

WALK 3.

IVY FARM WOOD WANDER via West Down

Abbreviations: Turn right **TR**, turn left **TL**, straight on **SO**, footpath **FP**, bridleway **BW**.

Distance: about 2.8 miles (4.5 km);

Time: about 1 hour.

Level: easy.

The walk starts at the **Abbot's Mitre Public House**.

1. Leave the pub and **TR**. Walk along village street for about 100 yards.
2. **TR** down a gravel track. This is **Cart Lane** (indicated by a finger post with the carving of a cart on the finger!) Walk along the track with houses on both sides. It soon becomes a path between trees. Walk up the hill. At the top the path widens to a broad grass path along the edge of a field on your left and a hedge on your right. Look back and to your left and admire the view. Continue along this path until you reach an obvious junction with tarmac and the gates to **Hunts** (John Deere dealers).
3. **TR** and walk through the gates. This is a permissive **FP**. You will see agricultural machinery to your left. Continue along a wide, scalping/grass path until you reach a gate. Duck under a wooden bar on the right. You are now in **Drove Road** (tarmac).
4. **TR** and walk down Drove Road until you see a gap in the hedge on the left marked by finger post saying **Permissive Bridleway**. NB. At this point there is a poo bag dispenser and a dog poo bag disposal bin.
5. **TL** and walk along this grassy path which runs parallel with **Little Drove Road** on your right. Continue **SO** until you reach a gap in the hedge dead in front of you. Go through the gap and **TR**. You are now on the **Mark Way**.
6. Walk along a narrow path with a double wire fence on your left and a hedge on your right. Shortly, the path bends sharply to the left. Continue along the path. You will see another path on your right, parallel to the one you are on. Ignore it. Continue along the Mark Way until the path bends to the right (indicated by a way marker on a wooden post). You have now reached the eastern edge of **West Down Nature Reserve**. Part of this is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). West Down is managed by Chilbolton Parish Council.
7. Ignore the paths immediately on your left and right and go **SO** through trees and veer slightly to the left. You will see a gap in a post and rail fence ahead of you. Go through the gap. Cross the field veering to the left. The grass path is obvious. Bending to the left you will come to an old, single bar wooden gate. Go round it and go **SO** across a concrete road. You will see a path (sometimes muddy) in front of you. The path divides here. Take the left fork and enter a **FP** through woodland. This is **Ivy Farm Wood**. Follow an obvious path ignoring paths to your left.
8. You will come to a junction of paths with a tree in the middle. **TL** and head for a wooden pedestrian gate. Go through it. You are now in the enclosed area of West Down. You may meet cattle. These are docile Red Devons that are used for conservation grazing. Follow the **FP**. You will reach a junction of paths with a five bar gate to your right. Go **SO**. Follow quite a wide, undulating, gravel

track. There are some fine views to your left and a wooden bench to take a rest. At this point, on the right, is a concrete post marked MS and is a boundary marker of the former Chilbolton Airfield used during the Second World War.

9. As you come to some woodland you will see a large, wooden gate on your right. Just past this there is another concrete boundary pillar. The path divides here. It doesn't matter which you take as they both end in almost the same place.

10. In front of you will soon see houses (the outskirts of **Chilbolton**). There is a wooden bench here if you feel like a rest. The path goes down the slope. You will see a cattle pen in front of you and to the left of this is a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and **TL** to follow the **Test Way** (way marked) along the verge.

11. When you reach the tarmac road **TL**; then cross the road and almost immediately **TR** (sign-posted). There is a gap in the hedge. Go through it. You will see the Coronation Tree on your left with a bench underneath it marking the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. There is a fine view of the River Test. After a few yards **TR** along a narrow gravel **FP**. You are on the **Test Way**. You will see some attractive water gardens on your left and the garden of Watch Cottage on your right.

12. Follow this path bordered by a high fence until you reach a pedestrian gate. Go through it. You have reached the **War Memorial Playing Field** given to the Parish Council in memory of those from Chilbolton who gave their lives in the Second World War. If you have a dog, please put him/her on a lead.

13. You have a choice. You can either:

- carry **SO** in the direction of the pavilion and exit the playing field by a gate in the left hand corner of the field. Here there is a dog poo bag dispenser and a waste bin. Go through the gate and onto a wide gravel track with the Old Cottage on your right;
- or
- veer to the left. You will see a large metal roller. Head in that direction. Just beyond it to the left you will see a pedestrian gate. This is the route of the **Test Way**. Go through it and **TR** and follow the narrow path through trees. It emerges onto a wide gravel track with the Old Cottage in front of you.

14. You have now reached **Chilbolton Cow Common** a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This is conservation grazed in late spring and in summer. There are many varieties of wild flowers to enjoy as well as fine views of the River Test. Follow the gravel track as it bends to the right in front of the cottage until you reach a Footpath/Bridleway sign near a dog poo box. At this point **TL**

15. Walk along the wide gravel track and through a gate (often open). You will see three houses in front of you. The centre one is the Old Inn. Walk towards it. If you wish to explore the common **TL**. Otherwise, about half way to the Old Inn, you will pass a double manhole cover (BT) and immediately after you will see a grass path heading off diagonally to your right. Take it. It leads towards a small, wooden bridge over the Abbot's Stream. Cross the bridge and go through the gate. Please make sure you close it. A narrow path goes between gardens to the left and the right. Follow this path. You will come to the village street and the **Abbot's Mitre** is in front of you.

That's the end of the walk. I hope you enjoyed it.

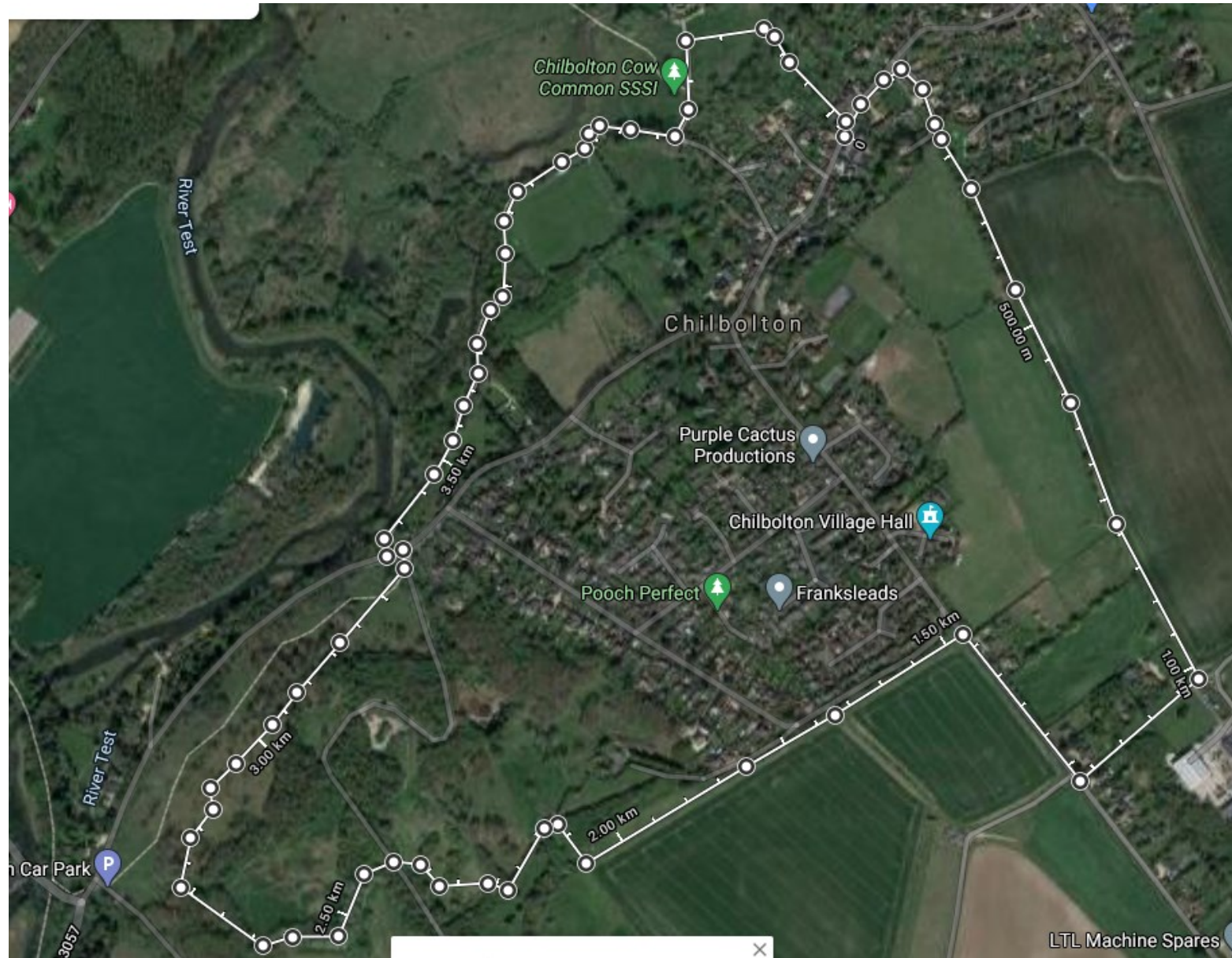


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