

Wellbeing Walks

- Enjoying our local spaces whilst improving our health -

Delivered and funded
by:



Wellbeing Walk – No.1
– Babbs Mill Circular Route –
2 miles (fully accessible route)



- Accessible Route
- Alternative Route (follow with care)

Start / Finish

Babbs Mill Lake

River Cole

River Cole

River Cole

River Cole

Tudor Grange
Academy Kinghurst

CTC Kinghurst Academ

112 Cooks Lane
Kinghurst

Child 1st Day Nursery

Fuel Driving School

Babbs Mill Lake East

Kingshurst Hall

Reminiscent Handcrafted
Delivry

Some thoughts and ideas before we start:

- The walk is very much about RELAXING - about the journey, rather than the destination, for taking precious time for YOU, to gently stroll, unwind and to clear your mind of all else
- Why not put your phone on mute and forget about it until the end?
- Breathe in the fresh air, appreciate the sights, smells, sounds and sensations of all around you, including the wind/sun/rain on your face
- Take time to notice what you might normally miss or ignore; the sound of the babbling River Cole, the sound of the breeze rustling through the reeds, the different bird calls and the smells (wet grass, tree blossoms, warm tarmac, etc.) and the sights, just sit somewhere peaceful and WAIT, it won't be long until you start to notice different sights, sounds and sensations that were previously "invisible"
- Why not relax on one of the benches, or better still, take a picnic rug or light, folding chair and discover a nice, secluded spot away from the "main drag" (honestly there's some lovely little spots where you feel that your miles from anyone!)?
- Take a drink or a snack, have an outdoor breakfast/lunch/tea or make it a mini picnic?
- Much of this Walk could be equally suitable for a vigorous run or cycle ride?
- Why not do this as part of a small group of like-minded friends, even if you break-off to sit and relax/meditate in your own little space occasionally?
- The walks are suitable for lone or accompanied trips.
- **We shall be organising Group Sessions and Walks on this route – as soon as Government and local restrictions allow. So if you don't feel confident in walking solo – then give us a shout and we shall keep you updated.**

Staying Safe:

- Wear clothes and especially footwear appropriate for the weather and terrain (may be muddy and slippery in parts)
- Be aware of cyclists or e-scooters which may be travelling at speed on pathways – consider highly visible clothing
- Take a drink and sun protection if necessary
- Have a phone and check you have battery and signal before you start your walk (and then put it on "mute"?)
- Make sure someone knows where you are, and if you have children with you, they remain in sight and hearing distance at all times
- Take it easy, don't push yourself if you are not used to such exertion, remember you can build up to it nice and slow, and appreciate things along the way if you take the time
- Babbs Mill is statistically very safe, but always be alert, particularly if alone and watch for any strange behaviours and report via 999 or 101 (always avoid any confrontations)
- We recommend avoiding lone walking and walking at times of darkness
- If you do go walking alone - consider having a personal attack alarm or whistle for raising an alarm in case of very rare confrontations or threatening situations?

Wellbeing Walk – No.1 – Babbs Mill Circular Route - 2 miles (easy to moderate access and fitness)

1. Start/Finish at Babbs Mill LNR - Car Park Fordbridge Road (AKA “The Basketball Car Park”):

- *Kingshurst is close to the Manor of Coleshill, recent archaeological surveys have revealed an Iron Age Village with a large Round House and smaller Round Houses built around it. Also discovered is a Roman Marching Station with links to a minor Roman Road. Origin and destination of this road remain a mystery*
 - *Babbs Mill Park was created to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. In 2002 it was designated a Local Area Nature Reserve in recognition of its diverse habitat. It also holds the coveted “Green Flag” park status*
 - *Jubilee Gardens – Just over the Fordbridge Road as part of Kingshurst Allotments – Community groups have been given free access her and miraculously grew over 1 tonne of produce to give Free of Charge to our local community during the Pandemic!*
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2. Follow path westwards from car park into Babbs Mill LNR. Follow footpath: *(Alternative follow the **Yellow Route** which is less accessible and requires care - follow grass area which runs behind trees along footpath and be treated to views of a reed bed and blocked steps across a small culvert) – Kingfishers, buntings, warblers and bats are regularly spotted here*

3. Continue along path (with River Cole to left hand side):

- *The River Cole is 25 miles long and runs through Kingshurst. It rises at Red Hill near Lickey, and enters the River Blythe below Coleshill. Cole is a Celtic name for the river*
 - *Look out for Herons, Egrets and other wildlife here*
 - *Picnic and relaxation spots here*
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4. Children’s playground to right hand side:

- *Children’s playground*
 - *The play area had been badly damaged by vandals and irresponsible dog owners and security measures including CCTV have solved this at great cost. Please ensure you report any damage or misuse may mean closure*
 - *To the left of the path is a high vantage point where plenty of fish can be spotted in the River Cole on a bright day*
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5. Walk to the beginning /eastern end of Babbs Mill Lake – This is where the water flows from the lake and into the River Cole:

- *Look to the right at the hilly grass meadows which have been planted with wild flowers and some fruit trees. This was formerly a municipal “pitch and putt” mini-golf course*
 - *Look out for butterflies, damselflies and moths and other insects around here – particularly in Spring and Summer*
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6. As you continue on path, coming to a metal chicane/gate. You will see the mini skatepark:

- *See a mini skate-park after gate/chicane*
 - *Straight after the gate/chicane is an uphill path leading sharp right, this leads towards Kingshurst Way and beyond that, the site of Kingshurst hall. Kingshurst hall was built in 1700s, demolished 1962 to make way for tower blocks. Kinghurst hall was on site of previous 13c motte and Bailey castle, remains still visible*
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7. Arrive at the “Boat Ramp” Car Park:

- *Feed the birds - Please avoid white bread which they love but is not good for them. FAR BETTER FOR THEM are; peas, finely shredded lettuce, sweetcorn, WILD BIRD SEED, porridge oats, rice (cooked or uncooked) – Please dispose of bags carefully (we have had birds die here due to swallowing or getting tangled in litter)*
 - *Use binoculars – Breeding Swans, Canada geese. Tufted duck, Mallard. Black headed gull, lesser black backed gull, herring gull. Great crested grebe. All regular visitors. Rarer birds to see Gadwall and Shoveler duck, Greylag geese, Cormorant and Little Grebe.*
 - *Picnic tables (and lots of litter bins!)*
 - *The lake was artificially created as a balancing feature in times of flooding from the River Cole. It was originally just a flood plain or meadow that constantly waterlogged by the bursting of River Cole banks. It was previously used as a grazing meadow for the cattle from Kingshurst Hall*
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8. Straight on, through another gate/chicane:

- *Picnic table and benches*
 - *Listen out for Ring-Neck Parakeets, their bright green plumage unmistakable.*
 - *Wooden viewing platforms over the lake (good photo opportunities, including Swan and Coot nests at certain times)*
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9. Walk towards another gate/chicane at far end (western) of lake, turn left and follow path over the bridge over the “smelly brook” which feeds into the lake:

- *“Smelly Brook” is a misnomer as it no longer smells (much?) since it has been run through reedbeds which act as a natural water treatment plant!*

10. Yorks Wood - *not featured on this walk, but a great walking/mountain biking trail. This will be featured in a future Wellbeing Walk*

11. Western end of Babbs Mill Lake

- *To the right are some superb Reed beds, which are home to warblers, buntings, water rail etc.*
 - *The reed beds were constructed and planted in 2013 to help improve the water quality of both Babb's Mill lake and the River Cole and should also eradicate the unpleasant smell associated with one of the waterways in the area, known locally as the 'smelly brook'. by cleansing the urban watercourse which flows through York's Wood. at the same time the watercourse itself was restored as it was broken out of its existing concrete channel and into a more natural course, the more natural and visible watercourse has helped deter fly tipping and increase the reporting of pollution incidents.*
 - *To the left is a lovely grassed "beach area" where you can feed water birds, or just sit and enjoy the view of the full length of the Lake, (it's beautiful here at sunrise, where you'll also hear a gorgeous "dawn chorus" from the birds in the reeds and trees behind you!)*
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12. Footpath over little bridge (over the River Cole) to Babbs Mill Cottage:

- *Babbs Mill Cottages (Former mill)*
 - *Babbs Mill has been on site since the 13th Century. Named after John Babb who was Miller in 1600s It was still a corn mill in 1889, but by 1961 the buildings, though still standing, had been converted into cottages. Links to the gunpowder plot??*
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13. Turn left from bridge, through chicane/gate and keep on gravel path with River Cole on your LEFT

- *Babbs Mill Local Nature Reserve is also a Green Flag Award park. Being in one of the most highly populated areas of the West Midlands and is a significant green space for nature conservation and wildlife in North Solihull. The park has a variety of landscapes and habitats including a meandering section of the River Cole, a 5 hectare lake, grasslands harbouring wildflowers, and trees and woodland providing homes for bats and owls.*
- *Look/listen for the ring-neck parakeets here. Sometimes roosting in holes in tall trees to the right - Their high pitched squawk, flash of lime green plumage and their long tails in flight are a giveaway.*
- *Wild garlic (aka Ramsons/bear leaks) grow along the right of the path, with their heady, strong scent – a sign of ancient or well established marshy woodland*
- *Take binoculars as plenty of spotting opportunities here - Listen out for Song Thrush or warblers in spring. Also a good area to see Long Tail Tits .*

14. At various points along this path are several areas where the river runs shallow and fast end of this walkway between the Lake and the River Cole

- *Possible Kingfisher sightings*
 - *Enjoy the sound of the water?*
 - *Good spots for a doggy paddle for four-legged friends (and maybe their brave humans?)*
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15. Lark`s Meadow/Swan Drive housing developments to right

- *Great place for stretching/running or just sitting on a bench and relaxing*
 - *See balancing bars, stepping logs and other play for our young adventurers*
 - *No litter bins here (yet!), so please take litter and dog poop home or to the nearest bin!*
 - *There are flood culverts to the right, with bullrushes and other water plants, look out for Damselflies, Butterflies and amphibians*
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16. Concrete bridge – Keep this to your left and walk straight onwards following the path

- *This path is less used and is often quiet and feels nicely wild – enjoy the birdsong and sound of the river when in full flow*
 - *Listen/Look out for Crows, tits, robins, blackbird and if lucky a splendid Jay!*
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17. End of Babbs Mill Park – Turn left onto Cooks Lane and over the Fordbridge

- *Fordbridge gets its name from the crossing over the River Cole on Cooks Lane, which was referred to as "Ford Bridge" on 19th century OS maps. This name suggests this site was previously a ford, but eventually a bridge was built on the site of that ford, thus giving the bridge and ultimately the civil parish its name*
- *Many inhabitants of Fordbridge do not recognise it as a distinct area even though it is a distinct local regional area, instead classing it as part of Kingshurst or even the larger Chelmsley Wood Estate. The area around the eastern end of Cooks Lane is also often referred to as "Bacon's End" which has some very interesting local history in itself*
- *Stop off and look over the bridge into the river Cole – Look for fishes and the famous "Mr Plop" a released ex-pet, red-eared terrapin that sometimes suns himself on the bank/promontories in the river, the size of a dinner plate (TRUE STORY!)*

18. Turn left, back into Babbs Mill Park – Pass the outdoor gym and return to the Start/Finish point at the car park

- Mini outdoor gym was constructed in Spring 2020 by SMBC with support and request from the Parish Council and local Voluntary Groups – A great way to warm-up or warm-down – No fees or membership required!!!
 - Note the bunds, piled up earth mounds to stop vehicles entering the park, these have been sown with wildflowers and attract a multitude of pollinating insects and bird life
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