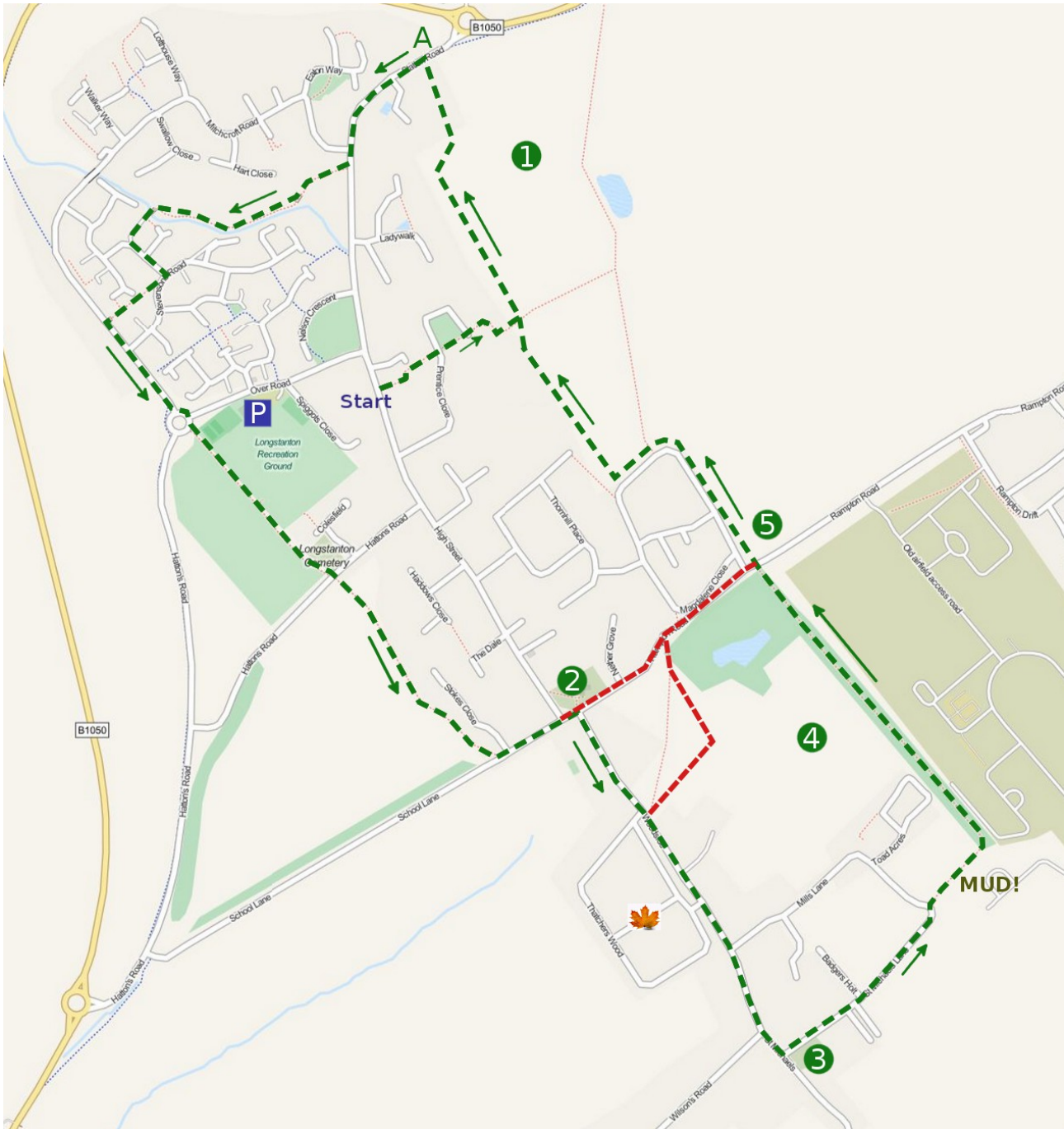


Longstanton – a walk around the village



Time	1hr 30m (leisurely)
Distance	5km (shortcuts possible)
Difficulty	Easy, flat. Muddy sections in winter or wet weather
Start/end	Black Bull public house car park. Citi 5 bus stop is opposite the pub
Alternative start	Point A on the map for those arriving from the busway or Northstowe/Willingham
Car parking	At the recreation ground
Access by bus	Citi 5 from Cambridge or any busway service
Refreshments	At the Pavilion on the recreation ground or the Black Bull

Formerly a small rural village, Longstanton has more than doubled in size since the start of the century and is now witnessing its biggest transformation yet – the construction of new near neighbour, Northstowe.

The building of Northstowe means that the eastern side of Longstanton is in a constant state of flux, so some details of the walk that follows may well change as time passes.

Walkers wishing to explore the environs of Longstanton should also be aware that the village, like many in the area, lies very close to the water table. This means that in the winter, or after a period of rain, some parts of the walk may be (will be!) muddy, a state of affairs made worse when agricultural machinery has used the route. Definitely an excursion that calls for good walking shoes and in muddy times only a trusty pair of wellingtons will really keep out the elements.

Start point

The walk nominally starts at the Black Bull car park, but it can be accessed at any point along its route. Parking is available in the recreation ground car park, though building plans for a new pavilion may mean that this is not always open. Citi5 buses from Cambridge stop just opposite the pub. Visitors arriving from the Busway park-and-ride or from Northstowe should walk along the B1050 towards Longstanton and pick up the route just after the roundabout at the top of Station Road.



Route

From Longstanton High Street, cross the Black Bull car park and take the footpath at the far side. Follow this into Prentice Close and carry straight on with the green on your left. At the far side, take the footpath between two houses. Follow this narrow path, crossing a wooden bridge and continuing until the footpath arrives at a T-junction.

Take the path to the left across another wooden bridge and follow the path until you reach Station Road. To your right ('1' on the map) is the site of the first phase of Northstowe. The area adjacent to the path is the 'green separation' which will separate Longstanton from Northstowe and will be used mainly for playing fields.



At Station Road, turn left and follow the road towards the centre of Longstanton. (This is point 'A' where walkers from Northstowe and the busway join the path.) On the right you will see the old village pump at the point where Station Road becomes the High Street.

Just past the junction with Mitchcroft Road, turn right into Few's Lane. Just before the end of the lane take the footpath on the left that takes you over a wooden bridge to an open green area.

Follow the path straight ahead (may be muddy in rainy weather), pass one bridge and take the second bridge into the Home Farm estate.





Turn left, then right, pass through a gate and turn left on to Over Road. Continue along the road as far as the roundabout.

Cross the road and follow the footpath sign to Hatton's Road. Continue along the edge of a field with a tall hedge to your left. On the other side of the hedge is the village recreation ground. If you choose to go through to the recreation ground (there is an 'unofficial' access about half way along), please be aware that dogs are not permitted.

Continue straight on until the path meets Hatton's Road with the village cemetery on your left.

Cross Hatton's Road and make a slight dogleg to your left, then continue in the same direction as before along the edge of a field. At School Lane, turn left and notice the old school house, built in 1844, on your left as you walk towards the crossroads, with All Saints Church ahead of you ('2' on the map). The grade II listed church mostly dates from the 14th century; its churchyard contains some fine trees, the war memorial, and an area of military graves recalling the village's proximity to Oakington air field – an important base for Bomber Command - during the last war.



In poor weather the walk can be shortened at this point by following the short cut down Rampton Road until you rejoin the path at the WWII pill box ('5' on the map). Alternatively, you can continue a little further and turn left at the gate opposite Thatcher's Wood. The latter has the advantage of giving a view of the Manor and the paddocks that form part of the Longstanton conservation area. If you take this short cut, after passing through the gate, follow the perimeter of the field with the hedge on your right rather than take the more obvious diagonal. This will give better views of the old paddocks and the traces of the medieval settlement that are still clearly visible.

Take the right turn by the church into Woodside, passing the 17th century Manor (or Longstanton House) on the left. A little further along, opposite Thatcher's Wood, a gate on the left gives another short-cut opportunity. However, unless conditions underfoot are very poor, it would be better to continue in order to see St Michael's Church, an unusual 13th century thatched building with a vaulted well.



If you happen to do this walk in the autumn, when leaves are falling, be sure to take a few steps to your right into Thatcher's Wood and follow the road that parallels Woodside instead of staying on the main road. Keep watch to your right and if you are lucky enough to choose just the right moment, you will see some truly spectacular autumn colours. Rejoin the main road and continue along Woodside.

At Mills Road, Woodside becomes St Michael's and soon you see St Michael's Church on the left, set back from the road. The two parishes that became Longstanton - All Saints and St Michael's - amalgamated as late as 1953. St Michael's is now redundant and in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust but as one of only two thatched churches in Cambridgeshire, this church has an unusual charm.

On the other side of the lane a 17th/18th century thatched and timber framed cottage complements the church perfectly and makes this small corner the iconic view of Longstanton, despite being in one of the village's most remote locations.

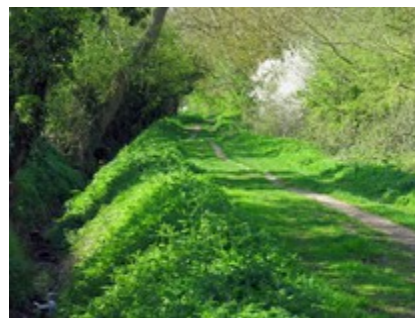


Turn left here into St Michael's Lane and continue past Badger's Holt – a mobile home park. The striking wooden sculpture of a badger was created from the stump of a diseased ash tree in 2012 by Tim Atkins of Exning, using only a chainsaw.

Continue past paddocks on your right until the road bends to the left. Here, go straight on, following the sign for 'Long Lane'. If there is to be any mud on your walk, this is where you will find it.

Follow the path around to the left.

As you walk along the track alongside the watercourse, in the paddock to your left ('5') you will see in the contours of the land the outlines of a former Anglo-Saxon village on the site. To the right is the old Oakington airbase, more recently an Immigrant Reception Centre, and currently reserved for the second phase of the Northstowe development. Just before reaching the junction with Rampton Road, you pass the Gravel Pit. This is believed to have been part of a former manor; nowadays the lake is administered by a charitable trust and is used as a fishing lake.



Cross Rampton Road and take the path to the left of the pill box ('6'). Ten of these pill boxes were originally built to protect the air base; nine are now listed as protected sites. This one is the most accessible and was rescued from the undergrowth in 2010.

Pass through the gate and continue along the left edge of the field. When cattle are grazing here, some nimble footwork may be needed to keep your shoes clean! The local farmer specialises in rare breeds

and you may see Belted Galloways or some impressive English Longhorns.

At the far end the path turns left near a children's playground. This path is officially a diversion from the previous public right of way which has been obliterated by the Northstowe activities. Follow it past two playgrounds and then around to the right past a small lake. The land beyond the lake has been raised in height by some 2 metres and will be used for playing fields for Northstowe. A final bend to the right brings you back to the junction where you joined the path on the outward leg. Turn left under the trees next to a watercourse and return to Prentice Close. Recross the Black Bull car park to arrive back at your starting point.

More information

The LDHS (Longstanton & District Heritage Society) web site will provide much more detail on the archaeology and history of Longstanton. In particular, there is a walk description that covers some of the same route as this one at <http://www.ldhs.org/2014-guided-walk/3/>

South Cambs District Council has a good description of the Longstanton conservation areas at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/conservation-area-appraisal-longstanton>