

Pub Walks

In addition to the walks that can start or end at the Woolpack or Red Lion, the village's pubs, there are several other pleasant walks for those seeking refreshments during their walks. Footpaths to the south lead to Haynes. A short walk from the end of the BW 16 & FP 17, across Silver End Rd, and down Northwood End Rd, is the Greyhound pub.

Similarly, FPs 3 & 4 to the west lead to Houghton Conquest and if you walk to the village centre you will find the Royal Oak and the Knife and Cleaver.

BW 14 & FP 12 to the north lead to Elstow via Medbury Farm. In the centre of the village the Red Lion awaits the thirsty traveller.

Access to Wilstead Woods

Wilstead Woods, a County Wildlife Site, is a small remnant of ancient woodland which at one time ran from Cranfield to Haynes. It lies to the south of the village on the face of the Greensand Ridge.

The woods, which are part owned by the Forestry Commission and part owned by Haynes Park Estate, can be accessed by use of the former 'carriage drive'.

This was originally a back drive to Haynes Park, a large country house just outside the parish boundary. It is now a permissive path from Cotton End Road to the woods, crossing footpath 5 on its way.

Both owners of the wood currently allow walkers access to the woods so please treat this wood with care in order that it may be enjoyed by many generations to come.

Travel To Wilstead

By Road: From A6 or A600

By Train: Nearest railway station is currently Bedford Station some six miles away. A new station some 2-3 miles away is planned for the nearby Wixams development.

By Bus: There are frequent bus services to the village from Bedford (Routes 81, 44); Luton (81) and Flitwick / Ampthill / Clophill (44). Alight in the centre of the village near the two pubs, the Red Lion and the Woolpack.

Car Parking in Wilstead

There is good off road parking available in the village car park in Whitworth Way, behind the Methodist Church, and in the lay-by on Bedford Road to the north of the village crossroads (see map). Some of the main roads in the village can be used for parking but some are narrow and unsuitable, so please exercise care. The lanes are even narrower and should not be used for parking.



Manor House, Cotton End Road

Countryside Code

Please keep to the paths, close gates and keep dogs under control, out of the crops and away from livestock.

Acknowledgements

Mr R Maddams for the use of his sketches.

The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) and Forest of Marston Vale for their encouragement and contributions to this leaflet. The Wilstead P3 group work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council and the local people to improve rights of way and other important features of the countryside. The Forest of Marston Vale is working towards a long term vision of a varied countryside within a woodland framework.

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

Footpaths in Wilstead



Church House Church Road

The rural village of Wilstead, (sometimes known as Wilshamstead) is set towards the eastern end of the Forest of Marston Vale and offers over 17km (11 miles) of footpaths and bridleways within the parish. These provide a great variety of walks and views, sufficient to please all walkers.

The Village Of Wilstead

Wilstead lies 4 miles to the south of Bedford at the foot of the Greensand Ridge escarpment. The origin of the village dates back to Roman times, or earlier; there are signs of a settlement in fields to the north of the village. The Domesday Book (1086) records the village as Winessamestede' with 23 heads of households'.

Close to the crossroads in the middle of the village is the 14th century church of All Saints. The church contains a memorial tablet to William Tompson who in 1595 founded the Wilshamstead Charities which still exists to help the villagers. In the churchyard there is the tomb of Sir William Morgan, the Chief Secretary of the State of South Australia. A village born grocer's son, he found gold in Australia and became one of Australia's richest men. He died on a visit to the village in 1883. At the top of Church Road is the Church House thought to have been a 'Pilgrim's Rest', for those journeying to shrines.

According to the Domesday Book, at the end of Cotton End Road there used to be another hamlet called Westcotes, probably where Littleworth is now. Near here down Elms Lane is Manor Farm, thought to be the location of Nigel de Albini's Manor. Much nearer the centre of the village on Cotton End Road is another Manor Farm, thought to be the likely location of Countess Judith's (sister of William the Conqueror) manor of Winessamestede, the second manor of the village mentioned in the book.



Cottages near Elms Lane

Walking from the eastern end of Cotton End Road some of the notable buildings are the old cottages at Littleworth and near Elms Lane (fine examples of farm-workers cottages), the Old School House (formerly a Church of England primary school built in 1847), Long Thatch (a beautiful example of a thatched period cottage) and the Manor House. Little Church Farm in Vicarage Lane, 'Eyebrow Cottage' in Luton Road and Vicarage Farm in Bedford Road are amongst other fine buildings to be found elsewhere in the village.

Some of these buildings were built with Wilstead bricks made in one of the two brickyards the village once had (see map). The crudeness of their manufacture resulted in a wide variety of brick colours, some almost red. The Millennium village signs are constructed with Wilstead bricks topped with dark engineering bricks.

Footpaths (FP) & Bridleways (BW)

Wilstead is surrounded by fields and woods that reach into its very heart with working farms, public spaces and footpaths adjoining the main roads of the village. Wilstead also extends out into the immediate countryside by the means of various lanes that run at right angles from these main routes through the village. The lanes, which are up to half a mile in length, have an even more rural feel, surrounded as they are by fields. Most of the lanes turn into footpaths and bridleways, not only linking neighbouring villages, but also forming an integrated set of paths connecting all areas of the village.

Wilstcad is very fortunate in having over 17km (11 miles) of footpaths (for walkers) and bridleways (for horse riding, cycling and walking) within the parish. Some form a ring around the village (see circular walks below) with others acting as links into the village.

Combinations of these footpaths, bridleways, lanes and roads offer walks of varying lengths and varied outlooks. The paths to the south of Wilstead provide views towards the wooded escarpment whilst the paths to the north, east and west, over mainly flat farmland, offer excellent views of typical Bedfordshire countryside. The paths to the north, e.g. BW 14, and FP 12, also provide distant views of Bedford and Shortstown, including the sheds where the R101 airship was built and whose crash in 1930 put an end to the British airship industry for sixty years.

Circular Walks

Many combinations of footpaths and bridleways can be made into circular walks around the village. These circular walks can range from less than a mile to approximately 11km (7 Miles) using Luton Rd. FP5, FP7, FPI7, BW16. Elms Lane, BW14, BW11, BW15, FP12, FP13, Duck End Lane and Bedford Road.



Long Thatch, Cotton End Road

For the energetic, a circular walk can include walking up the only hills in the footpath system onto the Greensand Ridge some sixty metres above the village to the south. Having climbed up to the ridge, you are rewarded with superb views to Wootton in the west, over the new settlement of Wixams being built on the site of a former ammunition factory, to Bedford and beyond in the north and to Willington and Great Barford in the east.

The escarpment face, which contains St Macute's Wood and the site of an ancient chapel, can be seen from all parts of the village providing a contrasting backdrop to the paths and bridleways on this side of the village.

Links to other Villages

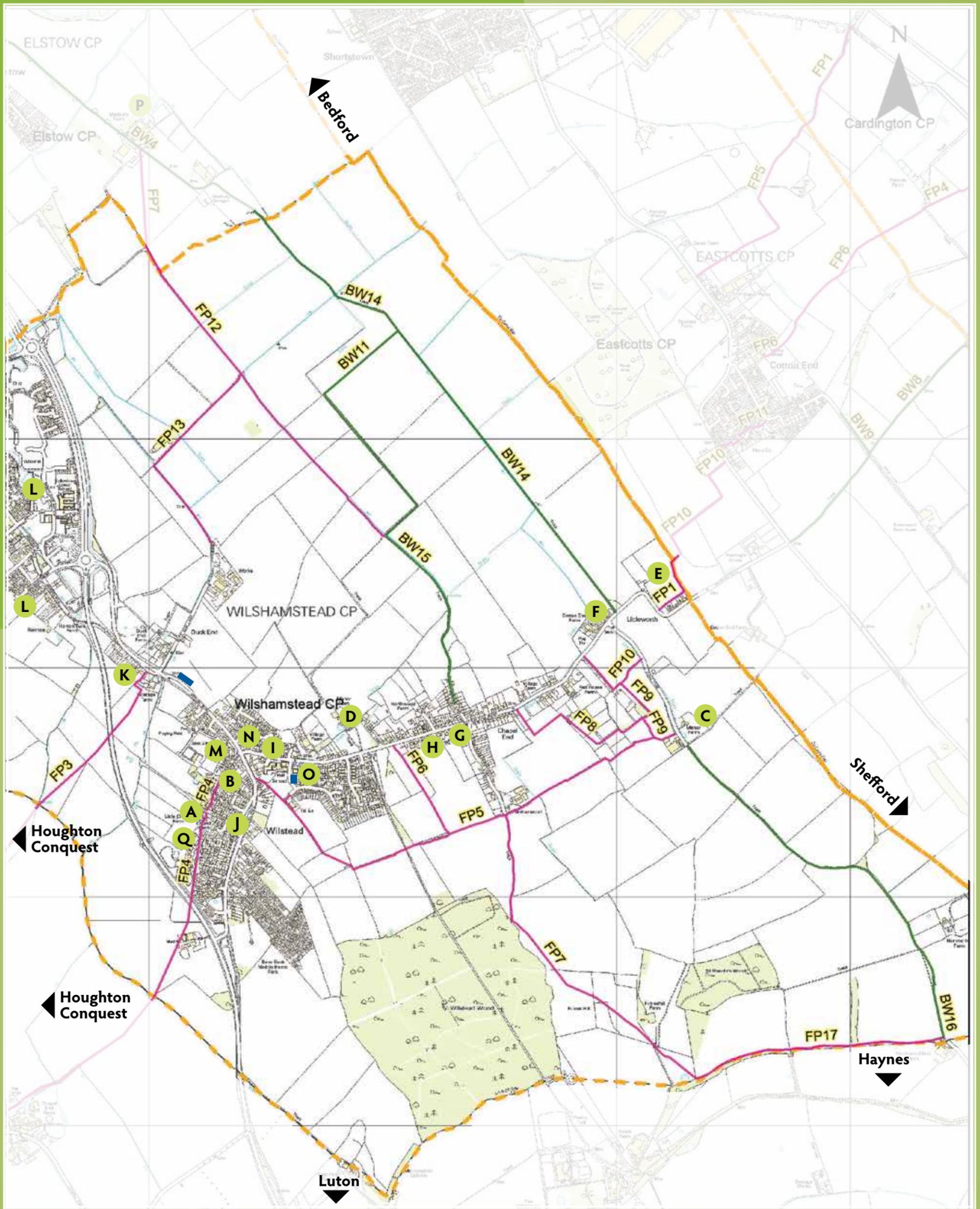
The footpaths and bridleways not only join various parts of the village but also form links with the neighbouring villages of Cotton End, Haynes, Houghton Conquest and Elstow.

Cotton End has a single footpath to it starting at the eastern end of the village just before Littleworth. Haynes can be reached from the end of Ivy Lane or from the end of Elms Lane. These two ways meet at Northwood End Farm and from there it is a short walk down North Lane into Haynes.

Houghton Conquest can be reached from Bedford Road near where it meets Duck End Lane or from the end of Church Road near the church. Both these cross the A6 on the level (be careul when crossing) and then join up with footpaths from Houghton Conquest.

Elstow can be reached From Duck End Lane, or Hooked Lane or Cotton End Road where it meets Elms Lane.

Circular walks



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List of Paths

Below is a list of paths and their length so you can use the map to make up a walk that suits you. Only Footpath number 8 (FP8) has a stile.

FP1 285m	FP3 745m	FP4 1000m
FP5 Luton Rd to Ivy Lane 1440m		
FP5 Ivy Lane to Elms Lane 760m		
FP6 450m	FP7 1520m	FP8 820m
FP9 555m	FP10 145m	BW11 440m
FP12 1520m	FP13 1000m	BW14 2340
BW15 1670m	BW16 1810m	FP17 1120m

- A** ALL SAINTS CHURCH
- B** CHURCH HOUSE
- C** MANOR FARM, ELMS LANE
- D** MANOR FARM, COTTON END ROAD
- E** COTTAGES AT LITTLEWORTH
- F** COTTAGES NEAR ELMS LANE
- G** OLD SCHOOL HOUSE
- H** LONG THATCH
- I** MANOR HOUSE
- J** EYEBROW COTTAGE
- K** VICARAGE FARM
- L** SITE OF OLD BRICKYARD
- M** THE RED LION
- N** THE WOOLPACK
- O** METHODIST CHURCH
- P** MEDBURY FARM
- Q** LITTLE CHURCH FARM
- PO** POST OFFICE

- CAR PARKING
- FOOTPATHS
- BRIDLEWAYS
- PARISH BOUNDARY

1/4 mile
400 m' SCALE