First Walking Festival is a success

Farnham Town Council’s first Walking Festival, has been declared a success with over 435 people taking part.

The week-long Walking Festival, devised by Chris Shepheard, included over 30 walks ranging from 1.5 miles to 14 miles. The programme included walks for people of all abilities plus several that were wheelchair and pushchair friendly. Each walk was led by a volunteer who was an expert or enthusiast and it was their knowledge that enabled walkers to see many of the less well-known parts of Farnham for the first time. Breaking Free, in The Borough were booking partners for the event.

Councillor Jill Hargreaves, Lead Member for Tourism and Events says: “The Walking Festival was all about discovering Farnham and its surrounding villages. Our volunteer walk leaders were generous with both their time and their knowledge. The walks covered a variety of themes including how Rowledge has evolved from being an early encroachment on common land to the popular village it is today and an insight in the history, use and technology of Farnham mills along the River Wey.

“We were blessed with a week of glorious weather which I am sure added to people’s enjoyment of the walks. We have received some very positive feedback about the Walking Festival and I for one, am pleased to make it an annual feature in our events calendar.”

As home to the start of the North Downs Way, one of the walks was a 12-mile trek from Farnham to Guildford, which was completed by The Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Mike Hodge.

In addition to walks about the history of Farnham, there were also walks that aimed to connect walkers with nature. The Sacred Walk was described as being peaceful and contemplative while other walks introduced walkers to interesting species of trees, birds and wildlife that can be enjoyed in the South West corner of Surrey.

Just some of the positive comments about the walks enjoyed.

“I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the walk. The level of knowledge and information the walk leader has is wonderful — I was enthralled by the history ‘on my doorstep’
I wonder if it is possible for you to send a map of where we went so that I could repeat the walk.”

“Lovely walk. Well guided. Worth the trip from the Isle of Wight.” Sally Hedgecoe

“I met some lovely people, had the most interesting afternoon, learnt so much about the area and discovered places I did not know. I would like to thank everyone who was involved in organising this event. I very much hope that Farnham Walking Festival will become an annual event. My dog enjoyed the walk and the company too”. Clare Kearney
“The Forestry Commission Ranger and the location manager of Universal Studios met us and said a few words about the Commission’s work and the filming that takes place in the Bourne Wood”. David Dearsley

Anybody who wishes to explore more of Farnham on foot can download a series of self-guided trails from the Walks and Countryside page.