

# Get Walking

## in North Swindon

Swindon  
Travel  
Choices

**Walk for Health:**

Get active, eat well, feel better!

**Have feet, will travel!**

(and save money too)

**You'll never walk alone**

A guide to Swindon's walking community

**These routes are  
made for walking!**

See our maps inside >>







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As more cars clog up local roads and petrol prices rise, 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.

There are plenty of footpaths to lovely green spaces, like Mouldon Hill, St. Andrew's Ridge or Seven Fields, as well as walking routes to Swindon town centre.

Have a look at some of the easy-to-read walking routes maps inside, and discover how you can walk into Swindon town centre in about 60 – 80 mins.

**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!



Tom from Haydon Wick joined his local Health Walk and then trained as a Volunteer Walk Leader:

"I've improved my fitness through walking, made good friends, and discovered new footpaths, green spaces and wildlife havens."

Lynn, Volunteer Walk Leader for the Pinehurst Health Walk:

"Walking is ideal natural exercise, and joining a led group is a great way to meet new people and help motivate you to get walking and keep walking."

**How many steps?**

Wearing a pedometer is a good way to see how far you're walking every day.

10,000 steps a day is recommended by the NHS, and you can walk 1000 steps in 10 mins.

**When and where? Walk everywhere!**

Make it a habit and try and walk whenever you can ...to the shops, taking the stairs instead of the lift, doing the school run... You'll soon clock up your daily steps!

# 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!

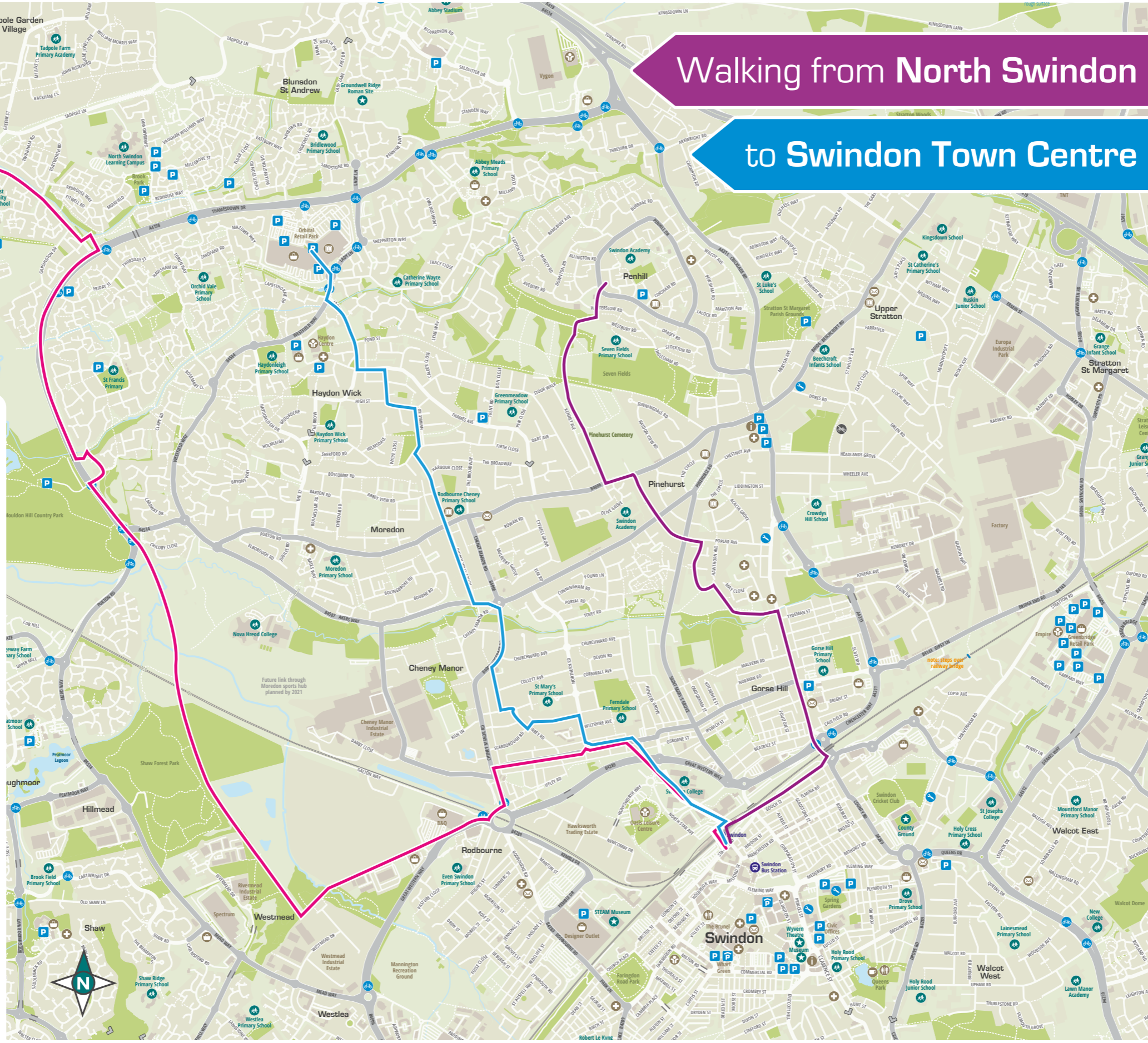
Find out how to join a local walking group. Turn to page 6



# Walking Words...



## Walking from North Swindon to Swindon Town Centre



Why not try walking into town - and catch a bus back?

Or walk both ways if you have the energy!

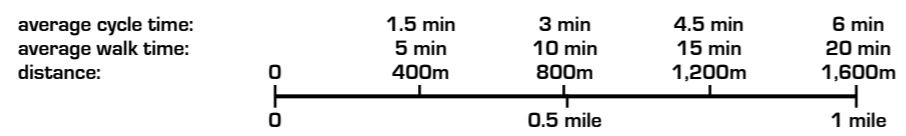


Choose from three alternative routes.

**Route A** starts in Oakhurst and follows the old railway path onto the Western Flyer, which takes you into town.

**Route B** cuts through the heart of Haydon Wick, taking you from Asda Walmart through quiet streets to the town centre.

**Route C** cuts across Seven Fields and the cemetery to join the quiet streets into the town centre. All routes emerge at Station Road.



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**Route A:** ~ Average walk time along this route 80 - 100 mins

**Route B:** ~ Average walk time along this route 60 - 80 mins

**Route C:** ~ Average walk time along this route 60 - 80 mins

"I've made some good friends and discovered some lovely green areas in Swindon"

"Our lunchtime walking group is great. It makes me get up from my desk to stretch my legs, and I feel so much better after some fresh air"



"I can't walk far, but I love walking with a group, and we get together over a cup of tea afterwards"

"I feel so much fitter since joining the Heath Walk that I've taken up Zumba as well!"

"I walk to work because I can!"



"Footpaths get me away from exhaust fumes"

"I can afford to treat myself because I'm not filling the car up every other week"



# You'll Never

# Walk Alone



Joining a **walking group** is an ideal way to explore your local area, and can help motivate you to walk further more often. You'll meet new people, you won't get lost, and you may be surprised at the distances you can cover when you're walking and chatting.

Find a local walking group (see opposite) or why not set up your own group with friends or work colleagues?

## STEP OUT SWINDON

Step out Swindon provides free, safe and friendly group walks lasting 40 – 50 mins, followed by socialising and refreshments. The groups are led by trained volunteers, who'll encourage you to walk at a comfortable pace, but fairly briskly for health. The walks shouldn't make you too breathless (you should still be able to hold a conversation) but you'll be encouraged to:

- Breathe a little faster
- Feel somewhat warmer
- Increase your heart rate

The walks, also include Gentle Walking groups, which walk at a slower pace for up to 20 minutes and offer additional seated exercise sessions.

## WILTSHIRE RAMBLERS

Wiltshire Ramblers currently total some 1,300 members within 5 groups. Our groups work towards the charitable aims of Ramblers in different ways, all organising programmes of led walks within Wiltshire and its neighbouring counties.



The local group offers a variety of weekend and evening walks from 3 miles to 15 miles. The first three walks are free, and then you're encouraged to join the Ramblers. Visit [www.wiltsswindonramblers.org.uk](http://www.wiltsswindonramblers.org.uk)

These fitness instructor-led groups are suitable for people who want to improve their fitness. Moderate fitness levels needed.

## HIGHWORTH AND SWINDON WALKING CLUB

The Highworth and Swindon Walking Club is a friendly group whose members enjoy walking in the countryside. The walks are typically 5 to 12 miles with gradients to suit all abilities. Short walks may include an optional pub lunch whilst one Sunday each month we visit the Brecon Beacons. The club has walking weekends away each year, exploring different parts of the country as well as social events.

The Club is an independent organisation affiliated to The Ramblers; Membership is £5.00/year. See <https://highworthswindonwalking.com/> or their Facebook page for more details.

## 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 spring 2022, but we advise you check on the website or contact the organiser before turning up.

If you require any further information then please email Grahame Lee, Scheme Co-ordinator on 07932 109209 or <https://beta.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.



# Friends, Romans, Swindonians!



Groundwell Ridge is an archaeological site described by English Heritage as 'one of the most important Roman finds in England' and is sited amongst the housing estates of St Andrews Ridge.

In 1997, a digger clattered into a buried wall, and experts were intrigued by Swindon's mysterious Roman complex. But following excavations in 2004, English Heritage revealed that the enigmatic site was once a magnificent, luxurious villa.

They uncovered well-preserved remains of a spacious Turkish bath-like complex after a seven-week dig at Groundwell Ridge. Experts said the elaborate Roman baths and heating system, dating back nearly 1,900 years, exceeded their highest expectations.

The excavation area comprises about 20 per cent of the villa which was occupied by wealthy, powerful Romans over 250-300 years of the early second century.

Nowadays, the historic find is buried once again, but the site remains reserved as a green open space for residents to enjoy.



## 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.

### 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](http://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.

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.

**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.

# These routes are made for walking!

Step out and spot the wildlife for yourself...

Why not walk to a local green space?

Tadpole Lane

Mouldon Hill

Seven Fields

Stratton St Margaret

Greenmeadow & Rodbourne

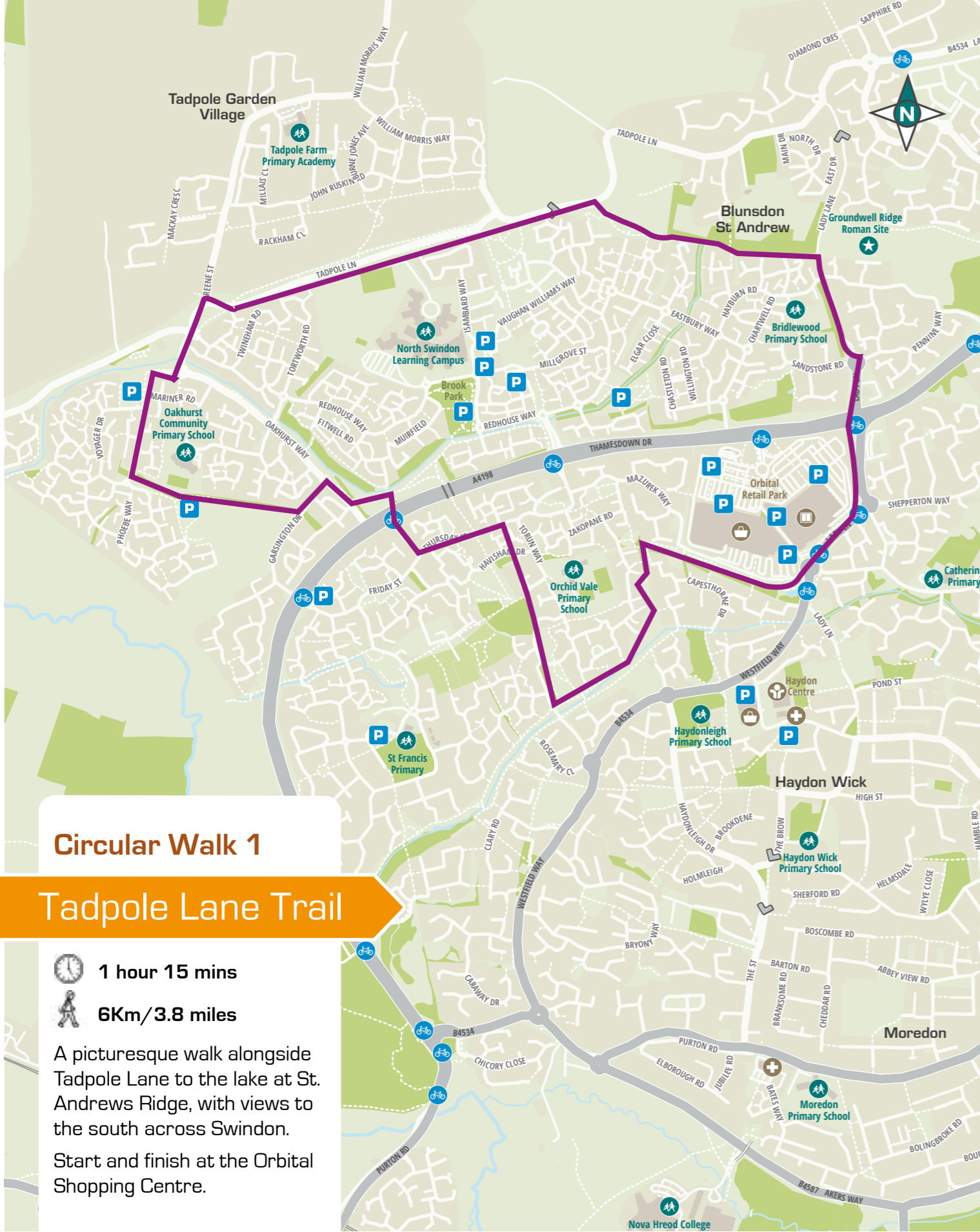
Highworth

Blunsdon

Our handy 'pull-out & keep' route maps are all short walks and feature hidden gems that you can't see from the road >>

Discover some easy circular walks in North Swindon



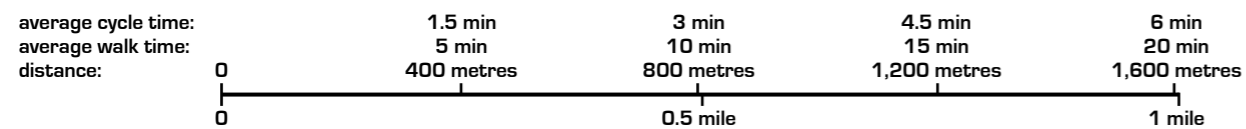


### Circular Walk 1

## Tadpole Lane Trail

1 hour 15 mins  
 6Km/3.8 miles

A picturesque walk alongside Tadpole Lane to the lake at St. Andrews Ridge, with views to the south across Swindon. Start and finish at the Orbital Shopping Centre.



Base map © Open StreetMap

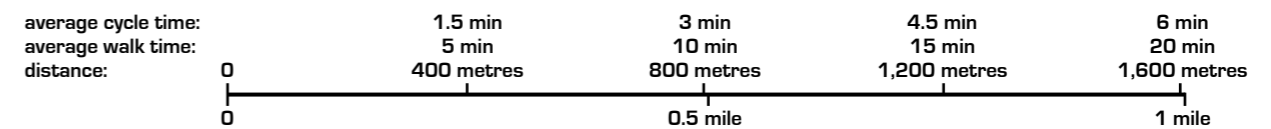


### Circular Walk 2

## Mouldon Hill

1 hour 10 mins  
 5.6Km /3.5 miles

This scenic walk follows a green trail alongside Haydon Brook and around the lake at Mouldon Hill. Sturdy footwear advised as the path around the lake may be damp in wet weather. Start and finish at the Haydon Centre.



Base map © Open StreetMap









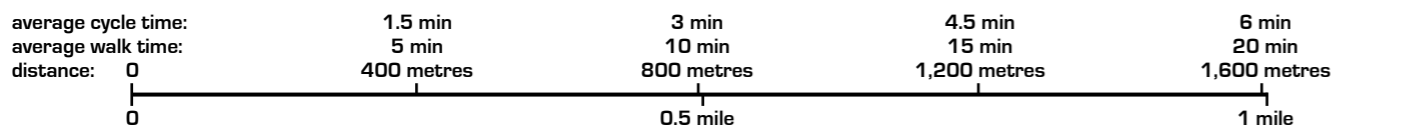
### Circular Walk 5

## Tadpole Round

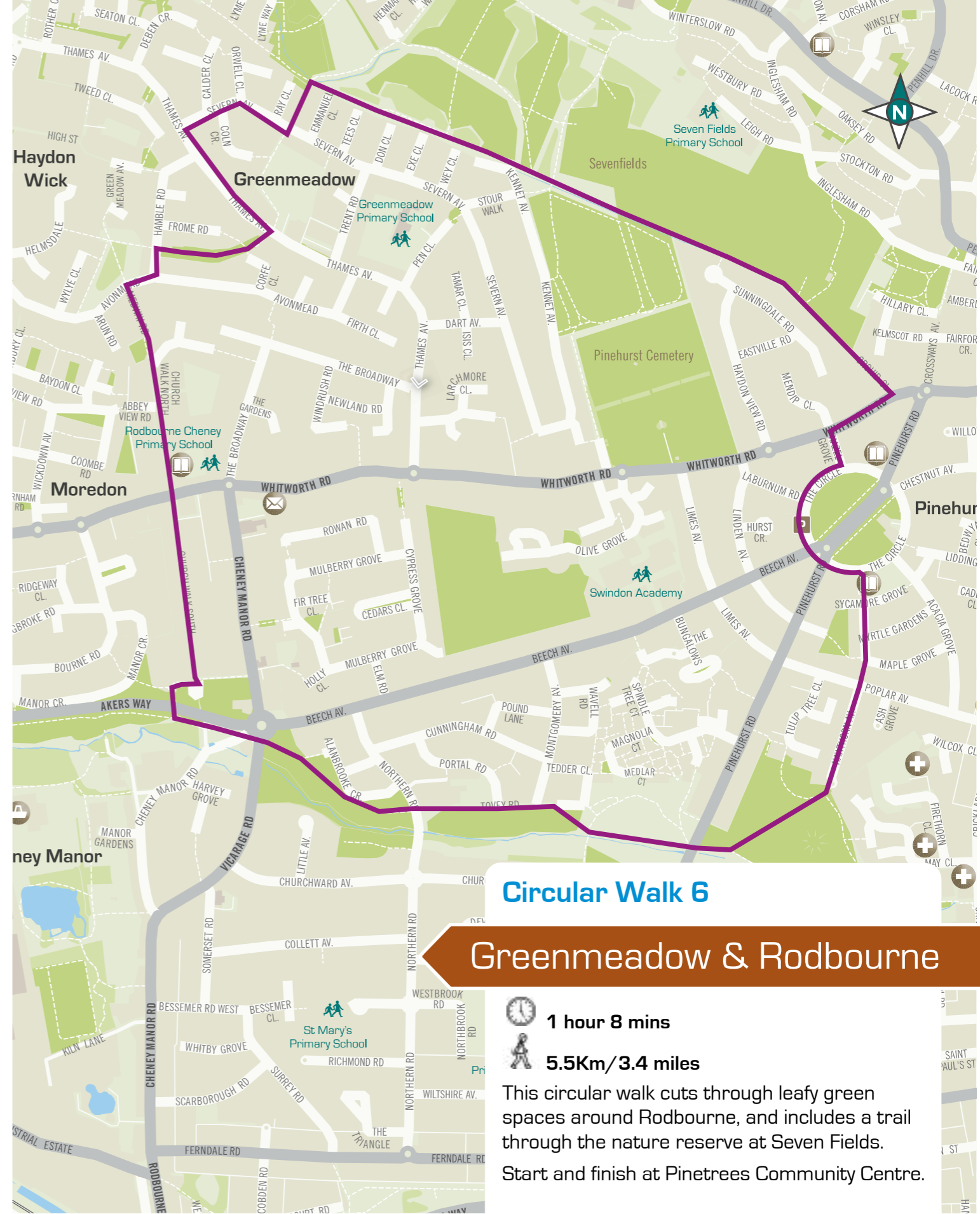
1 hour 45 mins

9km / 5.6 miles

A circular route around north Swindon. Mainly using off-road cycle tracks. Take care between William Morris primary school and Blunsdon Hill where there's no pavement. Please walk on the verge.



Base map © Open StreetMap



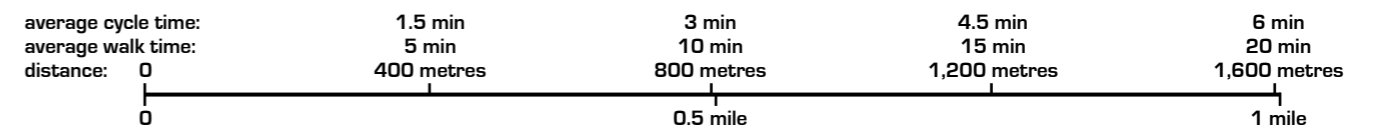
### Circular Walk 6

## Greenmeadow & Rodbourne

1 hour 8 mins

5.5Km/3.4 miles

This circular walk cuts through leafy green spaces around Rodbourne, and includes a trail through the nature reserve at Seven Fields. Start and finish at Pinetrees Community Centre.



Base map © Open StreetMap

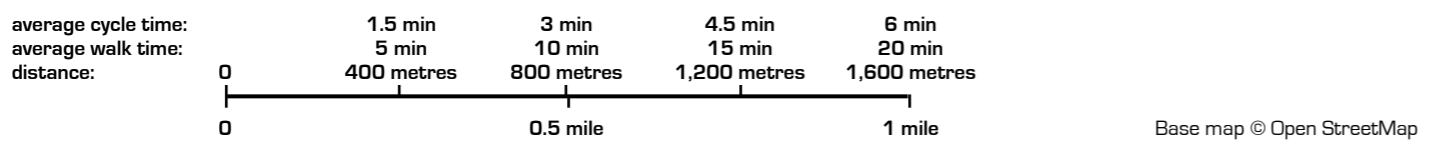




**Circular Walk 7**  
**Haydon Wick Circuit**

**2 hours 25 mins**  
**11.8Km/7.3 miles**

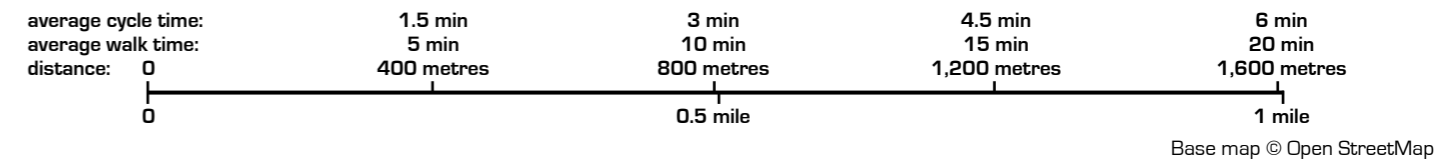
A circular route around north west Swindon mainly using off-road cycle tracks.



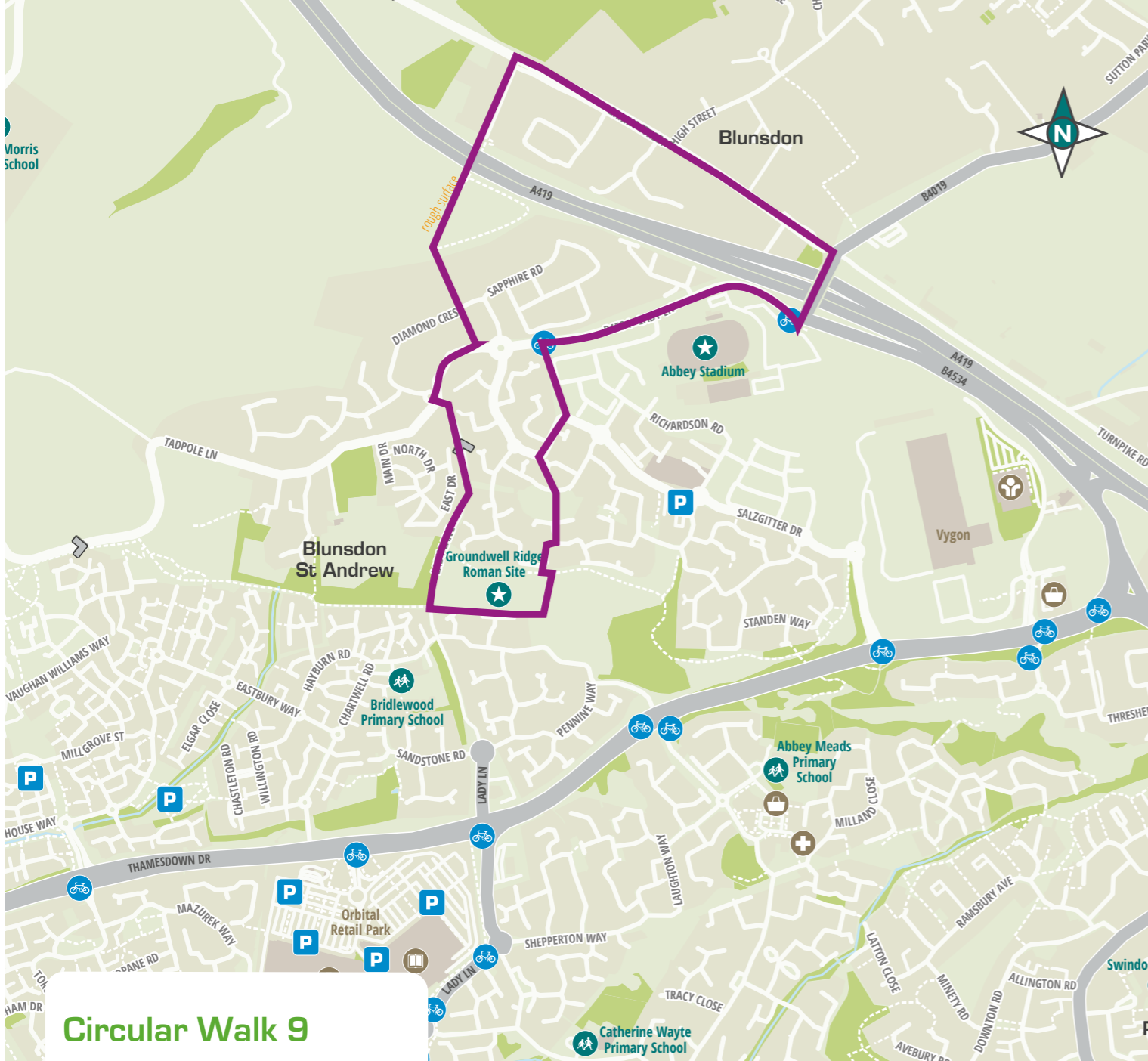
**Circular Walk 8**  
**Exploring Kingsdown Lane**

**1 hour 50 mins**  
**8.5 Km/5.3 miles**

A circular walk that explores the greenery on Blunsdon's doorstep. Start on Turnpike Road or Stanton Park if you need to park.





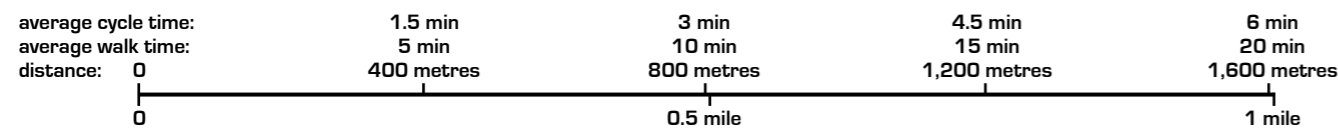


**Circular Walk 9**

**Around Abbey Farm**

**45 mins**  
**3.8Km/2.4 miles**

A circular walk from Abbey Farm that takes in the edge of Blunsdon and the hills of St Andrews Ridge.



Base map © Open StreetMap

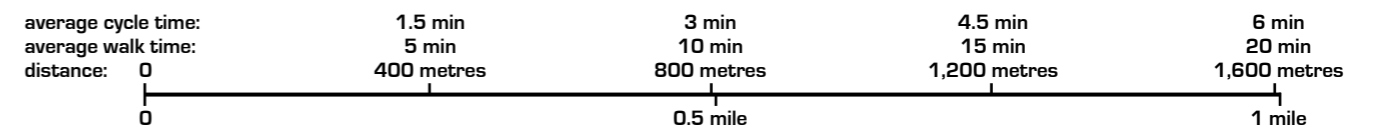


**Circular Walk 10**

**Priors Vale loop**

**45 mins**  
**3.7 Km/2.3 miles**

A circular walk around the paths and green spaces north of Thamesdown Drive.



Base map © Open StreetMap



Find each of these creatures and plants when you go walking in North Swindon!

# Will you take the Wildlife Challenge?

There's a wide variety of wildlife to be found in and around the green spaces of North Swindon. Can you spot any of these? **On foot of course!**

**Common Bluebell**  
(*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)



Find these violet-blue flowers in the spring. The tubular-shaped flowers have a distinctive sweet scent and carpet the ground in woodland areas.

**Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*)



An adaptable mammal and member of the dog family, the red fox lives in small family groups and can make a variety of habitats its home. Foxes are opportunistic omnivores and will eat whatever they can, from small mammals and birds and fruit. They have excellent night-time vision, making them ideal after dark predators.

**Dragonfly**  
(Anisoptera)



Look out for these amazing aerodynamic insects around wetland areas, like the lakes at Mouldon Hill and St Andrews Ridge. Its two sets of wings help it fly backwards or suddenly change direction, and it can hover for up to a minute.

**Kingfisher** (*Alcedo atthis*)

A small, bright blue/orange bird, it can be seen perching at the side of slow-moving water, or as a 'blue smudge' as it flies quickly across water.



**Marbled White Butterfly**  
(*Melanargia galathea*)

Spot this black and white butterfly perched amongst long grassland between June and August, as it gathers nectar from flowerheads.



The distinctive black & white wings will often be easier to see in the morning as the weather warms up and it opens its wings to absorb the sunshine.

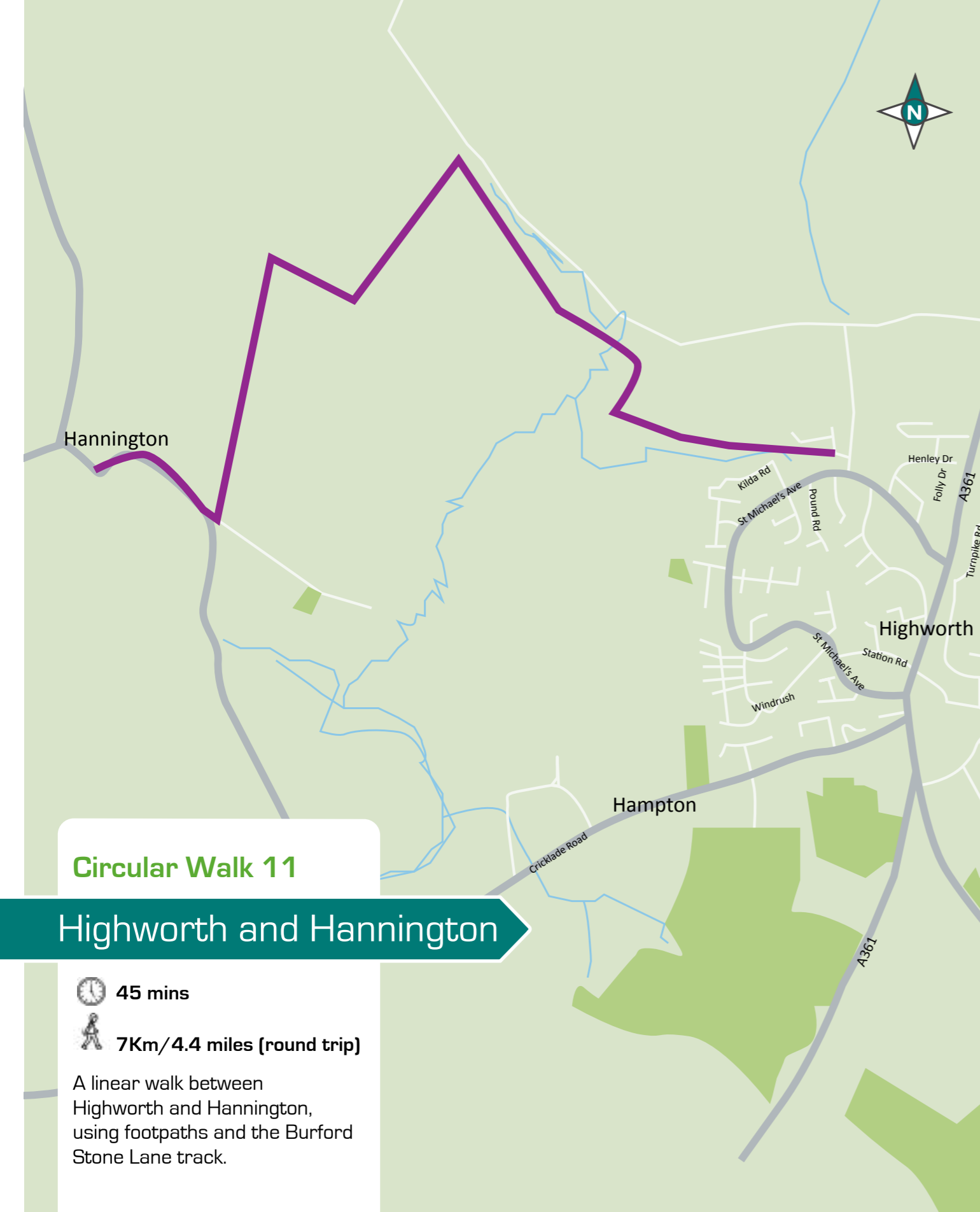
**Roe Deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*)



These deer are native to Britain and tend to live in woodland areas, grazing on open grasslands in larger numbers. Their coats are reddish-brown in summer, changing to pale brown, grey or black in winter. It's usually easier to spot them at dawn and at dusk, as they become more active.

**Buzzard** (*Buteo buteo*)

Look for the broad, rounded wings and short neck and tail of this bird as it soars over wooded areas in fine weather. As it glides, its wings make a shallow 'V' shape and its tail is fanned. It's the most widespread bird of prey in the UK, but is often mistaken for an eagle, which is larger. Listen for its call, especially in spring-time - it sounds like a mewing cat!



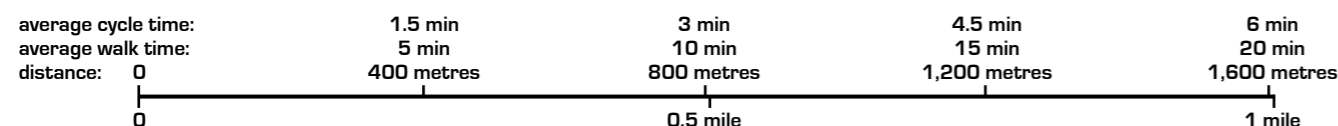
## Circular Walk 11

### Highworth and Hannington

45 mins

7Km/4.4 miles (round trip)

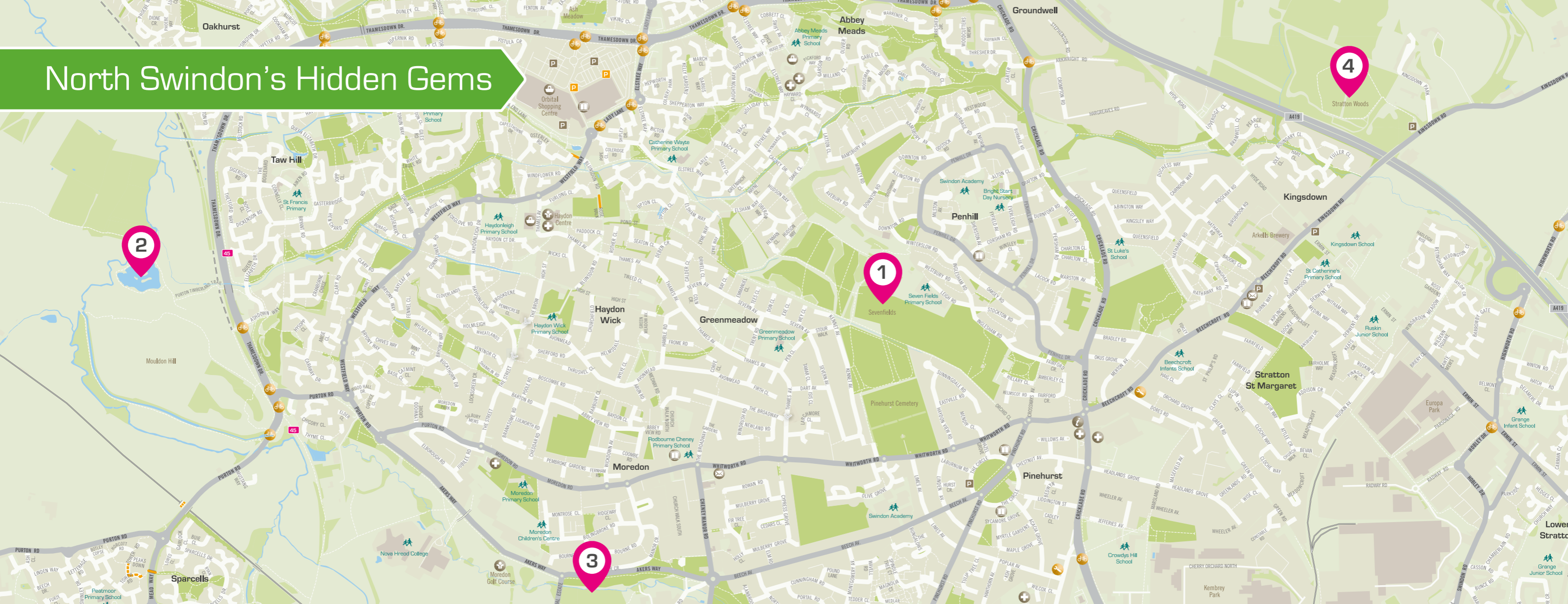
A linear walk between Highworth and Hannington, using footpaths and the Burford Stone Lane track.



Base map © Open StreetMap



# North Swindon's Hidden Gems



## 1 Seven Fields

Situated in a valley surrounded by the communities of Penhill, Greenmeadow, Haydon Wick, and Abbey Meads, Seven Fields is a country park, which includes playing fields, tennis courts, cricket covers, bowling green and the small, more formal Penhill Park, as well as a copse and woodland. It is well used for walking, cycling and the quiet enjoyment of nature.



Seven Fields is rich in wildlife and has some of the best wildflower meadows in Wiltshire, with ancient hedgerows, stream and a magnificent Wild Service Tree and Penhill Copse (ancient woodland). It received a Local Nature Reserve Designation in 1995.

### Did you know?

In the 1970s, Dutch Elm hit Seven Fields; all bar a few of the Elms died and were felled. The wood was sent to a local saw mill, who tried to mill the wood, but they were unable to do so as the wood was peppered by gun cartridges left over from the army practising by shooting at trees. It had rendered the wood useless, but they had lived for over another 30 years full of the metal!

## 2 Mouldon Hill

Mouldon Hill Country Park lies to the West of Thamesdown Drive near Taw Hill. It is a country park named after the small hill within it that rises from the River Ray and peaks at 105 metres above sea level.

The park has a number of paths and walkways, together with a hidden lake. A section of the Wilts & Berks Canal flows through the park and has been restored by the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. The River Ray also passes through the park, and is home to many species of fish and wildlife.



The Swindon and Cricklade Railway, a nearby tourist attraction & heritage line, plans to construct a new railway station within the park as part of their southern extension towards Swindon. It will be named Mouldon Hill

### Did you know?

In 1996 The Birchgrove Group sponsored the planting of 1200 trees to create a living and lasting tribute to the lives of people with haemophilia who were infected with HIV.

## 3 Moredon Tree Collection

The Moredon Tree Collection is located between Akers Way and Cheney Manor industrial estate. Up until the 1970's, the area was a plant nursery owned by Swindon



Corporation. It is now part of the Great Western Community Forest, which is undertaking the creation of the new woodlands.

Just south of the tree collection is Plum's Pit (old clay diggings, now a lake); popular with fishermen, which has a circular path around it.

The paths are generally good although boots would be recommended in wet weather, as there are some grassed areas to negotiate.

## 4 Stratton Wood

Stratton Wood is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. This large and vibrant young woodland provides visitors with a range of habitats to explore, including wildflower meadows, seasonal ponds and areas of mature trees. It was planted as part of the Great Western Community Project and includes a good network of paths.

Here you will find mixed native broadleaf woodland including oak, ash, field maple, goat willow and hazel, shrubs, hedgerows and two traditionally managed wildflower meadows.

The wildflower meadows are home to skylarks and other ground-nesting birds, as well as a host of bees, butterflies and moths. Other wildlife to look out for include roe deer, badgers, amphibians and bats.

The paths are generally good although some of the routes are unsurfaced and may be narrow and muddy in places.



# Have feet, will travel



## ...and save money too!

If you only live a couple of miles from work, you can kick-start your day just by walking to work.

Once you've planned your route and know where you're going, you can start enjoying the benefits of striding to work, like knowing how long your journey will take you every morning!

Distance	Average time to walk	Average calories burned*	Equivalent to
1 mile	20 mins	85	A banana
2 miles	40 mins	170	Cadbury crème egg
3 miles	60 mins	255	Half a jacket potato and cheese!

Look at [www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk](http://www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk) to plan your journey to work



## Apart from saving money on petrol, walking can mean...

- Avoiding the traffic queues
- Never having to worry about hikes in parking charges or those elusive parking spaces
- Stretching your legs and eyes after hours at that VDU
- Getting to know your local area
- Clearing your head so you arrive home feeling much more relaxed
- Spotting sales and offers in local shops
- Picking up a few groceries / your dry cleaning / those photos on your way home
- Having a chance to chat to colleagues or neighbours
- An easy way to burn calories and tone up
- Saving money on gym fees

### Claire lives in Haydon End and walks to her workplace in the town centre once a week:

"I use the hour's walk to listen to audiobooks and podcasts as I walk. It's a lovely way of getting some "me time" and I feel much more energised and ready to face the day when I arrive."

### Keith lives in Penhill and gave up driving to Kembrey Park every day:

"I was getting fed up of the queuing traffic down Cricklade Road every day and decided to see how long it would take to walk it instead. I was really surprised at how pleasant and easy it was to find a nice route through, and now enjoy the regular exercise it gives me, as well as the cash I'm saving in petrol!"



# Live Well Swindon Hub

The purpose of the Live Well Swindon Hub is to provide a point of contact for anything related to improving a person's health and wellbeing. For example, this could be about:

- being more active
- managing weight
- managing long term health condition
- stopping smoking
- healthy eating
- connecting to community life

The team's main work involves handling referrals and giving people access to opportunities and services which can help improve their health and wellbeing. We take referrals from health and social care practitioners for a range of healthy lifestyle programmes. We also take self-referrals from people seeking information and assistance with general wellbeing. When talking to people or processing referrals, our team looks at the complete needs of the person, considers their starting point and what they

are looking to achieve. This helps us make sure we match people to the right service or opportunity. We will answer any questions about referrals, and you can talk to us about the services available through the Community Health and Wellbeing Team.

We also have good knowledge of opportunities available across Swindon, so we can put you in touch or signpost as appropriate.

**Email:**  
[livewell@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@swindon.gov.uk)  
**Phone:** 01793 465513

Fancy burning 30% more calories when you walk? Find out more on page 23





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](mailto:stars@swindon.gov.uk) or visit [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk)



Helena from Pinehurst: "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 Nichols from Oakhurst: "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!

You don't need expensive gear or special walking boots for everyday walking. The great thing about walking for exercise is that you can just wear your usual clothes and comfortable shoes (unless you normally wear really high heels!).

## What to wear

**Breathable clothes**, which are either loose-fitting or have a bit of 'stretch' tend to be more comfortable, and it's a good idea to wear layers, especially as your body temperature rises when you get walking. Most fabrics are fine, although jeans are more likely to stay damp and cold if they get wet. Tight-fitting denim can also cut in to you over longer distances.



A **waterproof jacket** with a hood is usually a must, and if you're out and about after dark, wearing light or bright colours, with reflective strips on a jacket or bag means you'll be visible.

Popping a **small bottle of water** into your bag will help to keep you hydrated in warmer weather, and it's worth remembering **sunscreen**, **sunglasses** or a **hat** too.



If you're planning to head 'off-road' and on to rural trails, you could consider wearing **walking shoes** or boots to give you more support.

An **extra pair of socks** will help to cushion your feet, but you may want to avoid breaking in a new pair of walking shoes if you're going for a longer walk!



## Walking with Poles

If you enjoy walking, but would like to try something new, why not try **NORDIC WALKING**?

Nordic walkers use two lightweight poles to harness movement in their arms and upper body. They put pressure on the poles as they move along, creating momentum and speed. And because Nordic Walking uses more energy than normal walking, it's a great way to increase your fitness.

Ann Jones recently joined a Nordic Walking group that walks in West Swindon:

"I love Nordic walking, it's great fun and something different. I feel so much fitter since I started, and I've found new walking trails around Shaw Ridge and Lydiard Park."

**Q: How did it start?**

Nordic walking started in Finland in the 1930's, when competitive skiers started training off-season on grass. Today it's become the fastest growing fitness activity in the world.

**Q: Can anyone do it?**

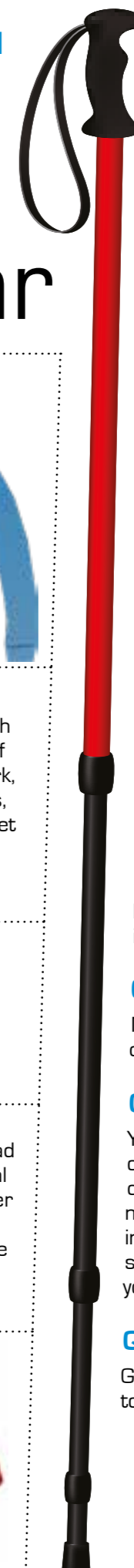
Nordic Walking is easy and most people can do it with a bit of practise.

**Q: What do I need?**

You need lightweight poles, usually made of aluminium or carbon fibre. The poles come in one-piece with wrist-straps, so you need to find the right length for you. Most instructors will usually offer a free taster session so you can have a go before buying your own.

**Q: How do I get started?**

Go to [www.nordicwalking.co.uk](http://www.nordicwalking.co.uk) to find a local instructor





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