

County council and the community team up to launch a walking bus

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Youngsters in Biddulph will soon be striding to school in safety thanks to the launch of a new walking bus.

Staffordshire County Council's road safety unit has teamed up with Biddulph Valley North Community Association to get the initiative up and running.

The aim of the scheme is to boost road safety on the approach to Oxhey First School by easing congestion.

More than a dozen parents have volunteered to lead the walking bus which will be launched after the Easter holiday.

The group of helpers will meet at Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre at 8.30am on weekdays before heading to the Pennine Way school.

The walking bus sensation in Staffordshire has established an astonishing rate of growth since it was launched in 1999 with 150 walking buses now running at 81 schools.

Local county councillor Ian Lawson said: "The walking bus initiative has proved to be extremely successful since it was launched more than 10 years ago.

"It is an excellent way for children to enjoy a bit of fresh air and exercise before embarking on a day of lessons.

"The scheme also helps to combat climate change by encouraging parents to cut CO₂ emissions by leaving their cars at home as well as easing congestion around the school."

Helen Roberts, Chairman of Biddulph Valley North Community Association, added: "The support for the walking bus has been overwhelming. The whole community is behind the initiative and is keen to work with the county council to get this safety boosting scheme off the ground.

"Seventeen parents have already offered to help lead the walking bus which is a really positive start. There are so many benefits to the project and I am sure that the pupils will really get behind it and embrace it."