

A slow walk to Wokingham Town

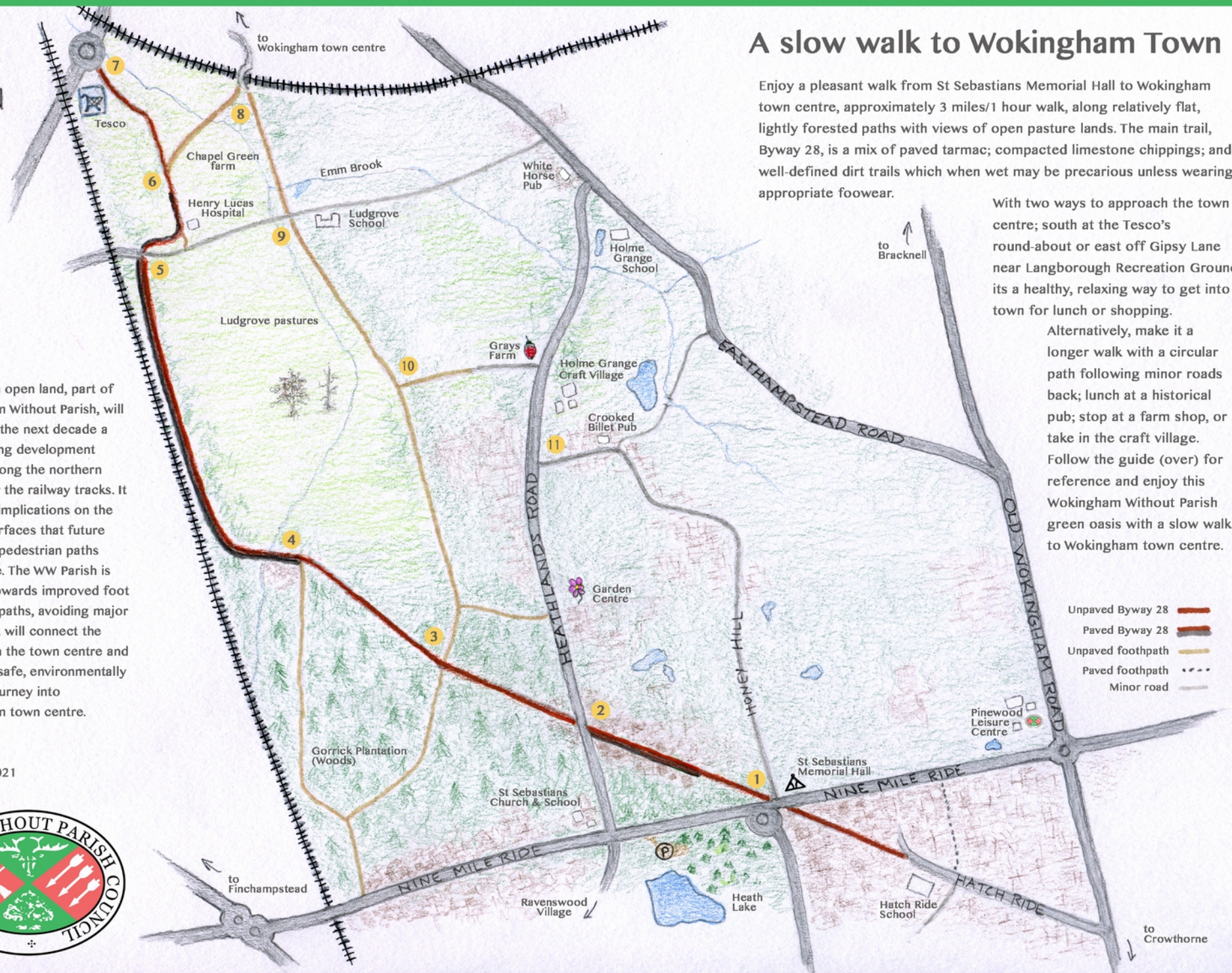
Enjoy a pleasant walk from St Sebastians Memorial Hall to Wokingham town centre, approximately 3 miles/1 hour walk, along relatively flat, lightly forested paths with views of open pasture lands. The main trail, Byway 28, is a mix of paved tarmac; compacted limestone chippings; and well-defined dirt trails which when wet may be precarious unless wearing appropriate footwear.

With two ways to approach the town centre; south at the Tesco's round-about or east off Gipsy Lane near Langborough Recreation Ground; it's a healthy, relaxing way to get into town for lunch or shopping.

Alternatively, make it a longer walk with a circular path following minor roads back; lunch at a historical pub; stop at a farm shop, or take in the craft village. Follow the guide (over) for reference and enjoy this Wokingham Without Parish green oasis with a slow walk to Wokingham town centre.

This green open land, part of Wokingham Without Parish, will have over the next decade a new housing development situated along the northern edge, near the railway tracks. It may have implications on the type of surfaces that future cycle and pedestrian paths could have. The WW Parish is working towards improved foot and cycle paths, avoiding major roads, that will connect the Parish with the town centre and provide a safe, environmentally friendly journey into Wokingham town centre.

WWPC
January 2021



- 1 The Byway 28 walk to Wokingham Town centre starts just beyond St Sebastians Memorial Hall on Nine Mile Ride, west of Honey Hill, before the roundabout of Nine Mile Ride and New Wokingham Road. The Hall was built by the Palmer family (Huntley & Palmer Biscuits) as a memorial to the estate workers and local community who fought in WW1. It was gifted to the parish in 1950 and is a 'for-hire' venue for leisure and cultural activities.



- 2 This first stretch of path was recently cleared and resurfaced with limestone chippings, it soon converts to a paved road to Heathlands Road. South along Heathlands Road is the 19th c St Sebastians Church and School, originally a Royal Keeper's lodge, part of Windsor Forest. Cross over Nine Mile Ride and visit Heath Lake, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the only acid lake in Berkshire providing a naturally high pH which supports several rare plants, including the water-millfoil and the six stemmed water crowfoot.



- 3 Back on Byway 28, cross Heathlands Road to join an unpaved section of the path, variable conditions underfoot if wet. The path runs along the edge of Gorricks Woods, an amalgam of managed conifer (Corsican and Scots Pine) plantation, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and significant areas of open habitat including heathlands. Byway 28 crosses with a minor footpath that leads up to Ludgrove School and could form part of a circular return path. (9 & 10)



- 4 The path continues along the woods, then opens up onto a minor paved road with a view out to the north across Ludgrove pastures. The road follows a long stretch of the railway tracks and is hedge lined with a variety of native hedgerow shrubs and flowers like Blackberry, Hawthorne, Honeysuckle and Dog rose.

- 5 The path ends with the gate onto Luckley Road, turn to the left to pass the school, bringing you out onto Finchampstead Road; turn right to go along the private road to Ludgrove School where a footpath marker will soon be on your left marking the trail north; or walk across Luckley Road to the minor road towards Lucas Hospital. The Hospital was built in 1633 as an Alms-house and was rumoured to have been designed by Sir Christopher Wren and has a beautiful walled garden.



- 6 Once past the Hospital, the path opens up on Chapel Green Farm and Equestrian centre. Here choose which direction into the Town centre - to head towards Gipsy Lane and Langborough Recreation Ground look for the wooden stile on your right with the trail marker arrow.



It is a few meters past the end of the parking area, leading off north into the tree line.

- 7 If you carry straight ahead, past the riding stables, the path takes a sharp left bend at some old out-buildings and carries on westward until it runs alongside the Tesco recycling area and out the gate onto Finchampstead Road at the Tesco roundabout. Follow the pavement north, past the BP station and under the railway bridge into the south end of the town centre.



- 8 To reach the east side of the town centre, taking the small dirt path of Byway28 as indicated above (6) is a better choice. Look for the marker on your right at the end of the Equestrian centre car park before the riding fields stretch out to your left. The dirt path, wood fence lined, disappears into the hedge row and tree line that hides the railway tracks to Bracknell. Follow the path to its end where you will find the footbridge over the railway tracks. On the other side follow the small road up to Gipsy Lane, bear left and shortly you will see Langborough Recreation field on your right. Follow the path along its side up to Murdoch Road and onto Howard Road which brings you out by the Denmark St car park.



- 9 To make this a circular walk, retrace your steps past the recreation ground to Gipsy Lane and the railway footbridge. Once over, bear left following the footpath marker for the Ludgrove path, the minor path indicated in beige on the map. This path takes you through a small section of dense foliage and out to a wildflower filled field lining the Emm Brook. Depending on the season, there is an array of native wildflowers to be found including various clovers, yarrow, scabius, thistles, and many more. The path crosses the road to Ludgrove School, a boarding school for boys.



- 10 If you walk east on Ludgrove Road it ends at Easthampstead Road, take a right and a few steps over is The White Horse pub if you're in need of refreshments. Otherwise cross over Ludgrove Road and through the gate to follow the path south around the side of the school following the brook as it meanders along the open fields of Ludgrove pasture on your right. The path is narrow in places with many tree roots and potentially wet so take care, this part of the path is unsuitable for cycles.



Follow the markers up a slight incline, bringing you out to walk along the side of Grays Farm, a PYO fruit and veg farm and shop.

- 11 Here keep following the path past the farm and alongside the Hunter Hill soft fruit tunnels to eventually rejoin ByWay 28 (3) and retrace your way back to the Memorial Hall. Another option is to follow the sign to the farm shop and take their access road back to Heathlands Road. Turn right and with care walk alongside the road to visit The Holme Grange Craft Village or walk on to Honey Hill and stop for a drink at The Crooked Billet pub. From there it's a 15 minute walk south to reach the Hall and Nine Mile Ride.

