

Little Waltham

Words and pictures by Laurie Page of the Public Rights of Way team at Essex County Council.

A walk from the village of Little Waltham around the little hamlets of Minnow End, Broads Green, Partridge Green and Blasford Hill. The meandering River Chelmer features along the way. There is the option of a short walk or a slightly longer one if you wish to include the pub on the way!

Distance: 4.3 or 3.3 miles

Starting point: Small car park in Back Lane, Little Waltham. (If this is full, the nearby Park & Ride is free and open every day except Sunday.

How to get there: From A130 Essex Regiment Way north of Chelmsford, at the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride roundabout take the turning signed to Little Waltham (Back Lane). There is a small car park after about 400 metres on the left.

Map: O.S Explorer 183 Chelmsford & the Rodings.

Refreshments: The Walnut Tree Pub en route (open all day). 01245 360222

Tourist information Centre: Chelmsford Travel & Visitor Information Centre. 8 Dukes Walk, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1GZ

Place of interest nearby: A few miles to the south is Chelmsford, the County Town of Essex and given city status in 2012. Hylands Park on the west side of the city, is the venue for the V Festival and has a restored 18th century House. The cathedral is right in the centre of Chelmsford and at Oaklands park to the south of the city is an interesting Museum with grounds attached.

1. Leave the car park by going through the gate that is signed Waltham Nature Reserve. Keep to the right and follow the path in the field that runs parallel to the road. Step over a rickety stile into the next field and continue through the middle of the field which drops down towards the river on the left. When you reach the fallen tree at the end of the field, you enter a wooded area by the River Pant. Keep right, going gently up alongside a wooden fence. Cross a footbridge and straight after, turn right at the T-junction then immediately left into a meadow. Here, there are two paths; take the footpath on the left going across the field to a kissing gate, where you follow a concrete path between hedges. At the end you go through another gate to the road.



2. Turn left over the road bridge and into the village. Soon after, pass Milestone Cottage on your right and take the footpath on the other side. Continue through a meadow of long grass and ash trees. Cross a footbridge to the busy road. Be careful how you cross. Take the footpath opposite, going down steps and across a crop field. Continue straight on into the next field, heading for the big house (Windmill House). When you reach the road turn right along the pavement but cross over and just after Little Bakers turn left onto the stony track and then immediately left again, over a footbridge and along the edge of a large field. At the end go right. The path immediately bends sharp left. Follow the line of the ditch until you reach the far corner of the field.
3. If you wish to take the **shortcut**, (3.3 miles) here go left, crossing the ditch and through the middle of a large crop field, taking you past the farm to the road. Turn right using the grass path alongside the road. At the first bend turn left onto the footpath. At the end of the field you go left.

For the **longer route** (4.3 miles) you turn right in the corner of the field. Keep to the right of a high hedge. Proceed along the field edge, going down to the corner where you turn left into another field. Follow a deep ditch to your right all the way to where you reach the lane. Turn left. When you get to the fork in the road, keep right (unless you wish to visit the pub on the other side of the green) and at the road junction soon after, take the footpath opposite.



Walnut Tree Pub

Follow a wide stony track between fields to a footpath crossroads by the tree, Turn left along a grass path with a high hedge to the right. At the end of the hedge line, cross the ditch on the right and continue along the field edge with the ditch now on the left. Continue straight on to the end of the field where you join the shortcut route (from the left). Proceed straight ahead.

4. Continue alongside Sparrowhawk Wood. The path bends sharp right around the wood. At the next corner, continue straight on across the field. Cross a footbridge at the end and bear right. Continue for some distance. In the far corner of the field go through some trees into the next field and on to a little lane soon after. Turn left along the lane. Pass Wood House Lodge on the left.

You will arrive at the main road.

5. Turn left along the lane. Pass Wood House Lodge on the left. At the main road turn right and then immediately left onto the footpath just the other side of the post-box. Go gently down hill to a little footbridge by the lane. Turn left and when you reach the converted mill building, go left over the river bridge and follow the path through a gate and over the river tributary. Where you turn left again, onto a path going alongside a hedge to your left. Go over a stile and up a bank where you bear left, going along the edge of a meadow for a short distance. At the next kissing gate turn left along the byway. At the end, on the left is the little car park where you started.



Cottage by the River Chelmer