

Ely Country Park  
Circular Walking Trails

**BULRUSH** Walk

1.5 miles (2.4km)

**KINGFISHER** Walk

2 miles (3.2km)



East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

## Bulrush Trail

**Distance: 1.5 miles (2.4km)**



From Fisherman's Car Park, take the hard path along Poplar Walk into the Country Park.

At the waymark on your left, turn left onto the bark path.

Continue straight ahead along the bark path for 130m until you reach a hard path.

**1**

At this point, to your left you will find a view of Ely Cathedral.

Cross over the hard path onto the bark path directly ahead following the waymark on your right.

Follow along the bark path, which veers around to the right for 150m.

Bare left of the waymark on your right hand side.

Turn left when you reach the sloped bridge. Walk down the bridge.

**2**

Turn right at the bottom of the bridge onto Springhead Lane (known locally as 'Lover's Lane'). Springhead Lane forms part of the Hereward Way promoted footpath.

Continue on Springhead Lane passing the kissing gate on your right hand side, until you reach the metal kissing gate at the end of Springhead Lane.

Go through the metal kissing gate into the gravel car park, and head towards the road.

### **Springhead Lane meadow - Point of Interest**

This area of the Country Park supports bats, grasshopper warblers, water rail and redwing and provides hunting grounds for barn owls.

At the road turn right up Kiln Lane taking great care.

**3**

On your left is a lake known as Roswell Pit.

Continue along Kiln Lane and take great care when crossing the railway line.

After the railway crossing, stop at the metal field gate on your right hand side; lapwings are known to nest in this field and you might see them in spring.

**4**

Continue along Kiln Lane.

At the 25mph speed sign on your left hand side, turn right onto a narrow tarmacked path which forms part of the Fen Rivers Way.

Keep the car park on your left hand side, passing underneath the power lines.

At the end of the path turn right through a metal kissing gate.

Continue along gravel path with the river on your left hand side.



5

At the end of the gravel path, proceed through the kissing gate.

6

Continue along the path underneath the rail bridge turn right into Fisherman's Car Park.

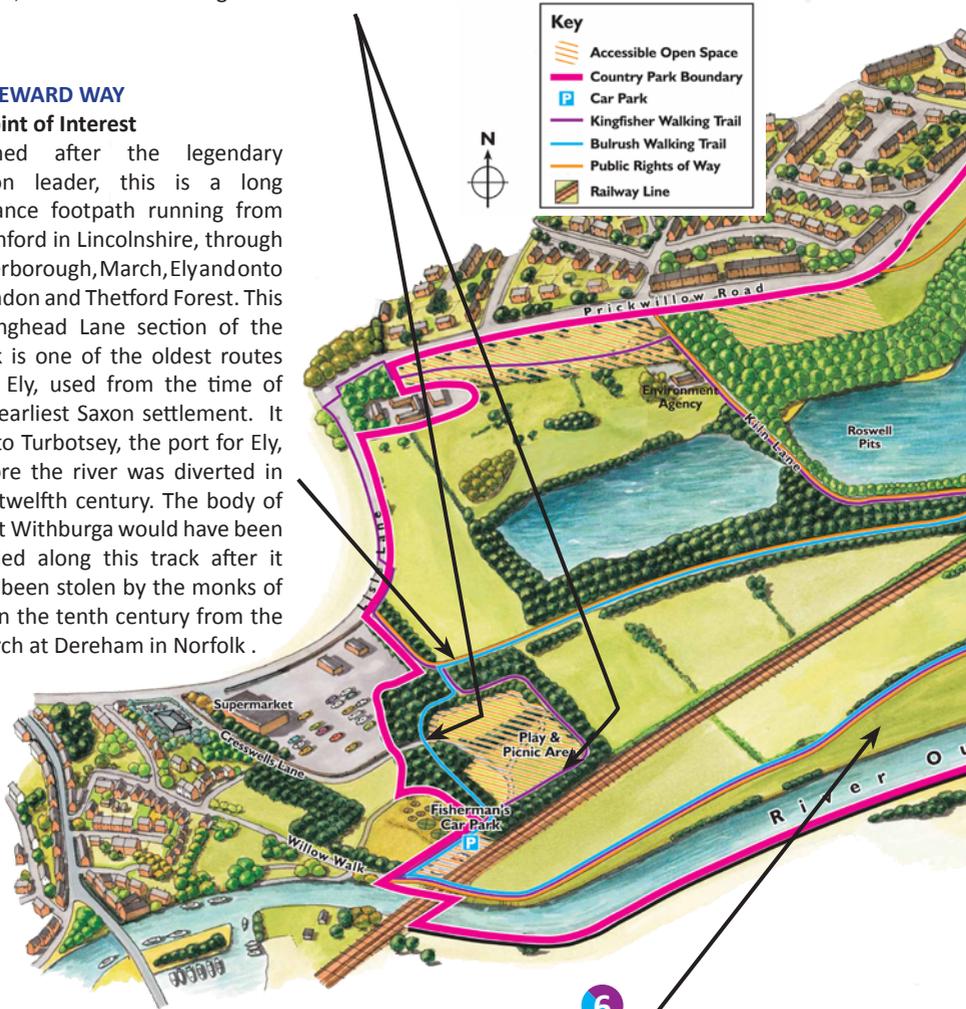


**1****ELY CATHEDRAL - Point of Interest**

Ely Cathedral is known as 'The Ship of the Fens', as Ely was once an island surrounded by marsh and swamp. After the Norman Conquest, where Ely saw some of last Saxon resistance lead by Hereward the Wake, Abbot Simeon began the building of a new cathedral. It took centuries for the cathedral to develop as we see it now. All the stone had to be brought by water, most of it from the quarries at Barnack, near Peterborough. The river at Ely is manmade, diverting the original course, which ran at the bottom of Stuntney's Hill. In 1321 the central Norman tower collapsed and out of the disaster Alan of Walsingham, the cathedral Sacrist, created the magnificent and unique octagonal lantern tower, which is one of the glories of world architecture.

**2****HEREWARD WAY****- Point of Interest**

Named after the legendary Saxon leader, this is a long distance footpath running from Stamford in Lincolnshire, through Peterborough, March, Ely and onto Brandon and Thetford Forest. This Springhead Lane section of the walk is one of the oldest routes into Ely, used from the time of the earliest Saxon settlement. It led to Turbotsey, the port for Ely, before the river was diverted in the twelfth century. The body of Saint Withburga would have been carried along this track after it had been stolen by the monks of Ely in the tenth century from the church at Dereham in Norfolk.

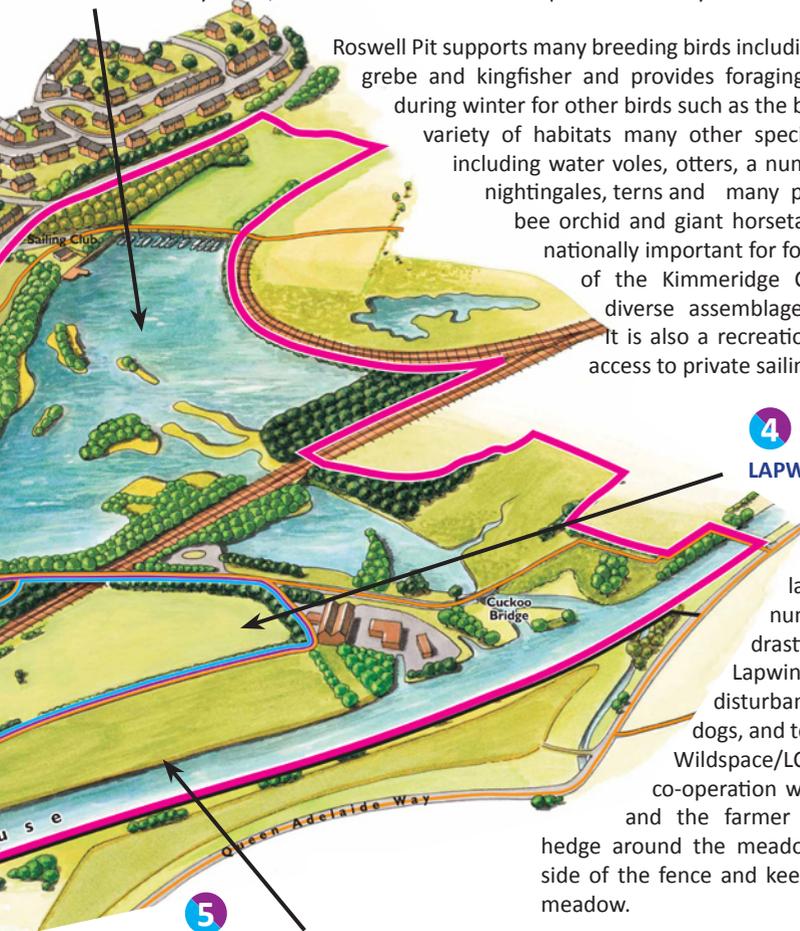
**6****THE CRESSWELLS - Point of Interest**

This riverside path goes through an area known as the Cresswells, pronounced Creasels. This was an area where the people of Ely grew water cress, but called it 'water creases'. This is a popular stretch of river for angling and around the turn of the twentieth century, Ely had a friendly invasion of Sheffielders, who took their Wakes Weeks holiday for fishing in the Fens. The busy railway line that now runs through this area was brought to Ely in 1845 by the great Victorian engineer, Samuel Morton Peto, to connect London to his development plans for Lowestoft on the Suffolk coast.

**3****ROSWELL PIT - Point of Interest**

The first pit you see was dug after the disastrous 1947 floods in the fens to provide clay or gault for riverbanks. After the seventeenth century drainage of the fens, the rich peat soil that was revealed shrank rapidly when exposed to the air and as the water was drained from it. This resulted in the need to embank the rivers and then install pumps to keep the fens drained. Roswell Pits, originally Roswell or Roslyn Hills, was excavated for the vast quantities of clay need.

Roswell Pit supports many breeding birds including the great crested grebe and kingfisher and provides foraging and resting areas during winter for other birds such as the bittern. With a wide variety of habitats many other species are found here including water voles, otters, a number of bat species, nightingales, terns and many plants including the bee orchid and giant horsetail. This area is also nationally important for fossils, as the outcrop of the Kimmeridge Clay has yielded a diverse assemblage of fossil reptiles. It is also a recreation facility, providing access to private sailing and angling.

**4****LAPWINGS NESTING**

This meadow is an important breeding site for lapwings, whose numbers have declined drastically in recent years. Lapwings are vulnerable to disturbance by walkers and dogs, and to protect the site Ely Wildspace/LCPRE volunteers in co-operation with Natural England and the farmer have restored the hedge around the meadow. Please stay this side of the fence and keep your dogs off the meadow.

**5****RIVER, EELS AND FLOOD MEADOWS - Point of Interest.**

This is the Great Ouse, which has its origins in South Northamptonshire and at 143 miles long is the fourth longest river in the country. At this point it is entirely manmade and the flow of water into and out of it is controlled by sluices to prevent flooding of the surrounding farmland, which is below the level of the river. This is a popular river for rowing with the Cambridge University crew training here and the Isle of Ely Rowing Club. Because of the War in 1944 the University Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge was contested on the Ouse just north of here, the only occasion it has not been held on the Thames. (Oxford won!)

Ely is very proud of its connection with eels and it is thought that the name Ely is derived from the Isle of Eels when Ely was surrounded by water and marshland. Eels are still caught in the Great River Ouse although only one commercial catcher still remains. Historically eels were part of the local staple diet as well as a valuable source of income. Clients also came from London with the popularity of jellied eels although today this is a dwindling market.

# Kingfisher Trail

**Distance: 2 miles (3.2km)**



From Fisherman's Car Park, take the hard path along Poplar Walk. Ignore the waymark on your left and continue to go forth.

Leave the hard path when you see the waymark on your left hand side and join the grass path straight ahead.

Continue along the grass path with trees and bushes either side of you.

At the waymark on your left hand side, take the route up the grass path up to the top of the mound. Follow the path around as it bears left, continuing along the mound.

**1**

From the raised mound you will find wonderful views all around you, with Ely Cathedral to the northwest, and the River and Fenland landscape to the south. Benches can be found at the top of the raised mound, this is an ideal spot to enjoy a picnic.

Continue down the slope, and straight ahead following the path with trees either side of you.

Just before the grass path joins the hard path, keep right of the waymarker and continue along the grass path.

Once you reach a sloped wooden bridge, turn right onto the bridge.

Walk down the bridge and turn left at the bottom, joining the hard, gravel path, which forms part of The Hereward Way on Springhead Lane (known locally as 'Lover's Lane')

**2**

Follow the route as it bends round to the right.

Head towards the kissing gate at the end of the gravel path, which joins Lisle Lane, you will find G&J Peck's on your left hand side.

Pass through the kissing gate at the end of the path and turn right onto Lisle Lane, passing the Ely Country Park entrance way sign on your left.

Carefully cross over Lisle Lane onto the pavement on the other side.

Turn right and continue up Lisle Lane towards the mini roundabout, passing a field of horses on your right hand side.

### **Meadow on Lisle Lane – Point of Interest**

Many of the dips and hollows in this area were created by Samuel Morton Peto, the nineteenth century engineer, by excavating materials to create the embankment for the railway line. This is a place of natural springs. The meadow is used for grazing and water cress and buttercups can be found.

At the top of Lisle Lane, cross over the road just before the mini roundabout.

Follow the pavement onto Prickwillow Road.

When on Prickwillow Road, immediately turn right onto the driveway of Common Farm on the corner.

From the driveway, enter the kissing gate on your left hand side into Ely Common.

Pass the Ely Country Park entranceway sign on your left and proceed through the common until you reach the little bridge to join Kiln Lane.

### **Ely Common – Point of Interest**

Known as 'The Common', it is part owned by Thomas Parsons' Charity, but accessible to the public. This top part of the Common was once known as Milking Hill Common and is a beautiful wild flower meadow with species such as Adders Tongue Fern and there are historical records of Green Winged Orchids.

### **Pillbox - Point of Interest**

A reminder of the defences erected around the country early in the Second World War in the event of invasion. The pill box is being converted into a potential bat hibernaculum (bat roost)

Turn right onto Kiln Lane.

Take care along the road keeping to the right hand side, passing the Environment Agency building on your right.

**3**

Along the road you will find an amazing view of Roswell Pits lake and Ely Cathedral.

Cross the railway line (take care).

After the railway crossing, you will find a metal field gate on your right hand side; lapwings are known to nest in this field and may be seen in spring.

**4**

At the 25mph speed sign on your left hand side, turn right onto a narrow tarmacked path named Fen Rivers Way.

Keep the car park on your left hand side, passing underneath the power lines.

At the end of the path turn right passing through the metal kissing gate.

Continue along gravel path with river located on your left hand side.

**5**

**6**

At the end of the gravel path, proceed through the kissing gate.

Continue along the path underneath the rail bridge turn right into Fisherman's Car Park.



### Access

Some sections of both routes may be unsteady underfoot. Sections of the Kingfisher Walk may be unsuitable for wheelchair and pushchair access.



### Additional information

Please be aware that sections of the walks are located within an ecological and geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Visitors are asked to respect the environment and keep dogs on leads when walking near nesting sites during the breeding session.

Please use the area responsibly and with respect to other users. Please dispose of litter using the bins provided and dog walkers must clean up after their dogs.

For other walks and trails, please visit [www.visitely.org.uk](http://www.visitely.org.uk) or contact Ely's Tourist Information Centre 01353 662062.