

Weneslawe Walk

8 miles. Location: Sandy, Potton, Biggleswade



Explore Greensand Country on Foot

Greensand Country

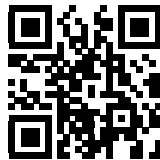
An area of distinct, beautiful and loved countryside

Weneslawe Walk

This 8 mile circular route aims to help local residents, including those new to the area, to explore the landscape on their doorstep. It can be walked in either direction and is easily accessed directly from housing areas on the west side of Pottton and also from the north of Biggleswade. The Weneslawe Walk passes through open countryside and woodland, including farmland near Sutton village, over Biggleswade Common, through a large part of **RSPB The Lodge nature reserve and gardens** near Sandy.

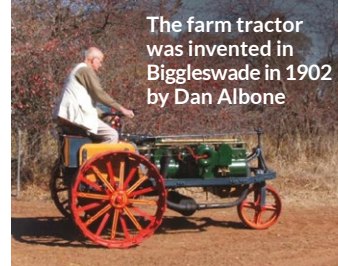
Why not visit the beautiful Mosaic Heritage trail, which runs through the historic market towns of Sandy, Pottton and Biggleswade? The mosaics are in the town centres and each has a plaque to explain the connections to Roman and medieval times, Sir William Peel, cycling and the railways.

Find out more and explore walking, cycling and horse-riding routes in Greensand Country
www.greensandcountry.com



Points of interest around Weneslawe Walk

Biggleswade is a historic market town that grew up close to a ford or 'wade' across the River Ivel, replaced with a bridge in the early 1300s. In June 1785, a massive blaze destroyed 103 houses, making 332 people homeless and ruining businesses. The town bounced back in the 1800s and was renowned for the vegetables from its market gardens on the fertile local soils. The farm tractor was invented here in 1902 by Dan Albone who also built innovative bicycles, motor bikes and cars.



The former Sandy and Pottton Railway branch line was known locally as Captain Peel's Railway after Sir William Peel, who purchased the estate on the hill just beyond Biggleswade Common in 1851. He paid for a railway connection to it from the mainline at Sandy and extended the line later to Pottton. After his death in 1858, his brother, Arthur Wellesley Peel, took over and sold the line. In 1871, he replaced Sandy Place with the Lodge, a grand Victorian mansion that is now the headquarters of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).



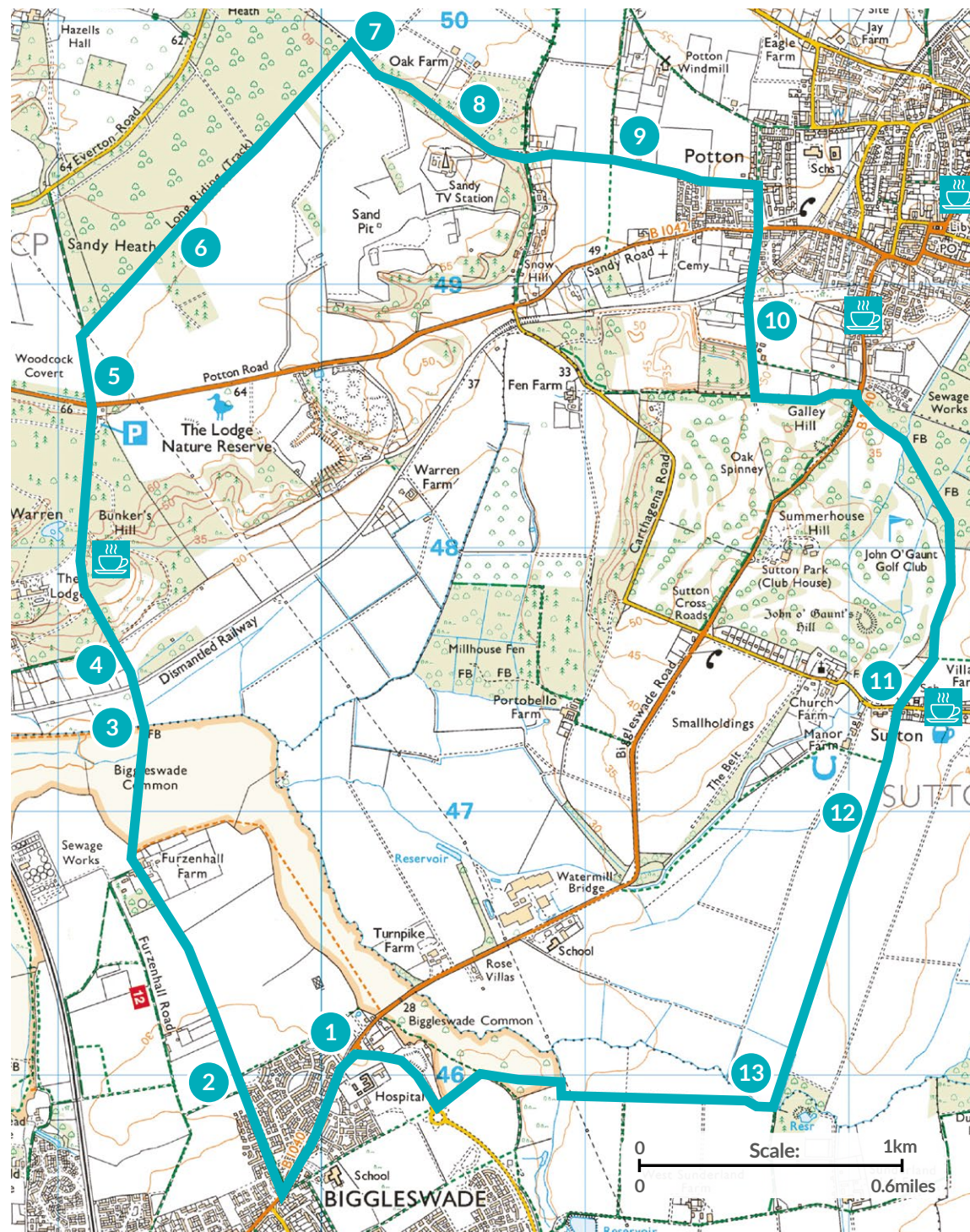
As part of the work completed by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership to strengthen the habitats in the landscape, significant restoration projects have been undertaken at RSPB The Lodge nature reserve and gardens to create better habitats for wildlife, which provide sustainable homes for a number of species and improve the chances of retention and colonisation on the heathland. In 2018, this restoration resulted in the breeding of Nightjars at the site for the first time in 45 years.

Heather at RSPB The Lodge nature reserve and gardens



Sutton is home to this remarkable packhorse bridge - the only one surviving in Bedfordshire. It was built of local Greensand, possibly in the 13th century. When the ford was resurfaced in concrete in 1989, the road level was lowered by 50mm (2 inches). This exposed the bridge's ancient elm foundations which began to decay and threatened its collapse. Happily, funding was found and the bridge was repaired.





Weneslawe Walk

8 miles. Location: Sandy, Pottton, Biggleswade

- 1 Your walk begins at the King's Reach pub.
- 2 Leave the town across Biggleswade Common, 300 acres of grassland from the lvel in the west and arcing around the north and east of the town. It is the largest area of common land in Bedfordshire, where local farmers (known as the Fen Reeves) have long had the right, in common with each other, to graze cattle and horses.
- 3 Beyond the common and a stream, a hump in the path marks the former Sandy and Pottton Railway branch line.
- 4 Enter the RSPB land between the brown sandstone gate posts. Despite its colour, this stone is known as Greensand because it was confused with another rock of similar composition but green in colour. Immediately to your right is an important surviving example of rare heathland. Follow a bridleway uphill beneath the canopy of old oaks and some of the now mature Pine and exotic trees that Peel had planted.
- 5 Across the road is Sandy Heath.
- 6 Turn right into Long Riding where the local gentry once galloped their horses. Where the view opens on the left beyond the grass field is the Deepdale Tree Nursery where ornamental and fruit trees are being raised in lines of large pots.
- 7 Turn right again where you are close to the 244 metres tall Sandy Heath television transmitter. It began broadcasting to Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire and beyond on 13th July 1965 when there were just two channels- BBC and ITV (Anglia). Since then, many modifications have been made to accommodate other TV channels, radio stations and mobile phone services.
- 8 A windmill has stood near Pottton since 1332 but it was rebuilt many times. To your left, you can see the stubby circular brick base of the final one, built before 1808. Attached on top were the sails that turned to capture the wind's power. They last rotated in 1928 when a gale blew them down.
- 9 In Sutton Mill Road, you cross the line of the railway again. Leave Pottton past the former Deepdale sand pit on the right. Its depth shows how thick the sands are in this area. Beyond here, get your first glimpse of the John O'Gaunt golf course at Galley Hill. Rare White Spotted Pinion moth caterpillars have been spotted on elm leaves here.
- 10 Taking care, cross the main road and enter Pegnut Wood. Your route follows the edge of the golf course, here occupying Sutton Park.
- 11 In Sutton, the road leads left towards the village pub, named after John O'Gaunt, (a son of King Edward III), who held the manor here in the 14th Century. To the right, the road fords the Sutton brook next to a stone packhorse bridge.
- 12 Leave Sutton along Lantern Lane through an avenue of young trees. Stop where there's a gap between trees on the right and spot the pointed tower of the chapel at Biggleswade Cemetery in Drove Rd, 2 miles away. The Bedfordshire Growers Farm Shop buildings are prominent to the right and over your right shoulder, Sutton's church pokes its tower above the trees.
- 13 Turn right. The penultimate section of the Weneslawe Walk crosses another part of Biggleswade Common known as the Pastures. Pick your way through the bushes with the boundary fence always close on your left and emerge on Baden Powell Way for the final walk back to the start.

Please observe the Countryside Code. Visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code for details

Walking Routes in Greensand Country

Greensand Country is a beautiful and loved landscape. It is defined by the Greensand Ridge, a band of higher ground stretching from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay, which rises out of the surrounding vales to create a locally unique environment. Greensand Country contains all of Bedfordshire's remaining heathland, more than half of its woodland and greater concentration of historic parkland than any other part of England.

Walking is an ideal way to get to know Greensand Country and experience what it has to offer. When on foot you are closer to nature and able to take in the views, soak up the landscape and enjoy the physical health and mental wellbeing benefits associated with exploring the great outdoors. Many routes have been created by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership to help you explore the history, heritage and rich culture of Greensand Country. Other routes include Katherine's Walk and Ouzel Valley Meander.



What's On?

Places to Stay and Food and Drink in Greensand Country

Plan a great day out in Greensand Country. There's something for everybody with idyllic villages to explore, home cooked food to eat, adventures to be had, unique handmade crafts to buy and history to discover.

There are many stunning views in Greensand Country. The ridge itself is a prominent feature in the landscape and provides a dramatic backdrop to the views from the lower lying countryside. The ridge is accessible from many of the surrounding villages and towns. Woodlands often frame views on lower ground, whilst landmark churches and other historic buildings provide focal points in the landscape.

Whether you're looking for somewhere to stop for tea and cake or lunch during your walk, or thinking about things to do, places to visit or somewhere for friends and family to stay locally, the Greensand Country website has everything you need to plan your next exciting outdoor adventure.

Support local businesses, enjoy great experiences and discover unique products in Greensand Country. Stop off at a pub or tearoom after a day of walking to enjoy locally sourced, home cooked food. Or shop for antiques and unique handmade crafts in one of Greensand Country's picturesque villages.

With walking, cycling and riding routes available to view and download on our interactive map, you can search for facilities, including toilets, points of interest, car parking and much more on your chosen route.

Simply click on the QR Code and start exploring today.



Central
Bedfordshire

Get involved: greensandcountry.com

