



Wareham Forest Way

Wareham to Sturminster Marshall - 13 miles (20.8km)



River Piddle



Wareham Common



Sturminster Marshall



Wareham Forest

A signposted walk through some of the less well-known landscapes of north Purbeck and east Dorset.

Useful contacts:

Rights of Way/Countryside Access Officer	01305 221000
Discover Purbeck Information Centre (Wareham)	01929 552740
Tourist Information Centre (Wimborne)	01202 886116
Forestry Commission (Wareham Office)	0300 067 4600

Open Access

Parts of Wareham Forest are mapped as open access land. Look out for the access symbol shown right. For more information visit gov.uk/right-of-way-access-land



Footpaths and Bridleways

Footpaths are for the use of pedestrians only and will be signposted by:



Bridleways are for the use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and will be signposted by:



Other walking leaflets available: Wareham Two Rivers Walks, Purbeck Way, Purbeck Way West Route and Lawrence of Arabia Trail.

Photo credits: Richard Elston - English Nature and Nicholas James.

Please note: The representation of a track or path is no evidence of a public right of way. This is not a Definitive Map of Rights of Way and has no legal status. Users of all routes shown in this leaflet do so entirely at their own risk and are responsible for their own safety, and the safety of others using the same route. We cannot guarantee that all routes will be passable, particularly in wet weather.

Whilst every care has been taken in the production of this leaflet, Dorset Council cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information and accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Large print leaflets are available on request.
Please call 01929 552737 for further information.

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Wareham Forest Way



Sand Lizard



Wareham Forest



Green hairstreak butterfly on bluebells

The Wareham Forest Way Walking Trail is just over 13 miles long and follows public rights of way and minor roads between Wareham and Sturminster Marshall.

Wildlife Watching

The heathy slopes of Woolsbarrow Hill Fort in Wareham Forest are an important wildlife habitat, but the species that live there are sensitive to disturbance and can be well hidden.

In spring you may be lucky enough to see Sand Lizards basking on the sandy paths and Dartford Warblers perching on gorse branches.

At dawn and dusk throughout the summer, you might see Nightjar hunting for insects and hear the distinct churring song of the male birds within the wooded section of the forest. You may also see Grey Squirrels, Woodpeckers, Treecreepers, birds of prey and Sika Deer during your visit.

Horse Riding

Horse riders with a Forestry Commission permit are welcome to use the Wareham Forest Way where bridleways exist on the trail.

Following the Wareham Forest Way

The trail is signposted in both directions with various signs and markers, some showing the distinctive pine cone logo shown below. Some sections of the path become muddy in winter. Although this leaflet includes a map, you are advised to take along O.S. Landranger (1:50,000) sheet 195, Bournemouth and Purbeck map.



Section 1: 7 miles (11.3km). Approx. 3 hours of walking Wareham to Morden

From Wareham Quay travel through the quiet roads of the town, passing next to Wareham Walls. Cross Wareham Common and the River Piddle water meadows. Follow the winding path through farmland and small woodlands before reaching Wareham Forest's conifer plantations and heathland. The top of Woolsbarrow Hill Fort is a great viewpoint with views of Poole Harbour. Travel through forest into farmland as you reach the village of Morden.

Section 2: 6 miles (9.6km). Approx. 2 ½ hours of walking Morden to Sturminster Marshall

Travelling east, through Morden and past St Mary's Church, you will travel through farmland and a former deer park known as Old Park; where from its eastern edge, the bank and ditch of the Park Pale can be seen. Cross two major roads and then travel north west over a dismantled railway brings you to Sturminster Marshall. The path then links with the Stour Valley Way following the route of the River Stour - leading upstream towards Blandford and downstream to Christchurch Harbour. Please take care when crossing busy roads.

Keeping Purbeck Special

The Purbeck countryside is a special place. Please help to look after it by following the main points of the Countryside Code.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



West Morden

Public Transport Information

There are bus connections between Wareham and Sturminster Marshall via Poole. Catch bus number 40 between Wareham and Poole and bus number X8 between Poole and Sturminster Marshall. Telephone: 01202 338420 or www.morebus.co.uk.

There are Railway Stations at Poole and Wareham on the London to Weymouth railway line Bus number 40 connects with both Stations. Telephone: 0345 6000 650

Wareham Forest Way

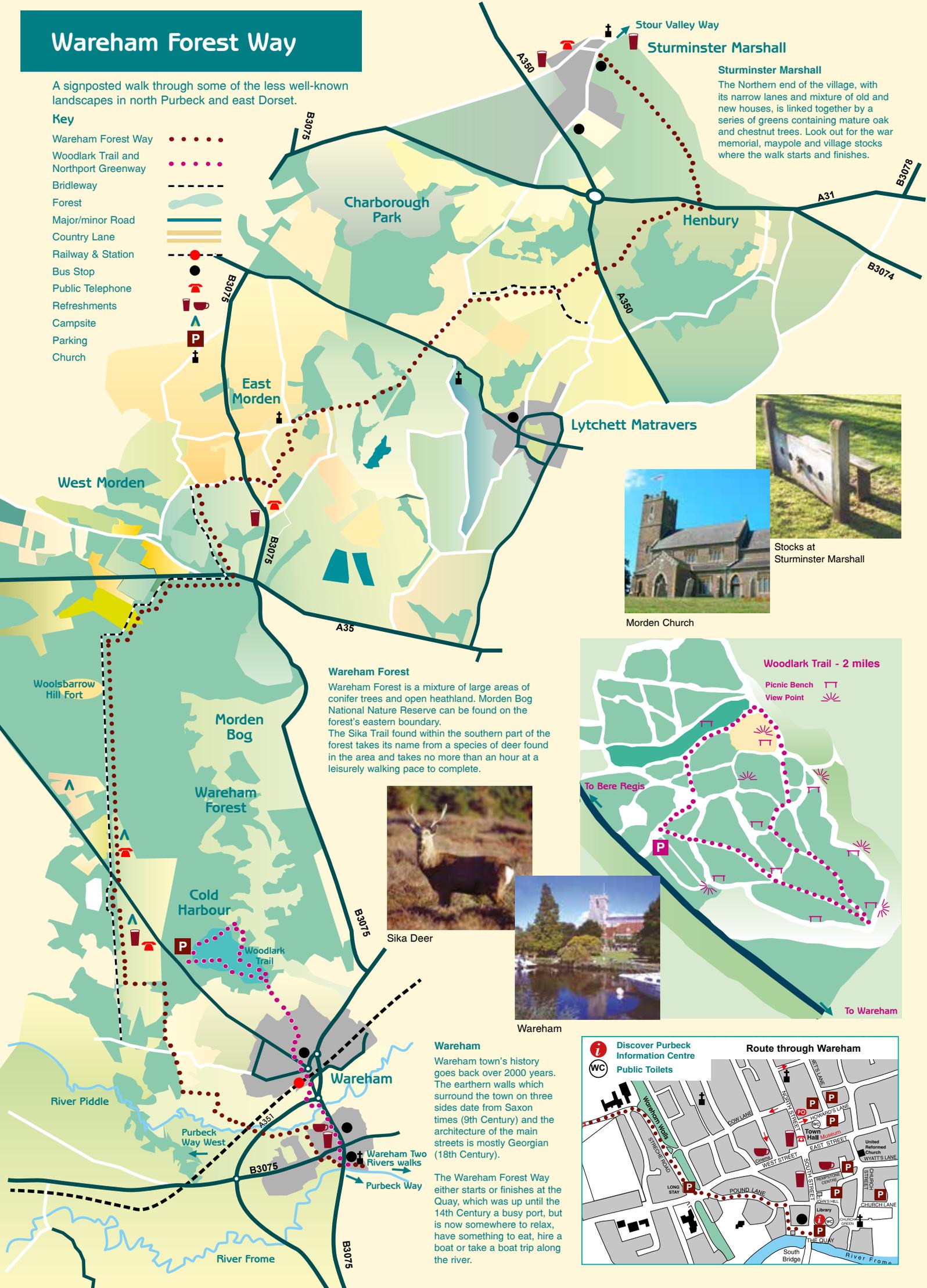
A signposted walk through some of the less well-known landscapes in north Purbeck and east Dorset.

Key

- Wareham Forest Way
- Woodlark Trail and Northport Greenway
- Bridleway
- Forest
- Major/minor Road
- Country Lane
- Railway & Station
- Bus Stop
- Public Telephone ☎
- Refreshments ☕
- Campsite ⛺
- Parking P
- Church ✠

Sturminster Marshall

The Northern end of the village, with its narrow lanes and mixture of old and new houses, is linked together by a series of greens containing mature oak and chestnut trees. Look out for the war memorial, maypole and village stocks where the walk starts and finishes.



Stocks at Sturminster Marshall



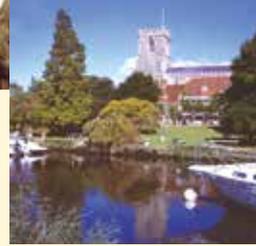
Morden Church

Wareham Forest

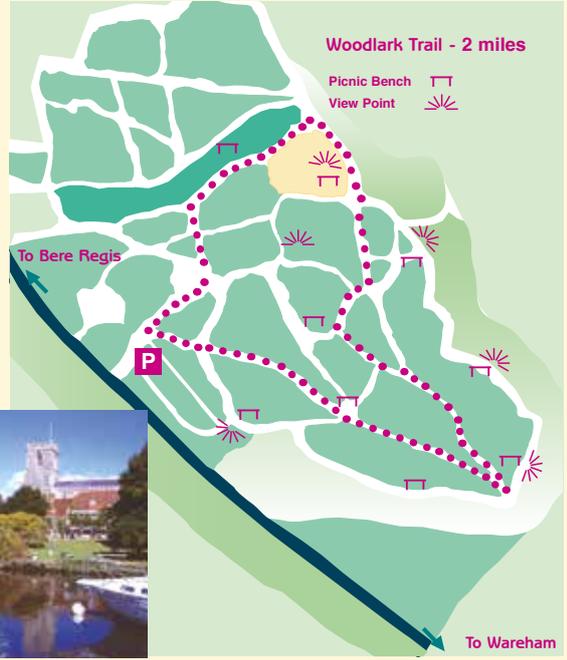
Wareham Forest is a mixture of large areas of conifer trees and open heathland. Morden Bog National Nature Reserve can be found on the forest's eastern boundary. The Sika Trail found within the southern part of the forest takes its name from a species of deer found in the area and takes no more than an hour at a leisurely walking pace to complete.



Sika Deer



Wareham



Wareham

Wareham town's history goes back over 2000 years. The earthen walls which surround the town on three sides date from Saxon times (9th Century) and the architecture of the main streets is mostly Georgian (18th Century).

The Wareham Forest Way either starts or finishes at the Quay, which was up until the 14th Century a busy port, but is now somewhere to relax, have something to eat, hire a boat or take a boat trip along the river.

