

# Midlothian win first 'Live Borders' Walking Football tournament



Walking Footballers from across the Borders and Midlothian took part in the first of a series of Tournaments organised by Live Borders at the Queens Centre Galashiels yesterday. .

The competition was won by the Midlothian/Loanhead team who pipped Gala Fairydean Rovers by the narrowest of margins on goal difference after a round-robin tournament.

Walking Football is a slowed down version of the game and is a fast growing sport across the country. The majority of players are aged over 50 but there was no age-restriction at Sunday's tournament. The youngest player was 48 the oldest 83.

Recent studies have suggested that Walking Football brings obvious health benefits but in addition helps end social isolation and brings friendships and camaraderie to a particularly vulnerable group, the over 50's.

Paul Smith is the Chaplain at Gala Fairydean Rovers and also runs walking football sessions in his home village of Newcastleton. Paul said; "We have guys playing who'd never kicked a ball before. We have men in their 50s and 60s playing now for the first time, some of whom have had mental health problems – others who live alone and would struggle to leave the house before. We're seeing a transformation here with guys getting a new lease of life from the physical activity as well as the social interaction and the banter in café after each game."

The organiser of the event, Drew Kelly, the Scottish FA Development Officer hopes that Sunday's event will be the first of many such tournaments to take place in the Borders hosted by Live Borders and it is hoped that towns that currently do not have teams such as Selkirk and Hawick will be represented in the future. Drew thanked Martin Edmunds from the GFR Walking Team for his help in contacting the teams and Lynne Marshall and Jillian Scott from Scottish Borders Council for their help on the day.