

Introduction

The 'Wey Walk' was first proposed by Amery Hill Residents Association in 2015 to showcase Alton as being the Source to the River Wey. Working collaboratively, Alton & District Residents' Associations, Alton Town Council and East Hampshire District Council, officially launched the Wey Walk at the 2020 Alton Walking Festival.



The Wey Walk is circa 1.75 miles, starting at Alton Station. The walk joins the River Wey at King's Pond and traces its course through the town centre, crossing the High Street (with many cafes and food & drink outlets) and enters Flood Meadows from Tanhouse Lane. The Wey Walk concludes at the river's northern source, near the bottom of Brick Kiln Lane on the north west edge of Alton.

The headwater of the northern Wey is a 'winterbourne' chalk stream. There are fewer than 200 chalk streams in the world, most of which are in the UK. Thus the flow varies considerably with the seasons and rainfall. Regularly during the summer some parts do dry up - this is a natural process - the river fills again over the winter.

Alton Town Council hosts an annual Walking Festival throughout the month of May. If you would like to join a guided 'Wey Walk' walk or for more information on other local walks, please visit www.alton.gov.uk or Tel: (01420) 83986.

As a gateway to the South Downs National Park Alton boasts an extremely rich and diverse countryside with an extensive network of public footpaths enabling walkers to enjoy the great outdoors. The town is an accredited 'Walkers are Welcome' destination. For more information on walking in Alton, please visit www.walkalton.org.



Useful Information

Public Transport

Traveline: www.traveline.info

Tel: 0871 200 22 33

Stagecoach: www.stagecoachbus.com

Tel: 0345 121 0190

Local Walking Organisations

Alton Ramblers: www.altonramblers.org.uk

Walk Alton: www.walkalton.org.uk

Walking for Health: www.walkingforhealth.org.uk

The Wey Walk

The Wey Walk, the information lecterns and this leaflet were produced by Alton Town Council. For more information on The Wey Walk and further copies of this leaflet please contact:

Alton Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
GU34 1HD

Website: www.alton.gov.uk

Tel: 01420 83986

Thanks to the Amery Hill Residents Association, Alton & District Residents' Association, Dr June Chatfield and Jane Hurst for making the Wey Walk possible.

Cover painting courtesy of Pam Pell.

Photographs by kind permission of Ginny Boxall and Mid Hants Railway.

Disclaimer: All information was correct at time of print but may be subject to changes, please check for possible amendments to the route before embarking on the walk. Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this leaflet Alton Town Council cannot be held responsible for accident or loss resulting from the information in this leaflet.



Alton Town Council



Alton



*scenic walk through Alton
following the River Wey*

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Using local paths

Many rights of way cross private land and we ask you to bear this in mind by keeping to the path and being responsible when using them. There are four types, please check which path you are entitled to use (for example cyclists cannot use footpaths). Wheelchairs, pushchairs and dogs are allowed on all types of right of way. Any permissive paths or areas marked are not rights of way, but the landowner has given permission for the public to use them.

To ensure that the countryside and its visitors are protected be sure to:

- Be safe and take care when crossing roads
- Wear suitable clothing and shoes for the weather conditions
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Keep dogs under close control and on leads near livestock
- Take your litter home
- Consider other countryside users



Rights of Way

Public rights of way are paths and tracks which you can use to cross private land, it is a criminal offence to prevent the public exercising these rights. Driving a motorised vehicle on a public right of way without lawful consent is also a criminal offence.

Hampshire County Council Responsibilities:

- Ensure that rights of way are not obstructed
- Maintain the surface in a fit condition for its intended use
- Maintain most bridges
- Signposts and waymarkers
- Authorise stiles and gates
- Keep the definitive map up-to-date

For information on rights of way and how to use them, to report a problem or to view the definitive rights of way map please contact:

Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

Website: www.hants.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 555 1375



Landowners Responsibilities:

- Keep back the side growth and overhanging vegetation
- Reinststate paths across fields after ploughing or planting of crops
- Maintain most stiles and gates
- Should not obstruct paths or deter the use of them
- Should not plough paths at field edges
- Should not keep dangerous animals (including certain bulls) on paths



The Wey Walk Route Description (circa 1.75 miles)

The suggested walk start point is the Railway Station, Station Road, Alton GU34 2PZ (Grid Ref: SU 7227 3970).

Alton Station to King's Pond - The first leg of The Wey Walk

The station is the terminus for two railway lines; the main Alton Line which runs to London Waterloo and the Mid Hants Watercress Line Heritage Railway which runs to Alresford. Look out for the first Wey Walk information panel along the route detailing interesting things to look out for on this leg of the walk.

- Starting at the station ticket office, face the car park and turn left following the pavement.
- Exit the station car park onto Paper Mill Lane via the steps, to avoid the steps continue approx. 50m to the station car park main exit.
- Cross the road to the opposite side and turn left, following the pavement and passing Rock Cottage on your right and continue under the railway bridge.
- Follow the pavement until you reach the Golden Olympic Post Box which was painted to commemorate local equestrian Peter Charles, British gold medal winner at the London 2012 Summer Olympics.
- Turn right into Waterside Court, previously the site of a paper mill which closed in 1909. Follow the road through the Court to the T-junction taking a right, then walk a few paces and look for a narrow footpath on your left with the sign 'King's Pond'.
- Cross the road and follow the footpath, passing through the zig-zag barrier to arrive at King's Pond.

King's Pond to High Street - The second leg of The Wey Walk

King's Pond is a public open space owned by Alton Town Council, it supports a range of wildlife, birds and wildflowers. This is the site of the second Wey Walk lectern with interesting information on King's Pond and what to look out for on the second leg of the walk.

- The suggested route around the pond is to the right, however you can take either path as they both meet again at the far end of the pond near where the railway bridge crosses the road. This was the location of Orps Fulling Mill which lay across the river here however, the buildings were demolished when the railway line and embankment were constructed.
- Exit King's Pond turning right onto Lower Turk Street and follow the pavement under the railway bridge, on your right is a former brewery site. Harp Lager Brewery opened here in 1962, it then passed ownership to Bass who enlarged it and in 2002 it was taken over by Molson Coors. The Molson Coors Brewery eventually closed in May 2015, bringing an end to hundreds of years of brewing history in Alton.
- The River Wey flows through the former brewery site. When the area is redeveloped the Wey Walk will be able to follow along the riverbanks through the site. For now we continue along Lower Turk Street. The elegant white building positioned alongside the road adjacent to the former brewery site is Culverton House. Rebuilt around 1827, the house is grade II listed.
- At the end of the street there is a mini roundabout, turn right and cross the busy Drayman's Way with care using the central pedestrian island.
- Continue right following Drayman's Way down the slight hill until you reach Manor public car park entrance. Turn left into the car park and you will see the river resurface beside you on your left running parallel with Weyside Walk.
- Walk through Weyside Walk. On your left is the side lodging range of the former George Inn dating from 1501.

High Street to Flood Meadows – The third leg of The Wey Walk

Alton was settled by early Saxons who left a large cemetery nearby, remains of Roman dwellings have also been found in the area. Today Alton High Street is home to many independent shops, some well-known chains and a varied selection of pubs, cafes and eateries.

- Exit Weyside Walk onto the High Street where there is a panel in a planter with information about the third leg of The Wey Walk.
- Cross the High Street and turn right, enter Bakers Alley on your left adjacent to the Bakers Arms pub. (NB cyclists will need to dismount to negotiate both these alleys and the High Street crossing.)

- Follow to the end of Bakers Alley and continue straight on, noting the River Wey resurfacing again on your left next to The Bank public car park.
- Alton Community Centre is at the far end of the car park. The site has a long and varied history, starting out as Fielder's Brewery, then becoming Wey Iron Works, fire station, warehouse, Kerridge's car workshop, ARP (Air Raid Precautions) station and an underwear factory.
- After the Community Centre, turn right onto Amery Hill then left to enter Tanhouse Lane. As the name suggests Tanhouse Lane was used to access tanneries located beside the river. It also has links to the brutal murder of Sweet Fanny Adams in 1867.
- Continue the full length of Tanhouse Lane and use the footpath to enter Flood Meadows.

Flood Meadows – The fourth leg of The Wey Walk

Flood Meadows is a public open space owned by Alton Town Council and managed with the help of local volunteer group The Alton Society. Here is the next Wey Walk lectern with information about Flood Meadows and the fourth leg of the walk.

- The suggested route through Flood Meadows follows the lower footpath next to the river. The lower river path is quite uneven and unsuitable for bicycles. There is a more accessible alternate route along the tarmac footpath to the right of the river. Both paths lead you to 'Flood Meadows Gateway' where the next lectern is located.
- Wey Walk riverside route; take the lower river path on your left following the River Wey as it meanders through the old watercress beds and over several little footbridges until you re-join the tarmac path near the archway and bridge which form the 'Gateway to Flood Meadows.'

Alternative route; Follow the main tarmac path past the dipping platform on the left, up the slight slope to a crossroads of paths. Take the footpath to your left and go slightly downhill to re-join the riverside path by the 'Gateway to Flood Meadows.' (NB: cyclists please take care and use caution as there are often dogs and children in the area.)

Flood Meadows Gateway to the northern source of the River Wey – The fifth leg of the Wey Walk

The Flood Meadows Gateway was installed by Alton Town Council and the Amery Hill Residents Association in 2020. Here you will find the Wey Walk archway, wooden footbridge, carved animal sculptures and the fifth Wey Walk information lectern.

- Exit Flood Meadows by walking under the archway and crossing the footbridge over the river, heading towards the road. The footpath joins the road where Lenten Street merges with the Basingstoke Road, a cottage nearby was formerly an Alton Toll House.
- Turn right walking along the pavement towards the junction with the New Odiham Road. The area of grassland on your right is owned by the local water company.
- At the junction cross the New Odiham Road to join the pavement on the opposite side and enter the open space opposite with the River Wey on your right as indicated by the line of trees.



The Northern Source of the River Wey – the last leg of The Wey Walk

At the entrance to the open space known as Will Hall Meadow, you will find the last Wey Walk lectern with information about the River Wey and the local area. The northern source of the River Wey is located here.

- Follow the footpath through the open space exiting at the far end onto Brick Kiln Lane. Named after the brick kiln and cottages that were located about two-thirds of the way up the Lane.
- From Brick Kiln Lane, you have several options:
 - Re-trace the Wey Walk route back to the start point.
 - Follow Lenten Street towards the town centre and High Street where you can explore what shops, cafes, eateries and bars Alton has to offer. Then continue to the top of the High Street where you will find the Alton Assembly Rooms, The Cairn War Memorial and the Curtis Museum on your right. Continue along the pavement crossing the mini roundabout and passing Alton House Hotel until you reach Paper Mill Lane and the Station start point.
 - Join the 'Six Hills of Alton Walk', a 11-mile circular ramble around Alton. The route has magnificent views of the town and its surrounding countryside from each of the six hills surrounding Alton, one of which is Brick Kiln Lane Hill. For the full 'Six Hills of Alton Walk' visit www.alton.gov.uk or pick up a leaflet from Alton Town Council in the Market Square.

KEY

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Alton Train Station | 6 Town Hall, Market Square |
| 2 Curtis Museum | 7 Gateway to Flood Meadows |
| 3 Allen Gallery | 8 Will Hall Meadow |
| 4 St Lawrence Church | |
| 5 Fanny Adam's Grave | |