



## The Countryside Code

From a gentle stroll or relaxing picnic to a long-distance walk or heart-pumping adventure, the countryside provides every opportunity for enjoyment and relaxation.



If you follow the Countryside Code wherever you go, you'll get the best enjoyment possible and you'll help to protect the countryside now and for future generations.

**Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**

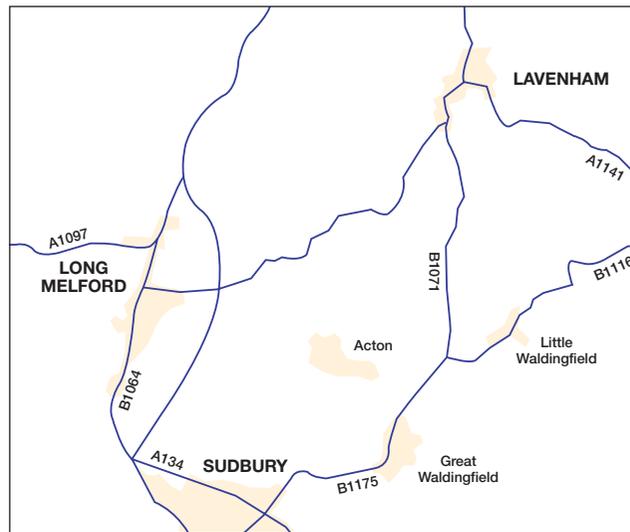
**Leave gates and property as you find them**

**Protect plants and animals, take your litter home**

**Keep dogs under close control**

**Consider other people**

We encourage the use of sustainable transport for you to access the walk. Please call the Suffolk County Council Traveline for more information.



**The Lavenham Walk is managed by Suffolk County Council. For further information about the Walk, please contact**

**Suffolk County Council**  
c/o Clare Country Park  
Maltings Lane  
Clare  
CO10 8NJ

Tel: 01787 277491  
[www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside](http://www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside)



# Explore The Lavenham Walk



Which site will you discover next?



# The Lavenham Walk

The Lavenham Walk follows a section of the disused railway line that once linked Sudbury to Bury St Edmunds. The Walk is now owned and managed by Suffolk County Council as a recreational path and wildlife conservation area. The 1 1/2 mile (2.55km) Walk links the village of Lavenham with Melford Hall Estate. A path through the estate takes you on to Long Melford. Two other countryside walks - The Melford Walk and the Valley Walk (see separate leaflets) also follow parts of this line and all three can be used as part of a longer walk between Sudbury and Lavenham.

There is open access to the whole track for walkers and cyclists. Horseriders are also welcome but not through the deep cutting at the south western end which is now a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). There is a permissive path along the top of the cutting for horses.

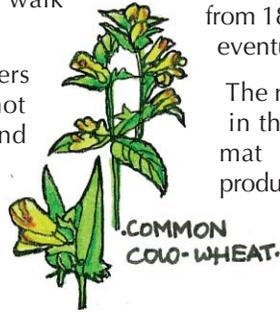
Lavenham Walk can be joined at Lavenham, Park Road, Bridge Street Road and via several public

rights of way, which provide a selection of circular walks of varying lengths from Lavenham. St Edmund Way, a long distance path, joins the Walk from Lineage Wood to Park Road. There is also a through route for walkers and horses on a path agreed with the owner of Melford Hall.

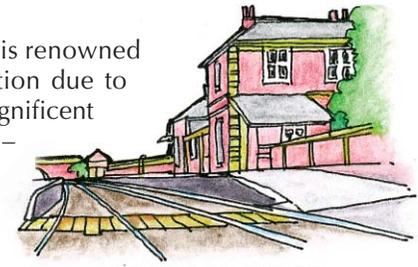
## The Railway

The Lavenham Walk was part of the Great Eastern Railway that allowed travellers easy access between Colchester and Bury St Edmunds. Trains operated along this section of the line, between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds, from 1865 to 1961. However, the popularity of car travel eventually led to the downfall of the railways.

The railway was vital to the local economy, bringing in the raw materials for the horsehair and coconut mat industries, and returning with the finished products and agricultural produce. Lavenham was home to the first sugar beet factory in England, although only working from 1868 to 1884.



The popular village is renowned as a tourist destination due to the survival of its magnificent medieval buildings – the result of its successful wooltrade of that time.



THE OLD STATION, LAVENHAM.

## The Life of the Railway

The Lavenham Walk leads you out of the town through paddocks and meadows into the arable landscape beyond. This narrow wildlife corridor connecting hedges, ponds and woods provides a peaceful retreat for wildlife and humans alike. The pillboxes though, viewed to the north, belie a more unsettled time. They were built as a line of secondary defence between the railway, town and Lavenham airfield, the base for the 487th Bomb Group of the American 8th Air Force, constructed just north of the town.

All along the track, the trees, scrub and vegetation provide ideal habitats for numerous birds, insects and mammals. Look for hovering kestrels as they hunt for prey along the track and neighbouring meadows. You may hear the warbling of whitethroats on your walk or catch sight of them diving in the undergrowth when they visit in the summer months.

Moving further away from Lavenham, leaving the noises of the town behind, an interesting arched bridge takes you into a calm, deep cutting with aromas of mint and ground ivy. This has become a fabulous sanctuary to a wide range of wildlife including 16 species of butterfly, orchids, thistles, quaking grass. Glow-worms are an amazing sight here – the females emitting light to attract males in the warmer summer evenings. Many of the species have become less common in the British countryside over the last 50 years due to loss of grassland and meadows, so this area has been designated as a County Wildlife Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its protection.

