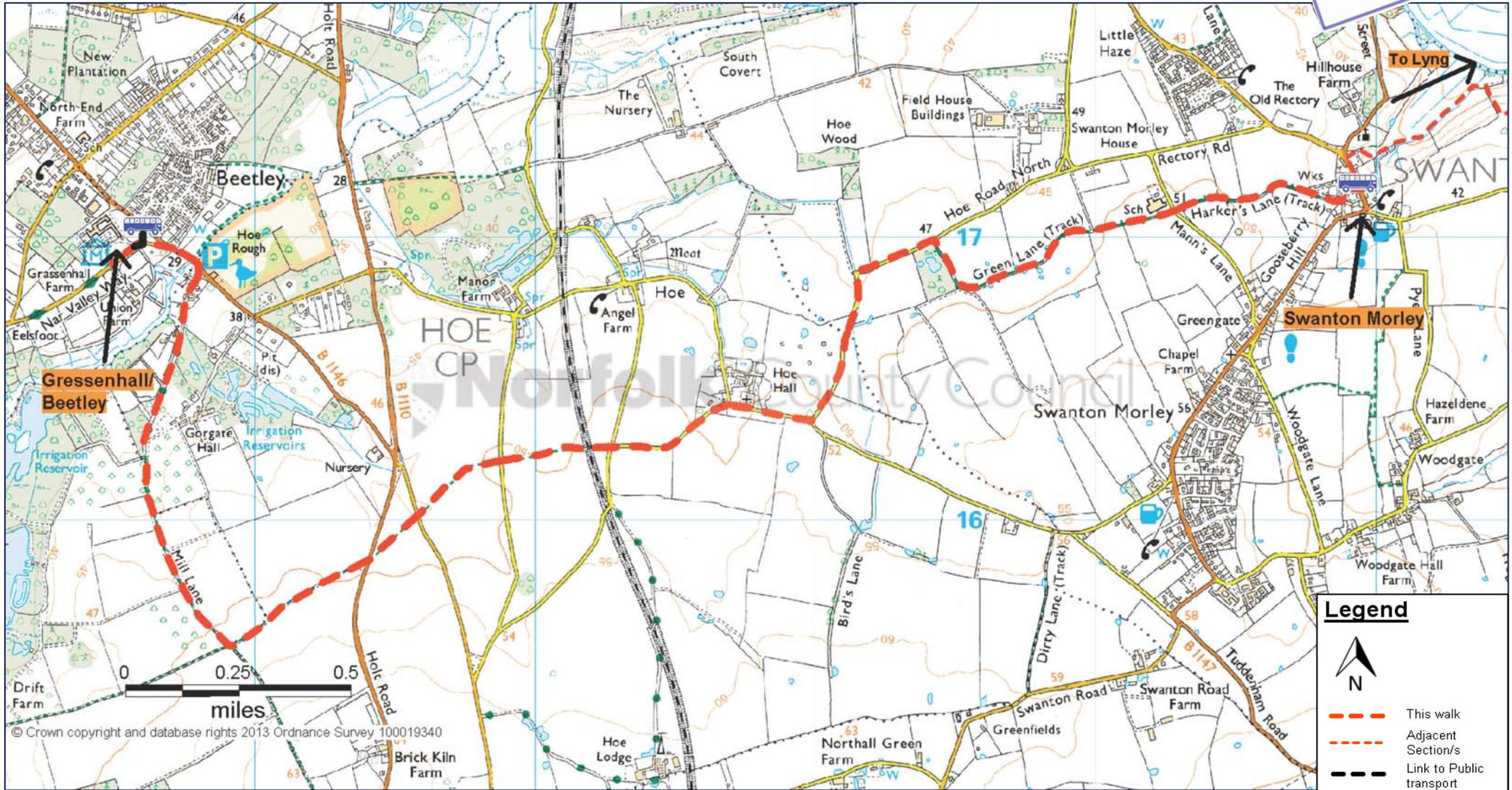


S1

Wensum Way Short Walk 1 (of 3) Gressenhall to Swanton Morley

Length:
4 Miles



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Along the way

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum at the start of the Wensum Way is a former workhouse that now serves as a museum depicting everyday workhouse life and Norfolk's rich social history. The farm here once used to grow food for the workhouse inmates. Now it is farmed using traditional techniques and uses Suffolk Punch horses to plant, harvest and plough.

Leaving Gressenhall, at the edge of the adjacent village of Beetley, the Wensum Way passes the entrance to Hoe Rough, a 12 hectare SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) nature reserve and County Wildlife Site managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The wet unimproved grassland here is home to 300 year-old oak trees and flora that includes green-winged orchid and bird's foot trefoil. Otters, water vole and great crested newt are found along the river and in the ponds, and 25 species of butterfly and 24 different types of dragonfly have been recorded.

Between Beetley and Swanton Morley the Wensum Way follows tracks and paths through gently rolling farmland, crossing the route of the former Mid-Norfolk Railway. The line linking Wymondham and Fakenham was built at the height of "Railway Mania" when railways were being built across the whole country. The track can be seen running into the distance but until recently the line has lain disused for many years. Restoration work by the Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust has meant the first public passenger train since October 1964 ran north from Dereham on 18th May 2013. Regular trains will not be introduced yet as there is not currently access to a station or platform for this section of track but work will continue to restore the track north, through to North Elmham.

However, since 1995, the Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust has restored Dereham Station and the section of the line running south to Wymondham. Passenger trains run between these two stations with various special events taking place throughout the year.

Shortly after crossing the railway line, the route passes Hoe Hall and St Andrew's Church before continuing along tracks and lanes to reach Swanton Morley, a picturesque village that dates back to the time of Domesday Book.

Arriving in Swanton Morley, the large 14th century Church of All Saints can be seen on top of a hill to the north. The village has two pubs, one of which, The Angel, was once home to Richard Lincoln, an ancestor of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. The village's Mill Bakery has been in business since 1645.

Walk summary

A 4 mile walk through rural central Norfolk countryside passing wildlife reserves and a historic hall along the way.

Getting started

This section starts at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse (farm crossing) at (TF975169) and finishes at Swanton Morley on Town Street (TG019171).

Getting there

Bus service: Konectbus 21, Konectbus 4
Bus stops: Beetley, opp Beech Road (for Gressenhall Museum), Swanton Morley, Town St

Traveline enquiries: 0871 200 22 33

www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk

Maps and guides

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238, Dereham & Aylsham, available from Ordnance Survey shop

www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite

What to expect

Rural lanes, tracks and paths across fields. No stiles

Facilities

Parking and café at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum (opening hours only), shop with post office and B&B accommodation in Gressenhall
Pubs, accommodation, camping, shops and post office in Swanton Morley