

Watlington.. a really attractive market town

The attractive market town of Watlington sits at the foot of the Chiltern Hills and dates back to the 8th Century. The town is full of historical buildings and a wide selection of interesting and diverse shops offering a range of speciality foods and goods providing a unique shopping experience.



There are a number of pubs and cafes to choose from where you can enjoy good food and drink.



Being surrounded by a wonderful network of rights of way and skirted by the Icknield Way (The Ridgeway National Trail),

Watlington is popular with walkers, naturalists, cyclists and horse riders. Since the reintroduction of Red Kites to the area a few years ago it has become a centre for those wishing to see these rare birds in their natural habitat.

There is free parking in the Town car park in Hill Road.

Pick up a walk leaflet from the Community office, Library, or Paper Shop or download one from our website www.watlington.org



This Walk.. Discover Watlington

This short walk of about 2 miles takes you through the historic town of Watlington. It is a level walk and suitable for all. You can complete the walk in under an hour but you are very likely to take longer as you find things of interest to delay your progress.

This leaflet will help you navigate the town from the walk's start in the free car park in Hill Road and gives a brief description of features of interest along the route.



The walk includes the impressive 17th Century Town Hall, built to commemorate the restoration of the monarchy at the end of the Civil War, and many other historical buildings as well as interesting pubs and shops.



If the need arises short diversions will take you to 'The Chequers', the 'Fox and Hounds' or 'The Carriers' where good food and drink can be had. Alternatively snacks and non-alcoholic drinks are available in the High Street.

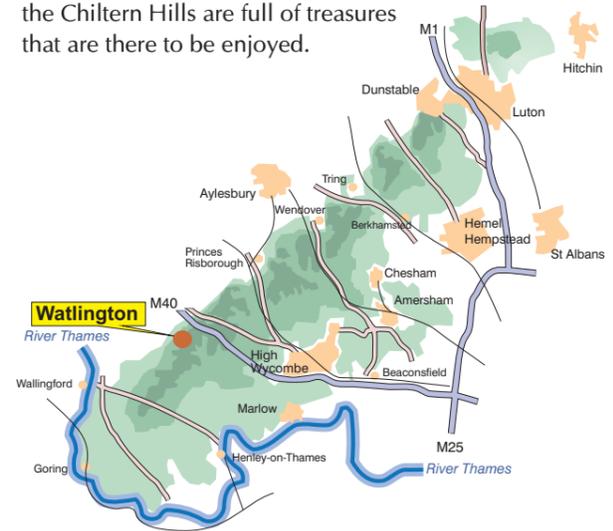
You can relax for a while in Mansle Gardens and then visit St. Leonard's church before continuing your walk around the town.

Play areas for young children are to be found in 'The Paddock' off High Street and the Recreation Ground off Love Lane where there are also facilities for skateboarders and older children.



The Chilterns.. an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Chiltern Hills stretch from the River Thames in south Oxfordshire through Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to Hitchin in Hertfordshire. The area contains some of the finest countryside in the UK, recognised by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). From quiet valleys with medieval villages to dramatic viewpoints on the hilltops, leafy green woodlands to flower-covered meadows, the Chiltern Hills are full of treasures that are there to be enjoyed.



For more information visit www.chilternsaonb.org or call 01844 355500.



This Walk.. try this and our other Walks

This leaflet describes and illustrates one of 4 walks produced by Watlington Parish Council with the support of the Hidden Britain Project, funded through the Rural Enterprise Scheme, administered by Defra.

These walks start from the car park in Watlington

Walk 1 Watlington

A 2 mile walk through this historic market town

Walk 2 Cookley Green and Swyncombe

7 miles - discover hidden valleys and medieval hamlets

Walk 3 Watlington Hill

4-5 miles - a hilly walk with magnificent views

Walk 4 Lewknor and Pyrton

6 miles - a level walk through open countryside

Refreshments: There are a number of pubs and cafes in Watlington where you can enjoy good food and drink.

Parking: There is free parking available in the Hill Road car park, Watlington, where you start your walk.

Toilets: There are public toilets in Church Street (at the bottom of High Street).

Accommodation: Visit www.watlington.org



Watlington.. how to get there



By car: Leave M40 at Junction 6; in Watlington take the first turning on your left into Hill Road. The free car park is on your right.

By bus: X39 hourly from Oxford. The Oxford Tube travels between Oxford and London every 10 minutes and stops at Junction 6 (Lewknor).

Countryside Code:

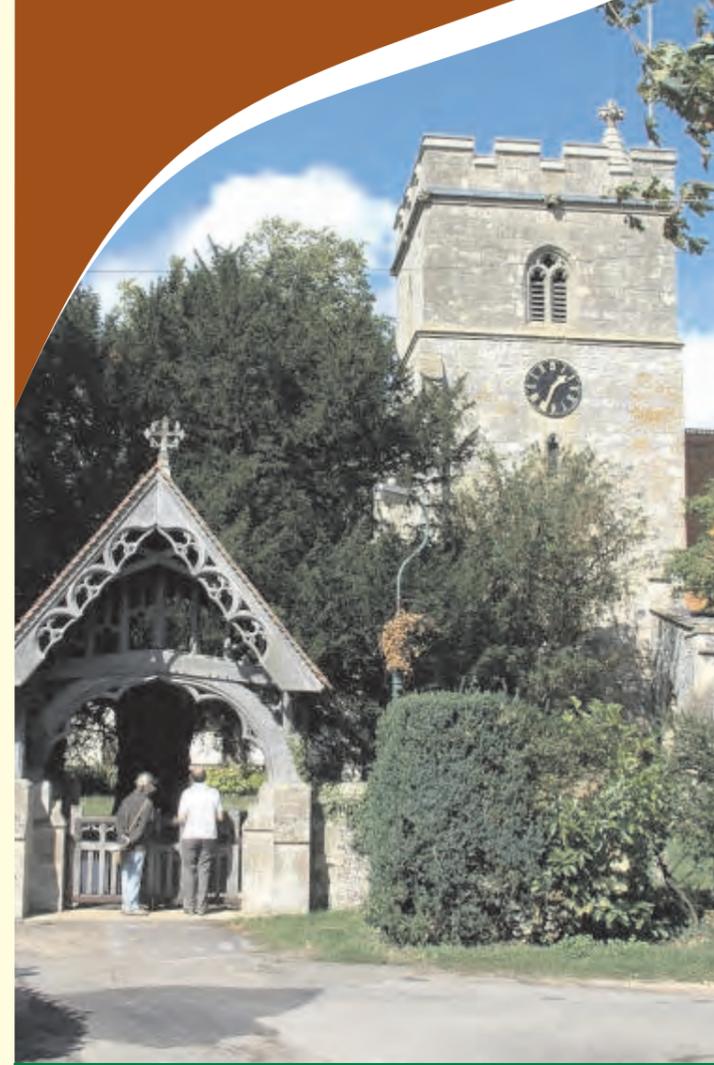
- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants & animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under control
- Consider other people

For further information on Watlington visit www.watlington.org

We are grateful to Martin Edis, Penny Cole and the Watlington Parish History Group. Other Watlington Walk leaflets can be obtained from the Community Office, Library and the Paper Shop.



Watlington Town Walk



Watlington
Oxfordshire Chilterns Country



Watlington Town Walk

2 miles - discover this historic market town

1 Leave the car park through the pedestrian entrance by the notice board and turn right - look opposite and you see Chiltern Gate; Built in 1865, this row of flint cottages was a training school for domestic servants before becoming Watlington's first Hospital.

At the cross roads is the Town Hall, built by Thomas Stonor in 1664-5 as a market hall with a boys school above.

2 Go over the cross roads and enter the High Street. Here you pass a wealth of 15th, 16th and 17th Century buildings - the following are of particular importance;

- No 3's Tudor herringbone brickwork above the butcher's shop
- No 12 - early 16th C, used to be a pub "One Crown House"
- Barclays Bank was a pub the "Three Crowns" with vitrified and red bricks.

Yet another pub?

- No 15 - late 15th C, was a pub, "The Barley Mow" - retains jettied upper storey.
- No 17 - late 15th C, was a pub, "The Old Greyhound" - an open hall house with a central hearth and no chimney.
- The Memorial Club was bought after the First World War and given to the Town as a memorial to those who fought in the 1914-1918 war. Originally a Farmhouse in 19th & early 20th C it was used as a private school. In 1859 The Temperance Society used the malt house at the rear as a lecture hall, which later became a cinema and now a squash court.
- The Granary, a timber building on staddle stones for grain storage.

- Davenport Place, beside The Granary, leads to The Paddock, an open area with seats and a playground, and the Community Office in Old School Place.
- Age Concern, on the right of Davenport Place in the High Street, serves tea/coffee on weekday mornings.
- Watlington Library was started in the 1930s and given to the County Council in trust for the people of Watlington. It has leaflets on areas of local interest.

- The War Memorial has won many prizes for the best kept war memorial in Oxfordshire.
- The "Royal Oak", at the bottom of the High Street was another pub.

3 Turning right, Chapel Street was known as Munchen or Monks' Lane and was once a large Grange which belonged to Osney Abbey, Oxford. There have been sightings of a ghostly monk gliding down this street. Early in the 16th C the street was named Hogg Lane and finally Chapel Street. On the right again is an ex pub called the "Black Horse". No 4 the thatched cottage is an example of a "cruck-framed" building (seen on the gable end). "The Chequers", built in the 16thC is still a pub.



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4 Retrace your steps into New Road. Behind the houses on the right used to be the old centre of the village where a 13th C manor house stood. This fell into disrepair early in the 17th C and the king's bailiff was accused of giving away its timber and stone. The remains of a moat can still be seen in the graveyard.

5 Enter Church Street. A gas works functioned here from 1866 to 1928. "The Thatch" on the right was once two small cottages while the single storey building adjacent to Blenheim House used to be a bakehouse in the last century

6 At the end of Church Street you pass Church Close. Once a tannery and a school it was the home of General Sir John Mogg, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe in 1973, who died, aged 88, in 2001.

7 Walk past into the footpath known as 'Church Meadows' to find 'Mansle Gardens'. Opened in 1990 by the Mayor of Mansle (in French Charente) and the Chairman of Watlington Parish Council to celebrate the twinning of the two towns. Take the right hand fork and at the end turn right towards the church, where the grounds of a modern bungalow used to be watercress beds.

8 A grassed island in front of the church is the site of a Church girls' school which stood between 1843 and 1872.

9 St Leonard's Church probably dates from the 12th C (it is first mentioned in the grant of land to Osney Abbey in 1129), but apart from the 15th C tower, it was largely rebuilt in 1877. It is open during daylight hours.

10 Returning past the footpath from the town centre is Prospect Place. At the next "T" junction turn right to Cuxham Road. On the other side is "Anchor Cottage", another ex pub, opposite "Bulrushes", which was probably a farmhouse in the early 18th C; its lean-to dairy can be seen; as a pub it was called "The Bull". A blacksmith and a bakery also operated from this site.

11 Turning left to Brook Street, a short piece of brook is visible. No 26 is the site of the "Swan Dairy" - named after yet another Inn. Before the drive to Ingham House (previously a vicarage, built in 1841) is a high wall, which used to belong to it. "The Lilacs", facing Couching Street, is a fine late 16th C house recently restored.

12 Turn into Couching Street (previously Cochynes-lane and later Cowchin Lane) - on the right is Watlington Court which was, in 1860, the police station and magistrates court with cells. This has now been converted into private dwellings. Opposite was a brewery until the 1960s.

- No 16, "Bowler's Piece" - a wagon entrance dates from the mid or late 18th C was rebuilt in 1916.
- No 20, "Tallows". The name "Kitchen" can still be seen above the original shop window together with the words "Tallow Chandler".
- No 22, has a small red lion on the denoting another ex-pub - "The Red Lion".
- No 38 was a cobbler - under the sign of "Sussex Rubbers".
- No 46 - "Old Bank House" was a post office early last century and Lloyds Bank came from Thame every Friday.

● On the left the Chiltern Business Centre was an inn called the "Hare & Hounds" until 1990. John Hampden was said to have stayed at the inn the night before the Battle of Chalgrove in 1643 and to have left a chest containing money for the payment of troops in the care of the landlord, Robert Parslow, before he left. Being fatally wounded in the battle he never collected the chest. Years later Parslow set up a charity (now part of Watlington Support Fund) to help the poor of the town - a guilty conscience perhaps?

13 Cross the road past the Town Hall into Shirburn Street.

- St John's Hall on the right was a Salvation Army Hall.
- Wesleyan Chapel 1812 is an early, and current, place of Methodist worship.
- The "Fox & Hounds" on the left is still a pub.
- No 21 was the old "White Har"t pub and used to hold court sessions from the 15th - 19th century.

14 At the end of Shirburn Street, Love Lane leads on the right to the Recreation Ground and Children's play area where you can sit and recover from your exertions!



next, try one of the other walks