



Dr William Bird: William is a family doctor in Sonning Common as well as Strategic Health Adviser to Natural England, the government's agency responsible for England's countryside and wildlife. In 1994 he devised the concept of prescribing health walks, now a nationally accepted and delivered through local authorities, primary care trusts and the Walking the Way to Health Initiative.

Notes from the podcast interview of William by Andrew Stuck, while walking around St James' Park, London on a bright weekday lunchtime in January: Interviewed January 2009 and published December 2009 on <http://talkingwalking.net>

The *Walking the Way to Health Initiative* came about through a partnership between Natural England (formerly the Countryside Commission) and the British Heart Foundation, and won funding from the Lottery. It has recently changed its name to *Walking for Health*. You can find a walk near you – just enter your post code in the finder on the Walking for Health website.

Walking for Health <https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/> Natural England <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/> British Heart Foundation <http://www.bhf.org.uk/> Subsequently the partnership managing Walking for Health has changed to: MacMillan Cancer Support <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/> and Ramblers <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

Evaluation of the Walking the Way to Health initiative was carried out by researchers from Oxford Brookes University.

Find out more about Green Gyms – an initiative led by TCV: The Trust for Conservation Volunteers: <https://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym>

Blue Gyms – read a report in the Daily Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/4527573/Campaign-encourages-people-to-exercise-in-blue-gym.html>

While at the Met Office, William led the development of a forecast for sufferers of Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema (COPD): <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/health/features/copd.html>

Getting Outdoors – check out the Natural Health Service – launched in July 2009: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110906155643/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2009/220709.aspx

And One Million Children Outdoors: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605091936tf_/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/gettinginvolved/default.aspx

William Bird's favourite walk:

The Pack and Prime Lane from Henley to Rotherfield Peppard <http://henleyonthames.org/locations/details.asp?fldLocationID=59>



TALKING

What has happened since we recorded this interview with Dr William Bird OBE



WALKING

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Dr William Bird MBE set up Intelligent Health in February 2010 with the vision of making a lasting difference to people's health and wellbeing by supporting them to become more active.

With more than three decades of experience in practising medicine and first-hand knowledge of the need to develop preventative measures to stop people developing diabetes and COPD, William is one of the UK's leading experts on physical activity and building active communities.

William has helped transform the health of millions of people across the UK through innovative initiatives he has developed such as Health Walks, Green Gyms and Beat the Street. He has worked for the World Health Organisation to develop a physical activity strategy for the Middle East which is now being implemented in many of the countries there and also worked on an innovative project for the Met Office, developing Health Forecasting and still works as a family GP.

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