

The Colchester Orbital Cycle

A cycle route (clockwise) from the Castle Park, via High Woods Country Park, Welsh Wood, Salary Brook, the Wivenhoe Trail and The Hythe, the Garrison, Hilly Fields (or Lexden Park).

About this route...

- ❖ **Suggested start/end point:** Middle Gate (Lower Castle Park), at the bottom of Maidenburgh Street.
 - ❖ **Grid ref:** TL997256
 - ❖ **Distance:** 14.3/15.3 miles
 - ❖ **Facilities at start:** toilets in lower Castle Park (when open) and Boating Lake. Nearest cafés on North Hill and North Station Road, or the park café (all within 1/4 mile).
- 1a Enter the lower Castle Park, if open, via Middle Mill Gate (adjacent to the weir and Sustrans Milepost). Follow the path along the river to the opposite far corner. Exit here and turn left across the bridge, then bear right, keeping the exercise area to your left. Continue to Meander Mews and immediately in advance turn left on the cycle path. At Cowdray Avenue cross at the designated crossing point.
 - 1b If the park is closed, cross the weir bridge instead on National Cycle Network route 1 (NCN 1) on to King's Meadow, and take the diagonal path left to Pavilion Way on the far side. Turn right. At the junction with NCN 51, go straight on, between the retail car park (left) and exercise area (right). Continue to Meander Mews, and then as above (1a).
 - 2 On the far side of Cowdray Ave., take the service road to the right of Aldi, then the cycle path right. Continue under the railway and on to Havering Close. At Broadlands Way go left, then immediately left again on to the cycle path that heads via a tunnel into High Woods Country Park. Continue up through the park to the junction with the East-West NCN 1 route. Go right and onwards for approx. 400m to exit at Hillridge on to Myland Hall Chase Cycle Path (NCN 1).
 - 3 Continue on The Chase through the backs of houses to the T-junction with the Ipswich Road at the BP station. Go right then cross at the traffic lights. On the far side, go right again and immediately left onto the cycle path signposted 'St John's'. At Chalfont Road go right; then first left onto Wilmington Road. At St Cyrus Road go right, then at the T-junction with St Christopher Road, go left.
 - 4 Continue to St. Johns Road, turn right, then immediately left onto Dunthorne Road. At the junction with Parsons Heath (A137), go right (note – this requires riders to dismount due to a raised kerb and bollards). Immediately after, turn left on to Welshwood Park Road.
 - 5 Go straight over the mini roundabout and turn right onto Woodlands. After approx. 300m, on the right-hand bend at the bottom of the slope, turn left into Welsh Wood itself. Follow the main path through the woods and exit on to Barbel Road. Head left, following the road upwards, then left again at Salary Close.
 - 6 At Bromley Road turn left and head downhill. Just before the Beehive Pub (left), turn right onto Salary Brook cycle path, signposted 'Salary Brook Nature Reserve'. Follow the path the full length of the valley running along the foot of Greenstead. At its end, at Clingoe Hill (A133), take the path bearing right and upwards to the road, instead of the underpass, then turn left and continue for approx. 270m upwards on Clingoe Hill to the traffic lights. Cross here and enter the University of Essex campus (Wivenhoe Park).
 - 7 Continue on Boundary Road with the main campus to the left (using the pavement if necessary, to navigate the traffic barriers). At Valley Road, turn right onto the footpath opposite and head down through trees to the railway crossing and the Wivenhoe Trail (NCN route 51) along the banks of the River Colne beyond. Head right along the river and then the quayside, back towards Colchester.
 - 8 At the junction with Colne Causeway, go left and cross Haven Bridge. At the roundabout, take an access road hard left (outside Pizza Hut), doubling back down on to King Edward Quay. Follow along the south bank of

the Colne for approx. 500m and then around to the right, to a junction with Haven Road. Go right here, then left at the mini roundabout onto Whitehall Road. After approx. 400m, turn right onto Whitehall Close (beware raised kerbs and bollards). Continue until Old Heath Road.

- 9 At Old Heath Road turn right, then left onto Barn Hall Avenue. At the junction with Churchill Way go left, then left again onto a short lane (right) leading towards garages, just after Stalin Way. (Note, Bourne Valley Nature Reserve lies just off Old Heath Road, shortly beyond Barn Hall Avenue. Routing via this pretty valley is highly recommended, but chicanes at entry and exit, combined with narrow footpath and boardwalk, make it necessary to dismount. At the end of the valley, take the footpath left, up to Stalin Road, then go left and continue to Churchill Way. The lane to the garages is opposite and to the right).
- 10 At the garages, take the path left (Jackson Walk) and follow through the back of houses to Abbots Road. Go right and continue to the mini roundabout at Mersea Road. Turn left here. After approx. 400m, turn right onto Queen Elizabeth Way, then right again on Monkwick Avenue. Just inside the entrance to Thomas Lord Audley School (on the right after approx. 300m), take the cycle path which bears immediately around to the left to a T-junction of paths Colchester Garrison. Turn right and continue around the perimeter of the barracks. At the next junction go left, then onwards beneath the flyover, which comes into sight shortly afterwards. Continue parallel to Berechurch Hall Road on the far side.
- 11 Approx. 350m beyond the flyover, at a junction of paths (signposted 'Friday Woods' straight ahead), take the path right towards 'Layer Rd'. Continue for approx. 1 km, crossing Fallowfield Road. Cross Layer Rd at the traffic lights and head straight over to continue (off-road) on Boadicea Way and around the perimeter of Shrub End Playing Fields, to Shrub End Road. Cross at the traffic lights & go straight over on to Norman Way (South), which reaches a dead end soon after, just past The Commons.
- 12 Take the cut-through at the end of Norman Way onto a cycle path running via greensward with Irvine Road allotments to the right. At a T-junction of paths, go left then right (effectively straight) onto a path that runs along the eastern boundary of Philip Morant School (connecting Norman Way, north and south). Continue on to Lexden Road and cross onto Lockhart Avenue, opposite. Turn right onto Endsleigh Court, then left at the junction with Sussex Road. Continue upwards to Hilly Fields Nature Reserve at the top. Take the cycle path diagonally right across the open grassland of Hilly Fields ahead. Wind downhill towards the buildings of Colchester Institute and at a T-junction of paths go left. Shortly after, at Sheepen Road, go right. Continue as for 14 (below) to complete the route.

Alternative route via Lexden Park, Spring Park and Cymbeline Meadows

A slightly longer variant to the principal route, departing westwards from Norman Way South, via Lexden Park, Spring Park and Cymbeline Meadows. Note, this option entails some busy stretches of road. It also connects with - rather than routing through - these important additional green spaces.

- 13 From Norman Way South, go left onto The Commons, merging with Church Lane alongside Lexden Park (right). At Lexden Road, cross over onto Spring Lane, past Spring Lane Park (left) and Lexden Springs Nature Reserve (right). At Spring Lane roundabout, bear right. At the mouth of the roundabout from the direction of Remembrance Avenue, cross with great care, utilizing the central island (with dropped kerbs). On the far side, go right and along Remembrance Avenue, via off-road cycle path. After approx. 1.5km, at Cymbeline Meadows (left), cross at the traffic lights, double-back 150m to take Sheepen Road.
- 14 Continue past the entrance to Colchester Institute (right) and St Helena School (left). As Sheepen Road bears right, take the underpass (left), beneath Westway, onto Sheepen Place. At Middleborough turn left, then left again at the mini roundabout onto North Station Road. Cross immediately, before the bridge, and take the path down to the south bank of the River Colne. Follow along to Middle Mill gate. This completes the Orbital cycling route.

The Colchester Orbital (Cycle) is a 14-15-mile circular route around town, connecting some of our loveliest green spaces. Further information, including details of the *Colchester Orbital Walk Guide* and route accessibility, are also available from the Orbital website: <https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-orbital>