

WALK NI

WALKING IN
NORTHERN IRELAND



31/03/2021

WalkNI Marketing Consortium Proposal 2021/2022

Introduction:

WalkNI.com attracted 655,427 users making 1,044,266 visits from 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 (a 45% and 55% increase on the previous year respectively) confirming its position as the definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland.

With 62% of visits from Northern Ireland, 24% from Great Britain, 10% from Republic of Ireland it is clear the website is an important platform for locals and tourists alike.

It is clear that walking brings significant tourism and local participation benefits:

Local Participation:

- 63% reported going outdoors for exercise everyday during COVID-19 lockdown, a much higher proportion than the 28% reported in the annual household survey (CHS 2017/18)¹
- 51% expect to spend more free time outdoors than they did pre-lockdown²

¹ Engaging with the Outdoors during COVID-19 Lockdown in Northern Ireland 2020, ORNI

² Engaging with the Outdoors during COVID-19 Lockdown in Northern Ireland 2020, ORNI

Tourism:

- Walking or rambling is the most popular activity (36%) undertaken by Northern Irish residents on domestic overnight trips³
- Hiking or cross-country walking was the most popular sporting activity (12%) undertaken by external overnight visitors whilst in Northern Ireland.⁴
- Intention by the Republic of Ireland market to take a short break post COVID-19 lockdown continues to increase – 48% intend to take a short break in Ireland / Abroad in the next 6 months⁵

WalkNI.com Key Stats:

The followings statistics clearly highlight the reach and engagement level of WalkNI.com:

- 655,427 users (2020)
- 1,044,266 web visits (2020)
- 29,919+ social media subscribers (across Facebook, Twitter & Instagram)
- 25,310 e-newsletter subscribers
- Key driver of walking product information and content to DiscoverNorthernIreland.com

Rationale and Benefits:

WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), a not-for-profit organisation with the vision 'To create a happier, healthier society where enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors improves wellbeing.'

In recent years, ORNI has transformed from an entirely core funded position to now deliver its strategic not-for-profit role through a [variety of arrangements](#) including delivering for Strategic Partnerships, Consortia, Service Level Agreements and on a project by project basis. In 2016 / 2017, ORNI successfully established the WalkNI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of WalkNI.com. The consortium is therefore entering into its sixth year. By continuing to contribute to the WalkNI Marketing Consortium – local authorities can reap the following benefits:

Solid Foundation:	Significant investment has already been made to establish a website, e-marketing and social media channels
Engaged Visitors:	As indicated by 'WalkNI Key Stats' the website / brand has a strong engagement from the target market
Combined Resources:	The small investments from a number of local authority partners can be combined to produce an outcome greater than the sum of its parts.
Cross Sell:	There will be opportunities to cross sell between destinations e.g. visitors to the Mourne Mountains will be able to learn about the Sperrins and vice versa.
Redeveloped Website:	A redeveloped WalkNI.com was launched in 2019 providing an enhanced user experience, responsiveness across platforms (mobile, tablet, desktop) and availing of the latest interactive mapping.

³ Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism 2018, NISRA

⁴ External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland 2016, NISRA

⁵ https://covid19.failteireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19_Consumer-Sentiment-and-Behaviour_18-May_FINAL.pdf

Why Outdoor Recreation NI?

The benefits of ORNI delivering the project are:

- Not-for-profit:** ORNI's not-for-profit status means that all the investment will be retained within this project
- Product Knowledge:** ORNI has significant knowledge of Northern Ireland's walking portfolio gained through its strategic role in walking development, management and promotion since 1999 and more specifically since the launch of WalkNI.com in 2006
- Volunteer Rangers:** ORNI deliver a Walk Volunteer Ranger Programme which audits over 200 Quality Walks, Ulster Way and Waymarked Ways. This ensures information provided to the customer can be accurately verified on a regular basis
- Track Record:** ORNI has been successfully delivering the MountainBikeNI Consortium since 2012 and the WalkNI Marketing Consortium since 2016

For more information on Outdoor Recreation NI see www.outdoorrecreationni.com

Partnership Approach:

Funding from DAERA (NIEA's) Environment Fund ensures that all Councils receive free walk listings on WalkNI.com. Councils that wish to **proactively promote** their walking offer to the local population and tourist can avail of the activity of the WalkNI Marketing Consortium. The two available packages are outlined below:

Regional Partner

Definition:

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is a key part of a wider itinerary

National Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is key part of a wider itinerary
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is the primary reason to visit
- Walking Clubs from Republic of Ireland

Marketing Activity

All Councils receive WalkNI.com Website Listings

- Annual audit of routes and incorporation in public liability insurance for private landowners
- Regular content management e.g. updating route info, news items, events

However, those investing in the WalkNI Marketing Consortium receive proactive inclusion within the following marketing activity. It is this key activity which drives visitors towards specific sections of the website.

Marketing Activity	Regional	National
Northern Ireland Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feature inclusion within<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ WalkNI Blog http://walkni.com/blog/○ WalkNI E-zines min 12 e-zines per year to 12,310+ NI contacts○ WalkNI Social Media Channels (Daily posts)• PR in Regional and National Press via WalkNI Awards and other initiatives	Y	Y
Republic of Ireland Visitors Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feature inclusion within<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ WalkNI Blog http://walkni.com/blog/○ WalkNI E-zines min 12 e-zines per year to 4,138+ ROI contacts○ WalkNI Social Media Channels (Daily Posts)• PR in Regional and National Press	Y	Y*
Walking Club Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-marketing to 566 walking club contacts• Promotion via Mountaineering Ireland and Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs	N	Y

*** National Partners will receive double the level of inclusion within campaigns than Regional Partners**

Accountability:

The WalkNI.com consortium will be managed by ORNI's Marketing Manager who will:

- Agree an annual work programme including KPIs
- Provide Quarterly progress reports
- Hold two meetings per year to report on progress, discuss campaigns etc.

Support Required:

Partner Level	2021/22
National	£6890
Regional	£3445

If you have any questions or queries regarding this proposal, please contact:

Chris Scott
Head of Operations
Outdoor Recreation NI
chris@outdoorrecreationni.com
07894354544

A person wearing a blue jacket and a backpack stands on a rocky ridge, looking out over a vast landscape. In the foreground, the person is seen from behind, standing on a large, grey rock. The middle ground features a calm, dark lake nestled between rolling hills. The background consists of more distant, hazy mountains under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is serene and scenic, typical of a hiking trail in a natural park.

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WALKNI CONSORTIUM – KEY STATS 2020/2021

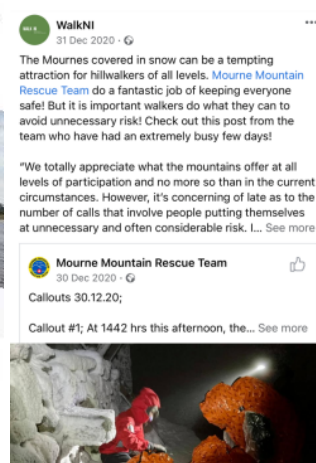
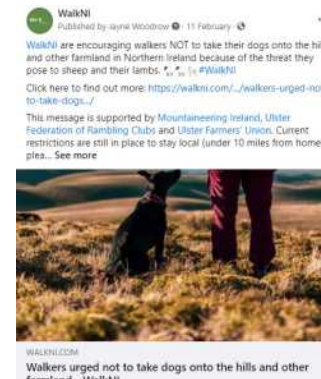
WEBSITE

- Website Visitors:
 - 655,427 Users
 - Increase of 45% on previous year
- Website Sessions:
 - 1,044,266 sessions
 - Increase of 55% on previous year
- Website visitor by Location:
 - NI – 407,964 users (**71% increase** on previous year)
 - GB – 155,928 (**30% increase** on previous year)
 - ROI – 65,193 (**32% increase** on previous year)



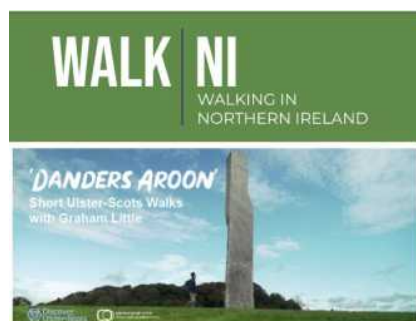
SOCIAL MEDIA

- Social Media followers:
 - 29,919+ followers across all social channels
 - Increase of 20% on previous year
- Following by channel:
 - Facebook – 20,256 followers (increase of 17% on previous year)
 - Twitter – 6,647 followers (increase of 10% on previous year)
 - Instagram – 3,016 followers (increase of 49% on previous year)



E-ZINE DATABASE

- Total subscribers – 25,319 subscribers
- NI Database:
 - 12,310 subscribers
 - Monthly communication
- ROI Database:
 - 4,138 subscribers
 - Stay connected communication x 2



Stay Home, Stay Safe, Be Inspired! Take a virtual 'Dander Aroon' Northern Ireland!

Join Graham Little as he explores five trails along the coast of Northern Ireland and unlocks their connection to the Ulster-Scots. Through a series of short videos Graham encourages us to explore these hidden gems for ourselves and additional bonus videos help bring the trails to life!

Each walk is inspired by their links to the early Ulster-Scots arrival in Northern Ireland. From tales of smugglers on the Antrim coast and traditional Ulster-Scots poetry, to insights into the history of the people who first settled on these shores there is something for everyone! you might even learn a new word or two!

Check out our latest blog linked below to discover more about these walking trails and their fascinating links to the Ulster-Scots and access special bonus videos.

["Danders Aroon" Blog](#)



While some of you may have your Christmas decorations up already, we are still celebrating all things autumn. From taking time out to enjoy a mindful walk through a forest, to the exciting announcement of a world famous walking trail set to make its mark in Ireland, there is something for everyone in this issue of the WalkNI E-News.

With indoor Covid-19 restrictions in place, the outdoors is a popular location to meet up with others. That's why we've packed this e-newsletter with a variety of ways to get you, your family and friends out and about. Please remember to maintain social distancing and dispose of litter responsibly.



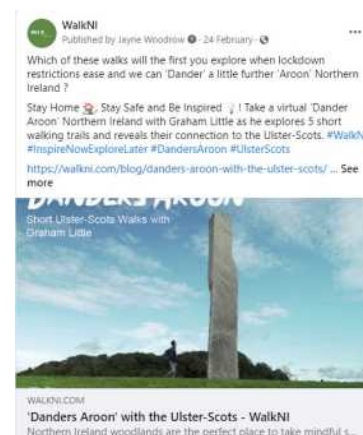
Take A Mindful Walk Through The Forest

There is strong scientific evidence that visiting a forest environment can have a positive impact on your wellbeing and forest bathing, which is known in Japan as *shinrin-yoku*, helps to reduce stress by connecting with the forest through our senses of sight, hearing, taste and touch. Check out our latest blog where we share our top 5 forest walks to help refresh your body, mind and spirit this autumn in Northern Ireland.

[Read More](#)

CAMPAIGNS & SUPPORT

- MyNI 'Get into Nature' Campaign Support
- Support for ORNI and NIEA walking research – Participant recruitment
- WalkNI Awards 2020 – Over 1,700 Public votes
- 'Danders Aroon' Ulster-Scot walks with Graham Little
- 'Right Side of Outside' Campaign Launch



WALKNI COVID-19 COMMUNICATION

- Up to date news articles on the latest COVID-19 Guidance and Restrictions
- E-zines communicating any changes to Guidance and Restrictions
- Social media messages backing Guidelines and Restrictions
- Promotion of growing issues concerning Consortium members – litter, overcrowding etc.
- Promotion of local trails rather than beauty spots – ‘Hidden Gem Walks’

WalkNI
Published by Jayne Woodrow · 9 February ·



Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
9 February ·

! Please ensure you dispose of face coverings and gloves responsibly.
✓ Disposable face coverings and gloves can be placed in a public litter bin when out and ... See more

4,795 People reached 127 Engagements Boost Unavailable

18 6 comments 6 shares

WalkNI
Published by Jayne Woodrow · 22 March at 14:46 ·

What to do the latest relaxation measures to the current COVID-19 Regulations announced by the Executive mean for outdoor recreation? While the majority of the current restrictions will remain in place until after Easter, the Executive agreed to gradual changes which will come into effect before the next formal review date on or before April 15.


#WalkNI #COVIDRestrictions... See more



WALKNI.COM
Latest Covid-19 Restrictions and what they mean for Outdoor Recreation - WalkNI

WalkNI
24 Dec 2020 ·

We have updated our outdoor guidance! Find out what the new COVID-19 regulations mean for walkers in Northern Ireland... See more



WALKNI.COM
Be Outdoor Smart - Leave No Trace - Love The Place - WalkNI

Claire Saunders and 13 others 1 share

WalkNI
8 Jan ·

The government has introduced new restrictions to reduce the spread of Covid-19. The latest restrictions allow people to leave their home for exercise... See more



WALKNI.COM
Latest Covid-19 Restrictions and what they mean for Outdoor Recreation - WalkNI

32 5 comments 28 shares

WalkNI
15 Aug 2020 ·

People are being told not to visit tourist hotspot Culcagh boardwalk in Fermanagh after record numbers cause major concerns over safety and social distancing.



ITV.COM
People asked not to visit Fermanagh's famous boardwalk | ITV News

24 14 comments 10 shares



WALKNI.COM
Be Outdoor Smart - Leave No Trace - Love The Place - WalkNI

WalkNI
15 Jan ·

⚠ There have been reports in recent days highlighting increased littering in parks and open spaces across Northern Ireland.

#LeaveNoTrace and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

If you are visiting a park or open space for exercise, in line with Covid-19 restrictions, please check out the latest guidance on WalkNI: <https://walkni.com/news/latest-covid-19-restrictions-and-what-they-mean-for-outdoor-recreation/>

- ✓ Put your litter in a public bin or bring home to dispose
- ✓ Clean up after your pet and dispose dog foul in a public litter bin or bring it home to dispose in black or green landfill bin
- ✓ If a public park is busy please visit an alternative open space or visit at a quieter time if possible



A person wearing a blue jacket and a backpack stands on a rocky ridge, looking out over a vast landscape. In the foreground, the ground is covered with dark, jagged rocks. To the left, a calm lake reflects the sky. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and nature.

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