

Your route

There will be routes of 3, 5, 8 & 15 miles. All routes use footpaths and may be muddy, so wear walking shoes or boots. There will be some walking on quiet lanes and roads. All routes start and end at Walk HQ in the Scout Hut, accessed from the Heartwood Forest Car Park in Sandridge (car park entrance is at the north end of Sandridge village, nearest postcode AL4 9DQ). NB No cars please to the Scout Hut itself for safety reasons – the lane is too narrow for cars and walkers.

All routes are waymarked and you get printed route instructions at registration, so you can walk at your own pace. On all routes there will be marshals at key points.

The shorter routes are ideal for those with young children; they also suit those just wanting a shorter walk. The 3 mile route stays within Heartwood Forest and the 5 mile route adds in Nomansland Common. The popular 8 mile route will go on from Nomansland to Wheathampstead. The 3, 5 and 8 mile routes are the same as last year. You can extend to 15 miles by carrying on to Ayot St Lawrence; the old 14 mile route has been extended and now visits the two churches there.

Final choices on route can be made on the day, subject to time guidelines (see below).

You can complete the 8-mile route in about three and a half hours including a short stop for lunch. If you want to join a group doing the 8-mile walk, please be at the Scout Hut to register at 10:00 am in order to start the walk at 10:30am.

Start times. These times aim to get everyone back in time for their tea and cake before 5pm!

15 mile walkers should start between 8:30 and 10:30 am.

8 mile walkers: start anytime between 9:00 and 1:00 pm.

5 mile walkers: start between 9:00 and 2:00 pm;

3 mile walkers: start between 9.30am & 3 pm.

Registration

It is important that you register (log in) at the start of the walk and “sign off” at the end. If for any reason you do not complete your walk and return to Walk HQ, please tell a marshal before you leave or contact Walk HQ (phone no will be provided) so we know what has happened to you. This is important.

Walking

Please keep to marked routes, going along tracks and footpaths, over stiles and across cultivated fields. Your route instructions and the “Walk For Water/Herts Hike” arrow signs will help you find the way.

Take particular care when you are crossing or walking on the road.

Follow the countryside code: Leave any gates as you find them; Keep dogs under close control at all times and on a lead when near livestock; Use the stiles and gates provided; and do not damage hedges and crops etc. Please give in litter at Marshal points or take it home with you.

Refreshments

You can buy a selection of Fairtrade snacks from our stall at Walk HQ (Sandridge Scout Hut), and tea, coffee, squash and home-made cakes are provided when you return.

The Fairtrade stall will also be selling items for you to take home and enjoy – tea, coffee and other goods such as olive oil and dates – so bring some money to support this effort please.

The following pubs can provide a welcome break or lunch stop – we recommend you pre-book a table if requiring food as Saturday lunchtimes are often busy. In Sandridge - the Queen’s Head, The Green Man and The Rose and Crown; in Wheathampstead the Swan and the Bull pubs, together with Charlies Café; at Nomansland, the Wicked Lady; in Ayot St Lawrence, The Brocket Arms.

What to bring

Waterproofs, warm clothes, strong footwear, sun hat, sun cream, drink and food. Aim to bring drinking water but ask if you forget and we can supply some.

If you bring your dog, please bring a lead. Keep dogs on leads inside walk HQ.

Travel

Those in the Marshalswick area of St Albans can walk over to Sandridge from near Sandringham School through Jersey Farm Woodland Park – a distance of one mile. It's much more direct than using the roads! Where possible, we encourage participants to use public transport, cycle or car-share. Children under 5 can travel free on buses. Those over 60, with a bus pass, also travel free.

Detailed directions to Heartwood Forest and Sandridge Scout hut

By car – The Heartwood car park is situated off the B651, the main road that runs from Sandridge to Wheathampstead, at the north end of Sandridge village. The nearest postcode to the entrance driveway is AL4 9DQ and there is a brown tourist sign pointing into Heartwood from the main road. If you are travelling north from St Albans to Wheathampstead, it is a left turn off the B561. The parking area for Oxfam Walk for Water will be signed. Having parked, follow Oxfam signs gently uphill from the car park to reach the Scout Hut.

On the bus

(2018 information) There are two buses for Heartwood Forest that stop in Sandridge village, the Intalink 304/305 from Welham Green to Hitchin via St Albans, and the Uno Arriva 657 from St Albans to Harpenden via Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

Please check the timetable on www.intalink.org.uk/timetables/ (route 304/305) or www.unobus.info/routes.shtml (route 657)

The journey time to Sandridge is approx 20 mins. The bus stop by St Leonard's Church is right by the bridleway "Pound Lane" leading to Heartwood Forest and the Scout Hut. The way through the farm yard and up the bridleway will be waymarked, as it is the last part of the return route to the Scout Hut.

By rail: Take the train to St Albans City station (Thameslink Govia, Brighton to Bedford line). Start from St Pancras International or from other Thameslink stations eg Blackfriars, Farringdon, West Hampstead Thameslink). Then connect with 657 bus at the St Albans Station to Sandridge Village – see above.

Map of Heartwood/Sandridge:

