



## LAUNCH PRESS RELEASE

Release date: Thursday 1st December 2016

# WALKING FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION TAKES ITS 1<sup>ST</sup> STEPS

**A new National Governing Body for Walking Football has been launched, run by people who actively play, organise and understand the needs and wants of the Walking Football community.**

The Walking Football Association (WFA) was founded by Steve Rich, an established “voice of walking football” who plays for Folkestone Wanderers and Paul Carr, a retired accountant, currently completing a football business degree at the prestigious UCFB University in Manchester and plays for Wigan Walkers.

The Association’s aims are to:

1. Promote and develop the sport throughout the UK
2. Govern the sport through the establishment of standardised rules, code of conduct and disciplinary procedures
3. Allow all affiliated member clubs to have a say in key WFA decisions
4. Create a bank of specially trained referees
5. Create a team of walking football coaches
6. Organise National and Regional tournaments
7. Establish national teams for the home countries
8. Run European and World tournaments and develop international relationships
9. Be fully inclusive with mixed gender teams encouraged
10. Organise the first women’s walking football tournament

***“EVERY WFA AFFILIATED CLUB WILL BE given a vote on key decisions”***

In 2014, Steve set up the Walking Football United (WFU) website devoted to walking football and aimed at providing a directory of registered clubs. The directory now includes almost 1000 clubs. For the last 3 years, WFU has organised successful national tournaments and this year a Home Nations Cup. Steve, who will be Development Director, is passionate about the sport which is now the fastest growing sport in the UK. *“Since this innovative sport was introduced in 2011, aimed at getting people aged 50+ back into activity, thousands of men and women have found fitness and fun from participating in a new and unique sport, based on, but far removed from normal football.”*

The establishment of WFA as the National Governing Body is seen as a natural progression from the achievements of the WFU and the sterling work undertaken by Steve Rich and his colleagues.

Chief Executive Paul Carr, who started playing to get fit in an attempt to control his diabetes, is equally enthusiastic and sees enormous potential for growth *“The sport has grown dramatically this year, helped by significant positive media coverage concerning the proven social, physical and mental health benefits. We believe that the WFA will provide the governance, direction, promotion and guidance needed, in a prompt and efficient manner. This will facilitate even greater growth with a target of 4000 registered clubs and over 100,000 players within 5 years. It is also very important that the WFA as the National Governing Body for the sport, is being run by executives who are experienced and active players and organisers of this wonderful sport and understand its challenges. Importantly each WFA affiliated club will also be given a vote on deciding important matters such as standardisation of rules.”*

Competitions Director is Paul Jackson, who plays for Heanor, and was the pioneer of the successful Derbyshire Walking Football League, has exciting plans – *“the WFA will run both regional and national tournaments for different age categories, and a new League Champions Cup is proposed. Plans are also being developed to organise a European Tournament in 2018 and a World Cup in 2020”.*



## LAUNCH PRESS RELEASE

Release date: Thursday 1st December 2016

WFA already has close association ties with facilitators of Walking Football in the following countries:

Australia, Brazil, France, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, South Africa, Turkey, USA, Cyprus, Portugal, Canada and Uganda.

The WFA is also in discussions with a number of potential sponsors and commercial partners.

A new WFA website will be launched in the New Year, when a membership package including significant benefits, will be offered to clubs who register.

Tony Norton, WFA Secretary, who has played and facilitated over 10 sessions a week within Wiltshire as a volunteer for the last 2 years, adds that the WFA will be signing up to the Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport and Recreation Sector.

---

For more information please contact:

**Steve Rich**            **07990 976462**    **stevewrich@hotmail.com**

**Paul Carr**            **07517 033248**    **carrpaulus@aol.com**

**The Walking Football Association Ltd,**

**Kemp House,**

**160 City Road,**

**London EC1V 2NX**

**The Walking Football Association (WFA) is the National Governing Body for Walking Football, the fastest growing sport in the UK, and is run by executives who actively play and organise this unique sport that has proven social, physical and health benefits. Walking football was invented in England in 2011, aimed at getting people age 50+ active, and now has almost 1000 clubs and more than 25,000 players.**