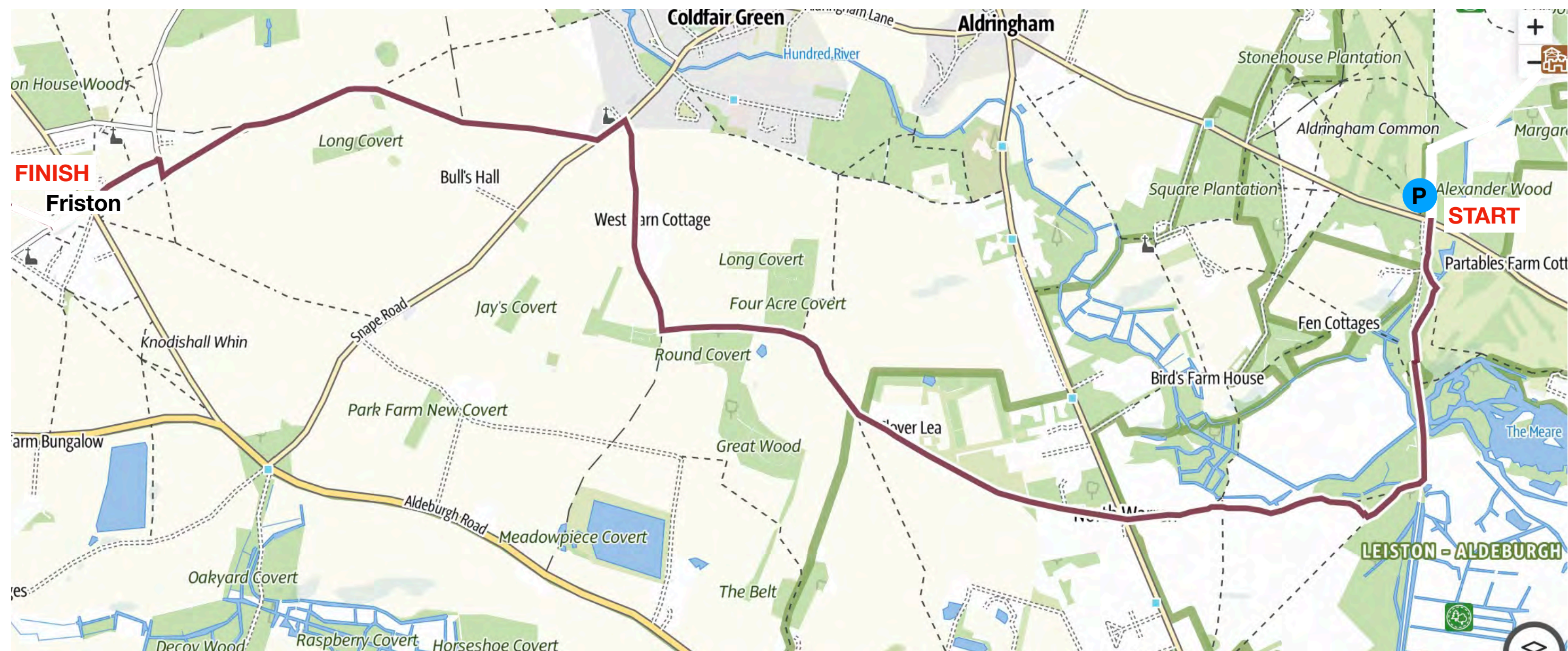


Suggested Unaccompanied Route Inspection (on foot) for Planning Inspectorate Examining Body

SANDLINGS WALK (from former Thorpeness level crossing point to Friston)

DISTANCE - 6½ km TIME - 1½ hours

- The Sandlings Walk is a long distance footpath through eastern Suffolk from Southwold in the north to Ipswich to the south.
- On this path you will initially follow the route of the old railway line to Aldeburgh alongside the Meare. There are numerous footpaths criss-crossing the Warren between Aldringham, Thorpeness and Aldeburgh making the area popular with walkers and birdwatchers.
- This area is rich in wildlife with Marsh Harriers resident on the Fen and in the summer Hobbies can be seen above the water catching damselflies. Bittern can be heard booming in the reeds and Kingfisher dart down the waterways. Life in the reeds is often hidden from view but we invite you to sit for a while and take in the scenery, the silence and the calls of the wildlife.
- This area is also important sandy heathland, a rare landscape which supports a wide variety of wildlife. Badgers, foxes, deer and muntjac have made their homes here. Birds including Yellow Hammer and Turtle Dove can be seen and heard, whilst the range of butterflies and insects are a delight.
- The tree mix to the east of the B1122 is made up of Oak, Silver Birch and Scots Pine each supporting their own unique range of wildlife and the gorse, broom and bracken are a key feature of the low level landscape.
- To the west of the B1122 the landscape changes to primarily agricultural with mixed woodland. Fields of sweetcorn, wheat, sugar beet and onions can be found as the path progresses towards Friston, the historic village which is already being negatively impacted by the energy projects.



This walk starts at the old Thorpeness level crossing point OS Landranger 156 MR 462604 (there are some car parking spaces here). Cross the road and walk south along the sandy path beside the golf course. Beware of adders.

Follow the footpath to the old railway cottages where you will reach a viewing point overlooking the reedbeds. We invite you to take a seat. This is the perfect place to watch and listen to the magic of this place. Look out for Marsh Harriers, Bitterns, Kingfishers and Bearded Tits and during the summer months Hobbies swooping over the water catching the dragon and damselflies. An evening Starling murmuration is an amazing sight here in winter as they use the reeds as a nighttime roost.



Now follow the footpath south down the old railway line before turning right through the woodland where silver birch fill the canopy above you. Woodpeckers make their homes here in the soft trunk of decaying trees. Then bear right out of the wood onto the heath land where gorse, broom and bracken form the cover for nesting birds.



The sandy heathland is a rare habitat and deer roam freely across it. Yellow Hammer can be heard and Stonechats, Turtle Doves, Linnets, Wrens and Goldfinches are frequently sighted. Buzzards and Kestrel soar overhead looking for food hidden in the ground cover. This is also home to Foxes and Badgers.



Pass the ornate sign on your right and soon you will reach the Leiston Road. Mind your head on the low hanging pine cones!

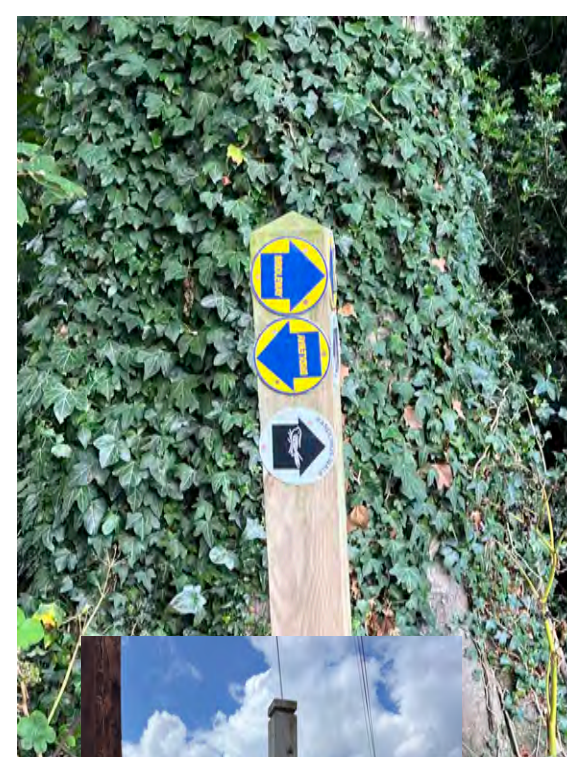




Once across the road follow the track to the end, at which point the scenery changes. Agricultural land and small woods make up the landscape from here to Coldfair Green. Wildflowers line the path and if you're lucky you may find some cinnabar caterpillars feeding on the ragwort although these are now becoming a rarer sight.



Follow the path to this sign and then turn right down past Billeaford Hall to the main road (B1069). On reaching the road, turn left and then take the first track on the right.



Now follow the path up the sandy track to the point at which the Sandling Walk cuts left across, at the time of writing, the onion field. After crossing the field turn right then left through the ivy arch on to the lane leading into Friston. Take in the view across to the Church beyond which Scottish Power have begun the groundworks for the substations associated with the offshore wind farm development. The silence and tranquility of this area is already being replaced with the sound of the excavation and construction works.

