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 Valley Trail is managed by Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council. For further information about the Trail, please contact the relevant organisation.

Babergh District Council
Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Suffolk
IP7 6SJ
Tel: 01473 822801

Suffolk County Council
c/o Clare Country Park
Maltings Lane
Clare
CO10 8NJ
Tel: 01787 277491
www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/e-and-t/countryside

Designed and printed by Suffolk Design and Print. Tel: 01473 584212.
The Valley Trail - The 3 mile Valley Trail follows the disused railway line that linked Sudbury to Cambridge. The trail starts at the Kingfisher car park in Sudbury and takes you to Rodbridge Picnic Site. It is now owned and managed by Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council as a recreational path and to enhance its nature conservation value.

Cyclists as well as walkers can use the whole trail and horseriders are welcome between Ballingdon bridge and Rodbridge Picnic Site. It is a part of some promoted long distance walking routes, the Stour Valley Path and St Edmunds Way, the National Cycle Network supported by Sustrans, some locally promoted circular routes and links to numerous public rights of way.

The Railway - The Valley Trail was part of the Great Eastern Railway linking Colchester to Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds, and was known as the Stour Valley Line. Trains operated along here from 1865 until 1967 and proved to be cheaper and more efficient than barges. The development of the railway was an important factor in the expansion of Sudbury during the second half of the 19th century. By the 1920’s the development of the road system lead to the eventual closure of the railway beyond Sudbury.

The Valley Trail runs through the Sudbury riverside meadows, which are the oldest continuously grazed pastures in East Anglia. The majority of these have been part of the Sudbury Common Lands Charity since 1897 and are traditionally managed.

The Life of the Railway - The landscape of Victorian Britain was dramatically altered by the construction of railways with the raising of embankments, digging of cuttings and tunnels and the erection of bridges and viaducts. These channels of communication through town and country provided protected corridors of countryside for wildlife. Since the 1960s, thousands of miles of track have become redundant, some creating recreational track ways while still remaining wildlife sanctuaries.

The ambience of the trail changes as you pass through a variety of habitats. This haven connects hedges, woods and ponds in the countryside around attracting a great variety of different species of birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies and other insects.

Badgers find a home here in the earth below while long eared owls nest and find sanctuary in the trees above. The thickets of scrub and bramble welcome the visiting warblers whose clear song heralds in spring. On warm balmy spring and summer days the colours of the plants mingle with that of the butterflies flitting about and the darting iridescent dragonflies. The Deptford Pink, a nationally endangered plant can also find the right conditions here in the grassland.