

Auldcathie Parkrun sets new records

The first Parkrun at Winchburgh's Auldcathie District Park took place at the weekend.

Two new records for the highest attendance ever recorded at a Scottish inaugural Parkrun and the busiest in Scotland were set as 601 people took part.

Parkrun is a volunteer-led, 5km challenge that takes place every weekend at various locations all over the world.

The runs bring together people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds together to take part for free as walkers, runners, or volunteers. Winchburgh Developments Limited has provided the main sponsorship for the Auldcathie Parkrun with further contributions provided by the key housebuilders on site.



Setting off



Robert Atherton, Bo'ness Paralympian Ben Rowlings and Gillian Wells
Cutting the ribbon on the start line, Bo'ness-based

Paralympian and world record holding wheelchair racer, Ben Rowlings, said: "It's amazing to have Parkrun come to Winchburgh and just incredible to see this level of turnout. The events are a great way to get people up and active and having the first Winchburgh park run at the start of the year sets an active tone for the rest of the year.

"The new Winchburgh course makes the Parkrun event even more inclusive. The smooth surface opens the event to users with a variety of disabilities ranging from wheelchair users, race running frames and visually impaired runners with guides.

"Parkrun is about bringing a community together and getting active regardless of times, speed or disability. Winchburgh Park Run has the ability to do this within our local area, which is brilliant."

Winchburgh's Auldcathie District Park has been designed with Parkrun in mind after the community raised the idea during initial consultations in 2018.

The park is a stunning backdrop to the 5km challenge flanked by dense woodland. All cycle and walking routes throughout the park are tarmac-covered, providing full access for everyone including wheelchair users.



First finisher at the inaugural parkrun

Personal Trainer and Parkrun event director, Gillian Wells from Winchburgh, led the campaign to secure a Parkrun for Winchburgh Village. She said: "This is a really exciting moment for us. My passion is in inspiring people of all ages, shapes and sizes to get moving and Parkrun is the perfect way to achieve this. Now more than ever it's really important to encourage one another to look after our mental health as well as our physical and being able to access this free and inclusive event on your doorstep is invaluable.

"At a time where many are struggling with the stresses and strains from such a difficult and stressful pandemic it's a fantastic way to come together as a community in a relaxed environment with fellow residents whilst also allowing us to help support local businesses who will provide space for conversation and refreshments afterwards."

Penny Lochhead, Community Sports and Greenspace Manager at Winchburgh Developments Limited, said: "This is a fantastic, free weekly event that is going to offer a regular routine for

people to get together, get exercising and enjoy this beautiful district park in the process. Gillian and her team of volunteers have done an amazing job to bring Parkrun to Winchburgh. It has taken a lot of hard work and dedication to get it over the line and going forward it is a massive commitment to deliver this 5km run every week of the year hopefully for many years to come.

“I’m thrilled all the hard work over the past few years has been worth it and Winchburgh now has a wonderful Parkrun to enjoy every Saturday morning. As the community of Winchburgh continues to grow in the next few years, it’s going to be a lovely event to bring everyone together.”

The running route is one of the most accessible in Scotland. The broadly flat 2.5km tarmac path is part of a fitness loop that takes runners from the recently opened ‘schools in the park’ education campus and Sports and Wellbeing Hub, down through the park and towards the Union Canal, where it then loops back for a second circuit. In the next phase of the park’s development another 40 acres of greenspace will be added allowing for a full 5km circuit.

There are toilet facilities at the adjacent Sports and Wellbeing Hub in the car park at the start of the race and there are hot drinks and treats awaiting the runners at the finish area from local business, Zac & Co.

www.parkrun.org.uk/auldcathiedistrict/course/

