

WEST SWINDON WALKS: OLD TOWN & BACK

NO MAP CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

This is an out-and-back walk starting at the Link Centre with the Town Gardens in Old Town as the turn-around point. The total distance is approximately six miles or about two and a half hours at a leisurely pace, depending how long you would like to spend at the gardens perhaps including a rest at the cafe. The paths are either tarmac or hard-packed gravel. The section closest to the steps up to the Town Gardens is usually wet at any time of the year and can be muddy, so choose appropriate footwear with good grip.

At the back of the Link Centre, take the path around the South Western edge of Asda car park and cross the footbridge over the stream to the area used for car boot sales. Turn left on to the path parallel to the stream and use the pedestrian crossing to cross Ashington Way. Keep to the path until you reach Westlea Drive. Turn right onto Westlea Drive for a short distance then turn right on to an uphill path which takes you to the footbridge over Tewkesbury Way. At the other side of the bridge, follow the path uphill to Toothill Village Centre. At the centre, turn left and cross Dunwich Drive. Walk down the hill to the end of Dunwich Drive and cross Bodiam Drive where you will see the subway under Great Western Way. Walk under the subway and turn left on to the cycleway towards Mannington.

At the end of the cycleway, turn right on to Telford Way and then turn right again on to the minor road which passes under the railway line. Just past the railway bridge, turn left on to a gravel path which curves around and up to the disused railway line, now part of the National Cycle Network. Turn right and follow the line for about a mile and a half, crossing over the restored canal at Kingshill* en route, until you reach a stream alongside the path, just before the Westlecot Road bridge which passes over the line. This is the wettest or muddiest section of the route. There are fine views from here across the 'Front Garden' to the downs; enjoy it as countryside before it is built on! Carefully climb the steps on your right, cross Westlecot Road and you will see the Town Gardens to your left.

Depending on how much time you have, you could stroll around the gardens, have a seat in the sunshine (we hope) or enjoy a cup of tea at the cafe before returning to the Link Centre by the same route.

*At the canal, you could opt for one of two shorter routes by coming down off the railway and following the restored tow path to the end either to the right or the left, then retrace your steps to the Link Centre. The path to the left is the shortest, finishing at Kingshill, while the path on the right reaches almost to the M4.

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An A2 size version of the map is available from the West Swindon library.

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