

Public transport

There is an hourly bus service through Stagsden that travels between Bedford and Milton Keynes. For details, contact Traveline on 0871 2002233 or go to www.traveline.info

Maps and GPS

The route is on OS Landranger map 153 and the more detailed OS Explorer sheet 208. There is a downloadable Garmin GPS track and route for the walk on <http://www.stagsden.bedsparishes.gov.uk/> along with details of other local walks in and around the parish

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

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Tips for enjoying your walk

If you have a dog, take care where there are livestock or, if possible take an alternative route. Cows with calves can be a problem. Parts of the walk can become muddy especially after heavy rain so strong waterproof footwear is recommended. Take care where conditions are rough and let someone know where you are going. Please be aware that much of the walk is unsuitable for wheelchairs and difficult for pushchairs. There are some stiles toward the end of the walk but these can be avoided by walking down North End Road.

Other walks

Find out about more of Bedfordshire's walking and riding routes as well as nature reserves and country parks by visiting www.letsgo.org.uk

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Circular walks

No.8

North of Stagsden

Approx 6 Miles / 10 km Time: 3 hours





Explore a rolling patchwork of arable fields and small woods north of the quiet village of Stagsden in north Bedfordshire

Stagsden

The settlement of Stagsden (formerly Stachedene) dates back to the Iron Age. Roman remains have also been found. Following the Norman invasion, the parish was divided into six manors which were gifted to supporters of William. After a period of ownership by the Earls of Peterborough and then the Trevors, much of the parish was bought by the Crown in 1873. Slate roofed brick-built 'Crown cottages' built during this period are dotted around the parish. The Crown estate of 3360 acres and many farms and cottages was sold at auction in 1921. The old school house, now the renovated Village Hall, remains in Crown Estates ownership.

Local geology and soils

Although older buildings in the village are of locally quarried limestone, surrounding land is underlain by the glacial chalky boulder clay visible in ditch cuttings. The soils are alkaline, clayey and require artificial drainage. They support large crop yields particularly of wheat. Some low land is underlain by acid clay soils and more suited to pasture.

A farmed landscape

The crops grown in and around Stagsden are predominantly winter wheat and oilseed rape which has bright yellow flowers in Spring. You may come across a field of barley, field peas or beans grown for animal feed. The heavy clay soil does not suit potatoes or field vegetables.

There are two beef suckler herds in the village, one of which you may see and possibly walk through during the summer/autumn months. However there are now almost as many horses in Stagsden as there are cattle!

Flora and fauna

Stagsden's farmland and base-rich woods host a variety of flora and fauna. Primroses, Bluebells and Cowslips abound in Spring. Grass verges provide habitat for a range of common wild flowers and rarities such as the Bee Orchid

Buzzards are a familiar sight in the skies above; Red Kites rarer. Other birds include Skylark, Woodpeckers, finches, Red Legged and some Grey Partridge. The call of Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Whitethroat can be heard along with numerous Swallows and the odd Yellow Wagtail. In Winter Redwings and Fieldfares join resident Song and Mistle Thrushes feeding on grassland and tall,

berry-bearing hedges. Our summer butterflies include Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and both Common and Holy Blue. Grass Snakes still survive in the area. Hares and Muntjac Deer can also be seen.

Planning your walk

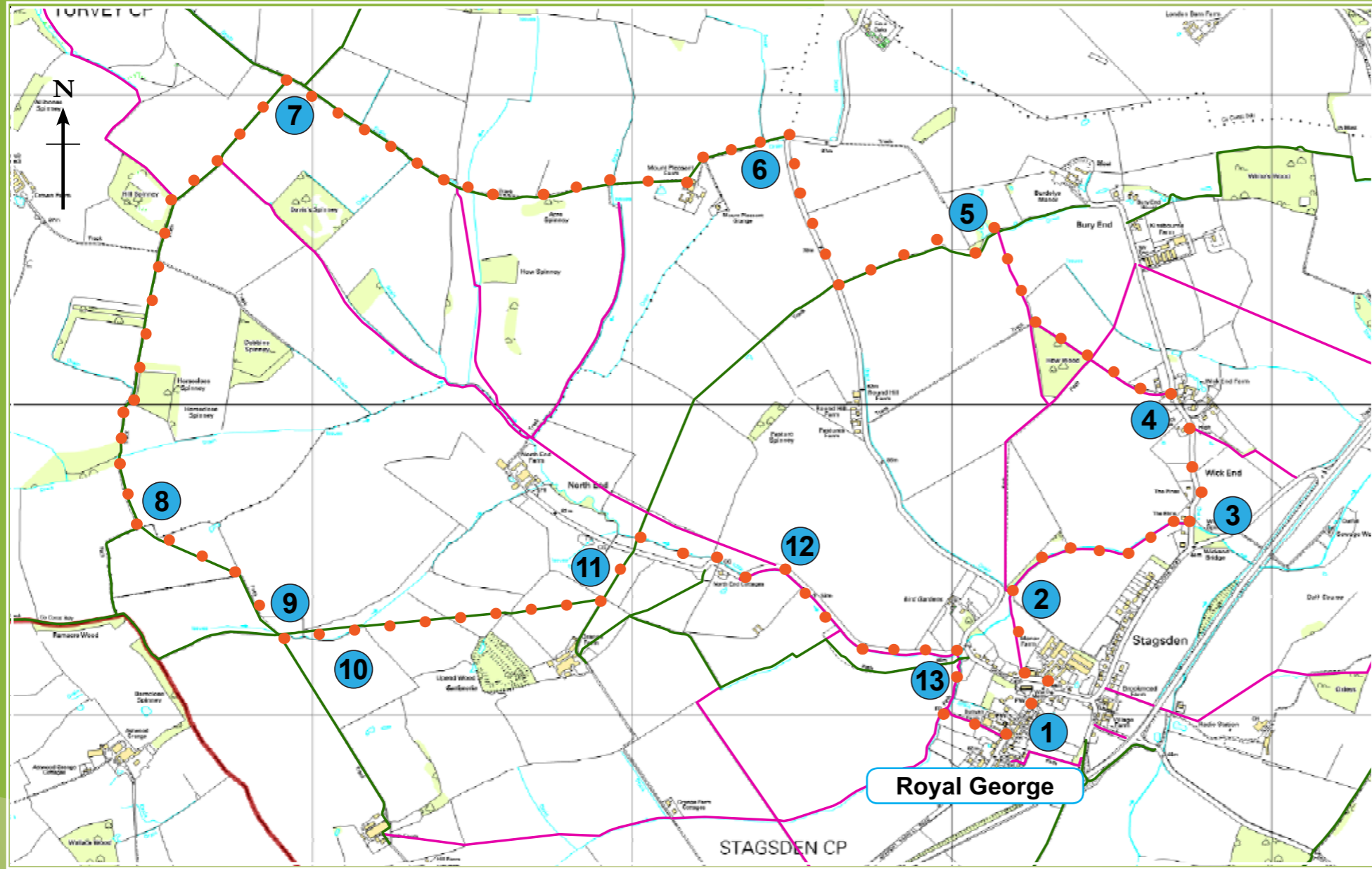
The Royal George pub in the centre of Stagsden is the suggested starting point and the walk is described in an anticlockwise direction. There are several other potential starting points and a number of paths and bridleways, which are marked on the map, offer alternative and shorter routes if you get tired or the weather changes

Refreshments, parking and toilets

There is parking on the High Street and alongside the churchyard. The Royal George pub has kindly agreed to allow parking for walkers who take refreshments there (no muddy boots, please). Inform the landlord if you intend to leave your car in the car park. You may also be able to get coffee at Manor Farm shop opposite the church.



Circular walks



North of Stagsden

Approx 6 Miles / 10 km Time: 3 hours

- 1 Starting at the Royal George Pub turn right towards Bedford. At St Leonard's church turn left through the lych gate and follow path through graveyard passing left of church. Go through gate on to Church Lane, turn right, cross over and take the signed public footpath left of bungalow and through kissing gate into grass field. Walk diagonally across to the way mark sign in the far corner.
- 2 Go through kissing gate before bridge and follow path on right hand river bank.
- 3 At Wick End Lane, turn left over bridge and walk up lane for ¼ mile.
- 4 At top of rise (Hobbs Barn) turn left up track signed public footpath. Keep to right of How Wood. At far end of wood, turn right off track and follow marked path alongside hedge to the tree belt.
- 5 Turn left at tree belt and follow to road. Turn right up road for ¼ mile.
- 6 At the right corner, turn left onto Mount Pleasant Farm drive and keep to bridleway past farmyard; pass right of Acre Spinney and along the green trackway.
- 7 At top of rise between hedges, turn left and follow bridleway passing left of Hill Spinney, right of Horseshoe Spinney and continue to top of hill.
- 8 Go through gap in hedge and walk due east across field toward the far left corner. Follow bridleway along right hand side of hedge to the hedge corner.
- 9 Turn left and continue on bridleway along bottom of field continuing into next field.
- 10 After 200 m turn right over ditch through gate then follow sign across ridge and furrow to next gate. Maintain direction across field. Ignore the wooden gate at the edge of Upend Wood go through the gate approx 100m left of this. Follow sign diagonally across field keeping Grange Farm on your right.
- 11 Through the bridle gate go left down the hill to the farm track, turn right along track, over cattle grid and past cottages to marked footpath beyond.
- 12 Go over this and the next stile following left hand field margin to bottom of field.
- 13 Follow brook round to right beneath the village and turn left over footbridge and up footpath to the High Street and Royal George pub.

Key

- The walk
- Public Bridleway
- Woodland
- Directions
- Public Footpath
- Bedford Borough Boundry

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