

Wansdyke Path directions – Lockeridge/Alton Barnes road to A361

Map: OS Explorer 157

Distance: 5.4 miles (8.65 km)

East to west

Go through the large metal gate into the field to the west of the Lockeridge to Alton Barnes road (which has a grubby notice on the fence next to it advising readers that the owners of New Town Farm allow access to the field for archaeological purposes) and proceed uphill, keeping the fence on your right. When the fence stops, continue in the same direction, still uphill but not as steeply. Aim for a stile beside a gate in the fence on the other side of the field, which is about 50m to the left of a circular enclosure of trees and bushes. Continue down the deeply rutted track in front of you. After about 40m turn left onto a level track. At this point you are reunited with the Wansdyke, which will be on your right for several miles. At the end of this track, there is a choice of routes and two gates: one takes you onto the top of the Wansdyke, and the other into a field, closely followed by second field. At the end of this, the routes converge and you plunge down onto a track and go through the gate at the top of the bank on the other side. Proceed along the edge of this field, and after a while there is a brief diversion away from the Wansdyke with the appearance of another narrow field between you and it. At the end of this, join a track going downhill, which passes a gate on your left with a notice by it about the Pewsey Downs Nature Reserve. It is at this point that you join both the White Horse Trail and the Mid Wilts Way, whose waymarks will accompany you virtually to the end of the Path.

After approx. 80m, cross a stile on the right at the top of a bank at a junction of tracks to get onto the Wansdyke. After a mile (1.6 km) walking along the top of the Wansdyke enjoying the superb views on both sides, arrive at a gate on the right in the corner of a field. Go through this and down the grassy track beyond to join a stony track parallel to the Wansdyke. Go left down this to arrive at a T junction after 100m or so. Go left towards a gate leading to Manor Farm, then almost immediately right through another gate to return to the top of the Wansdyke. Descend and continue, to arrive at a barn after just over 1 mile (1.6 km). Here go through another gate, then right and left over the drive leading to it to rejoin the Wansdyke after another gate. Continue along the top of the Wansdyke, crossing several farm tracks along the way, at all of which you drop down from the Wansdyke and negotiate a stile or metal kissing gate on each side of the track. After 1.2 miles (1.9 km) and a final stile, arrive at the A361 via the driveway of a house, Shepherd's Shore.

West to east

The Wansdyke crosses the A361 at Shepherd's Shore, where there is also a shot blasting and powder coating business. Go up the driveway of the house on the eastern side of the road, but almost at once branch right onto grass. Cross a stile and begin/continue a lengthy perambulation along the top of the Wansdyke. In the course of doing so, cross several farm tracks, at each of which you drop down from the Wansdyke and negotiate a stile or metal kissing gate on each side of the track. After 1.2 miles (1.9 km) arrive at a barn, pass to the left of it, then go right and left over the track leading to it to resume the path along the Wansdyke. After 2.4 miles (3.8 km), after a moderate ascent, arrive at a stony track leading to Manor Farm (per notice on gate on right). Go left after this gate, then immediately right along another stony track parallel to the Wansdyke for 100m, then branch right along a grassy track for 20m to arrive at a gate festooned with waymarks. On the other side of the gate, turn left and continue your progress along the Wansdyke. There are superb views on both sides along this stretch.

Finally, approx. 3 ½ miles (5.6 km) after leaving the A361, cross a stile at the top of a bank at a junction of tracks. Take the right hand track going uphill, with the Wansdyke still on your left, and pass a gate on your right with a notice by it about the Pewsey Downs Nature Reserve. (At this point you leave both the White Horse Trail and Mid Wilts Way). This track takes you into a field. There is soon a brief diversion away from the Wansdyke with the appearance of a narrow field to your left between you and it. Approx. 75m after the end of this diversion, fork left through a gate, then plunge down onto a track and climb up to the top of the bank on the other side, to the right of the unmistakable form of the Wansdyke looming above you. Here there is a choice of two routes: you can either walk along the top of the Wansdyke, or along the sides of two fields beside it. The gates out of the second one take you into a track with a fence on your right, at which point the two routes converge. Proceed down the track, then turn half right away from the Wansdyke onto another deeply rutted track. Cross the stile on the other side of the track which it joins after 40m or so. Continue in the same direction in the field beyond, aiming for a large tree which appears to be in its centre. Go downhill, first gradually and then more steeply, to discover that the tree is at a fence corner on your left. At the end of this fence you will arrive at the Lockeridge to Alton Barnes road.