

SUSSEX HOSPICES TRAIL PART 11: WEST ST LEONARDS TO CROWHURST



Moderate Terrain

**5 Miles
Linear
3 hours**

1205/19



Access Notes

1. The route includes several gentle gradients.
2. Along the way you will need to negotiate one kissing gate, farm gates, footbridges and one stile.
3. There are some sections of walking through quiet residential areas and one or two sections through woodland which may be muddy.
4. You will be sharing some of the fields with grazing livestock so take particular care with dogs.
5. There are no facilities for the bulk of the walk, but you will find a pub in Crowhurst at the end of the walk. We recommend that you check the opening times by telephone as they can vary. There are many spots for a picnic along the walk.



A 5 mile linear walk from West St Leonards rail station to Crowhurst rail station in East Sussex, forming the 11th stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

The route takes you around the open land at the edge of Bexhill into the tranquil Sussex countryside. On route you will walk through mixed woodland, stroll through the Combe Valley Nature Reserve and follow a section of the 1066 Country Walk. Combe Valley is a site of biological importance due to its diversity of habitat supporting many species of flora and fauna. Alluvial meadows and reed beds cover a large section of this area. The return leg can be completed with a single 6 minute train journey.

The hospices of Sussex are dedicated to providing specialist end-of-life care. Friends of Sussex Hospices has worked with partners and supporters to create the Sussex Hospices Trail, a 200 mile long-distance path to support and raise awareness of the twelve hospice care providers that serve the adults and children of Sussex.

Getting there

The walk starts at West St Leonards rail station and ends at Crowhurst rail station. The two stations are connected by an hourly train service which is just a 6 minute journey. There are pay and display car parks at both stations. West St Leonards parking rates are: Mon-Fri £3.20, Sat £2.50 Sun and Bank Holidays £1.00 (correct April 2016).

Approximate postcode for West St Leonards **TN38 ONL**.

Walk Sections



Start to Harley Shute Road



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Leave West St Leonards Station and, with your back to the station, turn right. Head up St Vincents Road on the right-hand pavement and before the T-junction, swap to the left-hand pavement. Turn left at the junction for a few paces and then cross over Filsham Road using the zebra crossing. At the far side turn right then immediately left into a tarmac footpath which is signposted Combe Valley Countryside Park.

This is the nearest point on the Sussex Hospices Trail to St Michael's Hospice in Hastings. St Michael's Hospice provides excellent holistic care and support for all those throughout Hastings and Rother affected by a progressive life-limiting illness or bereavement. As a charity providing care free of charge, the hospice needs to raise over £10,000 every day to continue providing these invaluable services.

Follow this sloping pathway which runs down between the school playing fields to your left and the railway line to your right. Stay on this path (ignoring the railway footbridge to your right). When the path emerges from the trees cross a narrow path and then carefully cross Harley Shute Road (B2092) after which you go through a metal kissing gate ahead.

1 → 2 Harley Shute Road to Wooden Causeway



Follow the footpath closest to the railway line as it heads downwards towards the open land ahead. At the lowest point you will come to a wooden causeway in front of you, crossing a stream.

2 → 3 Wooden Causeway to Crowhurst Worsham Sign 4



Cross the wooden causeway and follow the footpath (signposted towards Hollington) upwards into the wooded area

ahead. At the top of the rise take the left fork downhill and into the woodland. The path here twists and is uneven and may be very muddy.

As you come out of the woodland, turn right at the signpost numbered 21 and follow the footpath with the stream on your right until you come to a footbridge (where there is signpost which says Crowhurst to Worsham No 4).

3 → 4 Crowhurst Worsham Sign 4 to Bridge Corner



Turn right to continue your walk along the clearly marked path keeping the stream, which is called Combe Haven, on your left. You are now in the central area of the Countryside Park with its open water, ditches, grassland, scrub and woodland. The park contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the diversity of flora and fauna includes a nationally important population of dragonflies. Cattle graze some of the fields through the summer months and help to manage the water meadows.

4 → 5 Bridge Corner to Crowhurst Fingerpost 56



You will come to a divide in the path by a tree. Cross the bridge and bear to your left. In this wetland area you are likely to see many types of wildfowl such as pipets and marsh harriers. Continue on the path (with Combe Haven still running on your left) until you reach a signpost saying Crowhurst No 56.

5 → 6 Crowhurst Fingerpost 56 to Sandrock Hill



At this signpost turn right, cross the bridge and follow the path which is part of the 1066 Countryside Walk long-distance path. Continue on this path, around the left-hand field edge (which swings right), heading towards the new raised road that is ahead. Bear left onto a temporary footpath (correct April 2016) that leads you under the road. (This much-contested road was opened in Dec 2015 and is the A2690 Hastings to Bexhill Combe Valley Way. The road cuts right across this formerly tranquil valley and although the sight of cars has been hidden by banks and wooden baffles, the tops of larger vehicles can be seen).

Now simply follow the footpath ahead with a lake on your left and continue into another field of crops, also on your left. On your right is a ditch through which runs Powdermill Stream. Follow the path and you will see the village of Crowhurst ahead of you. The route continues, passing to the left of a recreation ground, and then reaches Sandrock Hill in Crowhurst.

7 → 8 Groundilly Cottage to End



Follow the grassy path downwards to the entrance to a large field. NOTE: This section may be very muddy and you may come across livestock in these fields. Your route continues with the church ahead. Go through the first field (following the hedge line on your left), over a footbridge and then along the right-hand edge of a second field (in which there may be sheep). You will see a farm gate ahead which leads you into Forewood Lane. (Across the road is the parish church which is dedicated to St George. The ruins of the manor house lie to the south of it).

Turn right onto Forewood Lane. If you are continuing onto Trail Part 12 stay on Forewood Lane. Otherwise, turn right again into Station Road which takes you uphill to Crowhurst rail station, marking the end of Part 11 of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

6 → 7 Sandrock Hill to Grandilly Cottage



At the junction with this road, turn right to follow the direction marked by the 1066 Country Walk signpost. Carefully cross the road and then turn left into Sampson's Lane. After about 80 metres turn left again at Grandilly Cottage and go through the gate (bearing a Southern Water Services sign) into the field.

In Celebration of St Michael's Hospice

The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Angela and Jim Sellick to celebrate the remarkable work done by St Michael's Hospice in Hastings. To read more about the sponsors of this Trail visit hospicetrail.co.uk

We hope you have enjoyed walking this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail. Hospices deliver their services for free but such care is not cheap and they largely depend on funds raised from their local communities. We would be very grateful if you would consider making a donation either to your local hospice, wherever that may be, or to the Friends of Sussex Hospices in order to support these invaluable services.

To donate £5 to the Friends of Sussex Hospices text
SHTR16 £5 to 70070

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Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and a map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

