

Stondon.net

Walk One

This circular eight kilometre walk (five miles) covers the northern/western footpaths in Stondon and also strays into Meppershall and Shillington. It will take just over two hours. The start point is the village sign by the mini-roundabout on Station Road. Distances are given in metres ('m') but these are approximate and so just substitute "yards" for "metres" if you prefer to stick to the Imperial System! When 'off road' please remain on signed footpaths – do not stray onto farmland, shut farm gates, and if you take dogs you must keep them under control!

And now for the directions to enable you to complete the walk. For info, at a slow pace it takes about 15-20 minutes to walk 1000m.

1. Initially stroll up Hillside Road in a north westerly direction past the school and village hall. For safety reasons keep to the left on the pavement. After progressing for 350m (just beyond The Pastures) take the signed footpath to the right just behind the new houses. Following this level grassy footpath for 1,400m brings you to the A600 (Bedford Road) with the Greyhound Stadium on your right. (At this point if you're already 'knackered', or just 'plain' thirsty, then I suggest you turn right for the Bird in Hand . Such temptation - a foaming pint of ale or a long cool G&T is only 350m away!)
2. If you resisted, turn to the left along the rough verge of Bedford Road for 250 metres, turning left again by a footpath sign. At first this path, with a ditch on the right, is quite overgrown but after a short distance the left hand side opens out to arable land. However the path is narrow and uneven so walk with care. When you reach a hedge (600m), go straight ahead through a hedge onto a track (you're now in Meppershall!) for a further 700m. This brings you to the first difficult aspect – finding the way through Chapel Farm. When you see on your left the opening to the farm buildings (signposted), go through and then almost immediately turn left again to go back on yourself (signposted) to cross a stile into a field that usually contains a few horses. Cross this field in the direction of the sign (south-easterly for 200m) to cross another stile through a few metres of woodland over a bridge to reach another stile. Then cross two more fields, with a stile between these, in the direction of the sign (southerly for 500m) to come back to Hillside Road by the bend - in fact it's now become Meppershall Road. (If you turn left here you can stroll down the road to the start/finish point so halving the distance for the walk.) Keep an eye open for a car down in the ditch – a not infrequent occurrence at this bend! Turn right and walk towards the water tower (300m) – just how many more aerals can they fit on the top! (By the way you're back in Stondon).
3. Just before the tower, turn left into the signed footpath. At this point you must fervently hope for two things - the fields ahead have not been recently ploughed and the ground is not wet because I ground is very heavy!
The generally downhill path continues southerly, and then becoming south westerly, for 1900m: it is quite well signposted except that navigating your way around Chibley Farm to reach Shillington Road can be troublesome. There are also several fences to cross and these can pose problems for the less able and for dogs. Note the vagueness - this specific part of the route does seem to be subject to frequent changes and signpost removal but it was correct at the time of writing .
Basically keep the farmhouse/equestrian centre at a distance to your left.
4. On reaching the Shillington Road, turn left and the start/finish point is only a 1700m stroll ahead. Obviously walking along the road itself is potentially hazardous: always walk facing approaching traffic as you then have maximum opportunity to observe and so react to any dangerous situation brought about by idiotic drivers.

Thanks to Alan Holbourn for describing this walk.

Walk One Map (courtesy of Ordnance Survey)

