

The Old Railway

The disused railway was the Bedford to Northampton Line. Closed in 1962 the old track bed and associated cuttings and embankment slopes now provide a valuable wildlife corridor.

Planning your walk

Turvey Village is the suggested starting point and the walk is described in a clock-wise direction. However you can walk in either direction and there are shorter route options identified on the map.

Refreshments, Parking and Toilets

Parking is limited within the village although there is a large layby to the west of the bridge, just into Buckinghamshire. The Three Cranes pub and Ye Three Fyshes pub have kindly agreed to allow parking for walkers who take refreshments there. Please inform the landlord if you intend to leave your car.

Public Transport

A frequent bus service operates between Bedford and Turvey for information contact TraveLine 0871 2002233 or www.transportdirect.com. The closest train station is at Bedford.

Ordnance Survey Maps

The route is covered on Ordnance Survey Landranger Series map 153. It is also shown on Explorer map 208. Both are available from local bookshops and some petrol stations.

Countryside Code

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Tips for enjoying your walk

Parts of the walk can become muddy especially after heavy rain, so strong waterproof footwear is recommended. Take care where conditions are rough and do let someone know where you are going. Please be aware that much of the walk is unsuitable for wheelchairs and difficult for pushchairs.

Did you enjoy the walk ?

If you have any comments about the walk or encounter any problems please contact Parks and Countryside of Way, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP or e-mail row@bedford.gov.uk

Other walks

Find out about more of Bedfordshire's walking and riding routes as well as nature reserves and country parks by visiting

www.lets-go.org.uk



Circular walks

No.3

Turvey

Approx 6 Miles / 9.5 km Time: 3 hours



Explore the picturesque village of Turvey situated on the banks of the River Great Ouse and the attractive undulating farmland of the Turvey House estate

Turvey

The village of Turvey (the name means turf island) is a fascinating assortment of interesting buildings. All Saints Church is partly Saxon and is said to be one of the finest in the Diocese of St. Albans. The churchyard contains many monuments to the two great families of Turvey, the Mordaunt family (Earls of Peterborough) and the Higgins family.

The Higgins family were responsible for most of the many new buildings in the village the main material used being the locally quarried limestone rubble. During the 19th Century John Higgins in particular was concerned for the welfare of his tenants and a building programme was undertaken. Such work has left its mark throughout the whole village and is a major reason for its attractive character. The landscape around the village is dominated by parkland with sheep grazed pasture, large trees and blocks of woodland. Further south the landscape is very open with a few scattered woodlands and hedgerows, and recent planting will improve the amount of cover but it remains an arable landscape.



Turvey Bridge

Turvey Bridge is reputed to be the oldest bridged crossing of the River Great Ouse in Bedfordshire, a bridge across the river was first documented in 1140 and the present structure which was widened in 1935 crosses three branches of the river. There is an excellent view of Turvey Mill (now a residential development) and two statues standing on the end of the mill's island. To the left 'Jonah' and his companion to the right were brought from Ashridge House in Hertfordshire by Charles Longuet – Higgins in 1844.

Turvey Abbey

The Abbey dates from the 17th Century but was not a monastic establishment until it was bought by a Roman Catholic Order of Benedictine monks and nuns in 1980.

The Abbey was inherited by John Higgins in 1792 together with its farmland and the Manor of Turvey, the farmhouse in the park grounds was built shortly after this, replacing the Abbey that until then was essentially the farmhouse. He remodelled and added to it for his own use including the addition of the clock tower and cupola visible from various points on the walk.

By 1801 John Higgins, who had a keen interest in gardening had already done much to redesign and replant the Abbey garden and was also responsible for the creation and planting up of Abbey Park and the digging of ponds within it.

Following his death in 1846 the parkland fell into disrepair not least because his son Charles was under the mistaken belief that his asthma was made worse by trees and cleared much of his father's planting creating the open and simpler arrangement present today.

Turvey Abbey Park

Until 1783 most of the area that is now Abbey Park was included in one of Turvey's large and open common fields 'Garden Field'. This would have been cultivated communally for many centuries and is the reason for the ridge and furrow earthworks, some very substantial, which survive over much of the park. There are excellent examples of the reversed 'S' shape typical of ridge and furrow, the lengthways shape caused by plough teams gradually preparing for turning round some way before reaching the ends of the ridges.

The roundel to the right of the footpath is the 'Royal Anniversary Roundel' planted to commemorate the Queen's 40th anniversary on the throne. It is planted on the site of an original 1838 roundel and includes a Hawthorn hedge, Oak, Scots Pine, Crab Apple and Western Red Cedar.

The small castle like structure on the edge of the Abbey grounds was built in 1829 for John Higgins as a garden house and was one of his last contributions to his complete remodelling of the gardens at Turvey Abbey from the 1790's. It possibly served as a retreat for quiet thought or relaxation whilst enjoying the garden. A Field Maple in the grounds is thought to be the largest tree of its kind in Bedfordshire.

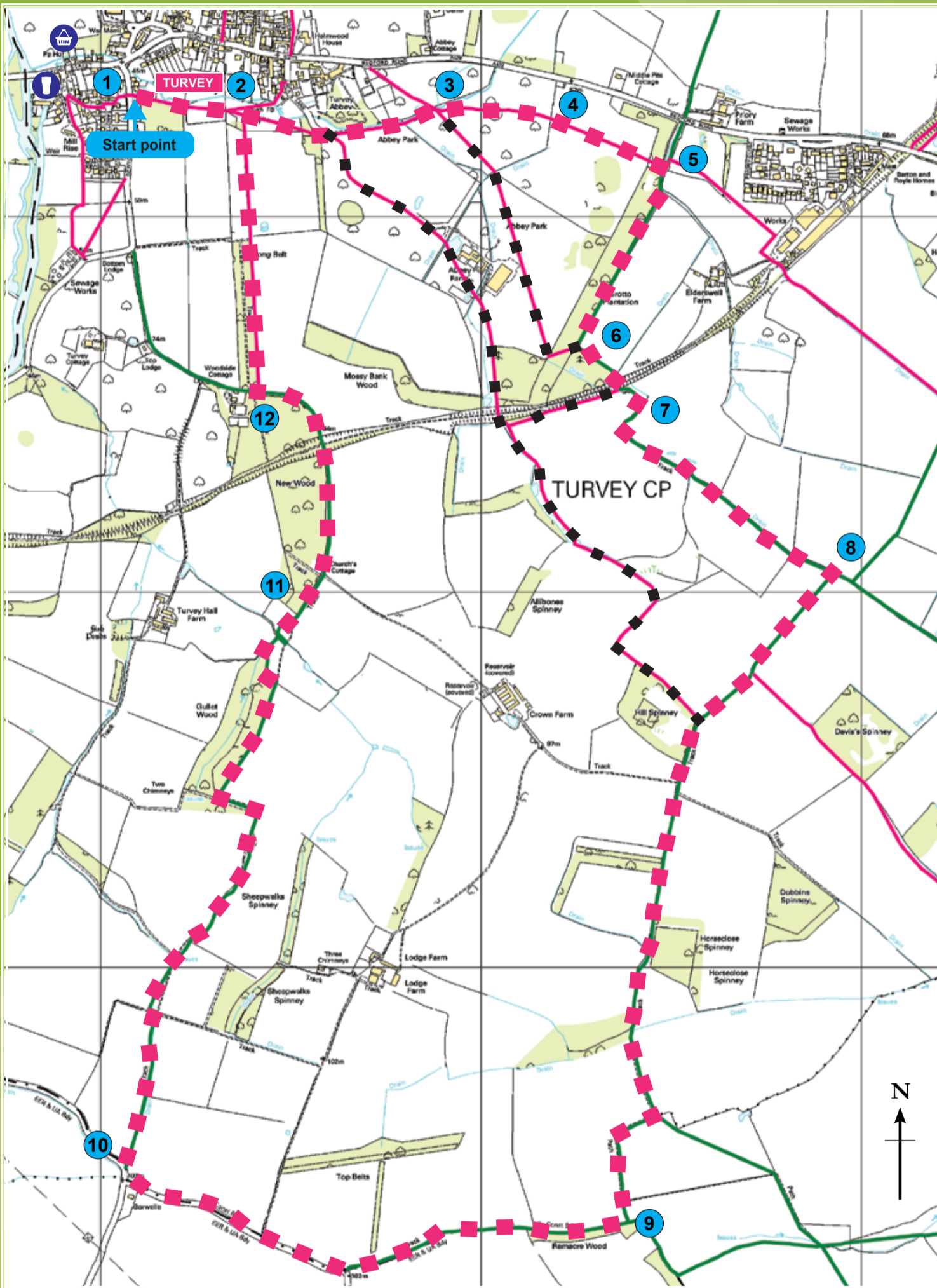


Circular walks












Turvey

Approx 6 Miles / 9.5 km Time: 3 hours



- 1 From Newton Lane take the footpath to the left, follow the lane, cross a stile, continue through the field, cross a second stile, and continue to the other side of the field.
- 2 Cross two more stiles, enter Turvey Abbey Park, cross the drive, and follow the path beside the stream.
- 3 Cross the stile, cross the concrete bridge and bear slightly right and follow the path to the stile in the fence opposite.
- 4 Cross the stile and continue across the Park until reaching its edge
- 5 Cross the stile and turn right along the bridleway.
- 6 Turn left and follow the bridleway. (For the shortcut turn right and back through the wood into Turvey Abbey Park, which leads back to point 3.) Cross the railway bridge and follow the path on the left to follow the field headland.
- 7 For another shortcut follow the path that runs parallel with the railway to your right. Turn right again and go back over the railway and through Abbey Farm and park.
- 8 Turn right and follow the bridleway past Hill Spinney all the way to Ramacre wood. Another short cut is available by turning right at Hill Spinney and following the footpath back under the railway to Turvey Abbey Park.
- 9 Turn right at the wood and continue along the path and then the road.
- 10 At the next road junction bear right and take the bridleway to your right through the fields.
- 11 Follow the bridleway, which eventually leads uphill and past New Wood on your left.
- 12 Follow the road around the bend to the left and take the footpath on the right leading down beside Long Belt rejoining the route at point 2. Turn left after the stile to return to Newton Lane.

Key

	The walk		Shortcut		Local shop
	Footpath		County Boundary		Public house
	Bridleway		Woodland		Directions

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