

Guided Walks/Cycle Rides

Guided walks are a great way to show off the structural/ heritage highlights of your restoration project. As you are engaging with the visitors directly you can ensure a good first experience and encourage them to return.

Strengths

- Face to face interpretation for groups.
- Leader can set level to suit audience.
- Sense of place with immediacy.

Weaknesses

- Totally reliant on quality of trained guides, their knowledge and ability to communicate.
- Party size critical (15) to maintain effective communication.

Audience

- Day/staying visitors.
- Specialists.
- Local people.
- Education visitors.
- Young people.
- People with a disability.

Costings

- The costs for running guided walks will be minimal particularly if you are doing this yourselves.

Planning

- Decide on your target audience and The purpose of the interpretation. Will your audio tour have a theme? [Click here](#) to find out more.
- Select tour leaders: Who will lead the walk - an existing volunteer or will you recruit a specialist volunteer, or even employ someone? You will need to consider training needs as the success of your walk will depend on the person leading it.
- It is important that whoever leads the tour can engage effectively with a wide range of people.
- In addition to a main leader it is a good idea to have at least two and preferably a handful of people who are happy to lead the tour.

Research

- What are the key messages you want people to take away from the walk/cycle ride? These can form the base of your script.
- Supporting resources: consider creating a map, or leaflet version of the walk. This can support what you are saying and may encourage visitors to return.
- Make sure you publicise your society on any documentation you produce.



Guided Walks/Cycle rides

Route & content

- A guided walk cycle route should preferably be a circular route.
- Is the ground suitable for a cycle ride?
- Is it suitable for all abilities and ages? Some routes may be, others may not.
- Length of guided walk/bicycle ride? Unlike a trail the guided walk cannot be too long, as you will have people of mixed abilities.
- What do you want the participants to see on the tour and how can you link these points of interest together?
- Will there be a theme to your walk?
- Plan your walk so that it takes into account physical terrain. In other words it might be a good idea to have a stop point after an uphill section.
- Health and Safety considerations.
[Click here](#) to view general Risk Assessment.

Taking your walk to the next level!

Once you have a route in mind think about how you can make this as interesting as possible. This is particularly important if you are designing the walk for families and school groups. The idea is that all the below are discreet and so do not distract from the natural landscape.

- What about having characters that people can look for on the route?
- Another idea is hiding 'treasures' for children to spot/collect, or a quiz to complete on the walk.
- Geocaching possibilities:
<https://www.geocaching.com/play>
- Adding points of interest e.g. wooden sculptures.



Guided Walks/Cycle Rides

Pre-Launch

- Run through: Once you have decided on a provisional route for the walk, it is a good idea to walk this with a friend to get a fresh perspective.
- You will be responsible for the health and safety of the people on the walk. Part of managing risk is to prepare a Risk Assessment to help you to pre-empt and reduce or eradicate risks where possible. If you are doing a walk once or twice a month it is advisable to walk the route before the walk with the public. Something might have changed on route or something may have become dangerous or inaccessible.
- Be prepared to answer visitor questions.
- Getting the word out: Publicise the event, put up posters near where the walk will take place. Include the following information: when, where, time place, directions, duration and contact number for the leader. Include any special requirements e.g. advisable footwear.
- Have leaflets ready to give out; you have a captive audience so use this opportunity to get the word out further. Do you have a self-led trail they might want to try next or a project open day to encourage further involvement?
- It is a good idea to have in mind potential problems on the walk and warn people before you start - steep hills, difficult terrain, what type of terrain they can expect.
- Know the duration of your walk.
- Wear a badge or sweatshirt with the name of your organisation to make yourself more visible.
- Keep a record: It can be useful to take photos. You could submit some to a local paper for instance. For advice on acquiring photo permission see the Canal & River Trust photo permission guidelines [Click here.](#)

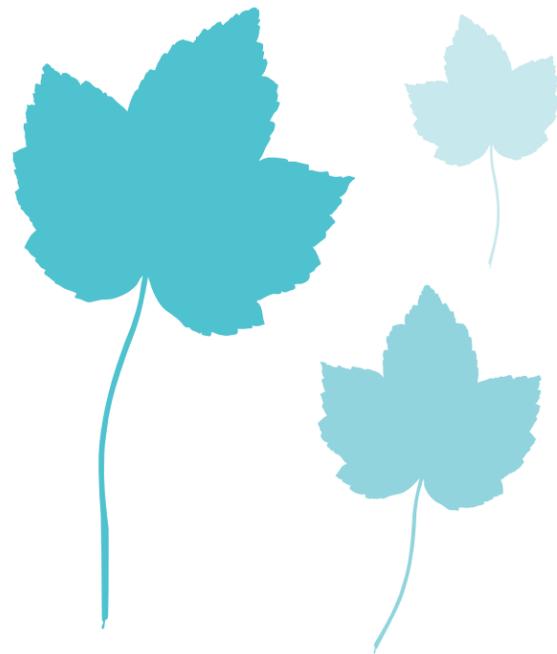
Before the opening

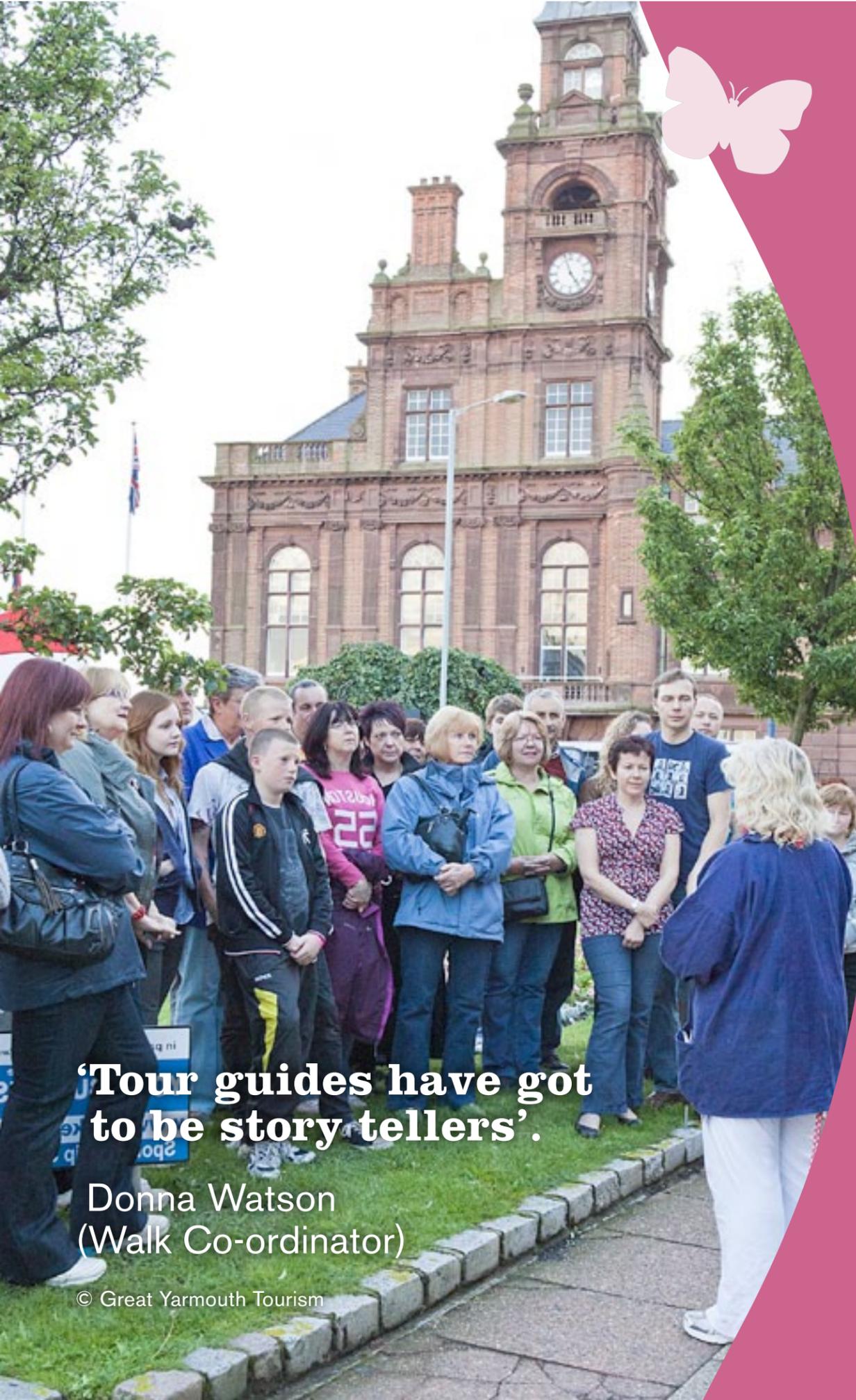
- Work out what your costs will be to put on the walk/ride.
- Decide whether you will charge or ask for a donation.
- Is there a maximum number of people you can take with you safely?
- Write a risk assessment. [Click here](#) for an example.
- Will you take bookings or will people just turn up? If you are organising this primarily through advanced booking - who will handle this?
- If the group is 20 or over you then you should aim to have a leader and someone at the back of the group to keep everyone together.
- Decide how often the walk can run - you can always increase or decrease this as you need to. You could start with twice a month.

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Evaluate and Celebrate

- Surveys
- Count visitor numbers (easy if you are using a booking system)
- Can further publicity be gained from the event?
- You could consider writing up your guided walk and producing a leaflet. This means that visitors can do the walk on their own.
- For more information, please view the evaluation section [here](#).





Great Yarmouth

If you are a visitor to Great Yarmouth, you have the opportunity to explore the rich heritage of this town by taking a guided walk. The walks came into fruition when in 1996 the Great Yarmouth Council strategy included a vision to create a team of official local guides.

Work then began on gathering interested individuals who trained to become officially qualified tour guides. The guides still work closely with the Borough Council who cover the insurance costs. Since the tours began in 1996 they have proven to be popular with new guides currently being trained. The tours are organised and led entirely by volunteers, who bring the history

of the town to life for visitors. Over the years the volunteers have experimented with different times and have now found a successful combination, which includes regular walks, and special seasonal walks the details of which are available on the website listed below. Visitors do not need to book to go on a walk, which removes a potential barrier.

The tours are advertised through the website, weekly newspapers and the 'What's on brochure'. Attendance does vary, but the number of participants can be as high as 25. The walks have proven to be a successful way to interpret the town, with the guides giving out questionnaires at the end of each session, the feedback to which is positive. To make guided walks a success it is important to find the right people who can engage with the public, which is something Donna feels they have achieved in Great Yarmouth.

<http://www.great-yarmouth.co.uk/whats-on/guided-heritage-walks.aspx>

http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/EE-GYar/cms/pdf/Heritage%20Guided%20Walks_2014_FINAL.pdf

'Tour guides have got to be story tellers'.

Donna Watson
(Walk Co-ordinator)