

Report: The Deepings Receives National Recognition as a Walking Neighbourhood

Summary:

- This note provides a record of local policy development (the Deepings Green Walk) being recognised nationally.
- In January 2019, Deepings First: Neighbourhood Planning Team, submitted a nomination for consideration by the Ramblers to be judged for their 'Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood Award 2019'.
- Although The Deepings did not receive the highest number of public votes, the Ramblers judging panel chose us as their own favourite by awarding The Deepings a 'Special Recognition Award' at ceremony in July 2019 in the Houses of Parliament.
- In addition the national Transport Planning Society nominated the Deepings Green Walk for their 'People's Award'. We were delighted to subsequently receive a 'Highly Commended' at their Transport Planning Day event in November.

Further information

- The Deepings Green Walk website: <https://www.deepingsgreenwalk.co.uk/>
- The Deepings "special recognition" for the Ramblers' Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood award 2019:
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/july/deepings-walking-neighbourhood.aspx>
- Video of the Deepings as one of the top ten walking neighbourhoods in the UK:
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/walking-neighbourhoods/britains-best-walking-neighbourhood-award/the-deepings.aspx>

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Shortlisted for Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood Award 2019

The Deepings

With special thanks to Deepings First for their excellent nomination and commitment to improving their neighbourhood for walking.


Vanessa Griffiths
chief executive officer



#WalkingNeighbourhood

Deeping Green Walk - approx. & indicative only

- Deeping off road
- Deeping on-road
- PBoro routes

Route is not a walking route. For more information see the map.



TransportPlanningSociety

CERTIFICATE FOR PEOPLE'S AWARD FINALIST 2019

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

RAMBLERS

'THE DEEPINGS GREEN WALK, LINCOLNSHIRE'



SIGNATURE

23 October 2019

DATE



The Transport Planning Society's Transport Planning Day Kindly Sponsored by:

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1. Background

Stage 1

The nomination process required the production of text and photographic evidence to support the following aspects:

- **A Summary** of the case for the Deepings
- **Places to walk to** – mix of local shops, services and housing
- **Walking network** – well connected, signed and promoted
- **Road crossings** – safe and convenient
- **Pavements** – accessible, wide, appropriate furniture, clutter free
- **Traffic calming** – measures taken to slow or reduce traffic
- **Green spaces** – good quality and easily accessible from housing
- **Green infrastructure** – streets and spaces have natural features
- **Public spaces** – attractive, welcoming contributing to a sense of community and place
- **Public transport** – good integration with walking routes
- **Special features** – interesting things to see and do i.e. pop-up and temporary initiatives, events, markets and street art
- **Additional** supporting information

The Ramblers received approximately 80 nominations for the award. The Deepings was judged by an expert panel to be one of the top ten walking neighbourhoods and the finalists went through to the second stage of the process.

Stage 2

The ten finalist areas were then involved in judging visits, interviews and the production of a promotional video <https://bit.ly/2ERFq8S> The final result was based on the highest number of public votes.

Although The Deepings did not receive the highest number of public votes, the Ramblers judging panel chose us as their own favourite by awarding The Deepings a 'Special Recognition Award' at ceremony in July in the Houses of Parliament.

Follow-on

In August, the Ramblers were invited by the Transport Planning Society (TPS) to nominate a project for their 'People's Award'. They chose to nominate the Deepings Green Walk. From all the different nominations, the Deepings was shortlisted as one of the five finalists and we were delighted to subsequently receive a 'Highly Commended' at their Transport Planning Day event in November.

Now that the green infrastructure proposal for the Deepings has received national recognition and acclaim by both the Ramblers (walking organisation) and the TPS (transport planning organisation) we are confident that that the Deepings Green Walk project and policy aspect of the Deepings Neighbourhood Plan, will form a positive basis for all future development and will be supported by SKDC in its promotion of the area as an excellent place to live and work.



2. Summary of case for the Deepings made in submission to the Ramblers Jan 2019

The Deepings is a Market Town with well-maintained conservation areas, good parks, delightful river frontage and many attractive historic buildings. What stands out about this neighbourhood are the efforts being made to plan strategically for a better walking environment.

Market Deeping Town and Deeping St. James Parish Councils, in consultation with the public and volunteers, are creating 'The Deepings Green Walk'. This 15km circuit which aims to join up local facilities, housing and green spaces is a key part of the Neighbourhood Plan and all development is expected to support this.



Places to walk to - mix of local services, shops, housing

The Deepings is a thriving community with many beautiful old limestone buildings dating back to the seventeenth century.

The distance from the north to the south of the Deepings area is just less than one mile, and east to west of the main town area is about 2½ miles wide. Facilities are all within easy walking distance for the majority of residents. Approximately 80% of the population of the Deepings lives within 20 minutes' walk of all key amenities – shops and supermarkets, schools, Community Centre, Health Centre, Post Office, library, parks and public houses.

Homes are available to suit all ages and family size – with good access to key amenities. Employment areas are within the neighbourhood and can also be accessed within a 20-minute average walking speed. The Market Place and High Street area has attractive old coaching inns and bustling antiques centres. The Market has been a feature in the area since at least 1220 and the town has developed as a key crossroads for travellers north/south and east/west

Church Street, leading off from Market Place, in the heart of Market Deeping, is widely acclaimed as displaying one of the best examples of vernacular Georgian architecture in the UK:



The Deepings is known for its largely fifteenth century church dedicated to St Guthlac, and the remains of a market cross. There are two Grade 1 Listed churches in The Deepings, the largest being The Priory Church at Deeping St James, which is based around a now lost Benedictine priory.



The Deepings Library, is centrally located and easy to walk to. The building itself, is a Georgian House once called The Park and owned by the well-known local family, the Wades, - saved from closure through community determination. Now the Deepings Community Library is one of the busiest in Lincolnshire, both in the number of users and because it runs such a range of services and activities both at the library and in the community.

All areas of the Deepings have attractive features both old and new, both in the built and natural environment, in a blend of styles that give the whole neighbourhood a distinctive and attractive character that motivates residents and visitors to choose walking as a positive option for access and for recreation.

As well as outdoor shelter and seating, the Deepings also enjoys a great selection of old and new cafés, pubs and restaurants – many in the town centre but others scattered throughout the rest of the neighbourhood and in nearby villages. None

are big chains, all are small, independent and welcoming places where walkers can find great food and drink. These venues are very popular and enhance the recreational and social benefits of walking as mode of travel within the Deepings. The Deepings enjoys a delightful riverside location, as well as parks and green natural spaces, bordered by open countryside. Community representatives work tirelessly to ensure the Deepings infrastructure is well-maintained, and provides an attractive and welcoming environment.



Walking network – well connected, signed and promoted

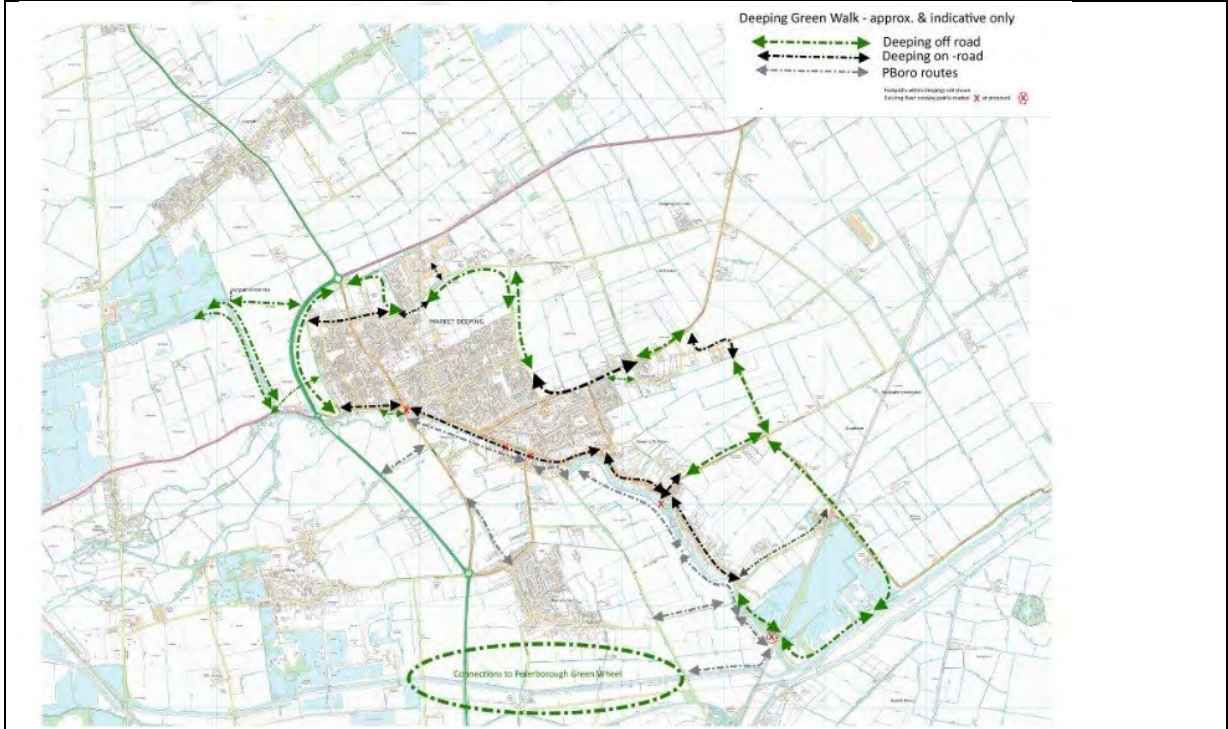
The creation of a Green Walk route is one of the key projects to come out of work to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for The Deepings.

The Deepings Green Walk is a 15km continuous circuit around the perimeter of the joint area of Market Deeping and Deeping St James, enhanced with a connected network of internal pathways to key locations, including schools, the Health Centre, Industrial areas and retail shops. The pathways will be developed to ensure they are safe, attractive, and accessible for pedestrians and will include designated routes for cyclist wherever possible.

The walks will encourage and enable people to benefit from taking more exercise and reduce car journeys.

Both the Market Deeping Town and Deeping St. James Parish Councils have formally adopted the 'Deepings Green Walk standard' for all new developments in that, new footpaths are required to be 'safe, accessible, attractive, and rationally linked to existing routes'. This ensures that all new housing and employment development is integrated into the current network of pathways.





Road crossings - safe and convenient

Safe road crossing is achieved in several ways – mainly by maintaining local speed limits, use of Zebra crossings in convenient locations, and providing halfway points in key places across the busier roads. There is a more recently installed 'considerate driver' feature adjacent to St. Guthlac's Church providing a safe pavement which now allows pedestrians to walk safely around the church where historically this had not been possible. Some busier residential roads are quietened through the use of gentle 'speed pillows'. We also have cycle paths in newer locations and plans for more as the Deepings develop.

In the town centre we have two safe pedestrian shopping areas: 'The Precincts' is a row of small independent retail units adjacent to the central car park accessed from the Market Place through a lovely old coaching archway. 'Market Gate' is also accessed through an attractive archway located nearby. Market Gate is a newer development of ten units designed to combine local shopping with a safe social area. It has been thoughtfully constructed to reflect the appearance of the buildings in the adjoining conservation area and provides a charming shopping walkway with a popular tea room and busy shops. Both are within a few metres of a convenient Zebra crossing that links the two sides of the Market Place and High Street which ensures walking is the easiest way to shop locally.



Market Gate pedestrian area

In addition to the regular Wednesday Market held near the Precincts, the town centre Market Place car parking now gives way to the recently introduced weekly Saturday market selling fresh local produce.



The Deepings Saturday Market

The precincts archway and the Zebra crossing can also be seen in this aerial photograph *(provided curtesy Peter Neal – Homeplans)*

Pavements – accessible, wide, appropriate furniture, clutter free

Footpaths and walking places are kept clean and tidy with accessible surfaces. They are in constant use by residents and visitors, within a strong self-managing community - which provides good oversight. This responsible behaviour ensures walking areas are very safe.

The whole neighbourhood is level and flat with good surfacing of the majority of walking routes. This ensure that pathways can be used by all - young and old as well as with buggies, wheelchairs and disability scooters. This is an inclusive neighbourhood which comfortably accommodates many older people and many with differing abilities e.g. four large nursing/care homes and several specialist homes for people with disabilities – all of whom are able to enjoy being out and about in the Deepings.

Traffic calming -measures taken to slow or reduce traffic

Since the opening of the Deepings bypass in 1998, all through-traffic has been re-routed away from the town. This has considerably increased the opportunities for local walking, and the pleasure of doing so.

Volunteers in Deeping St James participate in 'Community Speed Watch' traffic calming scheme. Volunteers carry out speed checks in 30 and 40 mph limits during daylight hours, in areas where town or parish councils or police have concerns about traffic speed.

Green spaces - good quality and easily accessible from housing

The Deepings is a delightfully green neighbourhood with many natural spaces. It is possible and easy to access all parks and open green spaces from everywhere within the Deepings

It is bordered on the west by Mill Field which provide open recreational land – previously used for the annual agricultural show and now ideal for dog walking and enjoying nearby open countryside. There is a high number of dog owners across the Deepings and all enjoy the use of this natural space. It also has shrubbery and small trees all around the perimeter – creating an excellent habitat for wildlife.

On the outer edge of the Deepings to the east, is the beautiful and well-kept Deepings Lakes Nature Reserve which is a 160 acre Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) and natural wetland area. The natural border between Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire in the south of the county is the River Welland, which has an abundance of picturesque and peaceful river scenes and is ideal rambling territory. The whole of the south edge of the Deepings runs along the river which is a pretty area at all times of the year and creates a focal point for community and visitor activity in the summer months.



Within the neighbourhood, the council bought the John Eve Field some years ago so that it could protect a green space area for residents of Market Deeping. Additionally, various pieces of land have been recovered from neglect over the years and transformed into small oases of natural beauty – one example is the Rectory Paddock which won an award in 2018:

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust The Orsted Community Award was presented to Market Deeping Town Council.

“Rectory Paddock in Market Deeping, a meadow with trees and a small pond, was purchased by the Town Council some 20 years ago had become neglected. For the last three years a small team of volunteers has helped maintain the land:- three boundary hedges have been planted, wild flowers have been planted, blanket weed has been conquered and the pond is now crystal clear spring water covered by several varieties of Lily. A swift tower with 21 boxes and spaces for

bats and a solar powered bird call system have been installed. The Paddock is now an oasis for wildlife near the town centre. Deer, foxes, sparrow hawk and owls have been seen as well as a variety of birds insects and flowers.”



The Deepings Practice Health Centre has also turned a spare acre of land over to a wildflower meadow as a contribution to enhance the area.

Green infrastructure -Streets and spaces have natural features

The Deepings community is proud of its commitment to ensuring grass verges and trees are retained alongside the considerable variety of naturally occurring hedgerows, river banks and additional planting. This ensures that streets and public spaces continue to provide a welcoming appearance for residents and visitors.

Public spaces - Attractive, welcoming, contributing to a sense of community and place

Market Deeping Town Council and Deeping St. James Parish Council are very proactive and take great pride in ensuring spaces are well maintained and welcoming.

All buildings and spaces in and around the Deepings are well cared for either by residents, volunteers or maintained by the local councils – as is evident by winning the CPRE Best Kept Village Award.

Streets and public spaces generally have good lighting. The majority of public amenity buildings and shops provide good shade and shelter. In some areas there are passageways and archways that are also able to be used for shade and shelter if needed. Parks and quiet areas also offer the shade of trees.

Good public seating is available throughout the Deepings, in parks, green spaces and main streets, particularly in the centre of town which is the hub of the community. The commitment to continued development of the neighbourhood includes the proposed installation of many more resting places and additional public seating as new families are integrated into the area – particularly around the

outer edges of the Deepings The Remembrance Garden is situated at the Riverside Park on the boundary joining the two elements of the Deepings and creating a natural meeting place for public gathering such as the peace memorial, and provides seating for residents to sit by the river and enjoy the wildlife.

In previous years, both Market Deeping and Deeping St. James have succeeded on more than one occasion, in winning Silver/Gilt Awards in the 'East Midlands in Bloom' for their attractive planted and decorated features within the neighbourhood. The features and planters are still maintained by groups of volunteers and continue to provide pleasure for all residents and visitors.

In the summer of 2018, a National Citizen Service (NCS) team of young people planned and undertook a renovation project to recover a small children's playground area that was in need of improvement. Despite the August heat they cleared, cleaned and planted to ensure it was attractive and enjoyable for family use.

Public transport –good integration with walking routes

There is a regular bus service that transports residents around the town and out to the neighbouring villages and towns. Bus stops and their surrounding areas are well maintained and many bus stops provide seating and shelter for waiting passengers with improved kerb height to enable easy access. The entrance routes from all four main entry points to the whole of the Deepings neighbourhood, are green and attractive for anyone arriving by any mode of travel.

Special features - Interesting things to see and do, i.e. pop-up and temporary initiatives, events, markets, street art

Several walking groups, including Ramblers' groups, organise walks through and around the area and help to maintain routes. There is a very active U3A group, Well-being walks, Deepings Walking Group, Town Council Annual walking of the footpaths, as well as Character Assessment research walks. The Deepings Walking Group meet up weekly at the Community Centre to enjoy healthy walking and the company of others. They publish a schedule of varied walks in and around the area, to suit all abilities.

There are more than 60 regular, volunteer-run health walks across Lincolnshire's seven districts, that all come under the national Ramblers Walking for Health scheme. 2018 was the third year of the Deepings Happy Walk in May to promote walking in support of Mental Health. Events such as the Deepings Raft Race and the Annual Duck race bring large crowds to appreciate the river setting, cheer on the contestants and enjoy the accompanying local craft stalls and Fair.

The Deepings holds many community activities: in the parks – particularly on the John Eve Playing Field and the Jubilee Park, Annual Carnival and Parade with fete in the park, Circuses, celebration events, Armed Forces Day, Beacon Lighting. And along the river - Memorial Events, Deepings annual Duck Race, and Raft

Race. And in the town - Christmas Market, Street Markets, Carols around the tree. Also, the Nature Reserve holds regular Open Days.



3. Deepings Walking Neighbourhood - personal blog for Ramblers website

by Project Coordinator Dr Pam Byrd, July 2019

The Deepings is an active neighbourhood, and walking is at the heart of how we live our lives here. The pleasure of walking here also makes it a great place for visitors to enjoy the town and the peaceful surrounding countryside. I am very keen to keep it that way and to encourage others to plan ahead - which is what motivated me to get involved in improving our local area for walkers.

Planning ahead is vital as we are facing the prospect of accommodating several hundred more homes over the coming years, and it is clear to me that ancient rights of way and public footpaths will be affected by new developments. In our neighbourhood planning discussions, we have realised that opportunities for walking could be reduced or lost unless we take a very active stance to safeguard our green spaces and improve the potential for walking activity in the future.

My particular role within the Neighbourhood Planning group is to ensure our plans incorporate features that support healthy living for people of all ages. I recognise that being a walking neighbourhood can also contribute greatly to being a healthy neighbourhood. In addition to promoting designs that build a strong social community, we are working towards a number of long-term health goals for the Deepings: (i) keeping our air clean by reducing car use for short local journeys; (ii) improving mental health and well-being through gentle activity, companionship, and enjoying green spaces; (iii) helping people to stay active and independent into older age; (iv) having lower than average levels of child and adult obesity; (v) having a lower than average level of type 2 diabetes, and (vi) reducing related health risks. I believe that walking helps towards achieving these goals and I am finding that appreciating the benefits of walking is more likely to lead to making the choice to walk – as a means of getting to local amenities, for leisure, and for health.

As a progression from this line of thinking I have worked with others the group to form a strategic development policy that we call the Deepings Green Walk. It is a multi-functional approach with interrelated benefits across a number of areas that are explained on our website: www.deepingsgreenwalk.co.uk This Policy is now written with the help of colleagues and was adopted in March 2018 by both the Market Deepings Town and the Deeping St. James Parish Councils. It is also written into our Neighbourhood Plan document and this means that we are able to require developers to adhere to the standards we have set. This feels like a significant achievement.

The Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that represents the distillation of information gathered from a range of local consultation activities. The process of developing the Plan has been underway for three years and, as well as agreeing to new housing sites, our document incorporates an assessment of the key characteristics of the area we wish to retain and promote in terms of geography, heritage, health and leisure facilities, parks and green spaces, local economy, and community provision. The Plan is due for completion in spring 2020 and will then be used by developers and Planning Officers to ensure all new proposals are in keeping with the wishes of the people of the Deepings. One important aspect is that residents have asked to have 'safe, accessible, attractive walking routes that are sensibly linked to all key amenities'.

As a community, we all get involved in one way or another. We have several organised walking groups here of all ages including a very active number of retired residents. Many children are able to walk to their local schools, and the councils regularly undertake group

walks to help keep the footpaths open and to identify any repairs or improvements. People are able to walk to the shops, the library, the health centre and the many social venues. Areas for walking are very well maintained though contracted work, and specific areas are attractively planted by volunteers. The Market Place is looking particularly colourful at present with beautiful hanging baskets. Other groups and individuals take it upon themselves to collect and dispose of any litter as they walk through the parks or footpaths – this ensures we all take a pride in our neighbourhood and many follow their example. Our big events such as the carnival, raft race, remembrance services etc. take place in locations that the majority of residents are able to walk to. We will also be taking part in the South Lincs. Walking Festival in October.

We are really fortunate here because we are situated in the South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) area of south Lincolnshire. This is a busy, thriving region for visitors and includes the historic towns of Stamford, Bourne and Grantham – each with its own special features and good places for walking. We therefore have considerable support from SKDC for developing the Deepings as a walking neighbourhood for resident benefit and to contribute to our visitor economy. The SKDC Local Plan also recognises the need to maintain and build our green infrastructure.

As well as improving the maintenance service levels, the change that has had the biggest impact is the public purchase of small areas of spare land that have been recovered and turned into delightful spaces for everyone to enjoy – along the riverside and elsewhere across the Deepings. Each has a description board with a short explanation about the site and each provides seating for walkers to rest in a pleasant spot. Maintenance of these areas is a joint activity between the councils and groups of volunteers.

My advice to other areas is to seek as much positive local engagement as possible – listen to people on market day or in public places, ask them what would help to make their area better for walking – then apply to the various funding organisations to make a series of small changes to show that their voices have been heard. Simply keeping pathways clean, providing seating, and making areas more attractive with planting can help to encourage walking, also to repair any damage as quickly as possible. Providing information about the benefits of walking and holding Walking Events also helps to raise public interest. When pedestrian areas are planned by local councils, I suggest ensuring there is plenty of green space and colourful, interesting features so that the area does not look too grey and soulless on a wet afternoon.

How did I come to nominate the Deepings? When I was searching the internet for information to support our policy development of the Deepings Green Walk I came across an article and read about the Ramblers Walking Neighbourhood Award and immediately said 'Yes' to myself as I thought it might help with providing some criteria. Then when I read through the nomination form I thought 'Yes, Yes, this describes just what we are about - we can do this.' There was still time to apply before the deadline and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group did not take much convincing and agreed that I could give it a go. To then find out that the Deepings are judged to be in the final ten feels very special, particularly when we could see that we are in such good company. This acknowledgement also feels like a great achievement and gives us considerable confidence to make progress with our work of ensuring the Deepings continues to be an excellent place to live, work and enjoy life – by being a nationally recognised Walking Neighbourhood.

4. The Ramblers nomination for the Transport Planning Society People's Award 2019



- The Deepings “special recognition” for the Ramblers’ Britain’s Best Walking Neighbourhood award 2019: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/july/deepings-walking-neighbourhood.aspx>
- Video of the Deepings as one of the top ten walking neighbourhoods in the UK: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/walking-neighbourhoods/britains-best-walking-neighbourhood-award/the-deepings.aspx>

Nomination Title: The Deepings Green Walk

The primary purpose of the Deepings Green Walk is to promote healthy living for people of all ages by guiding the beneficial design of future land development – which very much aligns with the Transport Planning Society’s principles of transport planning.

The Deepings Green Walk standard has been developed by residents of Market Deepings and Deepings St James in Lincolnshire, as part of the Deepings Neighbourhood Plan, and was successfully adopted by both councils in March 2018. Pam Byrd of the Neighbourhood Plan team received a special recognition for her work on the Deepings Green Walk as part of the Ramblers’ Britain’s Best Walking Neighbourhood Awards 2019.

The Deepings Green Walk aims to:

- Secure additional accessible pathways throughout the neighbourhood.
- Encourage active lifestyles.
- Protect and establish more delightful green spaces.

The Deepings Green Walk consists of three main elements, against which all new planning applications in Market Deeping and Deeping St James are now being assessed.

1. The Green Circuit:

An accessible route that forms a complete circuit of approximately 9 miles around the joint areas of Market Deeping and Deeping St. James. The Green Circuit will be marked in manageable stages so that walkers will be able to enjoy shorter or longer sections.

2. The Green Network:

A network of footpaths and green spaces linking our facilities and parks in a way that enables residents and visitors to navigate safely across and within The Deepings on foot, by cycle, with a buggy, by wheelchair, or mobility scooter. All new paths on the Green Network will avoid steps, bare earth and gravel surfaces. Our standard is for pathways to be 'safe, accessible, attractive and rationally linked'.

3. Benchmarking and Wayfinding:

Benchmarking focuses on marking specific locations with benches and other forms of public seating. New seating areas will provide places for resting and for communicating with other users. Wayfinding will be supported by establishing designating areas for community use and installing additional information points and signposts at specific locations across the Green inner Network and Green outer Circuit.

Presentation of Walking Neighbourhood Award by the Ramblers Association at the House of Commons in 2019



Neighbourhood Planning Team members Dr Pam Byrd (left) and Debbie Jones (right), with support from MP John Hayes (centre)



Neighbourhood award 2019:
<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/blogs/2019/july/deepings-walking-neighbourhood.aspx>

Presentation to Dr Pam Byrd (left) at the House of Commons, by the Ramblers Association President (right)