



Walk on the WILDSIDE

JO VAUGHAN TAKES A SHORT DRIVE TO THE MARKET TOWN OF ALFORD TO EXPLORE SOME OF HER LOCAL LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE

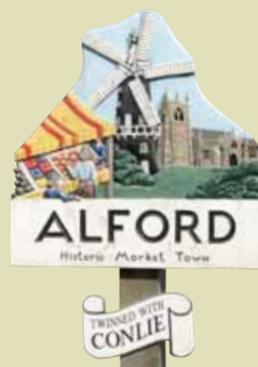


HEADING SIX miles down the road to Alford from the Club's Hawthorn Farm site wasn't the original plan. According to local OS maps there are loads of footpaths to explore directly from the site, although in reality many of these are closed or inaccessible.

But it's worth the short drive if only to see Alford's five-sailed working windmill and its old-fashioned town centre. This walk takes you past the windmill, then into the attractive surrounding countryside.

A general market takes place here on Tuesdays which could make parking

difficult, and there's also a Craft Market on Tuesdays and Fridays during the summer months.



General information

NEAREST CLUB SITE: Hawthorn Farm Caravan Club site, Crabtree Lane, Sutton-on-Sea, Mablethorpe LN12 2RS. Tel 01507 441503
DISTANCE: 4.6 miles/7.4km
TERRAIN: Tarmac and grassy paths
NUMBER OF STILES: 8
ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: Ordnance Survey Explorer 274

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy
CAR PARKING: Car park adjacent to Alford's library, found just off South Market Place. Cost: £1 for four hours. There's plenty of room, although overspill car park has a height barrier of 2.2m (7ft 4in)
REFRESHMENTS: Alford town centre
TOILETS: Car park



DIRECTIONS

1 Leave the car park using the entrance by the toilets, and turn right towards Barclays Bank and the square. Continue down Church Street before turning right in front of the church, following a brown 'Windmill' sign.

2 Continue along the main road's pathway, bearing left following the direction of another 'Windmill' sign (sp A1104). Pass the magnificent working five-sailed windmill, pausing to visit if you choose, before continuing along the road.

3 Before the de-restriction road sign, turn left following a green public footpath sign 'To Alford'. Follow the right side of a hedgerow before veering left at the end of the field, following a yellow arrow over a wooden boardwalk. Head around the back of a football pitch before veering right, following another yellow arrow. Walk ahead through a metal kissing gate where you turn left, keeping to the left side of the field.

4 Don't pass through the gate ahead – instead turn 90 degrees to your right towards a wooden kissing gate marked with a yellow arrow. Pass through this before heading diagonally to the next field's far right-hand corner, towards a bridge.

5 Pass over the river and then bear right through a metal kissing gate. Then bear left to diagonally cross the field to a metal gate in its far corner. Pass through another metal kissing gate and then keep to the left side of the field towards a wooden gate, following a barbed wire fence.

6 Go over the stile at the end of the field and veer left and then right towards the houses. When you reach the tarmac lane turn right and follow this all the way to the house and farm. But just before the buildings, cross a stile just to the left of a 'Hazardous Substances' sign. Follow the direction of the arrow ahead along the fence line.

7 Head through a gap in the fence, still skirting the buildings, before crossing another stile beside a stone water butt. Walk towards a bush in the middle of the field, and cross the stile behind it. Now turn left (following a yellow arrow). The 'moat' is to your left, but leave it as it soon curves 90 degrees to the left, turning right and following the yellow arrow towards both a hedge and another yellow-arrowed



Local attractions

- **Five Sailed Windmill**, East Street, Alford. Tel 01507 462136. Open: All year (selected days off peak). Disabled access. Working windmill that produces a full range of flours and wholemeal.
- **Mablethorpe Animal Gardens and Seal Sanctuary**, North End, Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire LN12 1QG. Tel 01507 473346; website mablethorpe-seals.co.uk.
- **Gunby Hall**, Gunby, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5SS. Tel 01909 486411 or email gunbyhall.ic24.net. Open: House and gardens – April to the end of September on Wednesdays from 2-6pm. Gardens only – Thursdays from 2-6pm. National Trust. Disabled access.

Tourist information

7-8 West Street, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9HT. Tel 01507 462143; email alfordinfo@e-lindsey.gov.uk.

post, found to the left of a lone tree.
8 Follow this arrow to the left keeping a dyke to your right. Follow the hedge until the wooden bridge upon which is another public footpath sign. Cross this before turning left to skate around the left side of the field, following another dyke. Cross the dyke where marked by arrows, and immediately turn right to the road.

9 Cross the stile and road, and pass the entrance to Mandy's Plant and Garden Centre. Continue ahead before turning left just before a tree plantation on your left, following a public footpath sign. Keep the plantation briefly to your right before turning left at a dyke (your back is now to the trees). Cross the dyke at the wooden railed bridge and then continue straight ahead following a yellow arrow through a clear trail in the field's planting.

10 At the end veer right to follow the dyke (on your left), and cross a stile before turning left (again, following an arrow). Go across another wooden stile and continue ahead following an arrow up the left side of a field, first following a dyke and then a hedge. Cross another wooden railed bridge and continue straight ahead, still following yellow arrows.

11 Cross the next wooden bridge on your left and then immediately turn

right (the dyke is now on your right). At the end, cross another stile, and bridge, and continue down a narrow grassy path. Go through the kissing gate, and walk to the road.

12 Turn left to walk along the pavement, past the 'Alford Historic Market Town' sign, but very soon carefully cross the road and turn right to follow the signpost 'To Mill Rundle Walk'. Keep close to the dyke until the field's end, and then cross it before immediately turning left. At the path's crossroads keep ahead before turning right at another dyke, following the public footpath sign (the dyke is on your left).

13 At the public footpath sign, turn left across a stone bridge and continue towards the houses. Go through a metal gate, cross the road, and continue ahead down a narrow footpath that runs behind some bungalows. Just past the bollards turn left, and at the T-junction keep right. Pass straight over the entrance to 'Wood Road' and then at the T-junction turn right.

14 At the main road junction, cross the road ahead (Hamilton Road) and continue down South Street, first passing a red postbox on your left, and then the Memorial Park Trust Recreation Ground. Soon you'll return to the car park.

Alford: 4.6miles/7.4km

