

Introduction

Bishop's Waltham has a remarkable geological and ecological diversity in a very small area due to its location on a spring line where the chalk downlands meet the clay lowlands of mixed farmland and woodlands.

There are 4 Local Nature Reserves, each within 500 metres of the town centre and each with its distinctive character. Fenland, chalk meadows and clay pits can all be explored as part of a 7km circular walk starting at the town centre.

The route shown on the map has no stiles, but there are some steep slopes and two flights of steps. It can be quite muddy in winter. Two and a half hours should be allowed for this walk.

For those with limited mobility, there is a circular easy-access walk that links Priory Park with the Railway Footpath Local Nature Reserve. This 1km route is shown on the map.

The surrounding countryside of unspoilt farmland and woodland benefits from over 50 rights of way leading to neighbouring villages and attracting many walkers.

The walk starts and finishes in the town centre, with small independent shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants.

Useful Contacts

Bishop's Waltham Parish Council

01489 892323

www.bishopswaltham-pc.gov.uk

Email: parishclerk@bishopswaltham-pc.gov.uk

Refreshments in Bishop's Waltham

There are several pubs, restaurants and coffee shops in the town

Public Transport

Traveline: 0871 200 22 33

Stagecoach: 0845 121 0190

(No. 69) Winchester and Fareham:

Xelabus: 02380 644715

(No. X9) Eastleigh (No. X10) Southampton

No bus services on Sundays and Bank Holidays

Countryside Information

Rights of way maps online

www.hants.gov.uk/maps/path

Enjoying Hampshire's

countryside

0845 603 5636

www.hants.gov.uk/countryside

Local Nature Reserves

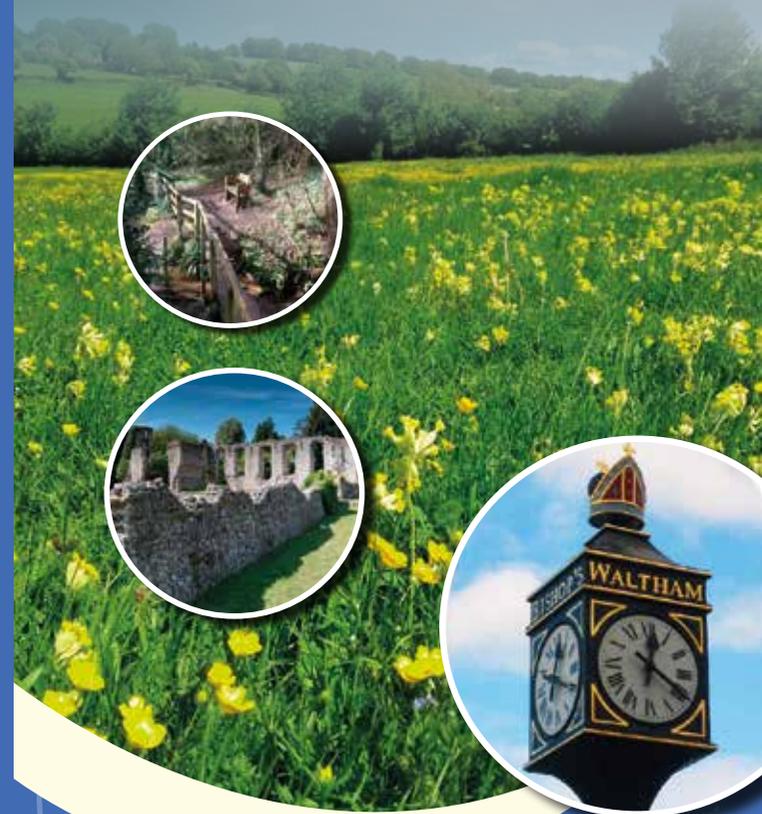
01590 674656

Email: centralcountryside@hants.gov.uk

Disclaimer: Published by Bishop's Waltham Parish Council and Hampshire County Council, through the Small Grants Scheme Countryside Access. The areas described have been put forward by the Parish Council. Whilst the County Council endeavours to maintain all rights of way to a high standard, additional resources are not allocated to routes promoted in this leaflet.

Every care has been taken in the preparation of this leaflet, but Hampshire County Council is unable to accept any responsibility for accident or loss resulting from following the information provided.

Nature Reserves of Bishop's Waltham



Enjoying the countryside

Hampshire boasts an extremely rich and diverse countryside and an extensive network of public paths which provide a range of opportunities for enjoying the great outdoors. Rights of way are linear routes, often ancient trackways through deep countryside; there are over 3,000 miles of these in Hampshire. The map in this leaflet may also show access to other areas of land, such as commons, woodland, recreation grounds or conservation areas, and your Parish Council may know of guided walks or events. Many people will be able to reach the countryside within a few hundred yards of home and the plants, trees and views along the same paths often change dramatically through the seasons. We hope that this leaflet will encourage you to explore and enjoy your local countryside.

Using the local countryside

We ask you to be responsible when using the paths in the area, and to check which paths you are entitled to use (for example, cyclists cannot use public footpaths and when on Forestry Commission land cyclists must stay on the waymarked cycle routes). Wheelchairs, pushchairs and dogs are allowed on all types of rights of way and areas with public access.



To ensure that the countryside is protected for future generations be sure to:

- Be safe – wear suitable clothing and shoes and take care when crossing roads
- Plan ahead and follow any signs – keep away from any forestry work
- Close gates behind you unless they have been fastened open
- Take your litter home, and don't light fires
- Keep dogs under close control
- Respect sites of ground-nesting birds

Maintaining countryside access

Hampshire County Council – public rights of way:

- Ensures that rights of way are not obstructed
- Maintains path surface, some bridges and signs paths
- Authorises stiles and gates
- Keeps the definitive map up-to-date

Forestry Commission – Crown Lands:

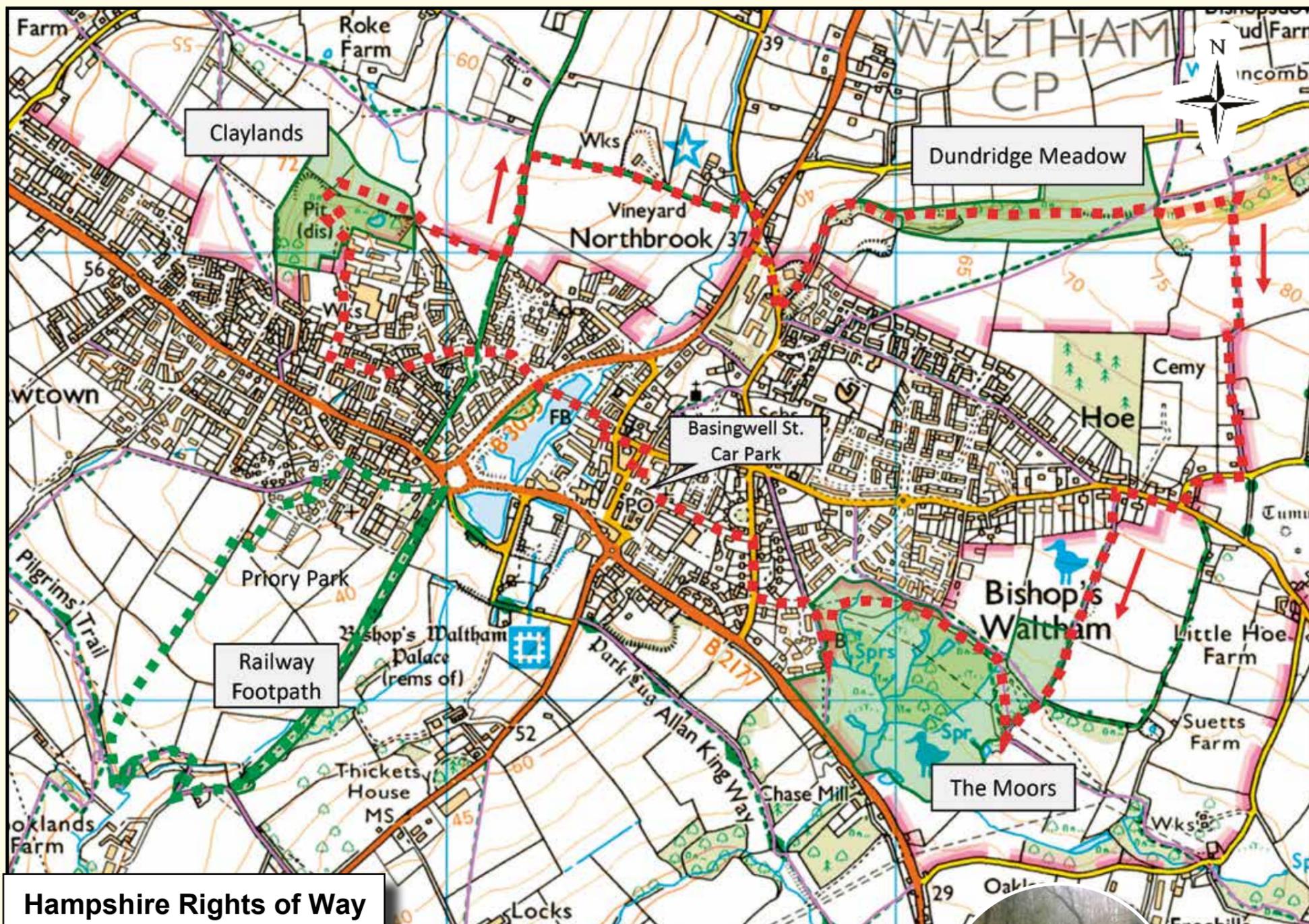
- Maintains gates, stiles and bridges
- Acts as contact point for questions about ponies and other grazing stock
- Signposts and waymarks cycle routes



Private Landowners:

- Keep back side growth and overhanging vegetation
- Maintain most stiles and gates
- Should not obstruct paths or deter use of them





Hampshire Rights of Way

-  By-way open to all traffic
-  Bridleway
-  Footpath
-  Restricted byway
-  Nature Reserve Walk
-  Easy Access Walk

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From Basingwell Street car park enter High Street and turn R. At top, turn L and on into Lower Lane car park. Take passage on R between houses and continue across bridge and main road into Langton Road. After 350m pass through bollards to T junction and turn R through industrial estate. After recycling centre, enter Claylands Local Nature Reserve through kissing gate on L keeping hedge on R.

CLAYLANDS

The site has secondary woodland, grass and scrub slopes, meadows and several ponds.

The south facing slopes were once thriving clay pits and brickworks established in 1862, continuing production until 1956. They were one of the main sources of employment in the area. The Botley to Bishop's Waltham railway line transported bricks and terracotta pots far and wide.

Products were used in buildings such as Buckingham Palace and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The warm slopes of the old clay works are now an important habitat for insects. Butterflies such as Marbled White, Green Hairstreak and Common Blue frequent the slopes. Glow worms can be seen after dark on summer evenings.

The network of ponds provides a habitat for all three native species of newt.

Follow zig-zag path up hill to T junction and information board. Turn L for 200m to viewpoint. Retrace steps to board and pass through kissing gate to turn sharp R down hill. Follow through kissing gate to meadow and bear R. At bottom turn L on to track for 300m. After vineyard, turn R along bridleway to road. Turn R and, at main road, cross over to Free Street. After 150m, before Butts Dell, turn L into byway. At fork bear R on permissive path keeping fence on L and up steps. Enter Dundridge Meadow.

DUNDRIDGE MEADOW

The site consists of hay meadows with species-rich hedgerows, chalk downland and ancient woodland. Greater Knapweed, Field Scabious, Common-Spotted Orchids and Cowslips can all be found here. Buckthorn and Spindle, both typical chalk species, are common in the hedges. Buckthorn is the food plant for the Brimstone butterfly which lays its eggs on the leaves. The pink berries of Spindle, while toxic to humans, are eaten by a range of creatures including mice and birds.

Follow path along open ground and meadow to enter woodland. (If woodland is closed, descend to corner of meadow, turn right through kissing gate and follow field keeping hedgerow on L. At stables, turn R, enter wood and continue up steps.) Follow through woodland to cross tracks, turn R up flight of steps.

Cross field then bear R to enter farm track. At junction turn R and cross at main road to turn R. After 150m turn L to footpath keeping straight through two meadows.

THE MOORS

This site comprises flower-rich wet meadows, fen and woodland surrounding a group of springs and a mill pond at the source of the River Hamble. To the west, Chase Mill almost certainly occupies one of the sites listed in the Domesday Book and was in operation until 1957.

Orange Tip and Green-veined White butterflies lay their eggs on Lady's-smock flowers in May. Other spring wild flowers, typical of damp herb-rich meadows, include Water Avens, King Cups and the scarce Bistort. Snipe, Water Rail and Siskin may be seen in winter. There are also some impressive tussock sedges by the pond which have taken years to develop.

The Sandboils is the name given to one of several spring heads on The Moors which feed the River Hamble. It gets its name from the upwelling water creating swirling sandy patches in the gravelly stream-bed.

Keep straight after kissing gate with fence on L until T junction. Turn R through kissing gate, cross meadow and bear L at kissing gate into woods. After 300m, at kissing gate, cross open area to small plank-bridge, then bear diagonally L round to kissing gate to visit the Sand Boils. Return through kissing gate, turn sharp L to road and turn L. At T junction, turn R then L into Little Shore Lane leading back to car park.

A fourth Local Nature Reserve, the Railway Footpath, forms part of the Easy Access Route and starts at Station Roundabout.

RAILWAY FOOTPATH

The Botley to Bishop's Waltham railway was closed in 1962. At the northern end of the line a 1 km section is now a permissive footpath and forms part of the King's Way and Pilgrims' Trail.

