

## 2018 Walk Ten - Bygrave Common

This walk around Bygrave Common and the beautiful countryside northeast of Baldock was devised by CPRE Herts' Trustee Eliza Hermann. It is accessible by public transportation, starting and finishing at Baldock rail station.

The walk has two options. There is a 3.3 mile circular route, or to avoid walking along Ashwell Road the walk can be done as a 4 mile out-and-back route on footpaths and bridleways, taking in all the same viewpoints.

This area has undulating terrain with long views and open landscapes, much of it in use as productive high quality grades 2 and 3 agricultural land.

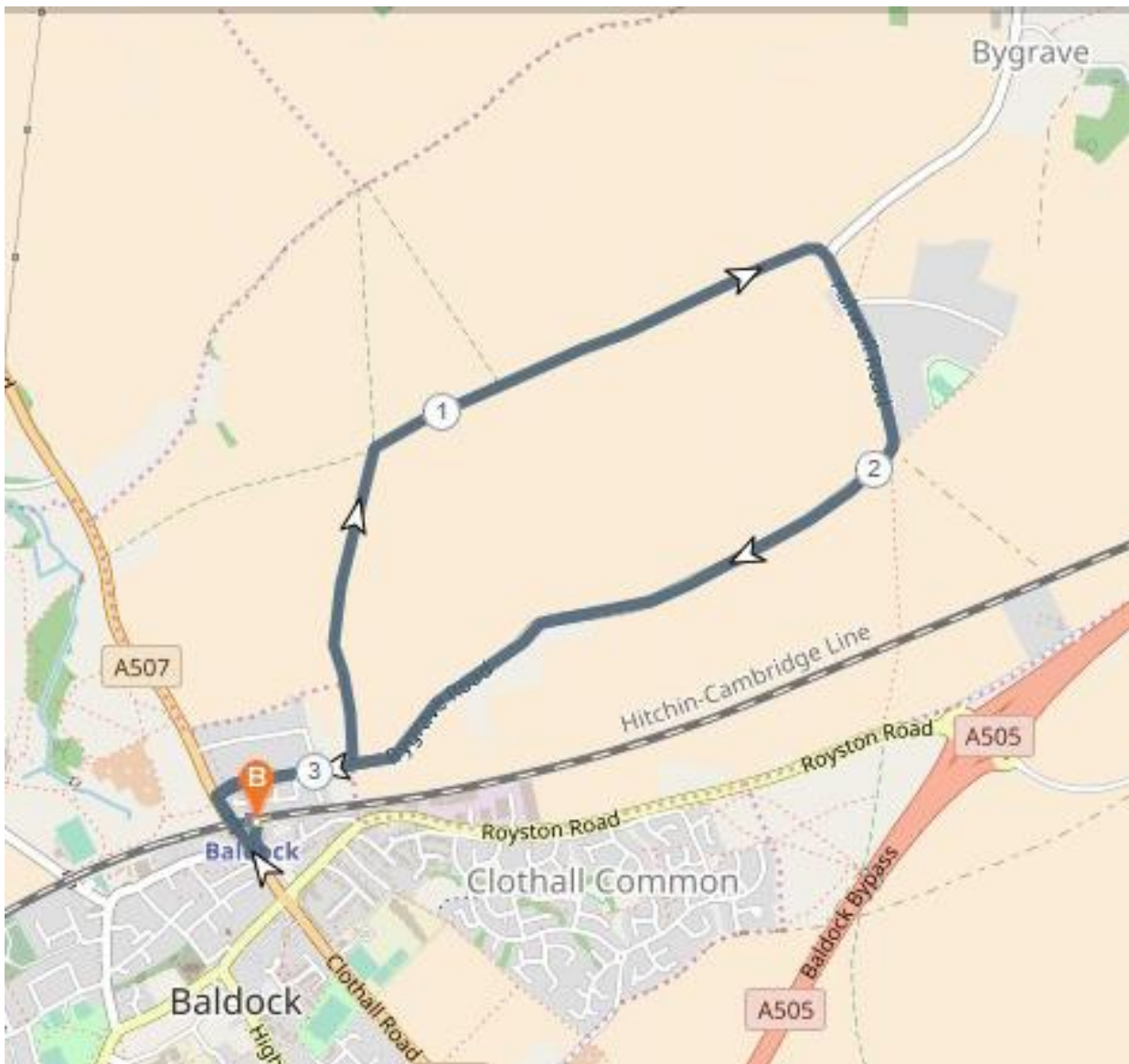
Bygrave Common is in the Green Belt. The submitted North Hertfordshire Local Plan proposes 2800 houses plus a retail centre, school and other infrastructure on approximately 430 acres of Bygrave Common and adjacent land. If this development goes ahead, it will destroy the landscape and its wildlife habitats, remove the agricultural land from production, cause coalescence of Lower Bygrave with Baldock, and nearly double the physical footprint of Baldock.

CPRE Herts continues to speak out against this damaging proposal.

This photo is from our CPRE Herts 2018 "Countryside Under Threat" calendar. It shows the view over part of the proposed development area, looking south to the Weston Hills.

Our walk this month includes the location where this photograph was taken.





The walk starts and finishes at Baldock rail station.

Emerging from the station, walk 100 yards south along the station access road (Laurel Mews). Turn right and then right again at the North Road (A507).





Walk north on the pavement along North Road for one-tenth of a mile, passing under the railway bridge, to the first street on the right. This is Bygrave Road.



Turn right (east) and walk on the pavement along Bygrave Road for two-tenths of a mile. There is a signpost on the left "Public Bridleway 34".



Turn left onto the bridleway and walk north along the grassy path.

Initially there are hedgerows either side of the path.



Soon the path opens up with views to the right (east) of the neighbouring farm.

Follow the path as it emerges into a field, on a strip of grass.



The path turns diagonally uphill to the right (almost due north) and proceeds in a straight line up the hill. There are wonderful views all around from the ridge-top.

However, all of this land around you here is part of the area threatened with development.



Continue on the path as it descends towards a hedgerow. At the hedgerow there is a path junction with a well-festooned signpost.





At this signpost, turn right (east). You are now on Public Bridleway 1. Walk in an easterly direction keeping the hedgerow on your left. You will pass a sheep pasture on your right.



Eventually the path jogs left through the hedgerow and then continues easterly along a farm track.



Continue along the track until it ends at a bend in Ashwell Road. Turn right and walk south along the verge and the pavement, passing the houses of Lower Bygrave on your left. There are also some "Save Rural Baldock" campaign signs.



At the top of the hill, at another bend in the road, you will come to a bench and a signpost for Public Footpath 15.



The bench has a small plaque "Bygrave, Winner of Hertfordshire Best Kept Hamlet 1991 - 1992 - 1993". This was back at a time when CPRE Herts held an annual competition for Hertfordshire's best kept hamlet, best kept village, and best kept large village.

We no longer run that competition, instead sponsoring our annual Rural Living Awards in which we recognise projects that enhance community life and the environment in villages and countryside all across the county. Please see CPRE Herts website for more information.

This bench is also the site of our October 2018 calendar photo. All of the land in the foreground will be developed if the submitted North Herts Local Plan is approved.



After taking time to enjoy the views, you have the choice of continuing the circular route (see below), or turning around and walking back the way you've come.



If you continue on the circular route, the next mile will be road walking on Ashwell Road. This road is usually not too busy, but there is no pavement so take great care with any traffic.

There is a Heritage Road Verge on the right - this means there are protected wildflowers and protected wildlife habitats. There are also fine views and several farms. All of this is within the area threatened with development.



Ashwell Road eventually becomes Bygrave Road, and you will be able to retrace your steps back to Baldock rail station.

If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and celebrate the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone to enjoy. For more information on our work and how you can help, please visit our website at [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk).

On our website you can also find ordering instructions for our new 2019 "Hertfordshire Countryside Under Threat" calendars, as well as Christmas cards and our ever-popular blank greeting cards.

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This route last walked by CPRE in September 2018.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended and a compass may be helpful.

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CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587. We are the county branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.