

Walking Football's coming home!

As football fever grips the nation, a new opportunity is coming to Banbury, helping even more people to take part in the national game.

Walking Football is played by people aged 50 and over, offering an accessible way to get involved in a team sport that requires no level of physical fitness or ability. Cherwell District Council is working with the Oxfordshire Football Association, Age UK and Banbury United to bring free regular introductory sessions to the town.

Cherwell's Lead Member for Leisure and Sport, Councillor Phil Chapman, said:

"Just because you might not be as quick as Marcus Rashford, doesn't mean you have to hang up your boots. Walking Football has huge health benefits, both to your physical and mental wellbeing, and it's also great fun. Men and women of all abilities are able to play together, making it the ideal, sociable sport for everyone to get involved."

Walking Football is a unique amateur sport, first created by John Croot in 2011. It is similar to the Association Football version of the game, with the same basic rules and ball skills.

The sessions in Banbury will start as a fun introduction to the sport, but there is the possibility of forming an official club to take part in competitive games in the future. Bicester Fossils Walking Football Club started in a similar way and now play regular games at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground.

Steve Payne, Chairman of Bicester Fossils Walking Football Club said: "since its formation in April 2018, The Fossils has developed into a caring, friendly club and has made a real difference to our members. Old football friends are meeting up again and new life-long friendships are being formed. There's a wide range of footballing abilities with all over fifties welcome!"

Age UK Oxfordshire has funded the sessions through their Generation Games programme.

Alastair Thomas, Head of Exercise and Physical Activity at Age UK

Oxfordshire said: "We are delighted to be working with such great partners to deliver a new walking football group in Banbury. It's a great opportunity to reengage with or try football for the first time."

Cherwell District Council's Youth Activators will run the free weekly sessions. These will start at Spiceball Country Park on Monday 28 June, between 5pm and 6pm, moving to Banbury United's Community Stadium once planned improvement works are completed.

As the weather inevitably deteriorates over the winter, sessions will move to Spiceball Leisure Centre and cost £2.

For more information and to get your name down, email physical.activity@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or call 01295 753749.

ENDS

Notes

If you don't live in Banbury and would like to join a team closer to you, contact Oxfordshire FA via Development@Oxfordshirefa.com.