

Walking forward

A call to support walking in the
2022 local elections

paths
for all

FOR A HAPPIER,
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND



Paths for All calls on candidates in the May local elections to make a commitment to support our vision for a walking nation – where everyone has the opportunity to be active every day, creating a happier, healthier and greener Scotland.

Everyone in Scotland, no matter who they are or where they live, should benefit from walking and wheeling (using a wheelchair or buggy). Our mission is to support people in Scotland to be active every day and walking is the easiest and most accessible way to do this.



Why walking matters

››› **Better lives:** Walking and wheeling can help people manage health conditions, overcome loneliness and isolation, strengthen community cohesion, improve wellbeing and mental health, and make them feel fitter and more independent. We want to enable more people to experience these benefits. Local authorities play a crucial role in making this happen.

››› **Connected communities:** By creating inclusive, accessible opportunities for everyone to walk and wheel, we can connect communities and help people live healthier, happier lives. By ensuring that everyone can access local transport, shops, schools and services by walking and wheeling we can help create a more inclusive society.

››› **A healthier nation:** Walking is one of the easiest ways most people can be active every day. It is therefore crucial in helping to reduce health inequalities, and pressure on the NHS and local services.

››› **The Net Zero option:** By making walking the default choice for short journeys or a part of longer public transport journeys, we can support Scotland's journey to net-zero and improve air quality.

››› **Placemaking:** Creating walkable towns and city centres can help the recovery from covid, decline in retail and support the redefining and repurposing of these public places. Our places and spaces should be safe and attractive for everyone to walk and wheel, and help improve wellbeing through access to greenspaces.

Recovering from the pandemic and addressing climate change

Never has there been a better chance to instil the benefits of walking. We've witnessed the growth of walking through the pandemic as people's awareness and enthusiasm to discover and explore their own areas increased. If the infrastructure is there to support people, we believe many will continue to make walking part of their daily routine, reducing their car use, using public transport more often and improving their wellbeing. Supporting walking and wheeling can help save money in the long run and deliver better health outcomes.

Local authorities can support and promote walking in their area, help reduce car dependency and address climate change.



Local government can make a difference

»» **Investment:** Investment in infrastructure, whether it's in towns or rural areas is essential. Investment in behaviour change programmes can be targeted to help the most vulnerable to participate in physical activity and reduce health inequalities.

»» **Maintenance:** Climate change means that path network maintenance is more important than ever before. If paths are in good condition more people will walk or wheel for short journeys rather than driving. Through supporting regular Footway Condition Surveys you can help ensure our pavements are usable and don't act as a barrier or hazard through disrepair.

»» **Safer communities:** Local authorities can help keep our communities safer by promoting walking and wheeling, improving lighting, reducing speed limits to 20mph and enforcing pavement parking legislation and new workplace parking regulations.

»» **Local impact:** Local decision-making can make a huge difference to people's lives. Often small-scale interventions, such as dropped kerbs, accessible public toilets and signage can make a big difference. Local communities work best when local services are easily accessible as part of 20-minute neighbourhood schemes and investment is made in improving the infrastructure enabling walking and wheeling access to schools and services. This also helps to reduce traffic congestion and associated pollution.

»» **Part of the bigger picture:** Local authorities can support the delivery of the National Walking Strategy at a local level to enable a step change going forward making Scotland a walking friendly country.

Find out more

Paths for All can support local authorities through a wide range of initiatives including:

- »» Smarter Choices Smarter Places
- »» Community Paths
- »» Health Walks
- »» Dementia Friendly Walking
- »» Workplace Walking
- »» Step Count Challenge

You can find out about and support our strategy for the future, **Step It Up**.

For further information about all our programmes and initiatives in your area visit www.pathsforall.org.uk or contact policy@pathsforall.org.uk



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