

**ITEM "New downloadable routes for people with limited mobility/additional needs."****Starts**

Bradfield and Stocksbridge Walkers are Welcome groups have created a new set of eight 'Inclusive Route' descriptions which can be freely downloaded. Covering both river valleys and moorland edge, the routes are designed to be inclusive for all, highlight many attractions, and provide information specific to the requirements of those in the community who may otherwise experience disadvantage in terms of access to the outdoors.

With funding from the Heritage Fund through the Sheffield Lakeland Partnership, the information provided gives details about the terrain, such as gradients and camber, surfaces and seating; this together with a route map, location of accessible toilets and refreshments, and information about places and points of interest along the way.

The routes also describe the heritage of the locality and provide information about their historical context. Examples include background to the 1864 Dale Dyke disaster in the Loxley Valley, and the story of the redevelopment of Fox Valley in Stocksbridge

Kathy Wedell, who together with her son Isaac surveyed the routes and produced the descriptions, said "Speaking as the parent of a teenager who uses a wheelchair, for Isaac to be able to get out into the wilds means everything. When just to go down the road to the local shop involves knowing in advance where the dropped kerbs are and hoping nobody has parked across them, to be able to escape to somewhere wild and beautiful is profoundly liberating. To get a wider view, a distant horizon, to breathe the air, be in nature, hear the quietness - it's crucial for us all, but especially for people living with conditions that mean access is not a given. To be wild, and to be included – that is soul food.

When going anywhere with Isaac I've always had to visit the route ahead of time or risk disappointment/exclusion; there is a huge need not just for accessible wild places but also for detailed route descriptions like these, so people like us can be confident just to head out and enjoy them!"



Kathy together with son Isaac (and guide dog Elsie) at Damflask Reservoir

There are many miles of public footpaths, bridleways, green lanes and trails in the Sheffield area; however few appear to be accessible to those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, parents with buggies or those with mobility impairment who find gates and stiles difficult to negotiate. In providing these new inclusive routes Walkers are Welcome has gone some way to overcoming such obstacles.

<https://bradfield-walkers.org.uk/inclusive-routes/>

<https://stocksbridge-walkers.org.uk/inclusive-routes/>

**Ends**

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**Walkers are Welcome UK** is a nationwide network which aims to encourage towns and villages to be 'welcoming to walkers'