

Your guide to

# Cycling in DORSET

WEST

41 Mile Route from Sherborne to Portland



Your guide to the  
National Cycle Network Route 26  
in West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

Route 26  
[www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com)

# be free to explore West Dorset at your own pace



With 400 square miles of countryside almost entirely designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, West Dorset is a great place to explore on two wheels. Here you'll find sleepy villages, bustling market towns, serene river valleys and green rolling hills. Our world famous Jurassic Coast is not far away and offers dramatic cliff-top views.

Use this leaflet to follow the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 26 between Sherborne and Dorchester and on to Weymouth and Portland.

The entire route covers approximately 41 miles and is manageable in a day, but you can do as much or as little as you please. The route includes the fascinating towns of **Dorchester, Sherborne and Weymouth** and many pretty villages along the way.



If you are looking for somewhere to stay our Tourist Information Centres offer a free accommodation booking service. Alternatively, contact them for a copy of the West Dorset Visitor Guide, or visit our website [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com). Both feature an impressive range of high quality accommodation throughout West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland.



Remember to look out for the cycle friendly logo. This indicates accommodation with special facilities like a room to dry wet clothes and a secure place to store your bike.

Details of places to eat out, free town centre maps, events, attractions and other cycle routes in West Dorset are also available on our website or from our Tourist Information Centres, (see back cover).

Although most of the **NCN Route 26** is signed, you should use Ordnance Survey Landranger maps 183 & 194 alongside this leaflet.

To report missing signs or for queries/comments on the route please contact Dorset County Council on: 01305 221000 or email: [dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk)



## Tour De Manche and Petit Tour De Manche

Explore further and discover the beautiful scenery of France and South West England on these two cross-channel cycle routes. More information at [www.tourdemanche.com](http://www.tourdemanche.com)

## Travelling by Train:

### South West Trains

London (Waterloo) to Weymouth services call at Dorchester South Station and Weymouth. London (Waterloo) to Exeter services call at Sherborne and Yeovil Junction

### First Great Western

Bristol to Weymouth services call at Yeovil Pen Mill, Thornford, Yetminster, Chetnole, Maiden Newton, Dorchester West and Weymouth.

For all rail enquiries call 08457 484 950 or visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

## Safe cycling advice:

Remember to be visible, wear bright clothing and carry a waterproof. Take refreshments, OS maps and a cycle repair kit. Always follow the Highway Code and remember country lanes can be narrow and busy with farm and local traffic at times so please be extra vigilant.



### Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Yeovil

**TRI UK** (hire and repairs)  
76 Lyde Rd, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 5DW  
T / 01935 422000 [www.triuk.com](http://www.triuk.com)

### Rock and Road

(repairs only)  
Unit 2, Merlin Road, Lynx Trading Estate, Yeovil, BA20 2GZ  
T / 01935 431937 [www.rockandroaduk.com](http://www.rockandroaduk.com)

### Halfords

(repairs only)  
Unit 4, Western Avenue, Houndstone Retail Park, Yeovil BA22 8Y  
T / 01935 432737 [www.halfords.com](http://www.halfords.com)



### Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Sherborne

**Riley's Cycles** (repairs only)  
Trendle Street, Sherborne (Nr the Abbey)  
T / 01935 812038 [www.rileyscycles.co.uk](http://www.rileyscycles.co.uk)

### Hope 2 Cycle

(repairs only)  
The Old Parcel Office, Sherborne Railway Station, DT9 3NB  
T / 01747 851397 [www.hope2cycle.org.uk](http://www.hope2cycle.org.uk)



### Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Dorchester

**Dorchester Cycles** (hire and repairs)  
31 Great Western Rd, Dorchester DT1 1UF  
T / 01305 268787 [www.dorchestercycles.co.uk](http://www.dorchestercycles.co.uk)

### Mud, Sweat and Gears

(repairs only)  
1st Floor, Great Western House,  
Great Western Ind. Estate, Dorchester, DT1 1RD  
T / 01305 260202 [www.mudsweatngears.co.uk](http://www.mudsweatngears.co.uk)

### Halfords

Unit 3, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2RY  
T / 01305 251732 [www.halfords.com](http://www.halfords.com)

### Poundbury Cyclesport

(repairs only)  
4 Hessary Street, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3SF  
T / 01305 458155 [www.poundburycyclesport.co.uk](http://www.poundburycyclesport.co.uk)



### Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Weymouth

**Fixbike** (Mobile repairs)  
T / 01305 898145 [www.weymouthcyclehire.co.uk](http://www.weymouthcyclehire.co.uk)

**Weymouth & Portland Bike Hire** (hire only)  
T / 0778 3456749 [www.portlandbikehire.com](http://www.portlandbikehire.com)

**Tilley's Cycles** (hire and repairs)  
9 Frederick Place, Weymouth, DT4 8HQ  
T / 01305 785672 [www.tilleysmotorcycles.co.uk](http://www.tilleysmotorcycles.co.uk)

### Cyclife

(repairs only)  
28 Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0AE  
T / 01305 781831 [www.cyclife.com](http://www.cyclife.com)

# Your Guide to the NCN Route 26 in West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland

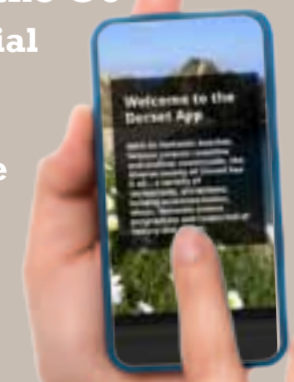


The route details opposite are in a north to south direction from **Sherborne** to **Portland** but you can cycle the route in either direction and do as much or as little as you please. Dorchester to Portland is about 14 miles and a pleasant, traffic free, leisurely day ride. Select part of the route nearest to your holiday accommodation, catch the train and cycle on from the station or simply use this map as a guide to explore West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland for yourself. To help you get started, the point where the NCN routes start in Sherborne and Dorchester are shown on the maps of each town. Don't forget to use Ordnance Survey Landranger maps alongside this leaflet.

Note: mileages are included only as a guide.

Let's get those wheels rolling!

Download your **FREE Dorset Visitor App** your 'Guidebook on the Go'. Our free 'Dorset - official visitor guide' app is crammed with details on places to stay, where to eat, shopping, attractions, activities and events.



**Key to Map**

- National Cycle Network on-road route
- National Cycle Network traffic-free route (including some forest tracks and paths alongside busy roads)
- Train Track
- River
- Roads leading off-route
- Extra care needed
- Tourist Information Centre
- Tourist Information Point



The National Cycle Network Route 26 starts on Bradford Road. This is marked on the map. If you need to pick up some supplies before you set out, Cheap Street is the main shopping street in the town.

The NCN route 26 from Dorchester For Weymouth, pick up the NCN26 signs on Weymouth Avenue and for Sherborne at Colliton Street

## Section 1 Sherborne to Barwick (Approx 5.5 miles)

Much of this part of the route is made up of level country lanes with views to open countryside. From the start of the NCN route signs on **Bradford Road**, continue for approx 2.5 miles. Turn left at the junction signed **Bradford Abbas** and continue along this lane. Continue over a small bridge, signed **Clifton Maybank**, and at a junction turn right and follow the signs for **Stoford**. Pass under a railway bridge and continue until you reach a T-junction at **Stoford** (take care at this junction!). Turn left and then right. The village green should now be on your left. Pass under a railway bridge. Turn immediately right. Follow the track up and round to the left. Turn right into **Southview**. Pass the school on your right. At the junction bear right entering **Church Lane**. Continue past the Church (on your left) and up a steep hill through a high narrow, hamstone cutting.

## Section 2 Barwick to Sutton Bingham Reservoir (Approx 5 miles)

This part of the route is also mostly level. The route through East Coker to Sutton Bingham Reservoir is very pretty and at the reservoir there is a picnic spot where you can enjoy a well deserved break. Use the short section of cycle path to the roundabout and to cross the busy A37. Dismount and cross the A37 using the island provided to reach the lane on the other side, next to the pub. (This part of the route is currently unsigned.) Continue along the narrow lane (grass grows in the middle in places). At the T-junction turn sharp left to **East Coker**. After about 2 miles at a T-junction turn left. Here you will pick up the NCN route signs again. After about 1 mile at the T-junction turn right. Continue down the hill under the railway bridge to **Sutton Bingham Reservoir**.

## Section 3 Sutton Bingham Reservoir to Maiden Newton (Approx 9 miles)

Most of this section of the route is quiet and level. There is one very steep hill as you take the road towards **Closworth**. At **Cattistock** you will find a post office, stores, a pub, playground and phone box. This is a great place for a picnic lunch especially if you are cycling with children. **Maiden Newton** also has all the amenities of a large village; newsagents, pub, post office, phone box, car parking and a train station, making it a great starting point to pick up the route in either direction. Cross the embankment over the reservoir (take the first left for picnic stop or second left to see historic Norman Church). Continue towards the village of **Halstock**. At the crossroads turn left, sign-posted **Closworth**. Continue up a steep hill to **Clarkham Cross**. At the T-junction turn right. Follow this lane for 2 miles. At a T-junction turn right. (Turn left to explore the village of **Evershot**.) Go over a small bridge. At the next junction turn left. Continue along this lane through the villages of **Rampisham**, **Wraxhall** and **Cattistock** to **Maiden Newton**. Take care entering **Maiden Newton**. The town can be busy. At the T-junction turn right. Continue past the war memorial. At the **Cross Monument**, turn left. You are now in the centre of **Maiden Newton** and on the busy **A356**.

## Section 4 Maiden Newton to Dorchester (Approx 8 miles)

This part of the route is mostly level. Large sections are off-road making it ideal for novice cyclists and children. The last section that runs along the **A37** is off-road, shared foot/cycleway. Take the first right into **Frome Lane** to **Frome Vauchurch**. Continue along this lane. At sharp bend, follow road round to the right. At the T-junction turn left. Follow signs to **Cruxton** and follow the quiet lane alongside the river. At **Cruxton** the route becomes a bridleway and passes the hamlet of **Notton**. (Cyclists can use bridleways but must give way to other users.) There are a number of gates and cycle friendly style gates to negotiate along this lovely off-road stretch. Continue to **Southover** (on-road) then **Frampton** (off-road/bridleway). The bridleway is rough in places for about 0.5mile and really best suited to mountain bikes, bikes with chunky tyres and tourers. Take extreme care. You may wish to explore the village of **Frampton**. Turn left, on leaving the bridleway and a short distance down the road there is a bridge over the **River Frome** and a village green next to the river. Continue along the route. You will reach a private road which is actually a bridleway to the small hamlet of **Muckleford**. Cross over the crossroads. Take great care here. Follow the narrow country lane for about 2 miles to **Bradford Peverell**. Continue through the village. Turn left and follow the lane. Go under the railway bridge. You will reach a crossing point on the busy **A37**. Cross this on foot. The NCN follows a shared foot/cycleway along the **A37** all the way to **Dorchester**.

From the **A37** take a left turn signposted **Charminster**. At the cross roads go straight over. You will pass a Church on your left. At the top of the hill, follow the road around to the right past the entrance to **Wolfeton House**. Follow this road and join the shared foot/cycle route on the **A352**. Cross the road at the traffic lights by the **Sun Inn Pub**. Continue to follow the cycle route/path alongside the **A352**. The route follows the river and will bring you into **Dorchester** by **Hangman's Cottage**. Alternatively if you approach **Dorchester** from the **A37** you will come to the end of the signed NCN route just on the outskirts of **Dorchester**, just south of a petrol station.

## Section 5 Dorchester to Weymouth (Approx 9 miles)

Route NCN26 is not signed through the centre of **Dorchester**. From **Glyde Path Road** turn right onto **Colliton Street**, cycling past **County Hall** and then turn left onto the **Walks**. Dismount and cross **High West Street** using the zebra crossing, then continue down **The Walks**, cross **Princes Street** and carry on down **West Walks** past **Borough Gardens**. At the bottom, turn left into **Bowling Alley Walk** and then follow **South Walks** all the way to **Icen Way**. At **Icen Way** turn sharp right onto **South Walks Road**, then left down **Culliford Road North**. At the traffic light junction with **Prince of Wales Road**, go straight on and over the railway bridge and carry straight on into **Culliford Road**. At the junction with **Lucetta Lane**, bear right round the roundabout and into **South Court Avenue**; from this point the route is clearly signed as **NCN26** all the way to **Weymouth**. Follow the signs left into **Manor Road**, left into **Herringstone Road** then right down a traffic free path passing under the railway to **Weymouth Avenue**. Cross the road at the signalised **Toucan** crossing then turn left down the cycle path. Cross the **Tesco** roundabout and pick up the cycle path to **Stadium Roundabout**. Take care crossing the **A35** then follow the **NCN26** traffic free path adjacent to the **A354** signed "Weymouth" all the way to **Manor Roundabout**. From here follow the signs on a short on-road section then pick up the traffic free cycle path alongside **Radipole Lake** and follow the signs to **Westham Bridge**. At this point you can either park your bike and explore **Weymouth** or push onto **Portland**.

## Section 6: Weymouth to Portland (Approx 4.5 miles)

At **Westham Bridge** follow the signs to **Portland**, use the subway to pass under the **A354** and then pick up the traffic free **Rodwell Trail**, a disused railway line. Follow this for 2 miles to **Ferry Bridge** and cross **Portland Beach Road** using the signalised **Toucan** crossing then turn left and follow the path next to **Portland Beach Road** past **Chesil Beach Visitor Centre** to **Osprey Quay**. At the first roundabout cross the road and follow the path through **Osprey Quay** to pass the **National Sailing Academy**, **Portland Marina** and **Portland Castle**. Follow **Mulberry Avenue** and **Lerret Road** to reach **Fortuneswell**.



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# So much to discover along the way...



## En route through West Dorset's towns & villages...

### **i** Sherborne

Sherborne is one of West Dorset's prettiest towns. It nestles in green valleys and wooded hills and has so much to offer. It's a thriving cultural centre, home to delightful and varied shopping, hand-crafted goods and elegant fashions. It's well known as the home to many fine art and antique shops and every Thursday and Saturday you can enjoy the busy atmosphere of the open-air market in Cheap Street. A Farmers' Market is held every third Friday of the month.

Don't miss visits to Sherborne Abbey, museum, the 15th Century Almshouse and two castles. Call into the Tourist Information Centre and pick up a town leaflet for more details of what Sherborne has to offer.

### **(Pub)** Bradford Abbas

To explore Bradford Abbas you will need to detour off route slightly. The pretty Church of St Mary is worth a look.

### **Barwick**

Barwick was first mentioned in 1185 when it belonged to Walter de Canteleu. Here you will find the 13th Century church of St Mary Magdalene with magnificent carved medieval bench ends. The park around Barwick House is dotted with strange follies including 'Jack the Treacle Eater' named after the servant lad Jack, who apparently ran to London with a message and nothing but a jar of treacle to sustain him. You will need to detour off route to see the Barwick Park Follies. A leaflet is available from Tourist Information Centres.

### **(Pub)** East Coker

East Coker's most renowned resident was the great navigator and pirate, William Dampier who was the first Englishman to set foot in Australia. He explored the west coast and was navigator on the ship that rescued Alexander Selkirk, the real-life Robinson Crusoe.

Until the 19th Century flax was grown in many areas locally and every cottage had a loom for weaving 'Coker cloth'. Flax from this village was used in Hillary's ascent of Everest and to lower Churchill's coffin at his interment.

Other notable points of interest include T.S.Eliot's ashes which are buried in the churchyard and one of the finest freestanding Elm trees in Europe.

### **Sutton Bingham Reservoir**

Sutton Bingham Reservoir is a mature reservoir in a beautiful setting and offers brown and rainbow trout fly-fishing, with facilities for the disabled. It is an ideal spot for watching water birds and enjoying picnics. There is a picnic spot, just over the bridge, turn left. The lovely little Old Saints Church nearby was built around 1111 A.D. It has only had one period of major alteration in about 1300 and has a very fine chancel arch and medieval wall paintings.

### **(Post Office and Shop)** Halstock

The church of St Mary has a nave (1845) by Pugin, the famous Gothic revival architect. The chapel is dedicated to St Juthware (Judith), who carried her own head to the altar after being

beheaded in the 7th or 8th Century by her brother, who mistakenly accused her of being pregnant. A number of Dorset Inns have since been named 'The Quiet Woman'.

### **(Shop, Pub and Post Office)** Evershot

The detour from the route into Evershot is approx 1 mile. This is a pretty village with a great variety of architecture. It is the source of the River Frome, which flows from here to Poole Harbour. Thomas Hardy used Evershot for his novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles and renamed it Evershead. Tess had breakfast in one of the cottages here. It was also used as a film location for Jane Austen's Emma in 1995.

### **(Pub and Shop)** Cattistock

Cattistock has one of the finest 19th Century churches in Dorset. The tower is unusually high and visible for miles and the church is beautifully painted inside. If you are cycling with children, Cattistock offers a playground, pub and shop, making it a good rest stop.



There is much to explore in Dorchester.

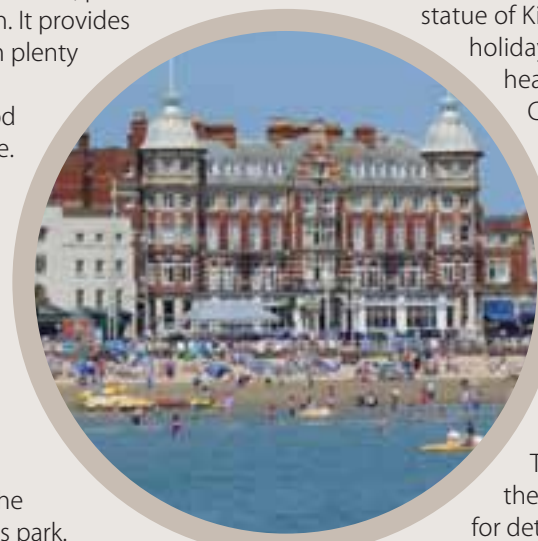
You can find out more from the Tourist Information Centre and pick up leaflets and trails to help you explore the town and its attractions. If you want to explore the heart of Thomas Hardy Country, visit Hardy's birthplace at Higher Bockhampton and Max Gate, his later home of his own design, on the edge of town (both are National Trust properties).

Dorchester makes a great lunch location with so many eateries to choose from. If you prefer to relax with a picnic in Dorchester's green spaces, the Borough Gardens and Salisbury Fields are only a short distance from the main shops. Both offer play parks and plenty of open space for the children. If you fancy a waterside stroll head for the River Frome and enjoy the views across the water meadows, only two minutes from the town centre.

### Weymouth

Weymouth's golden sands and buzzing, waterfront harbour are the perfect place to enjoy a day by the seaside. Weymouth offers the visitor an exciting mix of attractions all within walking or cycling distance from the promenade and there is a packed events calendar with celebrations all year round. An

amble along the esplanade will take you past the statue of King George III who spent many holidays in Weymouth to remedy his ill health. Further along is the Jubilee Clock, one of the seafront's most prominent landmarks which was erected in 1887 to celebrate the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign. If you're looking to revitalize and refuel, Weymouth has an enticing array of waterside restaurants to cater for all tastes. Make the most of your visit and pick up an information leaflet at one of the Tourist Information Points around the town (see [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com) for details).



### Maiden Newton

Maiden Newton has all the amenities of a large village; newsagents, pub, post office, phone box, parking and a train station. It provides a good place for a rest stop with plenty of refreshments on offer. With the train station and parking this is a good starting point for exploring the NCN route.

### Frampton

Frampton has many bridges that criss-cross over the River Frome. The White Bridge and Peacock Bridge are both 18th Century. The latter is also known as 'Wren's Bridge' and was built from a design by Sir Christopher Wren. The village has attractive cottages on one side of the street overlooking open fields. The owner of Frampton Court (now demolished) had all the cottages on the opposite side of the road removed to 'improve' his park.

### Bradford Peverell

Bradford Peverell is the birthplace of John Hutchins (1698-1773), Dorset's most famous historian.

### Wolfeton House

Wolfeton House is a fine Grade 1 listed medieval and Elizabethan House and is well worth a visit. The medieval gatehouse is the earliest surviving part of the house and has two unmatched and older towers. The Medieval Gate House is owned by the Landmark Trust and is let as a holiday cottage. You can sample cider from the Cider house here. Check opening times at the Tourist Information Centre.

If you approach Dorchester along the A37 you will see water meadows on either side of the road. To the right is Poundbury Hillfort and the Roman Aqueduct.

### **i** Dorchester

Dorchester is the county town and the 'Casterbridge' of Thomas Hardy's novels, our most famous literary genius. Thomas Hardy claimed that on market days, Dorchester reminded him of old Rome. Regular markets are still held every Wednesday and a Farmers' Market is held in South Street on the fourth Saturday of the month.



### Portland

Rugged and relaxed, Portland is famous for its National Sailing Academy that hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Sailing events in 2012. Portland is a true

explorers' island with curiosities and history and folklore just waiting to be discovered. Make sure you stop of at the Chesil Beach Centre, situated halfway along the causeway, and don't miss the lighthouse at Portland Bill. Portland has some great places to eat with most boasting fantastic views of the dramatic coastline and Chesil Beach.

## Route 26





Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make everyday. Visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) to get great tips if you're thinking about getting back on your bike or would like to go cycling with your children. Take a look at the easy rides section to find simple, safe and enjoyable cycling routes in your area, or order a free cycling information pack highlighting all the National Cycle Network routes near you.

**TravelDorset**  
Check before you travel



## WEST DORSET TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES



**DORCHESTER:** Antelope Walk, Dorset. DT1 1BE **t: 01305 267992**  
e: [dorchester.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:dorchester.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

**BRIDPORT:** South Street, Dorset. DT6 3LF **t: 01308 424901**  
e: [bridport.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:bridport.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

**SHERBORNE:** Digby Road, Dorset. DT9 3NL **t: 01935 815341**  
e: [sherborne.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:sherborne.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

**LYME REGIS:** Church Street, Dorset. DT7 3BS **t: 01297 442138**  
e: [lymeregis.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:lymeregis.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

**FOR DETAILS OF TOURIST INFORMATION IN WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND** go to [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com)

**WHERE TO GO | HOW TO GET THERE | WHERE TO STAY | OPEN ALL YEAR**



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