

Suggested Unaccompanied Inspection Route by foot or car for Planning Inspectorate Examining Body

The route - Sandy Lane Sternfield through Benhall then via the B1121 to the A12 (¾ mile)

Benhall is a small village about 1 mile to the south of Saxmundham with a population of 569 at the 2021 census. It has a beautiful thatched CoE Primary School (photo 2) which is over 150 years old and a Church of England parish church (photo 3) located some distance to the west of the A12.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

NGET are proposing to construct and/or store an over-bridge alongside the existing bridge over the railway line (photo 4) at the southern end of Main Road (B1121) close to the junction with the A12. The over-bridge works will require land forming the entrance to Whitearch retirement park (photos 5 & 6) to be acquired and will impact the entrance to this residential area. It will also impact on the footpath route shown dotted in green on the attached map.

Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

Entrance to Whitearch Park

The route

The suggested route starts to the south east of the village (in Sternfield) at the junction of Sandy Lane and Benhall Green (OS Landranger 156 MR 387611) before the lane crosses the River Fromas at a ford (photo 7).



Photo 7

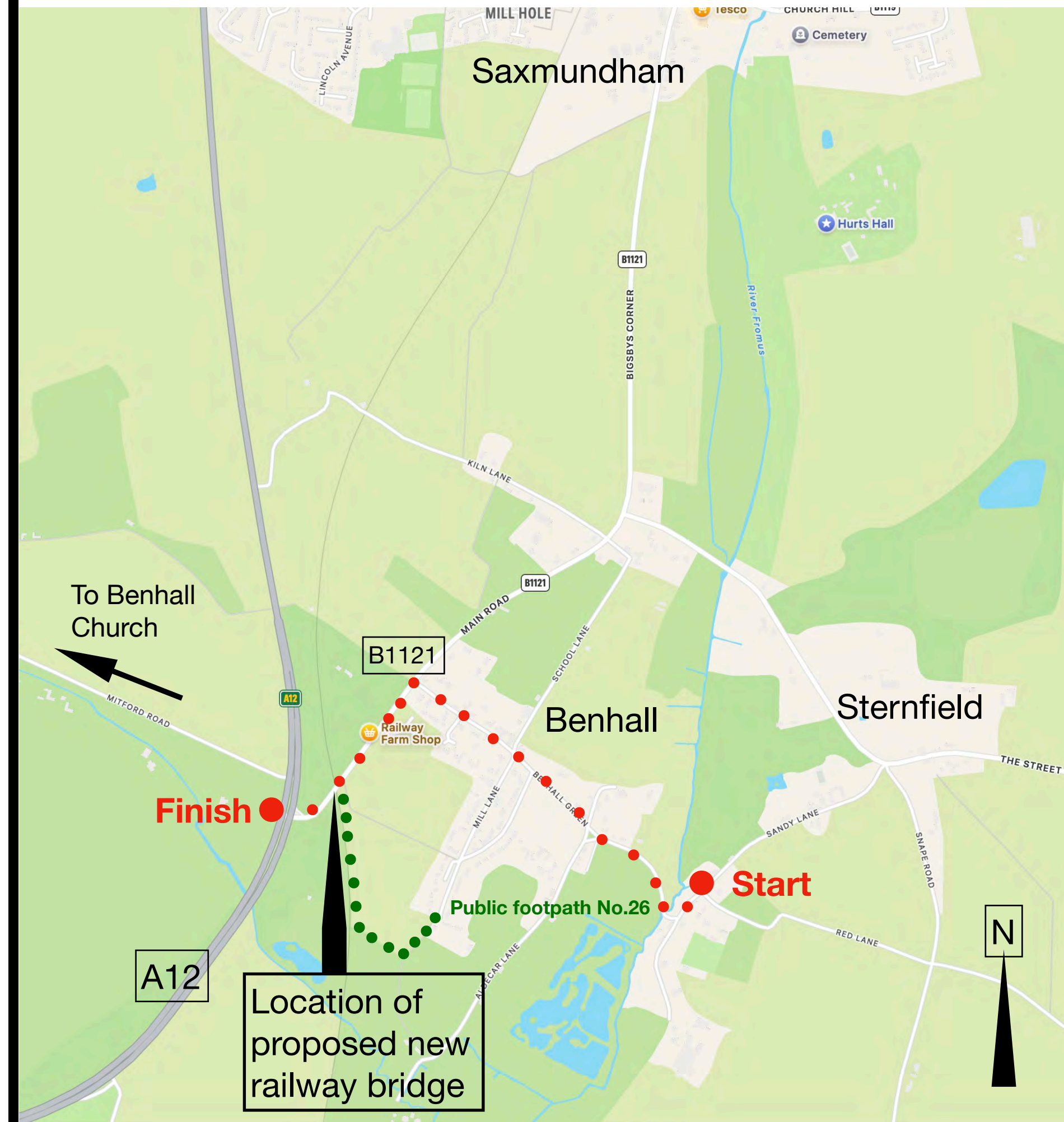
From the start point, cross the ford and drive along Benhall Green passing the common on your left (photo 8). This is a country village with mixed residential cottages and houses (photo 9).



Photo 8



Photo 9



At the junction of School Lane and Mill Lane (photo 10), Mill Lane on your left leads into Festival Close at the end of which a footpath leads across the fields (photos 11 & 12) to the railway bridge on the B1121 (see map).

Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Photo 13

Continue along Benhall Green to the junction with the B1121 (photo 13). This is the main route out of the village, turning right to go Saxmundham and left to the A12 (photos 14 & 15).



Photo 14



Photo 15

Turn left along Main Road (B1121) past the farm shop on your right (photo 16) and the footpath leading across the fields to the centre of the village on your left (photo 17) just ahead of the railway bridge.



Photo 16

Photo 17



Just over the bridge on the left is the entrance to Whitearch Residential Park (photo 18). The proposed new over-bridge and compound will impact on the only entrance to the park and it is not yet clear how this will be altered. It is worth noting that the park is a mini nature reserve in itself with extensive woodland and a lake. Kites, buzzard and kestrels are regularly spotted and residents report seeing badgers, foxes and otters around the park and in the water (photos 19 & 20).



Photo 18



Photo 19



Photo 20

A little further beyond the end of our proposed route is the junction with the A12 (photo 21). Diagonally opposite across the A12 is the junction with Mitford Road (photo 22) which takes you to the village church located some distance down the lane then right onto Deadman's Lane. This is the main route from the centre of Benhall Green village to the Church.



Photo 21



Photo 22

You will also note the cycle route directional signs indicating that the B1121 is part of the national cycle route, taking cyclists off the A12 to provide a safer and more pleasant route to Saxmundham and Lowestoft beyond. The use of the B1121 for industrial vehicles and construction traffic will add further danger to cyclists on this route.

Wider implications

The residents of Benhall, and especially those living in the retirement park, are extremely concerned about the impact of industrial vehicles on their village, its access and the environment. This is a rural location with an agriculture and wooded landscape and any increase in industrial or general traffic using the B1121 and surrounding lanes to service the Converter Station site will have a material impact on the area, its safety and its peace and tranquillity for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

The Benhall Railway Bridge is the entrance to the main access road serving the villages of Benhall and Sternfield and the busy town of Saxmundham. The disruption caused by constructing this bridge together with that proposed over the River Fromus to the south of Hurts Hall and St John's Church when there are alternative routes, namely the proposed Sizewell Haul Road, is considered by residents and local councils to be too much for the area to withstand.

We hope you enjoyed visiting the historic village of Benhall.