

Walk : Harrold Village Walk (option 1 – includes loop around Harrold-Odell Country Park)

Length: 5.5 km

Duration: Approximately 2 hrs

1. With your back to the centre, take a sharp left along the walkers' path and join the path behind the centre heading diagonally across the field towards Harrold Bridge. There has been a bridge here since 1136. It was an important point for crossing the Great Ouse River between Bedford and Northampton. **Why do you think the bridge is so long and has so many arches? The river always floods here in the winter.**
2. At the bottom of the field, go through the metal kissing gate and turn right across the bridge. This has been an important causeway since the 12th century, linking the towns of Wellingborough (north) and Bedford (south).
3. Proceed with caution across the bridge, keeping to your right. (There's a large refuge in the centre of the bridge if you encounter a lorry or bus while crossing). Once across the bridge, carefully cross at the lights and proceed along the footpath, crossing Hall Close.



4. At the bus stop opposite the entrance to Harrold-Odell Country Park, turn left through the metal gate and follow the path through the graveyard to St Peter's Church on your left. This was built in the 13th century on what is believed to have been the site of a Saxon church.

5. Pass under the lychgate and follow the road, onto a footpath to the left of a wooden fence. As the path opens onto a road, you will see a row of traditional thatched buildings on your right. The large white one was once the courthouse. **What is the small round building with a tiled roof that you can see opposite the courthouse? The "Lock-up" which was built in 1824 to provide temporary accommodation for felons awaiting trial. It was last used in 1967.**



6. Ahead, you will see a triangular green space with a circular tiled building standing on it. This is the 18th century Buttermarket. Proceed past the primary school to the top of the road and turn left onto the High Street. To the right of the primary school is a low, brick-built building which was once the smithy.

7. Follow the pavement until you reach a bus stop almost opposite the entrance to the Harrold Tennis Club. Take a moment to look across the road towards the Oakley Arms Pub. Here, on 30th June 1968, Paul McCartney first performed the now famous hit "Hey Jude".

8. Cross the road with care and proceed along the footpath to your right. **What does the white sign with a red outline and a picture of a bike mean at the start of this footpath? No cycling.**
9. With the water course on your left (constructed in the 19th century to serve the leather industry in the village), follow the path through a modern housing estate, until you reach a small, concrete bridge. Cross the bridge and continue along the path through an older housing area.
10. Follow the path, crossing the side road and zig-zagging through the flats back to the main road. This is a busy road, so cross carefully and enter the country park directly opposite you.



11. At the wooden signpost, follow the circular path down to the lake and turn left at the "no fishing" sign. Follow the path around the lake. **What is the wooden structure to your right? A bird hide (look out for the much bigger one on the opposite side of the lake which has information panels for identifying water fowl and insects.)**



12. When you reach the “staggered crossroads”, turn right and go past the carved seating on your right and follow the path down to the carpark. Here, you can continue along the main gravel path or take the more scenic (and safer) route on your right.

13. Walk past the café and toilets to your right and exit the country park. Cross the main road carefully at the end of the park and proceed to your left, crossing Hall Close, back to the bridge.

14. Cross the bridge with care. Retrace your steps over the wooden bridge and through the metal kissing gate at the traffic lights, up the field and back to the Chellington Centre.



Source: OS Maps