

# MoveMates Volunteer Newsletter

NEWSLETTER@MOVETHE  
MASSES.ORG.UK

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Let's Walk Group in action

## “We Exist to Get People Out”

The last newsletter included a piece saying that some beneficiaries decide at the last minute that they don't want to walk. That article certainly struck a chord with other volunteers who frequently turn up only to be turned away! The latest set of walk logs included several that start with “X didn't feel like walking today...”

Volunteer coordinator Mark Kelly has also had calls from volunteers asking what they should do about this. He fears that some volunteers are so used to being turned away that they no longer bother logging it.

“It's becoming a problem. As it says on the tin, MoveMates is a charity about moving. I'm concerned that some volunteers' time is not appreciated or is being wrongly used. For example, we've heard of volunteers being told 'I won't walk today but will you go to the shop for me.' Other charities exist to do that. We exist to get people walking.”

Mark says that volunteers have the right to expect five key things from their beneficiaries.

- **Punctual:** be ready at the agreed time, or notify the volunteer coordinator Mark on 07883971548 in good time if plans need to change
- **Respect:** treat volunteers, staff and the public with respect at all times
- **Inclusive:** no discriminatory or offensive language (e.g racist, homophobic, transphobic, misogynistic)
- **Understanding:** walks may occasionally need to be rearranged or cancelled by volunteers
- **Move:** MoveMates volunteers offer walking companionship and support only - not personal care or additional tasks

Finally, Mark urges volunteers: “Please remember to always log your time - even if you don't walk!”

## Let's Walk

MoveMates volunteer Karen Hayes independently runs a monthly walking group primarily for visually impaired people.

Called Let's Walk, the group was set up under the umbrella of MoveMates, helped by project officer Libby Crofts and supported by York's Community Health Champions.

Initially aimed at residents of Wilberforce House, York's housing scheme for people with visual impairment and other disabilities, all MoveMate walkers are welcome.

The group meets at Wilberforce House every third Tuesday of the month at 1:30. Walks last 60-90 minutes.

Says Karen: “We have volunteers trained as sighted guides. One of our volunteers, Michael, is also a MoveMate and recently raised funds for some ramble tags. Keep up the good work!”

Ramble tags are lightweight wearable navigation aids for blind or visually impaired people, allowing them to hold onto a guide's upper arm or wrist without direct skin contact.

For more information, contact Karen on [Yorkletswalk@gmail.com](mailto:Yorkletswalk@gmail.com)





## Clarity about donations

The March 2026 newsletter set out the decision by MoveMates' trustees to seek donations from beneficiaries to help cover the cost of running the charity.

In response to some feedback, MoveMates chairperson Hayden Holmes has given us the following statement.

*"Thanks very much for your feedback and queries about the recent volunteer newsletter, specifically on the request for donations from beneficiaries.*

*We have always encouraged beneficiaries to donate if they are able to do so. However, MoveMates is not a 'fee for service' charity and beneficiaries who do not make voluntary contributions will not be excluded.*

*The beneficiary newsletter sent out in April suggests some ways that beneficiaries may consider contributing. We appreciate the wording in the volunteer newsletter was a bit more strongly worded and wasn't clear enough that this was still a voluntary contribution.*

*The charity has been fighting for survival over the last 18 months with charity funding becoming more and more competitive. Several York-based charities have had to close over that same period and we will continue to fight to avoid that same situation.*

*We have stripped back as many of our costs as we can to remain a lean charity. However, we cannot run without our excellent staff who work above and beyond what they are reimbursed to deliver.*

*We also have insurance liability to cover our volunteers and beneficiaries during walks, and other admin costs such as DBS checks, phone line, social media and webpage.*

*If your Move Mates have raised any concerns about donations please be honest with them – that we can only exist with voluntary donations but that any donations are voluntary and not a requirement. Last year the charity came very close to closing completely and the feedback we received then was that beneficiaries and volunteers wanted to have the opportunity to help and contribute.*

*We have learned from this and are trying to engage more and ensure volunteers and beneficiaries are able to contribute to the strategic direction of the charity. Volunteers are what makes this charity so special, and this was acknowledged in the highest possible way when MoveMates was awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service.*

*We welcome further feedback and ideas, and thank you all for being engaged.*

Cheers

Hayden Holmes (Chairperson)



### VOLUNTEER'S CHATTER BOX

**"M is well after eye surgery last weekend and definitely wanted to walk today, even in the rain!!!**

**We donned waterproofs and off we went. She loved seeing the daffodils in flower and signs of spring everywhere."**

Send us your stories  
newsletter@movethemasses.org.uk

### COMING UP!

**May 30 York Pride:** Over 17,500 people went last year, filling the Knavesmore with love, laughter and colour – and it's expected to be even bigger in 2026! MoveMates has a stall so if you can donate items or help on the day, contact [Mark@movethemasses.com](mailto:Mark@movethemasses.com)

**June 14 Social at Brew York:** This special social evening is for volunteers, beneficiaries and friends, giving everyone the chance to celebrate what Move Mates is all about. Includes a quiz, raffle and Korean buffet. Tickets are £22 – please book soon via [movemates.org.uk/events/brew-york/](https://movemates.org.uk/events/brew-york/)

## What's Your Number?

Congratulations to Lorraine Fox (below) who has just logged her 100<sup>th</sup> MoveMates walk!

How many have you logged? To find out, just sign in to your MoveMates account, select My MoveMate Pairings, and look at My Stats. You'll see the month and year of your first walk, and how many walks you've logged. Share your number - [newsletter@movethemasses.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@movethemasses.org.uk)



## Got a Question?

**Q:** Can MoveMates help to replace my beneficiary's worn out walking aid?

**A:** No. If the aid was provided by the NHS, the number to contact should be on the equipment. If it was bought privately and they can't afford to replace, your beneficiary should arrange to contact their GP for a referral.

Got a question? Send it to [newsletter@movethemasses.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@movethemasses.org.uk)



## ◆ MoveMate Stats for April

**NEW PAIRINGS**

**9**

**ACTIVE PAIRINGS**

**103**

**CURRENTLY PAIRED BENEFICIARIES**

**94**

**CURRENTLY PAIRED VOLUNTEERS**

**69**

**ALL TIME PAIRED BENEFICIARIES**

**372**

**CURRENT ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS**

**114**