

Get active, eat well, feel better

And save money too!

A guide to Swindon's walking community

These routes are made for walking!





WALK THIS WAY

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This magazine has been compiled with the help of the local community. We launched the "Wichelstowe Walking Competition" in the summer of 2022, asking residents to nominate their favourite walks around the area.

The walks in this magazine are based on the winning walks, which we hope will get you out and about exploring new places.

You can save time and money by making short journeys on foot. And because walking is ideal natural exercise, if you tweak your habits and fit walking into your daily routine, you'll soon reap the health benefits too.

It's free,
enjoyable,
easy to do and
good for your
health and
your wallet!

What could
be better
than walking?



Why Walk?

Walking is an easy way to achieve the recommended two and a half hours of moderate exercise a week.

You can do it in your own time, at a pace to suit you, and you don't need special equipment or gym membership. Just put on a pair of comfortable shoes, and you're good to go!

5 BIG benefits



- 1 **It can help you lose weight.**
Walking burns calories which helps you manage your weight. This will vary from person to person, depending on a person's weight and the pace and distance they walk. As a general guide: a 180-pound (12.8 stone) person will burn 100 calories per mile and a 120-pound (8.5 stone) person will burn 65 calories per mile, walking at a fairly leisurely 3 mph (covering a mile in 20 mins). Brisk walking will use more calories.
- 2 **It's good exercise.**
You can reduce your risk of developing serious conditions, like heart disease, strokes, Type 2 diabetes, some cancers and Alzheimer's disease.
- 3 **It will lift your mood.**
Walking will reduce anxiety and help you to sleep.
- 4 **You'll get stronger.**
Walking can improve your flexibility, the strength of your muscles, joints and bones, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis for women.
- 5 **Walking is enjoyable!**
Don't take our word for it, go outside and give it a try!

Find out how to join a local walking group. **Turn to page 4**

You'll Never Walk Alone

Weekly Walks Diary - what, when and where

Step out Swindon is a self-funding volunteer led scheme with 9 wellbeing walks in the Swindon area. There are currently over 650 walkers registered with the scheme and this is growing every week as people become aware of the health and wellbeing benefits of walking and socialising with a group.

New members are always made welcome and the ability to walk for about an hour is the only qualification required. The volunteers take care of those who start off slowly and ensure that they always get back for the all-important refreshments and social chat at the end of every walk.

The walks in the table below are correct as of summer 2026, but we advise you check on the website or contact the organiser before turning up.

If you require any further information then please contact Grahame Lee, Scheme Co-ordinator on 07932 109209 or www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/wellbeing-walks-groups/ramblers-wellbeing-walks-step-out-swindon



All group walks are free.

When?	What?	Where?	How far?
Mondays at 10am	Penhill Wellbeing Walk	John Moulton Hall Community Centre	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Mondays at 10.30am	Christ Church Old Town Wellbeing Walk	Christ Church Community Centre	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Mondays at 2pm	Covingham Wellbeing Walk	St Pauls Church Hall	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Thursdays at 10.30am	Haydon Wick Gentle Mobility Walk	Haydon Centre	Very short distance, slow pace. Up to 30 minutes
Mondays at 2pm	Lower Shaw Farm Wellbeing Walk	Lower Shaw Farm	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Thursdays at 10am	Haydon Wick Wellbeing Walk	Haydon Centre	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Thursdays at 10am	Wroughton Wellbeing Walk	Ellendune Centre	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Thursdays at 2pm	Mannington Health Walk	Mannington Retail Park (TK Maxx)	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.
Fridays at 10.30am	Croft Old Town Wellbeing walk	Croft Sports Centre	2-3 mile walk, up to 1 hour.

These routes are made for walking!

Step out and spot the wildlife for yourself...

Why not walk to a local green space?

Wichelstowe

Wroughton

Old Town

Rushey Platt

Mannington

Old Town Railway Path

Our handy 'pull-out & keep' route maps are also available as interactive maps on your smartphone. Scan the QR codes on the walk pages to follow them. >>

Discover some easy circular walks in Wichelstowe



Dawn's Loop About this walk

This walk was a favourite of local resident Dawn Manser and her dog Bella. It provides a mixture of scenery including the canal and the old railway path without getting too muddy.

There's also the opportunity to stop for a drink at Hall and Woodhouse, or pick up snacks at Waitrose.

To spot on the walk: Stone sculptures on the Old Town Railway Path.

There are five stone sculptures along the path.

Some think they are wheels, some dials or discs. They start at the Old Town end and heading towards the west, they represent Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Conceive.

They were commissioned by the Swindon Bike Group in 1995 and created by artist Alec Peever, who specialises in sculpture and carving. Each sculpture was made from Portland stone and has two parts, a small wheel showing the Element, and a large wheel with a short piece of poetry.

In addition, there is a length of wood crossing the path between each of the wheel pairs. Each of these lengths of wood has two words written on them. Poet Fiona Sampson was responsible for the words.



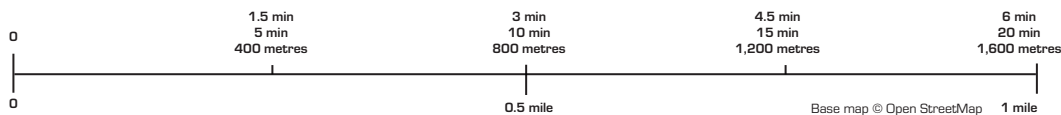
Dawn's Loop

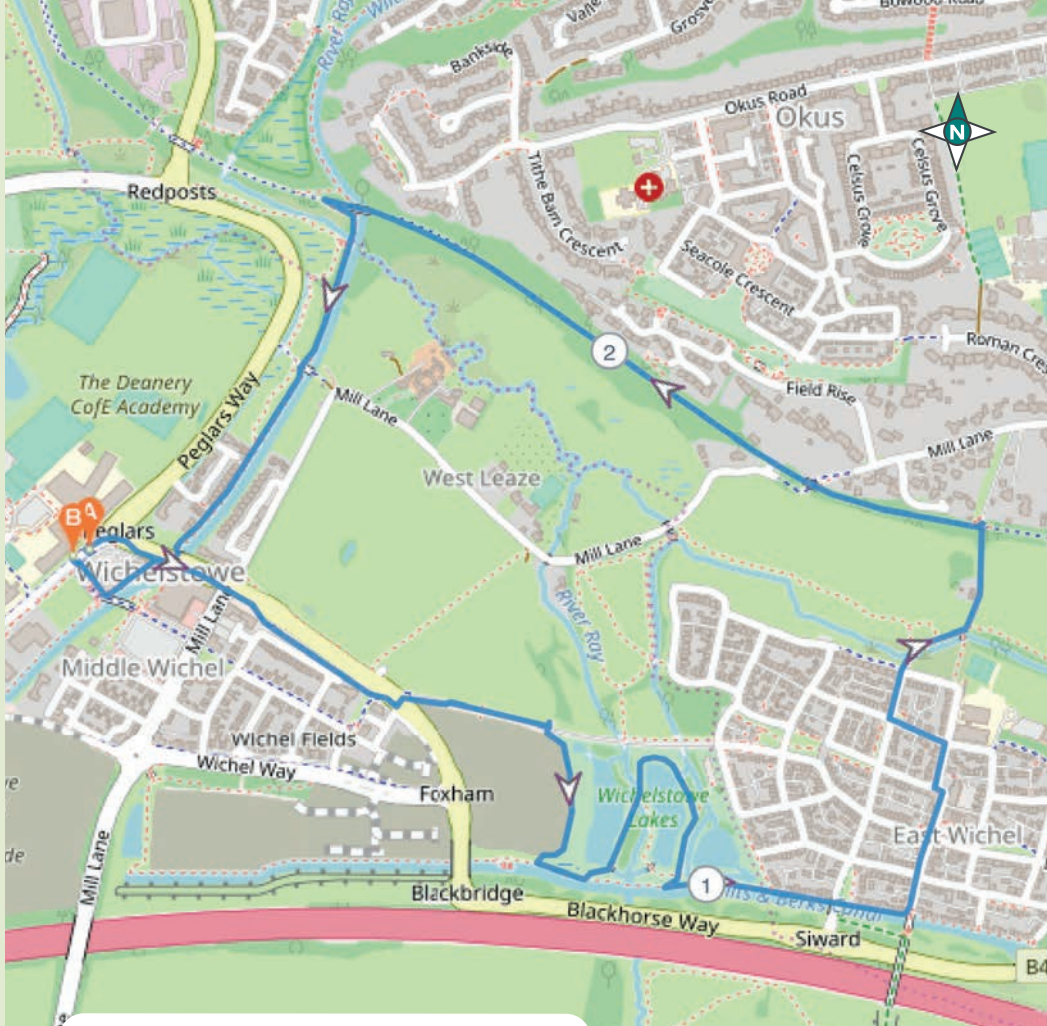


40 minutes

1.95 miles

Scan me to follow the route on a smartphone

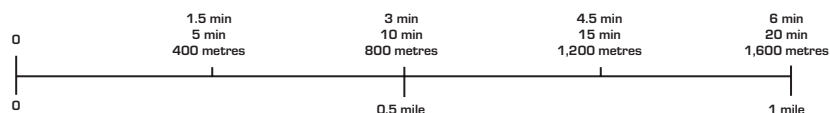




Heritage and nature ramble

 **60 minutes**
 **2.8 miles**

Scan me to follow the route
on a smartphone



Base map © Open StreetMap



Heritage and nature ramble About this walk

This walk was a favourite of Chris Barry, who volunteers with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust.

"It's varied, relaxing, and good exercise - and it puts a smile on my face!"

On some metal railings by the canal under Skew Bridge,

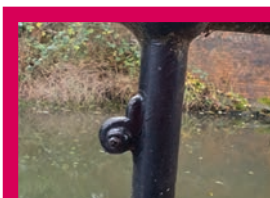
near Rushey Platt, is a mouse and three snails, welded to the railings. Most towpath walkers don't know they're there nor have any idea how or when they were put there. However, the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust posted some pictures of them on their Facebook page, and were delighted to have tracked down the man who did them, thanks to his daughter Debbie and grand-daughter Lynne, who had seen the post and got in contact.

His name was Michael (Mick) Couling - he'd been a blacksmith and spring maker at the Swindon Rail Works. When they closed in 1986

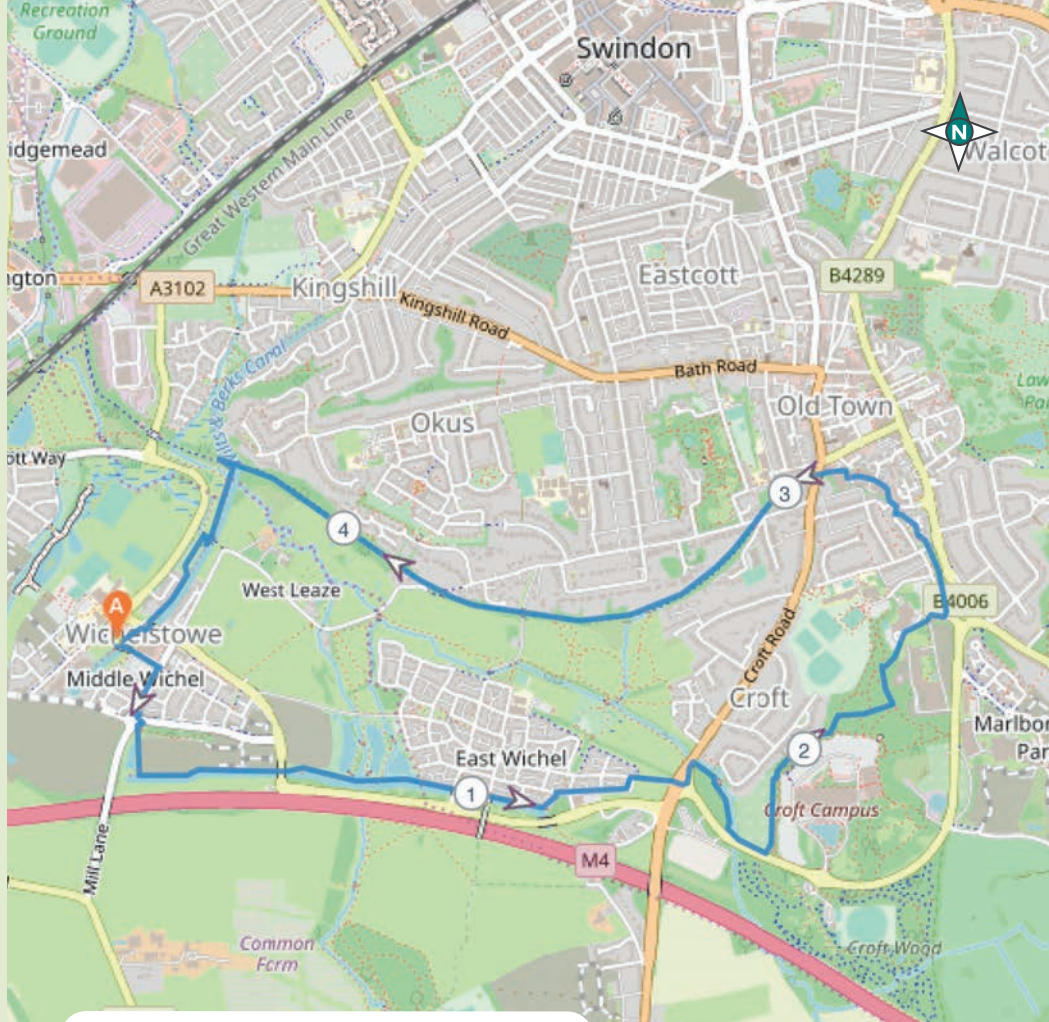
he worked at the Forge in Wroughton (now also closed) and was a volunteer at the Didcot Railway Centre.

Soon after the towpath was repaired in 1986, Mick was engaged to make the railings, both at Skew Bridge and a little further on towards Kingshill where there is a spill weir - those railings sport another mouse! He was a creative person, as evidenced by these delightful decorative ornaments.

Sadly, he died early in 2017, aged 80; it's so nice to be able to remember him in this way.



To spot on the walk: The mouse and the snail



Canals, copse and railway lines About this walk

Did you know?

Signal Way was the home of Swindon's first railway station.

What is now home to several industrial units used to be the site of the Swindon Town Station, a railway station that served fare-paying passengers for 80 years.

The station nearly didn't get built - the original plan in 1870 was to tunnel 700 yards through the Old Town Hill and have the first station

at Chiseldon. However, the tunnel did not succeed and the line came from Rushey Platt, and a station was created. It opened in 1881.

As well as two signal boxes and a turntable, the station had a goods shed and a loco shed located just to the east of where the Marriott roundabout is today, three platforms (the longest over 500 feet long), waiting rooms and a main station building, including a very fine refreshment room.

Swindon Town station was used by thousands of Swindon residents during the annual Great Western Works Trip fortnight break to travel to the coast and other holiday destinations.

It was also used for letting off homing pigeons from the north, including Manchester. The line closed to passengers in September 1961. For more information, visit www.swindonsotherailway.co.uk

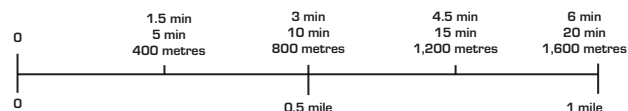
Canals, copse and railway lines



1hr 30minutes

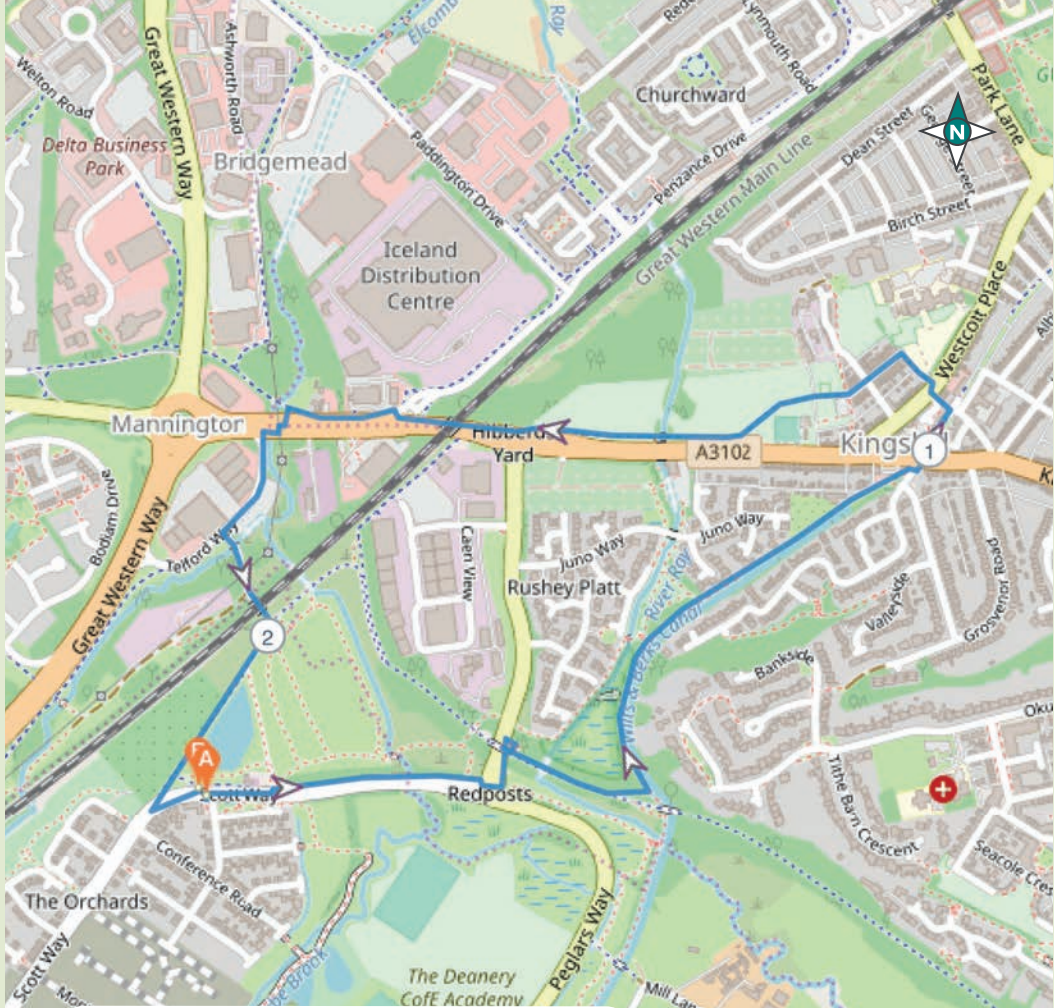
4.7 miles

Scan me to follow the route on a smartphone



(Be aware that there may be restrictions around the Wichel Fields site as building continues)

Base map © Open StreetMap



Scott Way Saunter

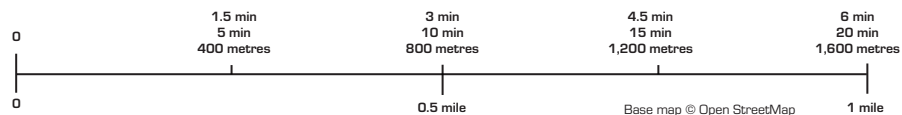


50 minutes (plus stopping time for coffee)



2.2 miles

Scan me to follow the route on a smartphone



Public art to spot around Wichelstowe



The Water Vole and the Waders

Artist Lucy Casson was inspired by the water birds which have made the canals and lakes at Wichelstowe home as well as stories of the more elusive water voles. The animals were modelled in clay to get the expressions just right before the models were sent to the foundry and turned into these fantastic bronzes. Full of character, these small creatures welcome the children who attend the school nursery every day.



Hall & Woodhouse Lock Gates and Lady Rose Canal Boat

The pub's designers took inspiration from its surroundings, looking at creative ways to incorporate the canal and reflect industrial Swindon's architectural heritage into the pub's interior and exterior. Large wooden lock gates set the canal tone at the pedestrian entrance to the pub. An innovative, purpose-built canal boat named Lady Rose protrudes from the front entrance of the building. It contains self-serve beer pumps in sectioned booths that can seat up to 20 people.

Wichelstowe Tree of Life

Sebastien Boyesen's second piece of art at Wichelstowe provides the Gateway into Wichelstowe from the south. The Tree of Life is formed from two different types of metal with stainless steel flora and fauna placed on top of the Corten Steel base. The animals depicted include water voles, dragonfly, kingfishers and otters. The heron, voted on social media as Wichelstowe's favourite wildlife, takes pride of place.

Birds in Flight

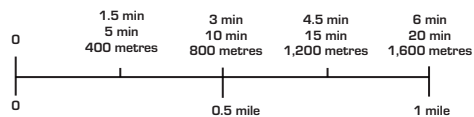
Designed by artist Duncan Kitson, the Birds in Flight were installed in 2023. Wichelstowe is home to wide range of birds with the majority of new homes including built in swift bricks, with nesting boxes also installed on mature trees integrated into the sites green spaces. The birds not only form a feature gateway but along with the bird shaped benches below them form a perfect place to sit and reflect.

Boyesen Bridge

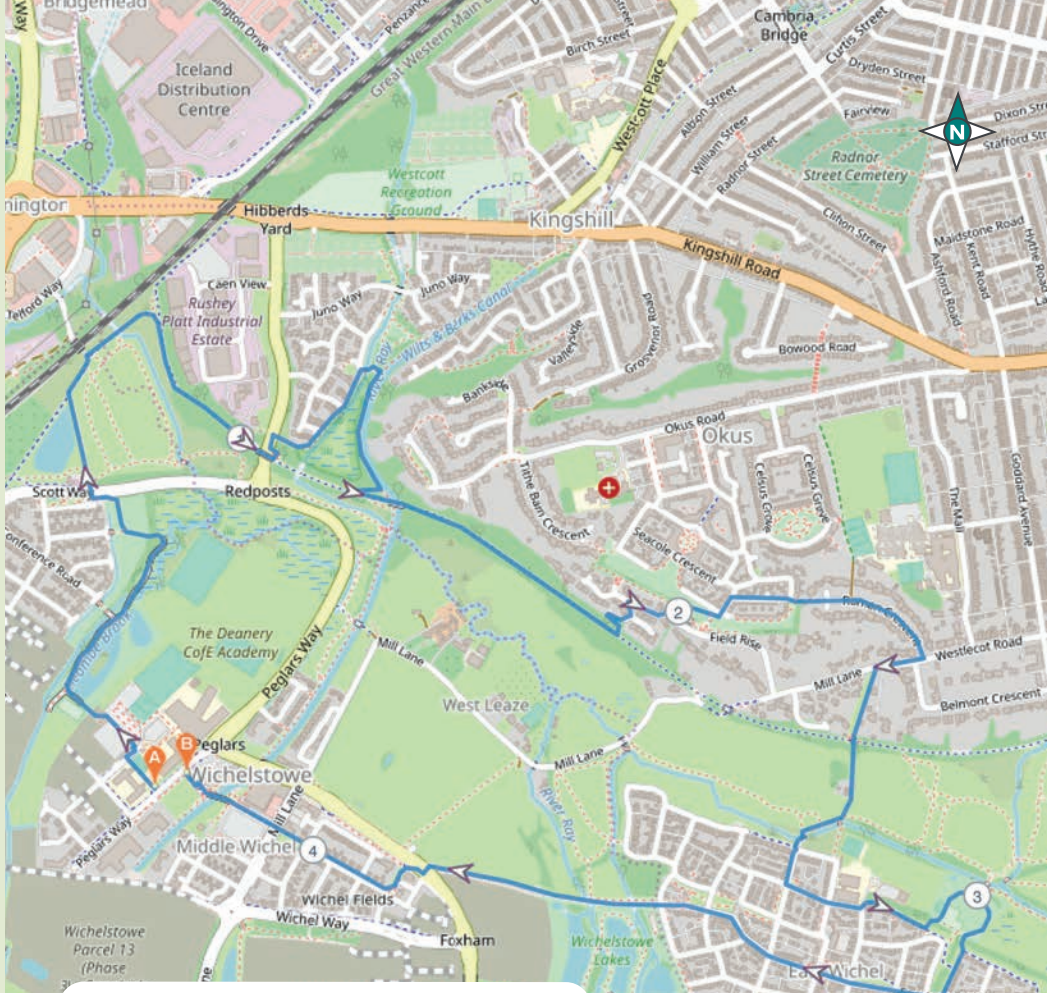
The landmark footbridge over the canal was designed by architect Sebastien Boyesen in 2017. The brief was to connect the new retail amenities and housing with the supermarket located on the other side of the canal, creating an accessible and aesthetically pleasing route. Working closely with the Stantec engineering team the 35m long, 28 tonne bridge balances functional elements with a stunning design. The bridge is formed of laser cut steel panels interspersed with coloured resin which reflect the sunlight during the day and are illuminated at night by lights set within the handrail. The design was developed by looking at the local flora, creating images based on the distinctive quality of such plants as the Horseshoe Vetch and Bath Asparagus that are found locally.

For more details of public art in the area, see
<https://www.wichelstowe.co.uk/discover/public-art>

Getting around.. To work, shop and school



Base map © Open StreetMap



Play Park Crawl

About this walk

This walk visits 4 great local playparks in the area (The Boardwalk, Rushy Platt, Angel Ridge and East Wichel). A park crawl is a fabulous fun free activity for families and bringing a picnic along can make a day of it. There's plenty of wildlife to spot as you travel between the parks.

Play Park Crawl

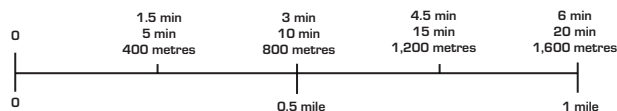


**1hr 30minutes (plus
stopping time for play!)**

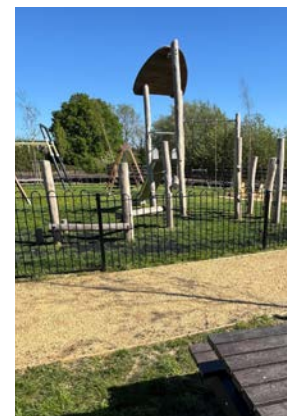


4.1 miles

Scan me to follow the route
on a smartphone



Base map © Open StreetMap



Did you know?

The Angel Ridge Playground is a popular sand pit park. The bones of an Ichthyosaur (marine dinosaur) were once discovered nearby, and this pre-historic relic inspired the use of fossils throughout the play site, with hidden replica fossils secreted in the sand area and a giant ammonite heralding the start of the play site.

One of the key features of the site is the weighty Turning Stone, a huge 5 tonne boulder which even small children can easily rotate. This is personalised with an inscription, a poem by Jane Evans.

Engraved elements along the pathway of the site chart the history of Angel Ridge, from dinosaurs through to the current day.



Get App-y!

If you want to walk **10,000 steps a day**, these are some of the walking apps that can help to make it happen.

There's no better time to stretch your legs in the great outdoors – and some of the best walking apps can help you make the most of your time. Here is a selection of apps that we recommend. Nearly all offer excellent functionality for free, with some offering paid or subscription options for more advanced features.

1. NHS Active 10

This app is great for beginners and gives motivation to take brisk walks. The app tracks your walking and you can earn rewards for every brisk minute of walking you do. The aim is to complete at least 10 minutes of brisk walking each day. You can track your progress and set your own goals.



2. Walk 15

Another app that is great for beginners and motivates through its fun step challenges for individuals, friends, or workplaces. There's even a chance to sign up to the "Swindon" team and compete against other European cities during European Mobility Week each September.



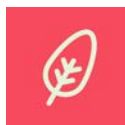
3. Strava

Strava is a highly-rated fitness app. Whilst it is primarily built for runners and cyclists, Strava is a solid, reliable app for tracking walks, offering accurate GPS, social motivation (kudos, following friends), and good basic data (distance, pace, time) for free.



4. Huntly

Huntly is an innovative app designed to inspire children to explore the great outdoors



while learning and having fun. The app offers a wide variety of interactive quests that encourage kids to discover the beauty of nature, learn about wildlife, and develop essential problem-solving skills. You'll barely notice the distance you're covering whilst hunting items.

5. Go Jauntly

Go Jauntly is a community-driven walking routes app aimed at discovering local routes. The routes contain photos, step by step directions and a map, as well as other useful information – be it historical, art, or where the nearest bus stops or toilet stops are. Swindon Travel Choices has been loading Swindon routes onto this app, so we would love for you to download it, search for "Swindon" and enjoy the walks.



Wichelstowe Trails

Explore Wichelstowe's Trails and collect all the markers to discover more about the wildlife, water features and public art which make it such a fantastic place.

1. Scan the QR codes when you come across a Trails marker to find out more information about the area.
2. Use the maps to seek out and collect all the markers.
3. We'd love to see your photos out on the Trails. Post your photos on Instagram with the hashtag **#DiscoverWichelstowe**

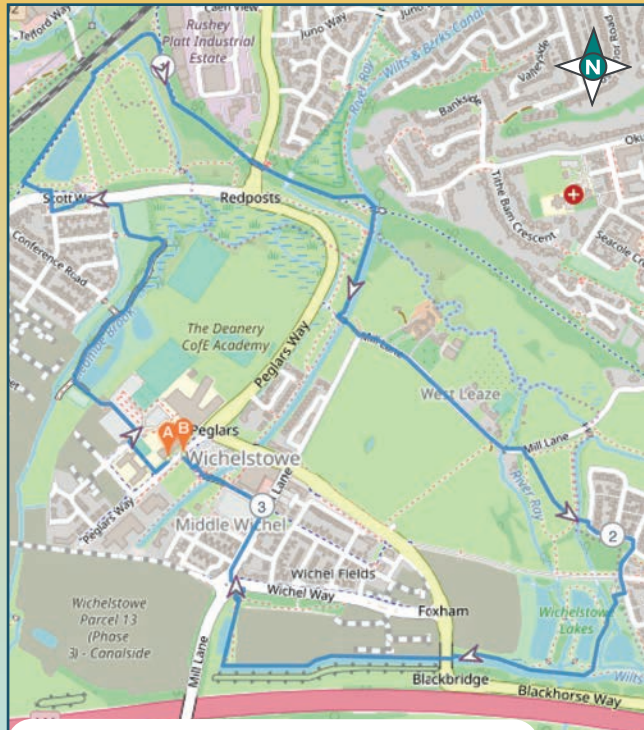


www.wichelstowetrails.co.uk

Wichelstowe



The Hedgehog Trail around Wichelstowe



Hedgehog Trail



1 hour



3 miles

Scan me to follow the route
on a smartphone



12 things to find around the Hedgehog Explorer Trail



☐ Tree of Life



☐ Mouse & snail on railings



☐ Water Vole & the Waders



☐ Oak Tree



☐ Hedgehog Highway



☐ Water bird



☐ Bullrushes



☐ The boardwalk



☐ Dragonfly Boat



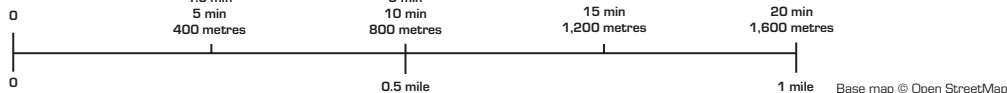
☐ A Fruit tree



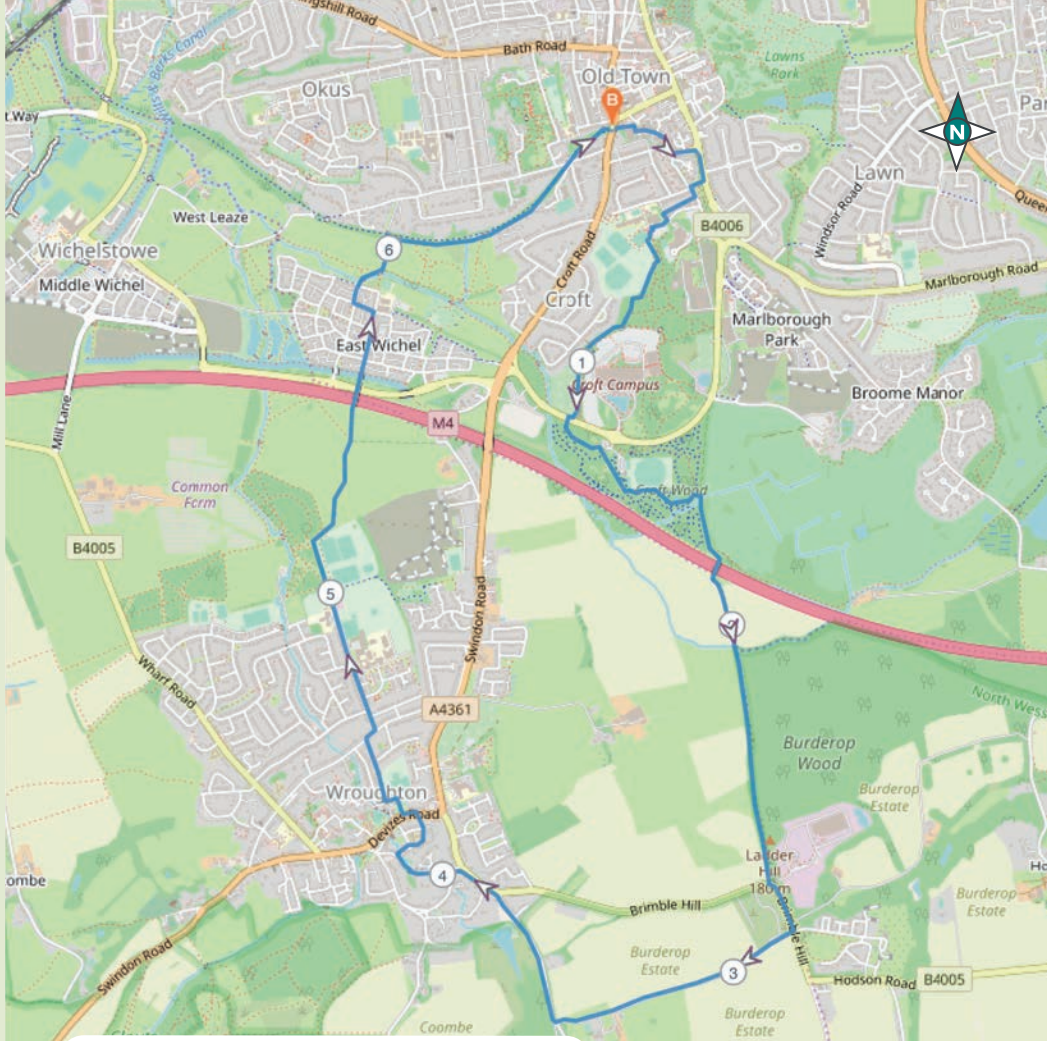
☐ Wichelstowe Trail markers



☐ Birds in flight



Base map © Open StreetMap



About this walk

The Walk on the Wildside route explores the tracks and trails around south Swindon, keeping off the tarmac as much as possible. It feels a long way from the busy roads of the town and is full of wildlife as the seasons change.

Focus on Wroughton

Wroughton is a mile from East Wichel via a traffic free path from the canalside to Inverary Road. Wroughton has shops, several pubs, a library and community centre and an interesting history.

Did you know?

Wroughton has a strong connection to horse racing. In 1874, the village celebrated for two days after the horse George Frederick, which was

stabled in the High Street, won The Derby. The horse and its Wroughton-born trainer, Tom Leader, were escorted from Swindon railway station by a brass band and received in the village which had declared all of its pubs to be open houses and provided free beer for the occasion.

Probably Wroughton's best loved horse was Brown Jack, who had been ill but restored to health at Barcelona stables (now The Pitches) with a diet that included whiskey and hot beer. By 1933 Brown Jack had won the Queen Alexandra Stakes at Ascot five years running and was entered there again for his last ever race. To the delight of the crowd and, of course the whole of Wroughton, he

won again, beating the King's horse into second place.

Brown Jack's fame was such that there is a bronze statue of him at Ascot, a LNER locomotive was named after him, his skeleton is still preserved in the Natural History Museum and, of course, there's the Brown Jack pub in Wroughton.



Walk on the Wildside

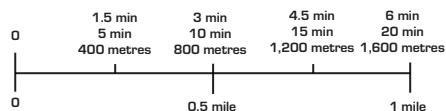


2 hours 20 minutes



6.7 miles

Scan me to follow the route on a smartphone



Base map © Open StreetMap

Pony Trail around Wroughton



Wroughton Pony Trail

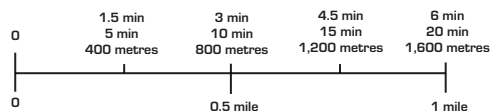


50 minutes



2.2 miles (one way)

Scan me to follow the route on a smartphone



Base map © Open StreetMap



Wroughton Pony Trail About this walk

The Wroughton Pony Trail is a 2.2-mile (approx. 3.3 km) circular walking route celebrating the local horse-racing history, green spaces, and hidden spots of Wroughton. It starts at the High Street bus stop by Fairwater Court.

From here you'll see Fairwater House, the heart of a former stable yard, which housed the 1874 Derby winner, George Frederick. The name Fairwater was adopted after a horse with that name won the Ascot Gold Vase.

Walking along the High Street you can explore the Moat Pond and its ornamental hand rail, dragonfly sculpture and the mosaics.

On this route you'll see the "Brown Jack" pub on Priors Hill. Brown Jack was trained at the Barcelona stables in the Pitches and was considered one of the top race horses of all times. To the left of the pub is the old forge where the Tarrant family would shoe horses.

In Willowbrook Gardens be sure to check out the aircraft benches. The Barracuda bench was restored by the BBC's Repair Shop On The Road in 2025.

The trail then takes in Weir Field and Blackhorse Woods before looping back towards the High Street. Be sure to discover the secret garden on Boness Road, and the heritage telephone box when you reach Kellsboro Avenue.



Walking to school can be quicker than driving, and it's a great way to spend quality time with your children.

Walking to makes sense!

If you have to drive to school, why not 'Park and Stride'?

Find a safe place to park a short distance from the school and walk the last few minutes of your journey. This will give you all the benefits of walking and avoid the congestion at the school gate, so it will be safer for everyone.

For more information on walking to school, 5 minute walk zones or walking buses, email stars@swindon.gov.uk or visit www.livingstreets.org.uk



Sarah from East Wichel:

"Walking to school with the children gives me time to chat to them and I know they are getting a dose of exercise and fresh air."

Mrs Jones from Old Town:

"It's a great opportunity for my kids to learn vital road safety skills as we walk to school together. I'm confident that this will make them safer as they get older and travel more independently."

Research shows that children who walk to school arrive more alert and ready to learn at the start of the day

Top marks for walking

✓ It saves you money

Parents could save an average of £642 each year by walking rather than driving to school.

✓ It's sociable

84% of children who walk to school meet up with their friends on the way.

✓ It's educational

Following footpaths to school helps children get to know their way around their local area and to be more independent.

✓ It's better for the planet

Walking cuts CO2 emissions, as well as exhaust fumes around the school gate.

✓ It's good for you too!

Striding to school with the kids is good exercise for you too!



Simple Steps to be Safe

Enjoy all the benefits of walking and keep safe
Just follow a few basic tips...

'Be bright, be seen'.

Wear bright or light clothing, with reflective strips on a jacket or bag so you can be seen when light levels fall.

It's best to choose routes that are **well-used** and **well-lit** if you're out and about after dark.



It sounds like basic advice, but **keep looking and listening as you cross the road** so you don't get distracted ...and look out for cyclists!



Carry a charged mobile and, if possible, let someone know where you're going if you're going on a long walk. Don't use the mobile phone whilst crossing the road.

Keeping Swindon **Safe**

It's a good idea to know where you're headed or to **take a map** if you don't. Go to www.swindontravelchoices.org.uk

If you're wearing headphones, just make sure you can still hear traffic and be aware of what's going on around you. **You often hear traffic before you can see it!** **Take some money** in case you need to use public transport.



Use crossings where you can, and if you're walking with young children, hold their hand or get them to hold on to pushchair handles. Make sure traffic has stopped before stepping into the road, even on a crossing.

If walking where there is no pavement, keep to the right-hand side of the road so you can see the coming traffic.

An easier way to plan your journey



Log on for

Travel guides | Cycle maps |
Bus information |
News and events

www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk



An easier way to plan your journey

- ➔ Journey planner allows people to plan and compare routes by bike, on foot or by bus, car and train
- ➔ All Swindon travel information in one easy to use website



Visit

www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/plan-a-journey
to discover your travel choices