project I am part of please visit the website <https://westwaleswalkingforwellbeing.org.uk/>

Stay safe and remember to wash your hands regularly.

Hwyl fawr

Dawn and the NERS team

Week 4

Hello walkers,

As our Walk Around the World challenge reaches its penultimate week we still continue to make phenomenal progress.

From the 1st of July we have now walked an incredible 29,000 miles. That is 58 million steps and huge health benefits for us all. So, where did we make it to by the end of last week? After waving goodbye to our welsh speaking friends we headed North and found ourselves being drawn to hike the mystical Inca Trail. When the mist lifted in the mornings, the emerald peaks and the ancient ruins were a wonder to behold.



Stocking up with much needed Arabica coffee in Columbia we had no time to rest our weary feet. Quickly striding on through Venezuela we decided we wanted the relaxing atmosphere of beach life again. Who could resist the coral sand beaches of the Caribbean? We had such fun dancing to the spicy salsa rhythm and partied late into the night with the echoes of the reggae drums.



Our journey took us back onto the Mainland and next was a visit to see Mickey himself in Orlando.



After riding some huge rollercoasters and we carried on North. The only stop was for photo's with the Statue of Liberty.



Finally, we reach our final destination for week 4 of our challenge **Niagara Falls**.



“This challenge has been the best motivation tool I have done over the lockdown, I hope we can carry on in to August?”

One last push team and let's make it back home to hang our walking boots! Wrap up as it will be chilly hiking through Greenland.

Stay safe,

Dawn & the NERS team

Week 5

Well virtual walking team, this is the final update you have been waiting for.....

We only went and did it!! WE WALKED AROUND THE WORLD and some more. In fact a lot more.

In total, 560 exercise referral clients and staff members, from 13 counties in Wales walked an incredible **38,000 miles**. The fitness and wellbeing benefits of all that walking are fantastic for everyone involved. Regardless if you contributed 1,000 or 100,000 steps every week. All movement is good for your body.

So here is where our weary feet managed to take us in our last week....

Leaving the thunderous Niagara Falls we headed North and quickly the temperatures dropped and we all put on every layer of clothing we owned. Stopping to buy some snow chains for our boots we noticed the days were getting longer and longer, until there was no nightfall at all. Our Arctic adventure had begun. Battling through the deep fjords and gleaming glaciers we were sure we spotted an arctic fox, or maybe it was a polar bear? We were in untraveled territory and it did get a bit unnerving.



Managing to catch a flight over the Davis Strait we landed in a sleepy coastal town in Southern Greenland. The mountains towered high into the sky and we were amazed at the raw beauty of what was before us.



We battled our way across the freezing country and were lucky enough to meet a team of pilots who were able to fly us over to Iceland and land in the world's most Northerly capital, Reykjavík.



Our bodies ached so the offer of a soak in the geothermally heated waters was very much welcomed – socially distanced of course!



We feasted on fish with hot springs rye bread and a shot of Brennivin and suddenly the UK felt closer than ever before. The thought of the green, green, grass of home gave us that last surge of energy.

Finding our friendly pilots again they flew all of us over to Northern Scotland and we raced through the highlands in good spirits. Passing over the border into England we all looked quite a sight now, our boots tattered and our bodies so tired.

Then before we knew it there it was – CYMRU.



We cried, we laughed, then we did something altogether for that magical moment, we all started singing Calon Lan.

Running down the coastal path and dropping people off on the way to their nearest towns, we said our goodbyes and promised to all meet again soon.

Then all of a sudden it was just the Cardigan team back outside Aberteifi leisure centre, left where they started 31 days before.

So there we are team, we should be proud of ourselves and what we have achieved.

But the journey is not over, oh no!

We have a new August challenge that we would love you to be part of. We are going to try and walk 50,000 miles in August and we need your help to achieve this goal.

Also, as it was going to be the National Eisteddfod in Ceredigion this month we want to ask everyone to send in a small contribution to a group rendition of Calon Lan. If you want to get your families/grandchildren/dogs to join in even better. Our media team will then put it together for us. Please get in touch with me for more details.

The plan is the same, just email me your weekly step count on a Monday and I will send out an update every week and let you know how we are getting on. Just walk when you feel you can and when it feels good. Always wash your hands when you get home and stay 2 meters from people when you are outside.

Hwyl am y tro,

Dawn & the NERS team

Feedback and Comments

'Fantastic! I hope all of you realise that you have done immeasurable good with this virtual walking idea. Please don't stop it, even when we get back to some degree of normality, it would be such a pity to let it go. There are times when I just can't get myself down to the gym, but knowing that this challenge is on going and that Sarah and co are on U tube means I have the chance to have the most amazing support whenever I am able to take advantage of it. It provides such a psychological boost as well. What an awesome bunch of people you all are. Not sure whether you have been included as key workers but from my perspective, you definitely are! Without your support I know I would be a much unhappier and unfit person. Solitary confinement is considered a form of torture in some situations but I do not feel alone with all this support. So I will say it again, well done and thank you. I am off to put some sun screen on. It's lovely to be in the sun!'

'I'm amazed, up so much! Tell myself I have to walk for Dawn! Thank you. I loved your walk report, making it to Cairo via Paris, so clever! (I'm a real armchair traveller so am eagerly waiting to see next destination)! What an achievement from everyone.'

'Thanks for organising it all - keeps me focused about continuing with the walks - I'd be too embarrassed if I didn't have any 'steps' to Send to you!'

'I have managed more steps this week, don't quite know how. Next week I am going to try and beat this figure which is my record so far. These virtual challenges certainly help as after sitting for a while I am aware of getting up and to start moving.'

'This just makes me feel so much more motivated especially when you send our update. Thank you so much, this was a fantastic idea and a lot of my friends in England are envious.'

'I am much looking forward to knowing how far we have got to. One of my life's ambitions has been to see the Taj Mahal so even getting there virtually is helpful!'

'Thank you a great trip! Such amazing places to visit! It's been so motivational! I must try harder this coming week. Thankyou'

'I always enjoy your updates and thank you for them but I have to say this week's was really wonderful. Thank you.'

'What beautiful photos! I wish I had seen that whale! Never mind, one can dream as we are walking along.'

'Looking forward to seeing where got to! Thank you for all your encouragement. I'm enjoying the challenge.'

'I always look forward to your email telling us where we have got to.'

'It would be lovely to think that we've made it right round the world. Well done for organising an incredible event over the past few months.'

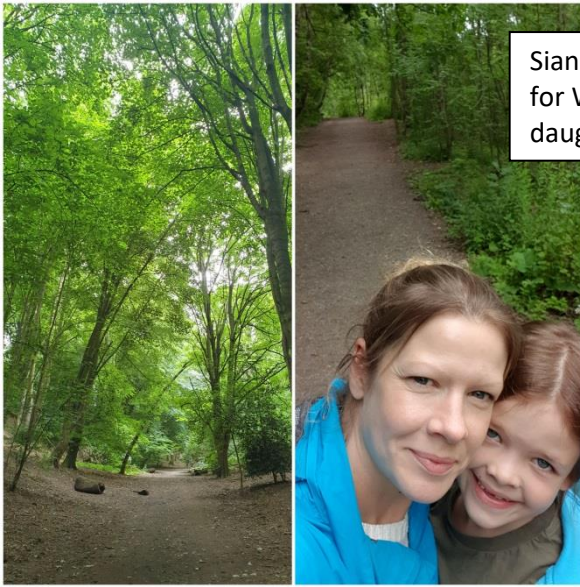
'It's quite amazing how the clients are responding.'

'Enjoyed hearing about all the places. Almost felt I was there really. Look forward to the next challenge.'

Photos



Pictured above is the Lewis family. NERS Swansea participants Paul and Kathryn topped up their steps whilst visiting their son Gareth who is a NERS Ceredigion Instructor. Joining them for a walk in the Hafod Estate in Aberystwyth are Gareth's wife Kate and Son Rhodri, together with his sister Rebecca and her daughter Sian.



Sian one of the NERS Coordinators for Wrexham out on a walk with her daughter in Maes Y Pant Wrexham

Jackie one of our Exercise Professionals in Wrexham out and about with her dog Zulu 😊

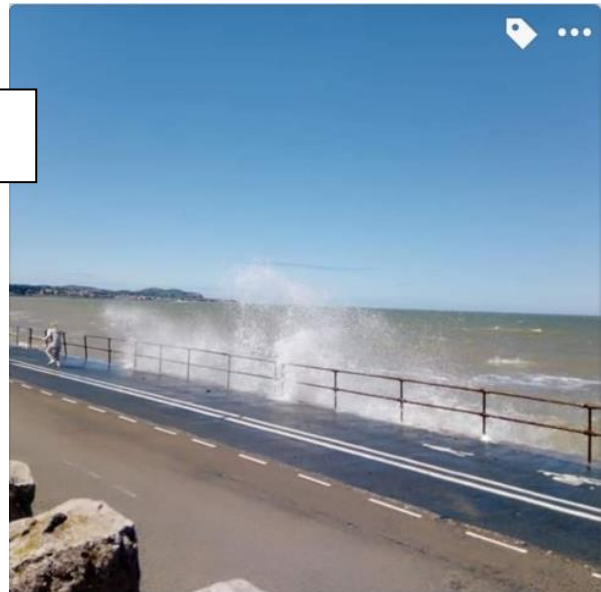


"Lovely dry 5 mile walk this morning"

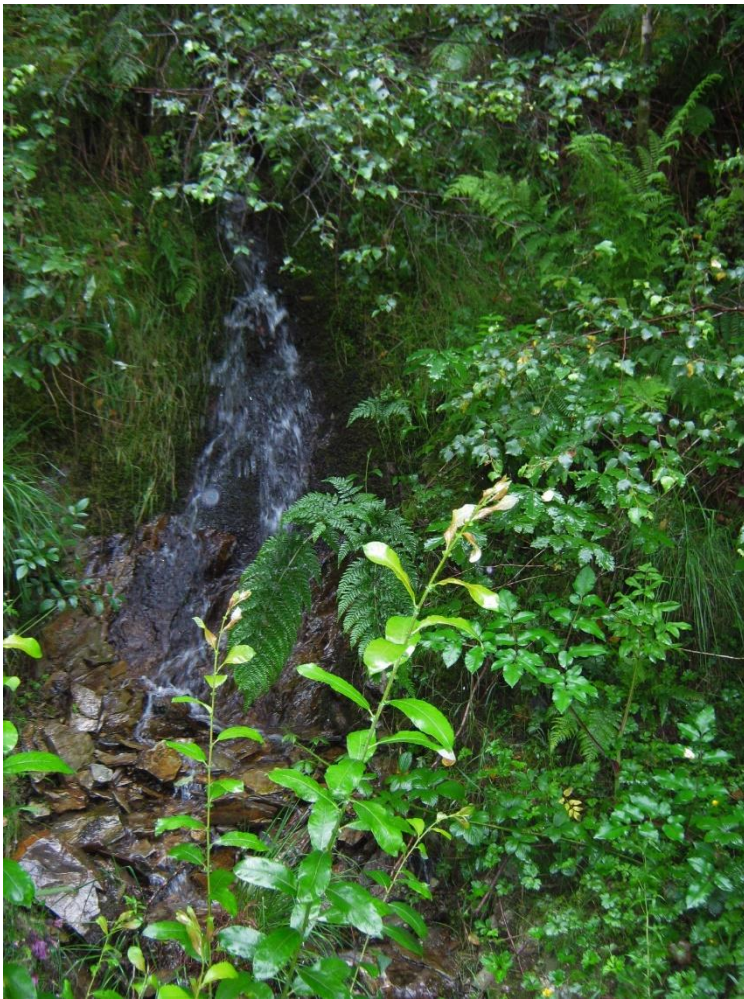


Bit of a wet walk today but not as crazy as the people in the river

Great to have a day out at the seaside



Nice walk up the Hafod this morning 11am and already got my 10000 steps.



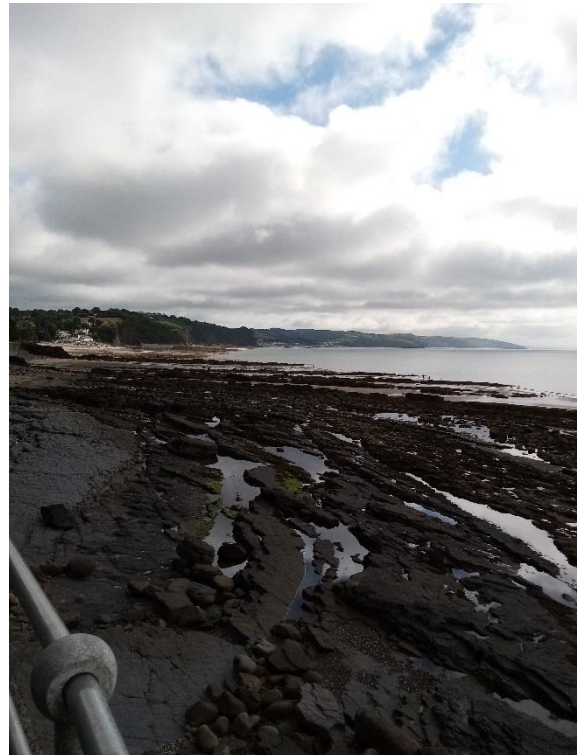


"Just before the rain, love walking through this while my dog happily plays"

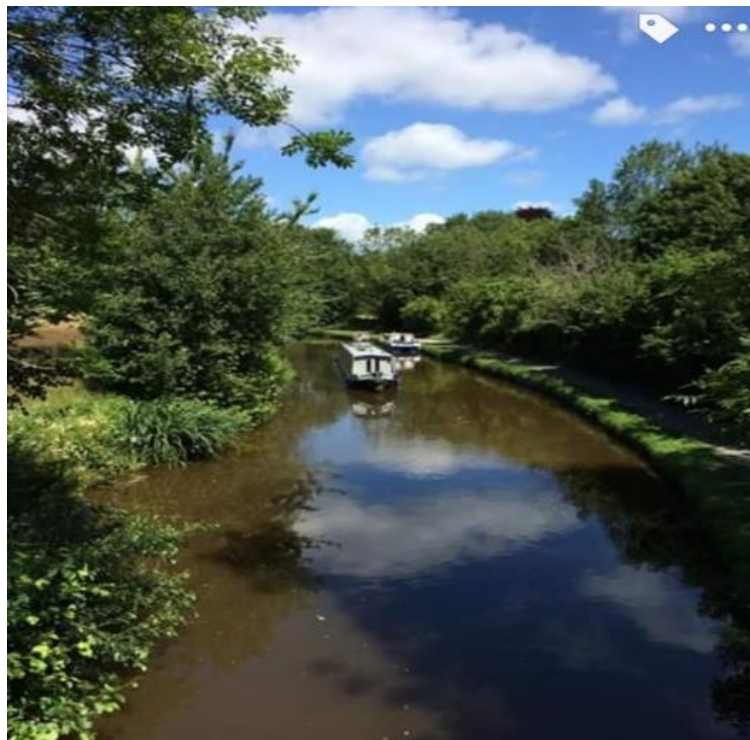
"A nice walk around Llwyneinion this afternoon, at this rate will be needing new trainers"



"My Wife and I had a lovely walk down through Moss Country Park managed 6 miles"



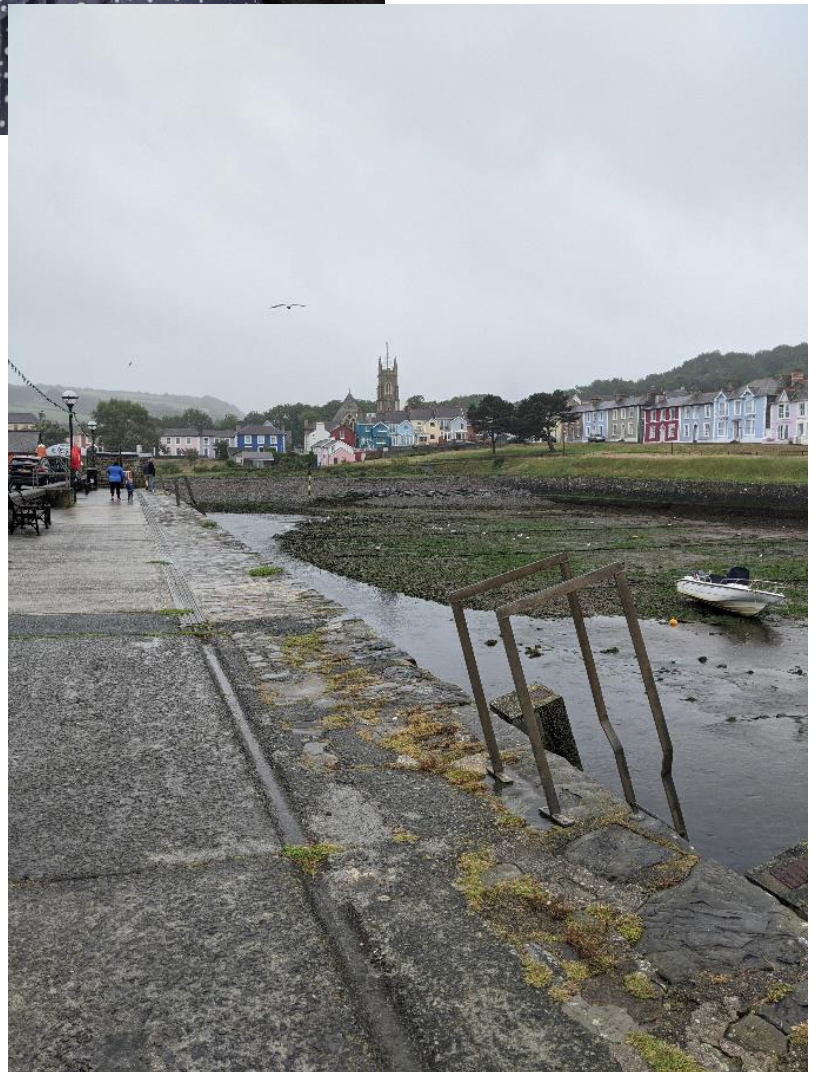
















The West Wales Walking for Wellbeing (WWWfW) project is a new initiative and aims to develop and deliver a programme of 'walking for wellbeing' opportunities for communities in West Wales.

Dawn Forster is the coordinator for Ceredigion and before lockdown was enforced she had set up friendly walking groups in Cardigan and looking next to Aberporth. The plan is to roll out the walks across the county. The walks are short, safe wellbeing walks, no longer than 1 hour in your local area.

The Project is funded by the Healthy & Active Fund, a partnership between Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales and is active in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. For more information visit www.westwaleswalkingforwellbeing.org.uk

If you are interested in joining the walking groups in Ceredigion you will be very welcome once things are safe to meet up again. If you email Dawn on dawn.forster@ceredigion.gov.uk, she can stay in touch and let you know when we will restart.

Dawn will be looking for volunteers to take part in the project as Walk Leaders or Walk buddies. Full training and support will be given. If you are interested please contact Dawn on dawn.forster@ceredigion.gov.uk for more details.

Details for contacts in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire can be found on the website, www.westwaleswalkingforwellbeing.org.uk



**"WALKING IS A
MAN'S BEST
MEDICINE."**

- HIPPOCRATES

THANK YOU

