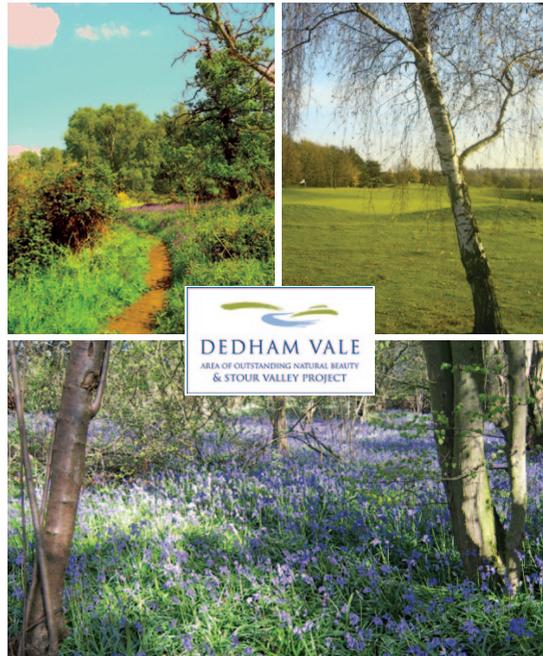
A scenic autumn path with vibrant foliage and a fence. The path is covered in fallen yellow leaves and leads through a lush green area with trees showing early autumn colors. A wire fence runs along the right side of the path, and a cluster of bright red berries is visible in the foreground on the right.

Walking in  
LEAVENHEATH

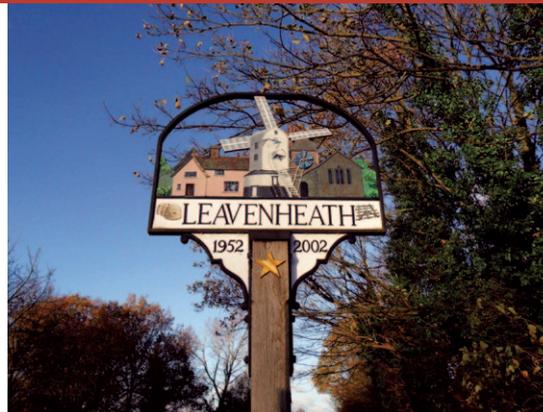
## DEDHAM VALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING BEAUTY

Enjoy the special beauty of Dedham Vale. The (AONB) Area of Outstanding Beauty (some 90 square kilometres) stretches from Manningtree to within 1 mile of Bures. Leavenheath includes two areas of the AONB – at Spouse’s Grove (part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest) and east and north east of Cock Street, including Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Golf and Spa and the beauty around Spring Farm.



For more information contact the Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project on 01394 445225 or email [dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk)

Leavenheath is largely a creation of the 19th and 20th centuries. 18th century maps show a large heath on the borders of Assington, Polstead, Nayland, Stoke by Nayland and Wissington called ‘Leaden Heath’ - earlier Leowine’s Heath or Levynhey (1292) - perhaps, originally, a hey or wood. The heath was enclosed in 1817, giving a landscape of straight roads and geometric land units. Leavenheath became a separate chapelry in 1863, a parish in 1868 and a civil parish in 1952.



### We would like to express our thanks to our principal funders:

The Dedham Vale AONB & Babergh District Council Section 106 Fund, and to all our collaborators, especially stile owners who have agreed to swop stiles for gates, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, The Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Golf & Spa, our volunteers, landowners, farmers, and Suffolk County Rights of Way Team, map designers, enthusiastic walkers and all contributors to this booklet

## INTRODUCTION

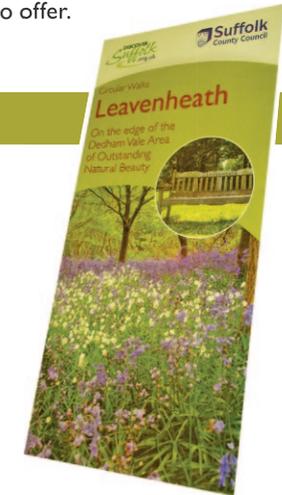
The recent purchase by Suffolk Wildlife Trust of 76 acres of land in west Leavenheath prompted collaboration in the formation of a circular walk. Leavenheath Parish Council then determined to form three more circular walks and a new map was developed with Suffolk County Council Rights of Way. Our objectives –

to promote more enjoyment and better health from our footpaths. This booklet, as a COMPANION FOR THE MAP, aims to encourage walking, through illustration and description of the variety of features that nature, agriculture, history and ecology have to offer.

### On these four walks:

- THE LANES AND LAKES - page 2
- ORCHARD WALK - page 4
- KINGSLAND WALK - page 8
- and WILDLIFE WALK - page 10

There are now no stiles. With the map and new signs, navigation is straight forward.



The map is available in digital form at: [leavenheath.onesuffolk.net/footpaths](http://leavenheath.onesuffolk.net/footpaths)

**The Benefits of Walking** – although high intensity workouts can torch calories, tone muscles and increase cardiovascular fitness, a slower pace offers many benefits. Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke by walking regularly, lowering levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol while increasing HDL (good) cholesterol. The Stroke Association says that a brisk 30-minute walk daily helps to prevent and control high blood pressure that causes strokes. Walking also strengthens bones and joints, reducing the chance of osteoporosis.

moderate-paced ones), lost five times more body fat than those who simply strolled at a moderate speed five days a week. Heading into the great outdoors boosts vitamin D, whilst the feel-good endorphins released relieve anxiety and stress.

University of Virginia researchers found that women who took three shorter, fast-paced walks a week (plus two longer,

The British Journal of Sports Medicine found that those engaged in outdoor walking groups saw significant improvements in blood pressure, resting heart rate, body fat, BMI percentages, and lung function. Whatever your age or fitness level, walking is a guaranteed way to up your physical activity and improve your fitness... for free!



## LANES AND LAKES

**Harrow Street** – this area was the main part of Leavenheath until the development around High Road and its estates. The village hall was sited at the junction of Old Road and Broad Oaks. The adjacent blocks of council housing were the first substantial building to take place on the Street before the construction of the estates, Broadoaks, The Ridings and Oaklands in the seventies. As you walk down Harrow street, before you reach the turn off for the footpath, you can still see some of the original buildings that have remained on what was a country lane.



As you approach Keeper's Lane you are beginning part of the walk that embraces the family-owned Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Golf Club and Spa which includes two championship courses, which are regularly used for international events. The Gainsborough Course crosses Keeper's Lane and then remains on your right until you eventually head back up to Harrow Street.



The Golf Club and Hotel are committed to minimising carbon footprint and long term ecological and environmental goals and has recently won environmental awards. Over the years, over 40,000 trees have been planted. Proactive woodland management has produced mixed deciduous woodland. Grass cuttings are composted for use on site and computerized irrigation systems make best use of water. There is minimal

use of fertilisers and chemicals. Bird population includes breeding pairs of nightingales, skylarks and linnets. Bittern and osprey have been recorded. There are sightings of otter and water vole. Next to the Gainsborough men's 17th tee, wetland encourages frogs and toads. Stag beetle piles are constructed. Low growing and semi-rough grass areas are managed to allow wild flower growth.



## LANES AND LAKES

**Hostel Site History** – north of Plough Lane just west of Dalton's Farm are Stoke by Nayland Hotel's Country Lodges, completed in 2012. In the 1940s, this site held a hostel for the Women's Land Army, housing 70 Land Girls who worked from dawn to dusk each day, milking cows, digging ditches, sowing seeds and harvesting crops. The site was purchased from the War Agricultural Department in 1950 by the Peake family and used



as a school for Organic Husbandry in collaboration with Soil Association founder, Lady Eve Balfour. The Peakes then adapted it to house turkeys, pigs and chickens. The original Water Tower from the Land Army Hostel has been restored and enjoys pride of place in the middle of the lodges site. It contains an exhibition of the WLA history and windows have been added at the top of the tower for panoramic views.

**Lakes and Woods** – the walk is soon passing behind a green and returning to the north east across a small bridge over water feeding the lakes. The large lakes (known as the Carrs) are coarse-fished for carp, tench, roach, rudd and bream, and attract many birds including grebe, grey lag and Canada geese, tufted ducks, coots, moorhens, herons and kingfishers. Then into woods above the lakes.

**St Matthew's Church** – the church was consecrated in 1836 as a chapel of ease to Stoke by Nayland. The first priest was Revd. Harold Curry who lived in the house behind the church now known as The Old Vicarage. By 1880 the growing congregation resulted in an extension that included bell tower, south aisle, prayer chapel, vestry and chancel.

In recent times the Victorian brick of the west front and tiled Chancel floor have been restored. Stained glass now fills the lancet window, lit at night, while seasonal banners and decorative hassock add colour to the interior.

The Church houses the Village War Memorials with white wooden named crosses for those killed in WWI and brass plate for WWII.



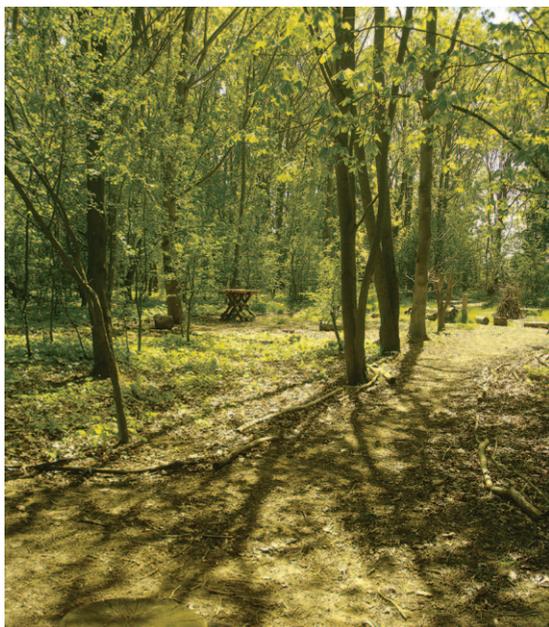


## ORCHARD WALK

To Edies Lane/Maple Way



**Royston Wood** – just west of the A134 is a 0.6 hectare community woodland, owned by Babergh District Council and managed by the Leavenheath, Polstead and Stoke by Nayland Community Woodlands. Rescued from poor condition in 2008, it supports surprisingly diverse ecology, and the central glade is used regularly by local groups.



**Plough Lane** – the Plough Inn used to stand on the A134/Plough Lane corner until the early 20th century. Whittingham's map of 1793 shows the west end of Plough Lane was part of 'Leaden Heath'. East of the Cock Street junction, it was a road leading via Bull (the old name for the area around Dalton's Farm) to Stoke Hough (now the the cross roads near to Stoke Priory).



## ORCHARD WALK

To Spring Farm/Cock Street Track – from the Golf Course, the walk crosses Cock Street and reaches the farm and a very picturesque lake with a majestic oak to one side, and in to woods. Through new gates, the walk takes you to the bottom of a track that leads back up to Cock Street, with Nayland Hall to the left and Little Nayland Hall and Nayland Hall Farm and Barn to the right. On reaching Cock Street, the walk takes you to the left along a permissive path around the Honey Tye orchard.



**Orchard Farming** – Boxford Suffolk Farms, who recently won Top Fruit Grower of the Year award, grow over 40 different varieties of apples with a balance of new modern, and old traditional, orchards, an important component of our local environment. In supplying 'traditional' and unusual English varieties to supermarkets, the farm sometimes has to pick and grade the apples directly into the tray in the orchard, to supply the quality required.



New orchards are progressive and innovative using new technology and growing techniques, such as hail nets and fertigation, to reduce damage and maximise life and yield of the trees. Included in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to protect old Orchards is one which was transplanted in 1948 with trees already 12 years old, including Cox's Orange Pippin, Laxton Superb, Egremont Russet, Discovery, Crispin, Spartan and James Grieve (an Essex variety).

**Honey Hall** – next to The Lion, this medieval hall house (2 and 3-storey) - timbered, sand plastered with tiled roof - was begun in the late 14th century, and is Grade 2\* listed. A floor and fireplaces were inserted in the hall in the 16th and 17th centuries. The upper floor west front projects over curved brackets. There are old leaded casements and the remains of panel pargetting.







## KINGSLAND WALK

**High Road – The Village Green** was formed in 1985 as part of major residential development north of the High Road. On the way to Edies Lane, just past Wright’s Way, notice two glorious cherry trees – these are mature examples of the local variety Polstead Black.



**Edies Lane and Spinney** – in lower Edies Lane (west side), see Stonicott, a circa early 17th century Grade II timber framed building, with plastered incised lines replicating ashlar masonry, and a thatched roof. Then through the narrow path to the spinney. West of the path is an ancient field hedge containing 12 different species- oak, ash, holly, elder, ivy, blackberry, cherry, hazel, field maple, blackthorn, dog rose & hawthorn. The spinney is a private shelter for wildlife like fox, rabbit, roe deer, muntjac and badger. As you leave, crossing the bridge, pause and take in the wonderful expanse of sky – some Spring and Autumn sunrises and sunsets are particularly spectacular!



**Farming** – Leavenheath farming is mainly medium-sized and multi-cropped – typically rotating crops in relation to tight markets e.g. growing a mixture of bread-making wheat, peas and oilseed rape. Although recently crops have been good and food is plentiful, markets are tight, and careful crop selection is essential to success. With the interest of wildlife in the crops eg. pigeons like peas, rooks raiding the seeds, bird scaring devices will be seen and heard. There has been a significant decline in the number of small farms, leading to a shortage in the supply of manure. Farmers apply major self-restraint in the use of pesticides and insecticides and, more widely, make important contributions to care of the countryside. Let’s keep to the well marked paths.



## KINGSLAND WALK

**Breach Grove** – (listed in the English Nature inventory of Ancient Woodland) - includes mainly medium aged oaks, planted approximately hundred years ago. It also contains hazel, holly, elder and cherry. Flora include bluebells and foxgloves.

**Kingsland Lane** – a restricted byway, with rich ecology - originally the key route from ‘Leaden Heath’ to Wiston.

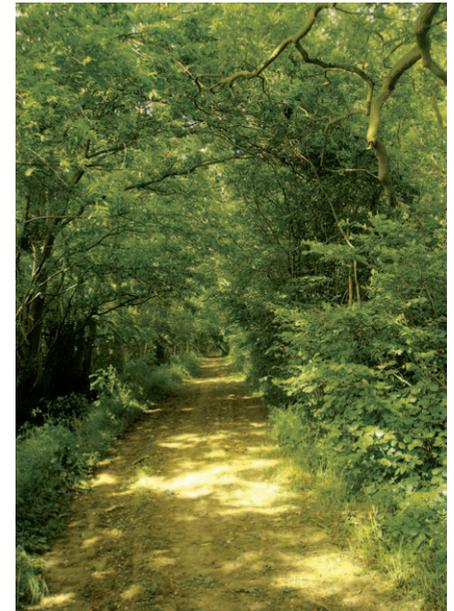
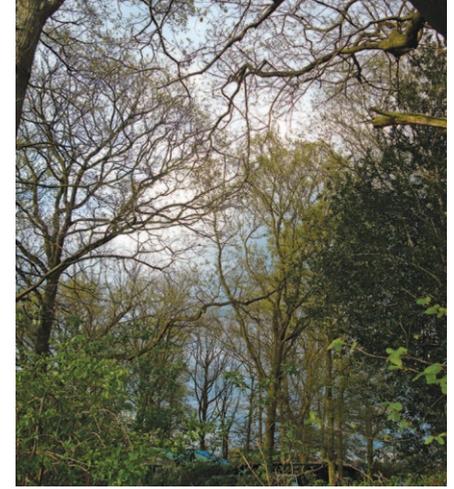


Species in the lane include soft shield fern, wood sedge, wood millet, wood spurge, bluebells, broom, dog’s mercury, honeysuckle, clematis, spindle, aspen, small-leaved lime, field rose, betony, common cow-wheat, violets, wood dock and woundwort.

The variety along this very old lane provides opportunity for enjoyment in identification of the species.

Beyond the west boundary hedge is Kingsland Field, and beyond that Peck’s Piece (see p.10) - both Suffolk Wildlife Trust land.

As the walk turns east back to Edie’s Lane, look for the carpet of yellow in the summer.



## WILDLIFE WALK

**Locks Lane** – the line of the lane is seen on 18th century mapping extending from the west edge of 'Leaden Heath'. The lane terminates in a track that leads to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve.



### **Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT)**

**Nature Reserve** – this walk includes the large SWT Nature Reserve devoted to linking up habitats to benefit dormouse and other vulnerable species - including Peck's Piece, Hullback's Grove, Spouse's Grove and, recently added, Ford's Heath.

Peck's Piece, is enclosed by fabulous old hedges alive with wildlife, including dormice. SWT let nature take the lead once again, allowing woodland to regrow naturally, seeded by the hedges and ancient woodland. Over the coming decades, the succession of habitats from open ground to grassland, scrub and woodland will be a changing landscape, attracting wildlife at every stage. In the south-east corner, a fenced area is planted with young ash trees, as part of exploration of resistance to Ash die-back.

Beyond the raised reservoir, close to which nightingale can be heard in Spring,

Hullback's Grove has developed from an arable field to a new woodland, grown naturally from seeds blown from the surrounding trees. It is dominated by ash, with dog-rose, birch, hawthorn, field maple and oak beginning to establish. Comma, meadow brown, orange tip and other meadow butterflies feed in the wide rides through Hullback's Grove.

The edges of the ancient woodlands support speckled wood and green-veined white. They will spread into the new woodland as it matures. As the wood develops, it will link the ancient woodlands of Arger Fen and Spouse's Grove to create a more secure future for one of the reserve's most elusive residents, the dormouse.



## WILDLIFE WALK

**Spouse's Grove** – is ancient woodland. With Arger Fen, it is part of a Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, named after sisters Edith and Frances Vale who purchased the reserve for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

It is best in Spring for bluebells, red campion, greater stitchwort and wild garlic, synonymous with ancient woodland. The scarce yellow necked mouse and even rarer dormouse live here.



**Ford's Heath** – on Ford's Heath the Trust aims to create something akin to the 'furzey commons', a lost landscape typical of the Leavenheath area several hundreds of years ago.

enable a grassy commons landscape to develop. The rough commons of south Suffolk have gone forever, but here nature can restore much-needed untidiness into the countryside. Gedding Hall in Leavenheath was the property of Edmund de Geddyng in 1327.

The plan is to help nature take the lead, helped by some eventual light grazing, to



**VOLUNTEERING** – there are interesting opportunities for volunteers with Suffolk Wildlife (Wednesdays).

If you would enjoy helping out with light maintenance of our circular walks (contact Richard Cowell 01206 262773)

- Starting point Village Green -

SEE MAP ON BACK

### To Nayland

(see: [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/walking-guides/](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/walking-guides/)): Walk to and down Edies lane / cross the public footpath to the A134 / turn right and take the public footpath east past the old Methodist Church / cross the orchard, field, and turn left at the track / at Cock Street turn right and bear left at Thompson's Farm / just past Beacham's Farm turn right following the Stour Valley path down to Nayland via Gravel Hill / turn right and then left into the High Street / cross the river by the Anchor Pub, and then take steps right, pass the weir, and skirt the river to the A134 / turn right and cross to Bear Street / take the footpath left up to and past the cemetery / follow the path ahead, past Townland Barn, on to woodland, a field and then, at the entrance to Spring Farm copse, turn left alongside a small stream to Little Nayland Hall / return across the field and orchards to Edies Lane and the Village Green.

### To High Fen

Walk to and down the full length of Kingsland Lane, turn right along the road and straight ahead along the track (Dead Lane) until you reach a road/ turn right and take

the next public footpath on the right, skirting the south boundary of Arger Fen / beyond Hullback's Grove, the path meets another public footpath / turn left and walk behind and beyond the raised reservoir, continuing up to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust access gate at the end of Locks Lane / just beyond the gate turn right along the public footpath that leads back to Kingsland Lane and then left back to High Road.

### To Assington

Walk north west along High Road and take the public footpath on the left just beyond Gedding Hall, continuing down to and passing Assington Mill / climb the hill and turn right at the top and walk to the Assington - Bures Road / turn left along the road and soon left again along the quiet road that leads towards Arger Fen / beyond Moors Farm, just before the first wooded area on the left, turn left down a track into Spouse's Grove, bear left and follow the public footpath out of Spouse's Grove, across decking and when reaching the field bear right and continue up the public footpath with Leavenheath Farm to your right - this path leads to High Road / turn right to return to the Green.

## WALKING GROUPS

The following groups walk in the Village during the year:

Leavenheath Women's Institute  
Stepping out in Suffolk health Walks  
Sudbury U3A walking group

[www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk)  
[www.livewellsuffolk.org.uk/healthwalks](http://www.livewellsuffolk.org.uk/healthwalks)  
[www.sudburyu3a.com](http://www.sudburyu3a.com) - GROUPS

### Ramblers

Sudbury Branch  
Colchester Branch  
Bury St Edmunds Branch

[www.sudburyramblers.org.uk](http://www.sudburyramblers.org.uk)  
[www.colchester-ramblers.co.uk](http://www.colchester-ramblers.co.uk)  
[www.burystedmundsramblers.org.uk](http://www.burystedmundsramblers.org.uk)

## BURIED TREASURE (eg. Geocache)

Geocaching is a brilliant outdoor activity and fun for all the family. The basic idea is that individuals and organisations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these on the internet. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. In its simplest form a cache is a logbook in which you can record your name and when you found it. It may contain information about nearby attractions or details of other caches. Some include items to swap, but please remember if you take something from the cache it is only right to leave something in its place for the next visitor to find.

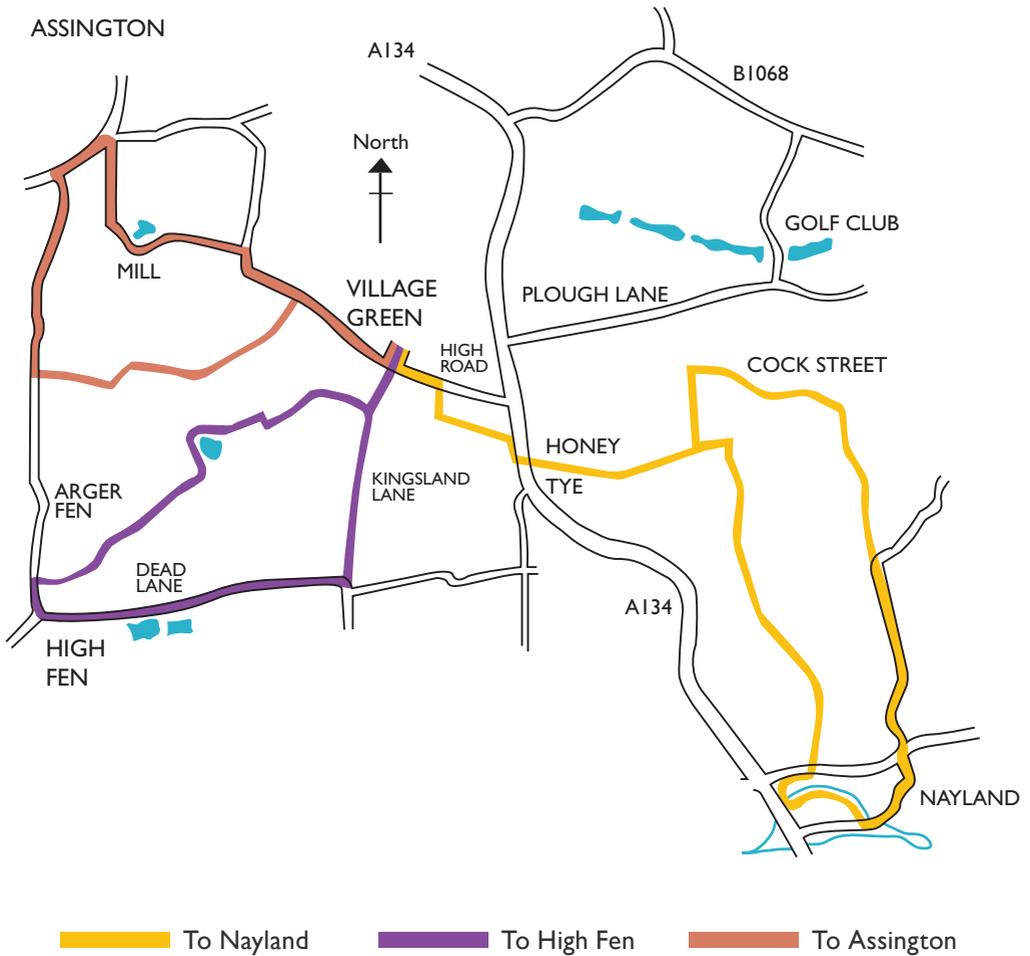
All you need is a GPS and an internet connection. You can download an app to your mobile phone for free by visiting [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), which provides a live treasure map and the locations of the hidden caches. Without GPS, if you just like maps

and compasses you can still join in the fun by noting the co-ordinates and going old school! There are numerous caches in our surrounding area, so what are you waiting for? Get outdoors into our beautiful countryside and join in the world's largest treasure hunt.

Happy caching!



# CIRCULAR WALKS BEYOND THE VILLAGE



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