



Green Link Walk

Section 1 of 4 Epping Forest to Lea Bridge

Section start:	Epping Forest (St Peter-in-the-Forest)
Travel to start:	St Peter's Church bus stop in Woodford New Road (see page 12)
Section finish:	Lee Valley Ice Centre (bus stop W)
Travel from finish:	Lea Bridge station and/or bus (see page 12)
Section distance:	4.5 miles

Introduction

The waymarking for this section was incomplete when we researched this guidance. There were significant gaps and no signs at some key junctions. There are plans to make significant improvements.

The signed route is step free and surfaced throughout so it is accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs. (The guidance in the [Go Jauntly app](#) is particularly helpful to anyone following the accessible route.)

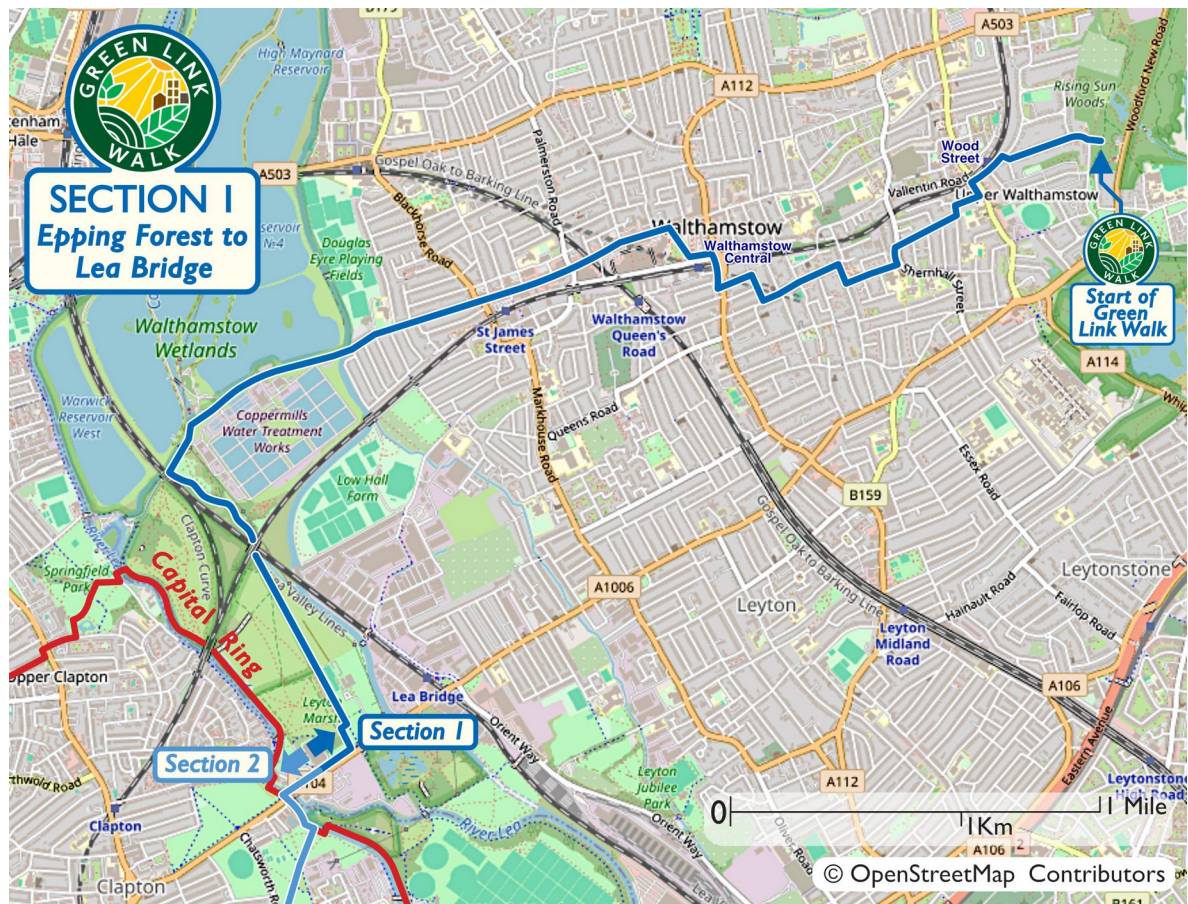
The route passes close to many places of interest that are highlighted on our maps and listed with brief details and internet links on pages 3 and 4.

Our walk guidance includes an alternative route and diversions to explore places of interest on the route. These suggestions do not always meet full wheelability standards.

There are opportunities to stop for refreshments. WCs that are open to the public are shown on our maps.

Updates: before setting off on this walk, please check with the Green Link Walk page on the [Inner London Ramblers web-site](#) to make sure that there are no obstacles that might affect your ability to complete the section as described. If you come across a problem on the walk, [please let us know by email](#).

Overview map of section I



Points of interest

[Epping Forest](#) is at least 8,000 years old and 4,270 of its 5,900 acres are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There are 55,000 protected 'ancient trees' of over 200 years of age – no other woodland in the British Isles has so many.

[St Peter-in-the-Forest](#) church stands beside the start of the route. This is a Grade II listed building and was built in 1840. It was doubled in size during 1887 and the interior rebuilt in the 1930s. It suffered a fire in 1975 and another in 1993 but was restored in 2020. Bluebells brighten the churchyard in spring.

[Gods Own Junkyard](#) is one of the worlds few manufacturers of genuine neon signs. It has a worldwide reputation and its stunningly colourful interior is open to the public. It has its own café: the 'Rolling Scones'.

[Walthamstow Village](#) has a long history. It is an attractive part of Orford Road, featuring 19th century shopfronts. There are places to eat, drink and shop.

[The Waltham Forest Museum](#) is called the Vestry House Museum because of the house it occupies. The house was built in 1730 as the parish workhouse, later becoming a police station and then a private house. It became a museum in 1931. The museum contains a car built locally in 1892 – it is almost certainly the first built in the UK. The museum is currently closed for renovation but will reopen in 2026.

[The Ancient House](#) was probably built in 1435 and is the oldest in Greater London. (Later along its route, the Green Link Walk also passes close to one of London's very few Tudor houses and very close to the oldest house in the City of London.) Between the Ancient House and St Mary's Church is an early [Penfold Pillar letter box](#).

[St Mary's Church](#) is Grade II* listed and has foundations dating from the early 12th century. Most of the current building dates from the 16th century although the interior was partly rebuilt in the 18th. An extension was opened in 2023 and it contains a small local history museum.

[Walthamstow High Street](#) boasts a flourishing street market which is the longest in Europe.

[Coppermill Lane](#) features many murals. The link takes you to an interview with the artist of the bird murals and contains links to articles about many other Walthamstow murals.

[Coppermills Water Treatment Works](#) opened in 1969 and replaced an 1860s plant which is now largely nature reserves which the Green Link Walk passes close to.

[The Coppermill](#) was already a corn milling site at the time of the Domesday Book. It subsequently processed gunpowder, paper, leather and linseed oil. In 1806 it was purchased by the British Copper Company to manufacture copper tokens. The mill was sold to the East London Water Company in 1859 and they rebuilt it in 1864 to house a steam pumping engine. In 2017 it became part of the Walthamstow Wetlands project and opened to the public. The top floor viewing platform provides superb views and there is a lift for wheelchair use only.

[The Walthamstow Wetlands](#) have been reservoirs since the 1860s. Whilst still serving as reservoirs they have been open to the public since 2017 as Europe's largest urban wetland nature reserve and feature a spectacular array of wildlife.

[Waterworks Nature Reserve and the Middlesex Filter Beds](#): south of the Walthamstow Wetlands the path follows the straight course of the former aqueduct that took water from the reservoirs to the treatment plant at Lea Bridge between 1852 and 1969. The former treatment works is now the Waterworks Nature Reserve and the Middlesex Filter Beds nature reserve which are both close to the Green Link Walk.

[The Lee Valley Ice Centre](#) features two Olympic sized rinks. This is a venue where Olympians train but it is also open to the public. It is home to an ice hockey club.

Walking directions

From Woodford New Road enter St Peter's Path to walk between the churchyard of St Peter-in-the-Forest church and the My Shish Restaurant. Walk along this path to the (unmarked) start of the walk in the woodland.

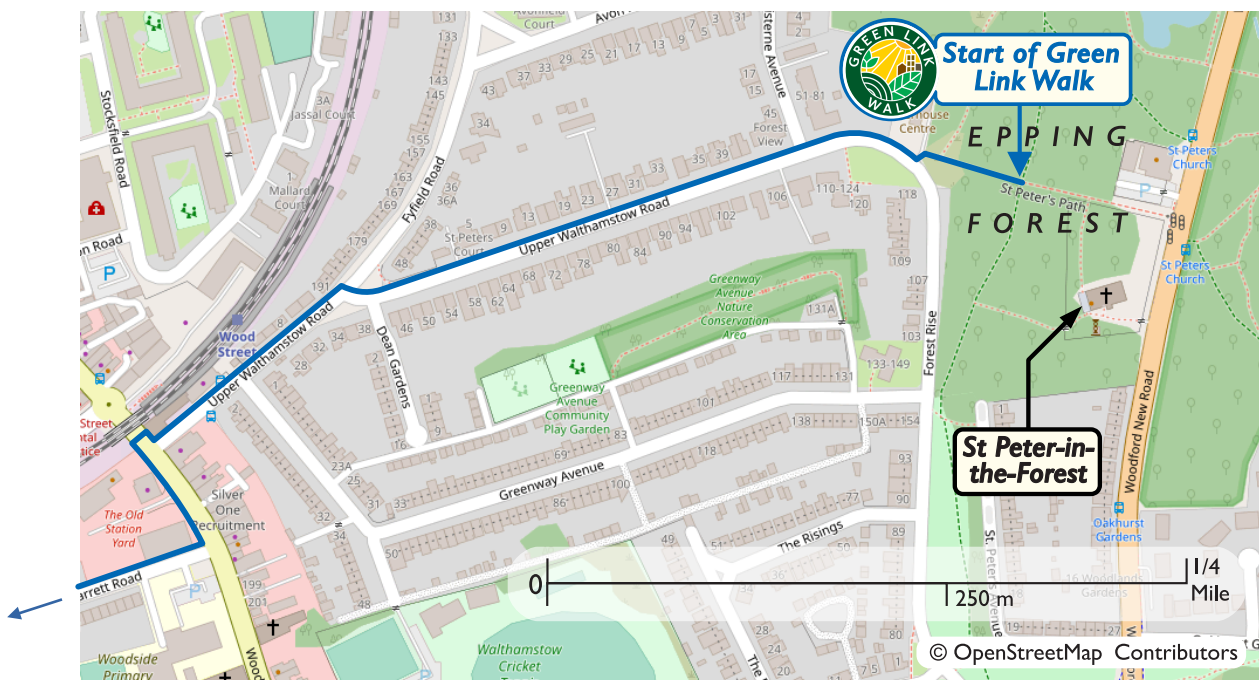
Keep on along the path to leave the woodland and join Forest Rise. Continue ahead on this road as it curves left to become Upper Walthamstow Road.

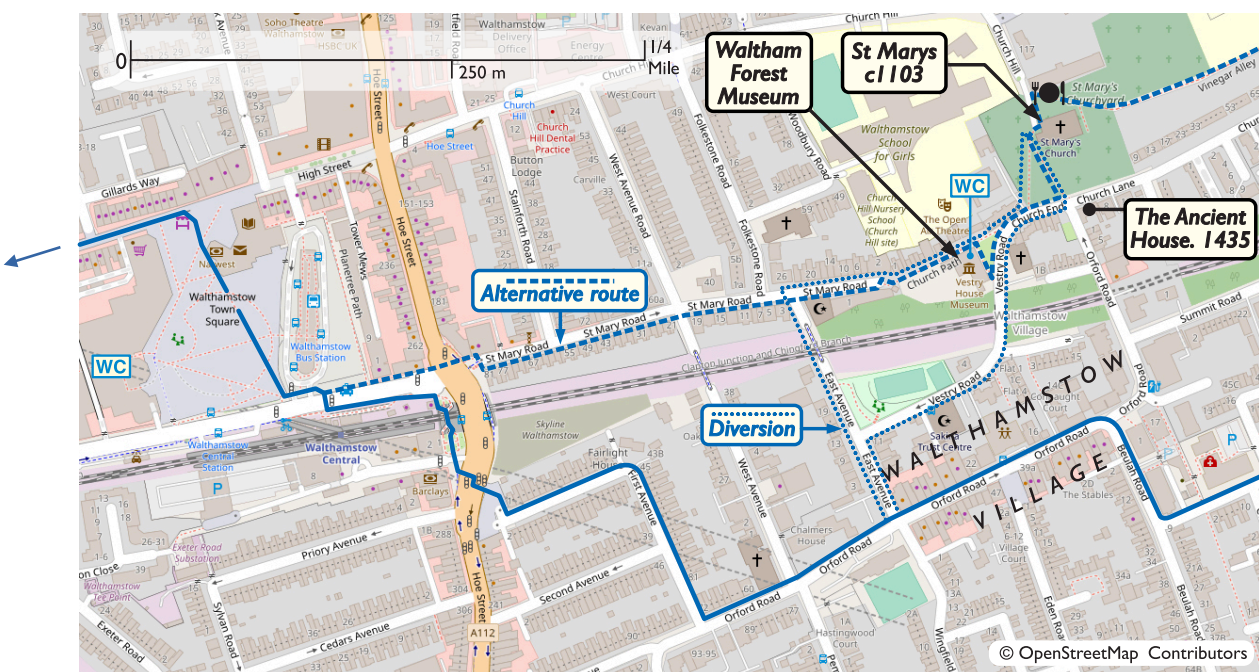
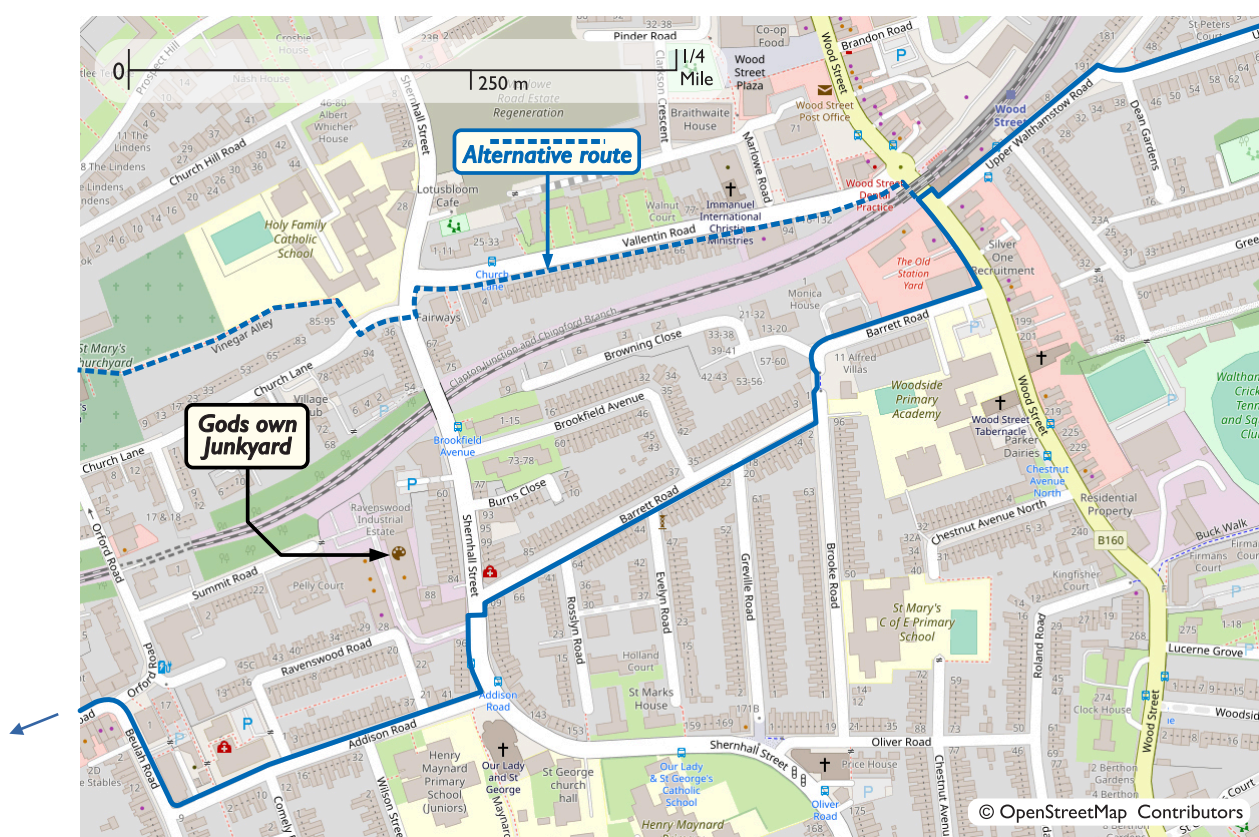
Walk straight down the Upper Walthamstow Road to cross the end of Fyfield Road and then turn left still on Upper Walthamstow Road. Use the pedestrian crossing to cross Wood Street at the T-junction by Wood Street station and then turn left. (Turn right here to start the alternative route to Walthamstow High Street described on pages 7 and 8.)

Walk along Wood Street to take the first right along Barrett Road. Curve left as you cross the end of Glenacre Gardens. Then walk through the bollards and then curve to the right, still on Barrett Road.

Continue straight along Barrett Road. At the end of this road, use the pedestrian crossing over Shernhall Street and then turn left. Take the first right along Addison Road in front of the church.

Walk the length of Addison Road. At the end turn right along Beulah Road. Then at the T-junction with brick planters, turn left along Orford Road. You pass a small pedestrianised square at the end of Eden Road.





Diversion to explore points of interest

Instead of the alternative route described below, this diversion allows you to explore local points of interest while still following the intermittently waymarked route which includes the attractive shops in Orford Road.

After the shops of 'Walthamstow Village' turn right off Orford Road into East Avenue and then take the first right, Vestry Road. Continue along Vestry Road as it curves left. You pass Waltham Forest's Museum. Vestry Road bends right to become Church End and shortly, London's oldest house is to the right. Opposite the Ancient House is a rare and very old Penfold Pillar letter box and next to it is the entrance to the churchyard.

After visiting St Mary's Church, take a fenced path starting through a gate by the tower to the corner of the churchyard. Turn right at the end keeping the Almshouses to your immediate right and continue straight ahead to enter Church Path, an alley. The alley leads into St Mary Road – follow this road to take the first left, East Avenue. At the end of East Avenue you regain the waymarked route by turning right back into Orford Road.

Keep straight on to take the third right along First Avenue just after the United Reformed Church. Follow First Avenue as it bends left to reach a pedestrian and cycle zone just before Hoe Street. Bear right to the light controlled crossing. Walk over both lanes of the main road and then turn right. Cross the railway bridge, then turn left down Selborne Road to the rail and bus stations.

Cross right to the bus station at the first set of lights beside the entrance to Walthamstow Central station, then turn left to walk over the exit roads from the bus station.

Alternative route from Wood Street station to the bus station

Some of this alternative route is off-road and greener as it runs through the extensive churchyard of St Mary's. This route takes you past several of the points of interest in this area.

Turn right under the railway bridge after crossing the road outside Wood Street station. Almost immediately turn left along Vallentin Road. Keep to the left side as you walk to the end of this road.

Turn left at the T-junction with Shernhall Street, then turn right over the pedestrian crossing. On the far side, turn right and then left into Church Lane. After about 20 metres, opposite the Catholic School and Sixth Form, cross the Lane to enter Vinegar Alley beside the school.

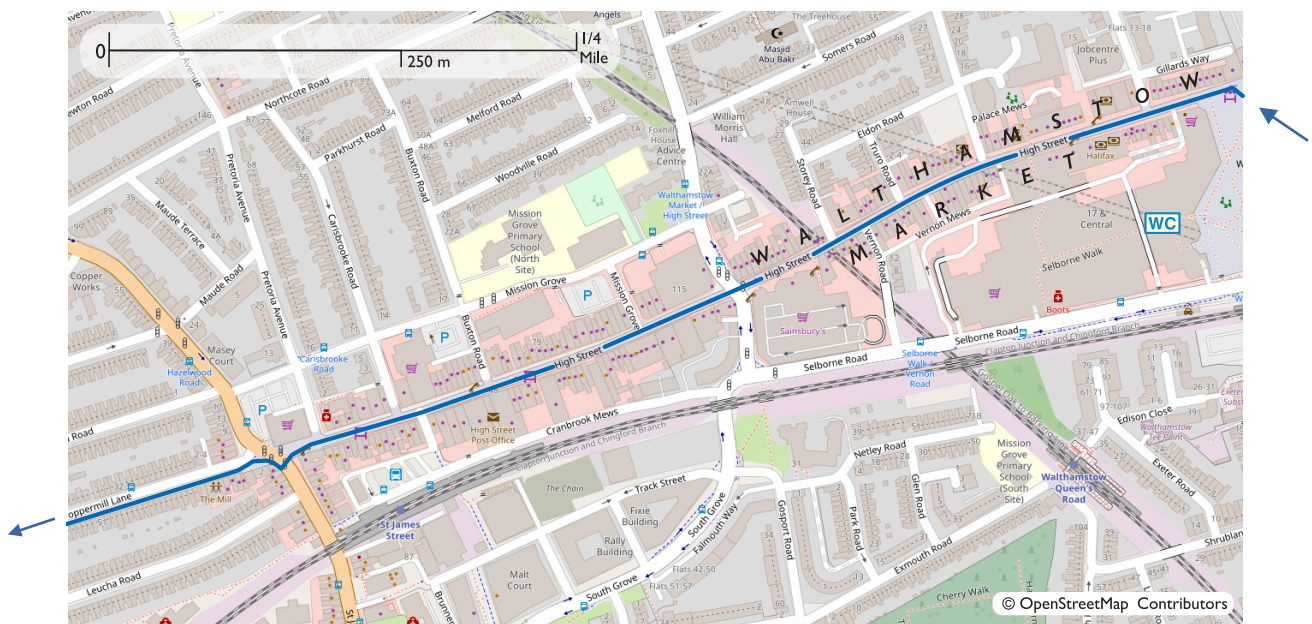
Continue to the end of the alley to emerge into a surfaced open space by the church. Turn left here to walk past the church tower and follow a track down to the road (Church End) where the Ancient House is ahead of you and the Penfold Pillar letter box just to your left. Turn right along the road.

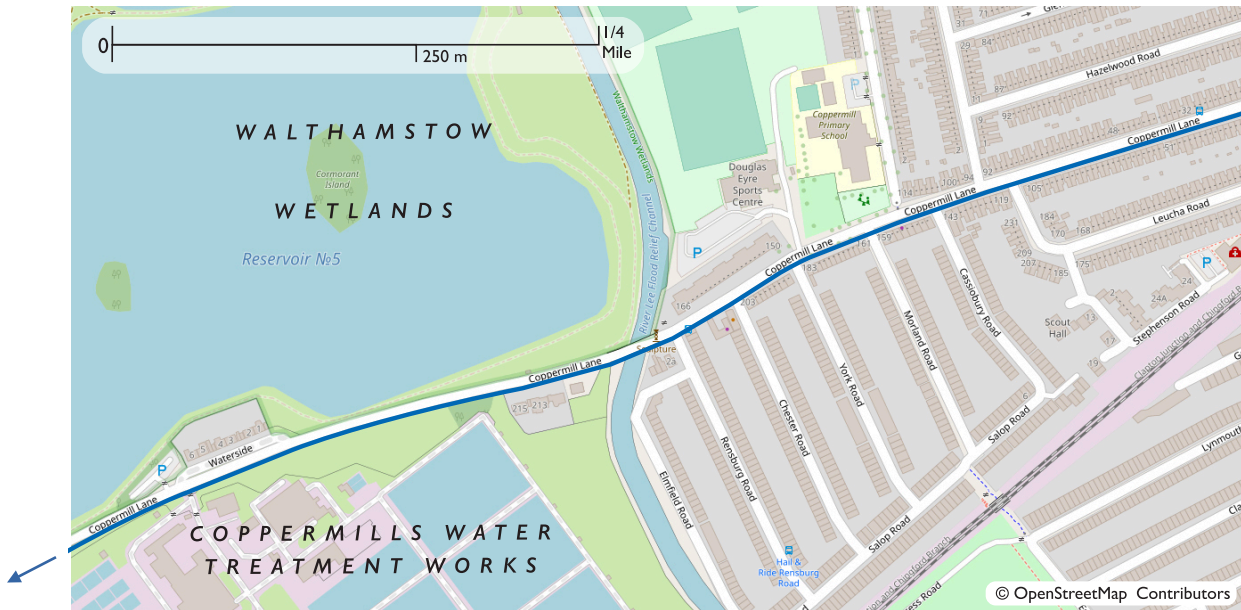
The road bends left by the Almshouses to become Vestry Road. Stay on the road for a short distance but then turn very sharply right round the apex of the small triangle of grass with trees to walk in front of the museum in Vestry House. Turn left when you get to a footpath passing a sign asking cyclists to dismount. Continue along this Church Path and again keep ahead when it becomes a road (St Mary Road).

Walk to the end of St Mary Road. Bear right at the end to cross Hoe Street at the lights. Continue ahead down Selborne Road to the exit roads from the bus station to rejoin the main route.

This brings you to the Town Square. Now turn sharp right to walk along a brick path between an avenue of trees with the bus station to the right. At the end the path bears left and opens up beyond the trees as it approaches the High Street. Turn left down the High Street just beyond the Lidl store.

Walk the whole length of the long High Street which is paved with bricks and pedestrianised. On some days there are many market stalls. Cross Willow Walk at the lights and continue along the High Street. There are more pedestrian lights at the end. Cross St James Street here and continue in the same direction straight along Coppermill Lane.





Pass the small Coppermill Park on the right and then cross the bridge over Dagenham Brook which, at times, is a fast-flowing river. Now the large reservoir number 5 can be seen on the right beyond the fence. Continue along the lane passing the Coppermill Water Treatment Works on the left.

Bear left with the lane to walk beside the Coppermill Stream that runs behind a fence on the right. The lane runs past a pylon and under the grid cables before passing the entrance to Walthamstow Wetlands on the right.

Diversion

A diversion into the Wetlands is worthwhile (see map on page 10). Go through the gate and follow the path round to the right between the embankment and the Coppermill Stream. Then curve left to reach the Coppermill Tower. Climb the tower to enjoy the fine view from the top.

Either return to the entrance gate at this point, or continue along the path by the stream between the reservoirs to reach the Engine House with its café and toilets. On the return, walk to the exit along the top of the embankment between reservoirs 1 and 2 back to the Coppermill Tower and thence to the way out. Turn right outside the gate.

The main route turns left off Coppermill Lane just before the lane ducks under a low railway bridge. Cross the right hand side of a small car park to a barrier. Walk through the barrier, joining National Cycle Network route 1 and entering Coppermill Fields.



Walk along the surfaced path with the railway to the right and the line of pylons to the left.

At the end of the Fields, the path passes under one railway bridge and then dips down and bends right to a subway under a second railway line.

Emerging from the subway, the path curves left to enter Walthamstow Marsh.

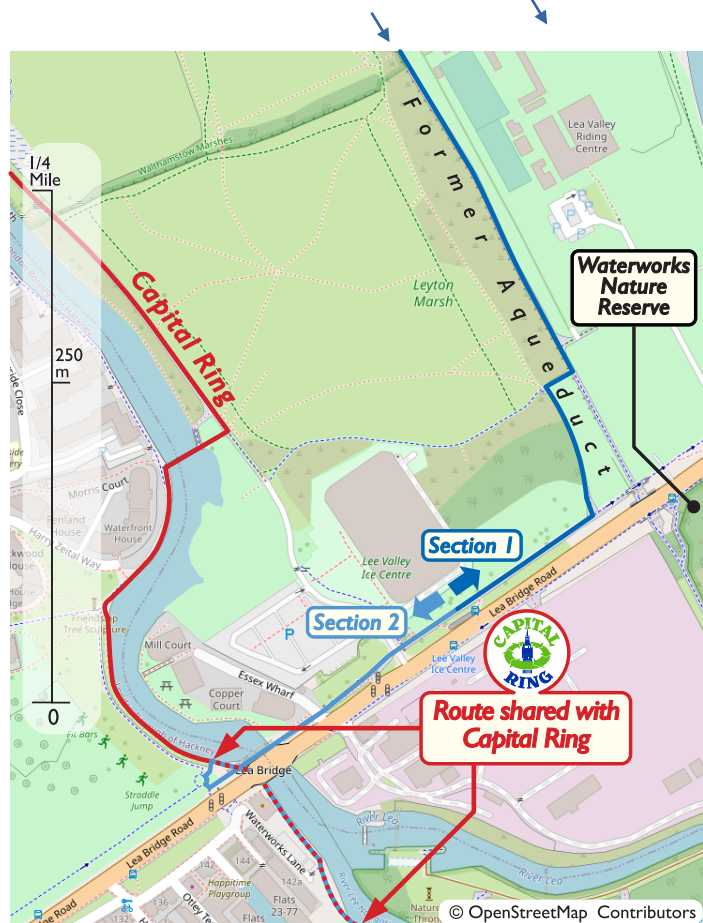
Follow the surfaced path in a straight line across Walthamstow Marsh and then Leyton Marsh.

Turn right off the main path where the path starts to slope down to pass under Lea Bridge Road. This turning comes just after a large Lee Valley waymarking panel on the left (headed 'Lee Valley Riding Centre').

Very shortly, after passing between wooden fences, fork left and walk through a barrier towards Lea Bridge Road.

Turn right at the road along the shared walking and cycling path.

You reach the end of section 1 of the Green Link Walk at bus stop W outside the Lee Valley Ice Centre.



Travel to and from section I

Travel options to the start of the section

By bus: The 20 bus runs between Walthamstow Bus Station and Debden. Take this bus to the St Peter's Church stop in Woodford New Road. St Peter's Path starts between the north- and southbound bus stops running west between the churchyard of St Peter-in-the-Forest and the My Shish Restaurant. Walk along this path to the (unmarked) start of the walk in the woodland.

By train: An alternative beginning, that slightly shortens the section, starts from Wood Street station which is served by Overground trains between Liverpool Street and Chingford. These trains also call at Walthamstow Central and Hackney Downs stations.

Travel options from the end of the section

By train: The nearest station is Lea Bridge which is served by a relatively frequent rail service between Tottenham Hale (Victoria line) and Stratford (Central line, Overground and other rail services).

By bus: The 55 and 56 buses run past the Lee Valley Ice Centre to Lea Bridge station.

The 55 bus runs between Walthamstow Bus Station and Oxford Circus. The route passes these stations: Lea Bridge, Hackney Central, Cambridge Heath, Hoxton, Old Street, Farringdon and Tottenham Court Road.

The 56 bus runs between Whipps Cross bus stand and St Bartholomew's Hospital. The route passes these stations: Lea Bridge, Dalston Junction, Essex Road, Angel, Barbican and St Paul's.