



Willington Dovecote and Stable,
Willington, Church End, near
Bedford, MK44 3PX

TRAIL

Walking

GRADE

Easy

DISTANCE

2.4 miles (3.7km)

TIME

1 hour

OS MAP

**Explorer 225;
Landranger 153**

Contact

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willingtondovecote@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

Dovecote and stables open between April to September on the last Sunday of every month, otherwise admission is by appointment via the voluntary custodian. Tel. 01234 838278. Open space accessible all year.

WCs - There are no toilets on site. Available at Danish Camp.

Parking : NT car park - free

Food and Drink: Available at Danish Camp in Willington

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Woodland and willows walk at Willington

Starting at Willington Dovecote and Stable Car Park this 2.4 mile (3.7km) trail on accessible surfaced paths explores the new Bedford River Valley Park. Planned in partnership with the Forest of Marston Vale Project, this walk is a great way to discover the exciting new developments in this riverside landscape.



Terrain

Easy walking on multi user accessible trails around the Bedford River Valley Park. Dogs welcome on leads.

Things to see



Willington Dovecote

Built by Sir John Gostwick for the visit of Henry VII in around 1541 the Dovecote and Stable are all that remain of the Manorial farm complex



Dovecote lake

The Dovecote Lake is a mixed fishery with Carp, Bream, Tench, Roach, Perch and Pike. Over the last few seasons the lake has been stocked with over 350 Carp, with the majority being the famous Dinks/Leney crosses from Priory Fisheries.



Danish Camp

The name Danish Dock or Danish Camp became attached to the site because the Danes, or Vikings, are known to have been active in the area, using the River Great Ouse to attack Bedford c AD 920. The log cabin at Danish Camp is situated on the banks of the River Great Ouse in Willington, Bedford. In 2004 The Terrace was added to the log cabin so that visitors could come to Danish Camp throughout the year. This area provided much needed room for dog walkers, group visits and has since been used for many events and celebrations, and is a useful stop for a cup of tea and something to eat!



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Start/end

Start: Willington Dovecote
and Stable Car Park, grid ref:
TL107499

End: Willington Dovecote car
park, grid ref: TL107499

How to get there

By bike: Route NCN51 passes
Dovecote and Stable. See
Sustrans for details

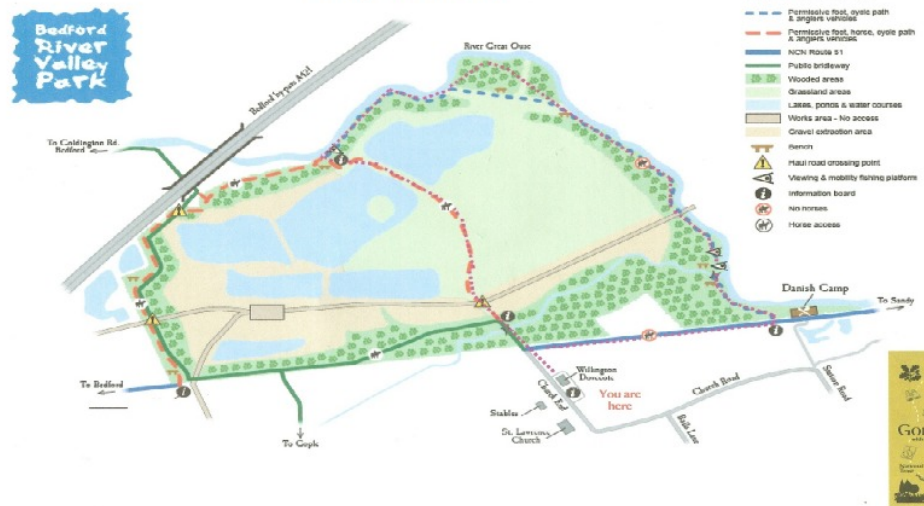
By bus: Stagecoach 73 Bedford
to Biggleswade

By car: Signed from the A603
Bedford to Sandy road. Small
free car park at Dovecote

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Map of route



1. Starting from Willington Dovecote car park, turn right out of the car park onto Church End and head in a northerly direction passing the Willington stables on your left.
2. Continue northwards, passing the junction with the National Cycle way Route 51 and crossing the Elstow Brook via an old quarry bridge, until you come to another junction and a metal bridgeway gate.
3. At the junction, pass through the metal gate and follow the signs directing you to the riverside path. Continue northwards and cross the Lafarge haul road - watch out for traffic.
4. After crossing the haul road you will pass through another metal gate and fenced-in gravel track that meanders through grass fields frequented by many species of birds and wildfowl. Further along the track you will pass two lakes, Causeway Lake on your left and Dovecote Lake on your right. Continue along the gravel track as it bends round Causeway Lake to a T-junction and signpost by a cattlegrid
5. At the signpost, turn right in a north-easterly direction and follow the tarmac path that is signposted Danish Camp. Follow the path along the banks of the River Great Ouse. Watch out for cyclists and vehicles.
6. Continue along the tarmac path until you come to another junction where a loose stoned track takes you into woodland where a new back channel off the river was created for spawning fish. The loose stoned path is an optional route that will bring you back onto the tarmac path further along and will add no more than 5 minutes to your walk.
7. The path now heads southwards, hugging the river and going under the Lafarge haul road bridge, before coming to a second bridge over Elstow Brook - perfect for playing Pooh sticks!
8. Follow the tarmac path over the wooden bridge to its junction with National Cycleway Route 51. Danish Camp is to your left. You can find refreshments here.
9. At the T-junction with the cycleway, turn right in a westerly direction and follow the sign for Bedford and Priory Country Park. This section of path follows the old Bedford to Cambridge railway line. To your left are the remains of the station platforms.
10. Continuing westwards, the path brings you back to the junction with Church End where you are directed back to Willington Dovecote and car park.