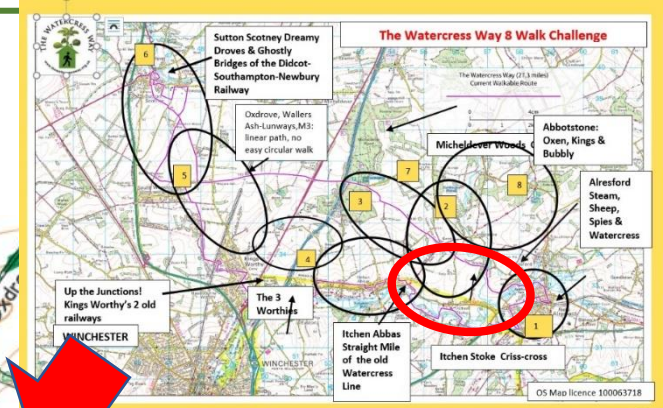


Watercress Way 8 Walk challenge: No 2/8 Itchen Abbas Criss-cross 5 or 7 miles



A **circular walk**, following about 3 miles of the southern part of the WW in the South Downs National Park. It can be shortened or lengthened & is suitable for children, and dogs under control. It is on grassy & gravel tracks and some roads without pavements. Some tracks can become overgrown & waterlogged. Refreshments at The Bush & Plough pubs. Wear appropriate clothing OS map app: [WW walk 2 of 8 from Ovington to Avington 1 Abbas loop 7 miles](#)

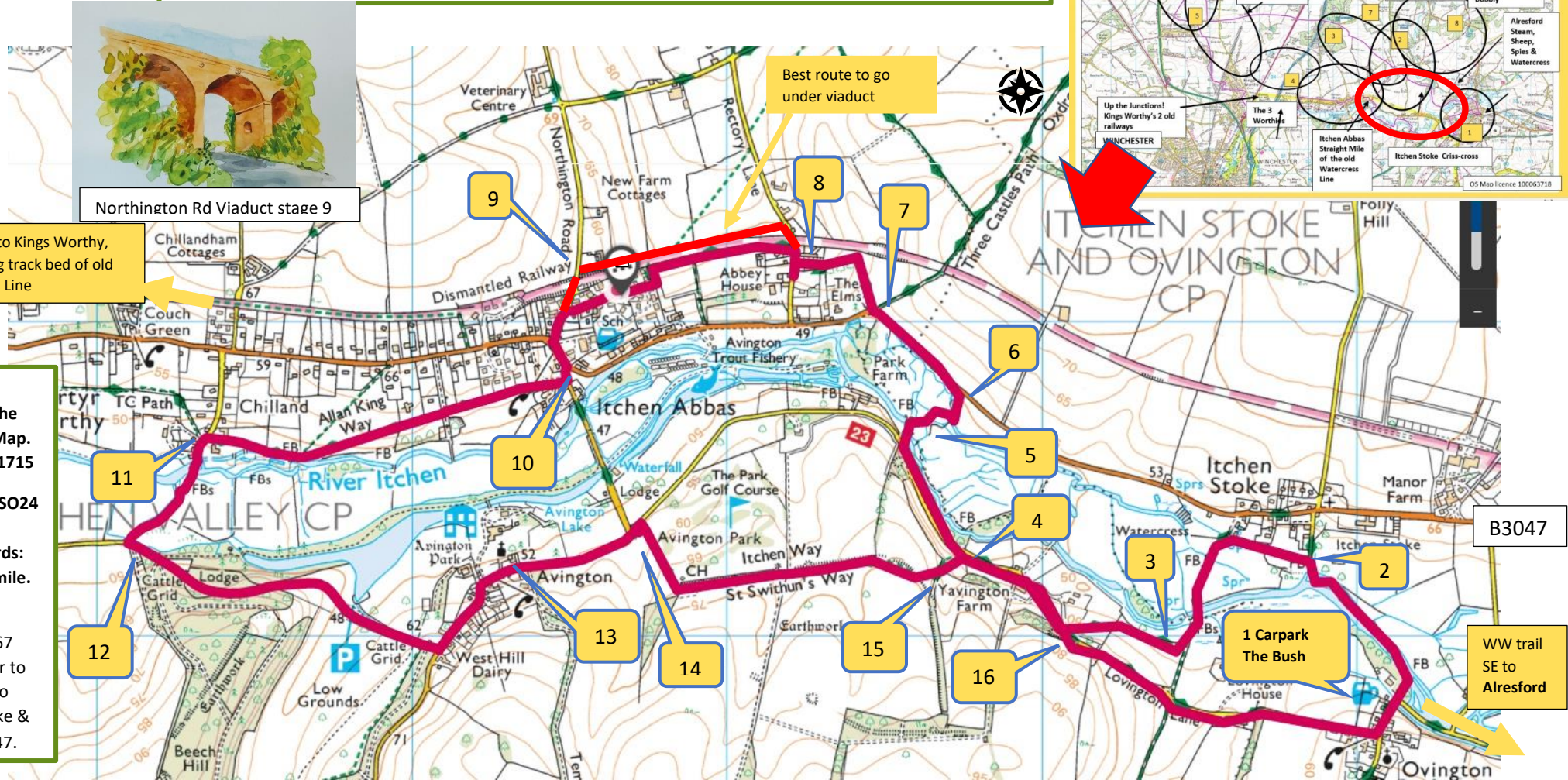
The River Itchen's valley, in the South Downs National Park. Glimpses of The old Watercress Line including Northington viaduct, beautiful historic parkland, sheep fields, verdant meadows, vineyards, pretty villages.



Northington Rd Viaduct stage 9

WW West to Kings Worthy, partly along track bed of old Watercress Line

ACCESS
 Carpark: The Bush OS Map. SU5605531715
 Post code SO24 ORE
 What3words: situation.mile.guessing
 Buses No 67 Winchester to Alresford to Itchen Stoke & along B3047.



WW trail SE to Alresford

See www.thewatercressway.org.uk to contact Trustees, & for more walks, cycling & horse riding routes. Become a 'friend' & receive regular updates. Help fund the charity's work on increasing access to the old railways & conservation work. We are on TripAdvisor, YouTube & social media Charity No 1167675 Follow the latest Countryside Code



	Directions with watchpoints
The watercress Way south of The Itchen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From The Bush carpark, follow the WW waymarkers north across the Itchen between the main river and an old mill race northwest to Itchen Stoke, Water Lane. 2. Just as you enter Water Lane, after small carpark, turn left through a kissing gate along a permissive footpath west then south across often flooded water meadows. 3. Cross several bridges until you meet a footpath and kissing gate to the right, gently going uphill across several fields, often with livestock. At Yavington Lane, turn right down the road(no pavements) 4. Ignore the footpath signed St Swithins Way on the left(you will descend this hill on the return journey, No 14). Carry on along the quiet road. 5. At the first footpath on the right, by an old wooden gate, enter the Nature Reserve(Dogs on lead).You cross several footbridges, some rickety! <i>Gets very wet here. Fabulous diverse habitats. Look for wild watercress(do not eat!), trout, warblers, cormorants attracted by the fish farms!</i>
The Watercress Way North of the Itchen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Exit the footpath onto the B3047, dangerous crossing. Cross straight over, up a bank and sharp left. This permissive past parallels the Grange Vineyard (<i>sparkling wine</i>). This is a narrow path, often with nettles, but safer than the main road. 7. Descend small bank into a layby. Ignore the bridleway to the right, unless you want slight detour to see Strawberry Lane old railway bridge of the Watercress Line which you can view from the bridleway, part of the 3 Castles Way. Back on the route: Take the next footpath to the right, through a kissing gate, uphill with huge beech trees to the left. <i>The large tree lined embankment in front of you is the old railway</i> 8. Exit via a kissing gate onto a residential road: Baring Close. Turn right at the end & follow Rectory Lane north until just after Winton Cottages. Choice here: Take the footpath to the left, up a few steps, which parallels the old Watercress Line through Little Hayes estate & School Lane(old wire fence is a clue) OR for a better view of the railway: carry on up Rectory Lane over old bridge, & take permissive footpath west through Newhouse Farm, which parallels the old infilled cutting all the way to Northington Lane. 9. Turn left at gate under amazing 1865 viaduct (Stage 9) . Then carry on to B 3047.
The Avington loop	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. At the main road, the B3047, stop following WW waymarkers, and cross over by the village hall to Avington Rd and St Johns Church. Here you can shorten the walk by several miles, by going straight down the Avington Rd to the Golf Course at stage 14. You can also access the straight mile here by walking up the hill west, towards Winchester (Walk 3) Otherwise, take the gravel footpath west in front of the church, which heads west parallel to the Itchen through several fields with stunning views. After the first kissing gate, just after a row of imposing lime trees is a small enclosure with a plaque. Divert to see Lord Gray's fishing Lodge. Back on the footpath, pass the swing & another 2 kissing gates before Chilland Lane minor road. 11. Turn left along a permissive footpath, past Chilland Mill. <i>Fields managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust- British White cattle here.</i> 12. At Easton Lane turn sharp left, heading east now back through Avington Park, <i>with fabulous views to the minor stately home of Avington itself, famous for Charles II and Nell Gwynne.</i> Follow the road over two cattle grids, and then turn left into Avington village, <i>past the old well(pretty flowers).</i> No pavements. 13. Pass by the remarkably intact Georgian church of St Marys (<i>linked with Percy Bysshe Shelley, brother of the owner of Avington</i>). <i>This is worth a look inside for the unusual family pews supposedly made from the Armada's captured ships</i> . At the eastern end of Avington village, you can access a footpath which parallels the road. 14. At the entrance to Avington Golf Course, turn right uphill, and follow a bridleway around the edge of the golf course to the left. <i>This gives a beautiful vantage point for the valley, and you will see the vineyards and Itchen Stoke Church in the far distance.</i> After a small beech hanger of trees, drop down hill to two kissing gates to Lovington Lane.
The Watercress Way	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. You are back on the Watercress Way for a short time , go right past Yavington Farm . 16. Here there is a choice: retrace your steps across the water meadows, crossing back to Itchen Stoke and then back to Ovington,(stages 3,2,1) or carry on this quiet road (no pavements) all the way to Ovington. At the T Junction, with Ovington's church to the right, turn left, downhill to The Bush Pub. The main WW trail goes east to Alresford.

Written by DoE volunteers and Kim Adams Trustee June 2021 Art work by Emma Lowres

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