

GM Walking Festival 2023

Resources for community groups, organisations, individuals, and workplaces

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Invitation to join in

Invitation to get involved: Join in the GM Walking Festival 1st – 31st May 2023!

The Greater Manchester Walking Festival is delighted to once again be able to bring together a range of walks and activities organised by local residents and organisations across GM during May this year.

Celebrating the joy of walking and being outside, the festival will bring together neighbours, friends and communities and encourage participants to have fun, discover, and re-discover, the joy of the walking journey. The Greater Manchester Walking Festival encourages people to get out, discover new places, make new connections and perhaps learn new things.

We need people like you to plan and host a walk (or two or three?) for the people in your local area. Have a think about what would encourage the people you know, those who may not regularly walk at the moment, to get outdoors in May and join the movement.

Simple tips for taking part in the Walking Festival:

Organise a walk

1. Decide on a day and time

Think about which dates would suit most of the people in your community so that everyone can make it. Are weekdays or weekends best? And what time of day works well.

2. Decide who it is aimed at

Do you want to encourage more families and children in your community to walk? Would a walk aimed at women be more suitable for your work? Walking, strolling, rolling, or just being outside and moving more. Whatever works.

Could you involve the people you'd like to attend in planning what the walk will be? Could you ask them what would appeal to them?

3. Decide on a joyful theme

A Festival walk doesn't have to be long or complicated. It can be a short walk (we recommend no less than 30 minutes) and we'd love the walks in the festival programme to have a joyful theme that encourages an interest from people who don't usually engage with walking groups. What would it be called?

There are lots of ideas including

- treasure hunts
- bring a friend social
- learn about local points of interest
- exploring somewhere new
- experience walking in quieter areas
- nature trails
- play or picnic in the park
- walk and talk
- discover new paths
- arts, fancy dress, garden walks

4. Submit your walk via the online GM Walking Festival page

- Visit the GM Walking Festival web page and fill in the walk [submission form](#)
- Submit before **24th March 2023**
- We will then review it and publish it before the end of March 2023

5. Spread the word

The GM Walking Festival organisers will be promoting the Festival through social media, press releases and stories from early April right through to the end of May 2023. We will highlight themes, such as Walk to School Week, National Mental Health Awareness Week, and places or groups with interesting events or stories. Please share the posts from @GMWalks Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram pages, adapting them to your focus. Please use the #GMWalking hashtag on your posts so others can easily find related content and spread the word!

Invite as many or as few as you are able to! You can advertise your event more traditionally with posters or community notice boards in shops or on the High Street or through social media. We will create a template poster that you can download and use from GMwalking.co.uk/festival. Remember inviting people face to face is also a great way to encourage people to join in.

We also have a downloadable editable calendar for people to keep a record of their walks or plan a month long challenge. See our [monthly walking challenges](#) for more information.

6. Finally... enjoy!

Please share the experiences on your walk. Post your photos, videos and stories on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook using #GMWalking and tag @GMWalks.

Please share any highlights e.g. if the people taking part in your walk enjoyed it and if you have any plans to keep walking. There are resources to help people keep up their regular walking on the [GM Walking](#) website.

For help with planning your walk see our guidance below or contact info@gmmoving.co.uk

Guide to Submitting a Festival Walk

How to submit a walk to be part of the GM Walking Festival 1st – 31st May 2023

This is a guide to help GM Walk Festival Organisers to submit a walk using our online form.

1) Select borough

Please select which borough the walk starts in. People will be able to search walks by borough, once the walks are live on the website.

2) Group or organisation name

This is the name of the individual or group organising and leading the walk. It can be an individual, school, workplace, community group, GP practice, hospital, housing association complex, place of worship or a 'service' within a local authority or the NHS. Everyone is welcome to take part in the GM Walking Festival!

3) Full name of walk leader/organiser & 4) Email or phone number of walk leader/organiser

The name and contact information provided will be made public on the GM Walking Festival webpage if you choose to share your walk publicly in box 18. If you're not the walk leader/organiser, please ensure you have their permission before publishing their details.

If this person has not yet been identified, please put a contact name and details of someone in the organisation or group that people can contact in case of enquiry, and with whom the GM Walking Festival organisers can be in contact.

You can however contact philippa@greatersport.co.uk if you wish the contact details to solely be used by The GM Walking Festival organisers.

5) Day of the week

Please select the day of the week for your walk(s). People may filter by day when they're looking for convenient events near them.

6) Date of the walk

Please select the date of your walk between 1st – 31st May 2023.

7) Start time

The time stated should be the time you aim to leave to start the walk. We will encourage walkers to arrive 10-15 minutes early via the FAQs and on the main festival page. People will be able to filter walks by day or date when searching for a walk to join.

8) Name of Walk

Try to think of a name that will appeal to new walkers or those that don't regularly walk. Perhaps an idea of where it is or what's involved. E.g. Picnic in Alkrington Woods; A stroll and the sights of the Irwell Valley; Family Rock Hunt in Queens Park.

9) Brief description of walk

Please provide a few sentences about your walk i.e. who the walk is for, the expected terrain, surrounding landscapes/scenery, purpose e.g. maybe it's an opportunity to learn about new walking paths in an urban area connecting to greenspace?

10) Meeting point

Please detail the street/town/borough where you'd like participants to meet you for your walk e.g. park entrance, café, building etc.

11) End address

Only complete this section if the walk ends in a different place to the starting point.

12) Start postcode and 13) End postcode

Please include the postcodes of the meeting point and end address (if applicable). This is really important information for an accurate GPS reading.

14) Distance

Please tick the box that is closest to the distance of your walk. People will be able to filter the GM Festival walks by distance once they are live on the website.

15) Walk Difficulty

Please use the walk grading key document on the right-hand side of the Festival page for guidance. People will be able to filter the GM Festival walks by walk difficulty grading to help them find suitable walks.

1. **Easy** - On generally well-maintained, level surfaces. Suitable for less confident walkers, families with young children, or those simply looking for a short stroll. Up to 2 miles/3 km.
2. **Leisurely** - Mainly on gentle gradients but possibly including steps, stiles, unsurfaced paths or longer distances (up to 5 miles/8 km). Walking boots and waterproof clothing may be useful.
3. **Moderate** - May include some steep paths, open country or longer distances (up to 10 miles/16 km). Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing recommended.
4. **Challenging** - Suitable for experienced, fit walkers. May involve hills, rough country or longer distances (10 miles/16 km or above). Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing essential.
5. **Multi-stage** - Walking routes made up of multiple stages, typically completed over several days or as individual walks.

16) Facilities

Please tick any boxes that apply to your walk. This will help people decide if the walk is appropriate for them. People will be able to search walks by these facilities to help them find suitable walks.

17) Transport

This will help those wishing to join your walk to choose how to get there or decide if they can reach the meeting point in time for the start time. A link to the TfGM journey planner can be found on the Festival Walk search page.

18) Public or private walk

Schools and some other organisations may wish to benefit from the support provided by GM Walking by submitting a walk, but may not wish it to be openly publicised. See A Guide to Submitting a Festival Walk document for more details

If you would like your walk to be open to members of the public, tick 'Yes'. This is great for promoting your area, your group and its work, and sharing the joy of walking and your walks. We're encouraging most walks to remain public to reach wider audiences.

If you tick 'No', the walk will not appear on the main festival page and members of the public will not be able to search for it or participate. Making a walk private may be appropriate for schools, or organisations working with groups of people that may have specific needs.

Making a walk private means you can still benefit from being part of the festival and get support from GM Walking/GreaterSport, however the walk will be solely for your target audience.

19) Useful link for additional details (if required)

If there is a link to your group, a map of the route, information about the area or park you'll be walking in or anything relevant, please include the web link in the box.

20) Booking Link (if required)

Please add a booking link if you wish to limit the numbers or know numbers in advance. This may be an Eventbrite or similar booking form, or an email address. If you put this in place, it is your responsibility to develop your own booking process and communicate with walkers booked on.

21) Are you new to the GM Walking Festival?

Please tick 'Yes' if you have never organised or led a walk as part of the GM Walking Festival before. The last physical GM Walking Festival was in 2022 and involved over 200 walks across GM. Please get involved if you can. We can help you plan to organise a walk.

22) Tell us how you found out about the Walking Festival!

Please select how you heard about the Festival from the drop-down options. This is really useful for our feedback purposes and what communications to focus on for next time.

You will then need to tick the "I'm not a robot" box and click submit.

The deadline for walk submissions is **Friday 24th March 2023**

If you have any further questions or need help with planning your walk, check out the FAQs below or contact info@gmmoving.co.uk

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please see below FAQs for walk organisers/leaders. If you have further questions, please contact info@gmmoving.co.uk or see the GM Walking Festival page for more information.

Q: Why take part in the GM Walking Festival 1st – 31st May 2023

A: The GM Walking Festival is a month-long celebration of walking, promoting opportunities to take part many different walks across Greater Manchester throughout May. The festival will promote places to walk, groups to walk with and reasons to walk and it is hoped that participants will be inspired to continue walking and discover the joy of walking beyond May.

For organisations thinking of hosting a walk, it's a great way to bring people together, help walkers meet new people, discover new routes, get some fresh air and build some activity into their day. Organising regular walks could help your organisation to achieve great things in a new way. The GM Walking Festival May 2023 is a great opportunity to start.

Q: Who can host a walk?

A: Anyone can! Whether you're an individual, group, schools, or organisation, we'd love for you to host a walk to encourage others to join in. Submit a walk using the online form and let's hear your ideas!

Q: I've never planned a walk before. Where do I start?

A: We have a guidance document that has further information on planning a walk and submitting a walk to be part of the GM Walking Festival. We suggest you start by thinking about who the walk is for and asking some people from that group what would interest or appeal to them. You can then plan the details together about where, when and how far.

All walks must be free of charge for the walkers as a condition of being part of the Let's Walk GM Walking Festival 2023.

Q: Are there any funds available to help my organisation host a walk?

A: This year the GM Walking Festival has a 'Let's Walk Fund,' a small grant fund with up to £100 to walk organisers to support the delivery and sustainability of festival walks in May and beyond. Funds are limited and not all those who apply will be successful. You can find the info and application process in the Let's Walk Fund Guide & Application form [coming soon]

There may also be local small grants available via the local organisations that support Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations in each borough. [Click here](#) for more information.

Q: Can I submit multiple walks?

A: Absolutely! Please submit a separate form for each walk you plan to organise and GM Walking will review all submissions. Find the submission form on our main Festival page

Q: Do we need to have an accredited walk leader to host a walk?

A: No, you do not need to have an accredited walk leader to host a walk. However, it is important you know the route, any risks and have some experience managing a group. If you'd like some guidance on supporting others to walk in a group, please see our guidance document for how to lead a walk safely. This guidance document summarises the main points to consider when planning a short walk in your local area and taking others on a walk.

Q: Can I keep the walk private and promote just for the people I work with?

A: Yes! On the sign-up form there is a question 'Do you want your walk to appear on the public facing GM Walk Festival web page?'. If you'd like to keep the walk private to your group or organisation tick 'No'.

This means your walk will not appear on the main festival page and cannot be searched by members of the public. See below question for further information on promotion of your private walk.

Q What is the benefit of being part of the GM Walking Festival if a walk is private?

A: If you make the walk private, all promotion to your group/community will be down to you. However, you will still benefit from being part of the festival through:

- Being part of a month of walking focused activity across GM
- Advice and information from GM Walking to set up your walk
- Access to branded marketing assets for you to promote your walk internally
- A coordinated, GM wide comms plan and approach which can be adapted for your purpose or audience (from early April)
- A downloadable, editable calendar so you can plan a challenge among your group or as an individual
- Web-based resources to support the continued walking of your participants
- An option to be part of a case study you can use within your own organisation to share impact and engagement

Q: Is there a minimum/maximum number of participants for each walk?

A: The number of walkers you have can only be monitored if you use a booking system. All walks submitted by **24th March 2023** using the sign-up form on the GM Walking Festival website will be published by the end of March and will be searchable by anyone (Unless you make your walk private. See above). We advise walk organisers to be prepared for any number of walkers. That may mean more than one person from the organising group helping out. At the last GM Walking Festival in 2022 there was an average of 15 walkers per walk.

Q: Can I restrict the number of people attending the walk?

A: Yes, if you set up a booking system, you can restrict the numbers that can book on. There is guidance on adding your booking details in 'A Guide to Submitting a Festival Walk'. If you choose to add a booking system, it will be your responsibility to communicate with walkers booking on or making enquiries.

Q: Can the walks be any length, duration, or difficulty?

A: We recommend a minimum of 30 minutes, and most walks in the festival will take less than 3 hours. However, it is up to you to decide the length or difficulty of the walk based on your experience and knowledge of leading group walks and the routes in your local area. There are different options to select for distance on the submission form which might help you decide.

Walks longer than 3 hours or those over hills and moorland, should be organised by established walking groups, with experienced, appropriately qualified, and insured walk leaders.

Q: Do children have to accompanied?

A: Yes, under 18s should be accompanied by a responsible adult. Please refer to your organisational safeguarding policy and ensure appropriate measures are in place.

Q: Do I need to take registers/participant forms?

A: There is no requirement from GM Walking to take registers, but if your organisation wishes to have a register or ask walkers to complete a form for your own purposes you may do so. Please ensure you have the correct data protection processes in place to collect this data.

GM Walking will contact walk organisers after their event to ask for information about the walk, including estimated number of participants, if there were people new to walking or your organisation/group taking part, and any feedback from participants etc

Q: What am I committing to by being part of the GM Walking Festival

A: By being part of the GM Walking Festival May 2023 you are giving permission for GM Walking/GreaterSport to contact you in relation to:

- The promotion of your walks and sharing your stories and experiences with us
- A follow up enquiry after your walk to ask how the walk(s) went
- Being advocates for walking, its benefits and positive outcome for people and communities