

SUSSEX  
HOSPICES  
TRAIL

# SUSSEX HOSPICES TRAIL PART 7:

## SOUTHEASE TO ALFRISTON



Challenging Terrain

7 Miles  
Linear  
3.5 hours

090519



### Access Notes

1. The route is steep at the start and then it is easier walking on the Downs before descending into Alfriston.
2. The route follows the South Downs Way and so is well-walked and fairly easy to navigate.
3. There are several gates to negotiate and two cattle grids. There may be livestock on the Downs, so take particular care with dogs.



## A 7 mile linear route which forms the seventh part of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

The walk starts at Southease rail station, just the other side of the River Ouse from the lovely village of Southease, and follows the South Downs Way along the scarp slope of the downs all the way to Alfriston.

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 begins at Southease rail station which is just east of the village of Southease on the Seaford Branch of the East Coastway Line and is surrounded by agricultural land. The typical off-peak service is one train per hour via Lewes to Brighton and one train per hour to Seaford. The walk ends in Alfriston village, from where you will need to arrange your onward journey. There are several options in terms of public transport for the return journey from Alfriston to Southease, however several of these bus and train routes are infrequent (and the connections can be lengthy) so please ensure you check your own arrangements for the particular day and time that you will need to travel. One option is to catch the 47 Bus to Seaford and then catch the train from Seaford to Southease. A second option is to catch the 125 Bus to Lewes and then take a train from Lewes to Southease. You can plan your journey in advance using [traveline.info](http://traveline.info).

## Walk Sections

### Go 1 Start to Hilltop

From Southease rail station, cross the railway line carefully at the pedestrian crossing and continue ahead towards the Youth Hostel (where there is a cafe and toilets). As you approach the Youth Hostel car park, turn to the right and cross the footbridge over the A26. Go through the gate and follow the chalky footpath which soon divides to offer you an option of a very steep OR a slightly less steep climb up to the top of Itford Hill (the choice is yours) where a settlement stood in the Late Bronze Age. Here the chalk path peters out to become short grassy turf.



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## 1 → 2 Hilltop to Car Park



Continue straight ahead to follow the wide, trodden grassy path. On a clear day there should be extensive views to Lewes in the Ouse Valley to your left and Newhaven and the coastline to your right. NOTE: You may be sharing the paths with sheep and/or cattle, so take particular care with dogs. There are likely to be many other walkers, riders and cyclists on the route as this is a very popular stretch of the South Downs Way.

The gradient eases as you are walking along the ridge. You will pass a radio station to your right and a steep lane (called a bostal) emerges from Firle village on your left. Go ahead, crossing over the lane, to reach a small car park.

## 2 → 3 Car Park to Firle Beacon



The route continues along the ridge to eventually reach Firle Beacon (marked with a trig point), which is one of the highest points on the South Downs. The village and manor of Firle Place is downhill to your left and, in clear weather, you should

have extensive views out across the Low Weald and beyond. The route continues along the edge of the escarpment and the grass is usually short, which makes for easy walking. There are also seats nearby if you wish to stop and enjoy the view.

## 3 → 4 Firle Beacon to Bopeep Crossing



Continue ahead on the wide trodden path which bends slightly to the south east. A small footpath veers off to your left (ignore this) towards the famous Charleston Farmhouse, home of the Bloomsbury Group and decorated with their unique artwork. Stay with the South Downs Way and a lane emerges from your left (Bopeep Bostal) at which point you will meet another car park.

## 4 → 5 Bopeep Crossing to Paths Cross



Follow the path ahead. Soon you will meet crop fields to your right and the pathway narrows as you begin to head downhill. At a four-way crossing of footpaths, take the narrow path straight ahead and through the trees.

## 5 → 6 Paths Cross to Kings Ride

Follow the narrow chalky path downhill towards Alfriston. This lovely village, on the River Cuckmere, has tea shops and pubs and is home to Alfriston Clergy House, the first property to be owned by National Trust. Continue straight ahead as the footpath meets the residential road called Kings Ride.



## 6 → 7 Kings Ride to End



Continue along the left-hand side pavement and then, at the junction, cross over and go ahead into Star Lane. When you meet the High Street turn left and continue ahead, walking north. You will see the distinctive bright red lion on the corner of the Star Inn which was salvaged from a shipwreck long ago. Continue to the bus stop at Waterloo Square where this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail ends. (NOTE: See the paragraph within the Getting There introductory section of this guide for details of public transport options).

### In Memory of Richard Salter

The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Jan Salter in memory of Richard Salter. Richard was cared for by both St Peter and St James Hospice and St Catherine's Hospice.

To read more about the sponsors of this Trail visit [hospicetrail.co.uk](http://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

Friends of Sussex Hospices, Registered Charity No. 1089306

<http://www.friendsofsussexhospices.org.uk/how-you-can-help/donations>

#### 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.

