

## Longparish, Forton Loop



**HAMPSHIRE  
COUNTRYSIDE  
SERVICE**

**Distance:** 4 miles

**Start:** Village Hall

Longparish consists of numerous hamlets, including Forton, Middleton, Longparish Station, West Aston and East Aston, lying along the west bank of the clear braided waters of the River Test. The valley is about half a mile wide, flanked by low ridges, with Harewood Forest to the north and west.

The village has many attractive thatched cottages and St Nicholas Church, which dates from the 13th century. An excellent network of footpaths including part of the Test Way links the settlements and provides some memorable views of the old cottages, the landscape and of the river.

The low lying fields of the valley are used for grazing livestock, while the rising ground is used for arable crops such as barley, wheat and oilseed rape. Small spinneys and areas specially planted provide cover for game birds and other wildlife.

Harewood Forest, in Saxon and Norman times a royal hunting forest, is now managed for forestry, hunting and wildlife. Harewood Forest was used in World War II for storing and marshalling ammunition which was then taken by rail to Southampton, so many rides were concreted and are still used for forestry operations.

### **Directions**

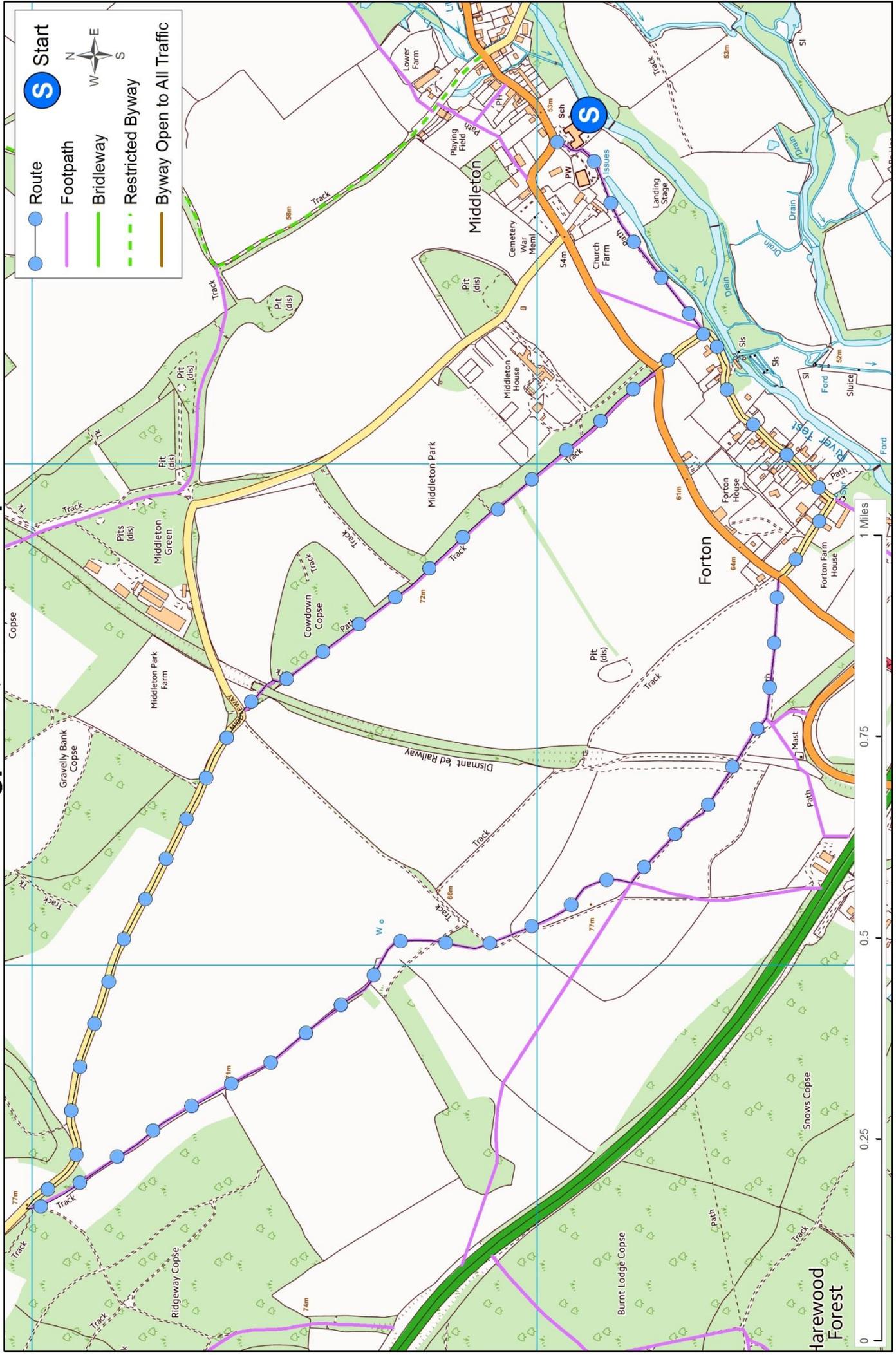
Visiting Forton, a pretty hamlet off the main road with many thatched cottages, and then across farmland into Harewood Forest with some splendid views.

Park in the car park by the village hall, not far from the Plough. Take the chance to visit the church before going through the second lychgate which was probably provided to rest coffins from Forton.

From the meadow you see Middleton House on the right before strolling down Forton Street. Walking across Cutty Brow you may well hear skylarks above the A303. The furthest point is in a group of beeches on the Middleway which are beautiful at any time of year.

The route follows the road part way back for the wonderful views, which continue down the Broadney path back to Forton.

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