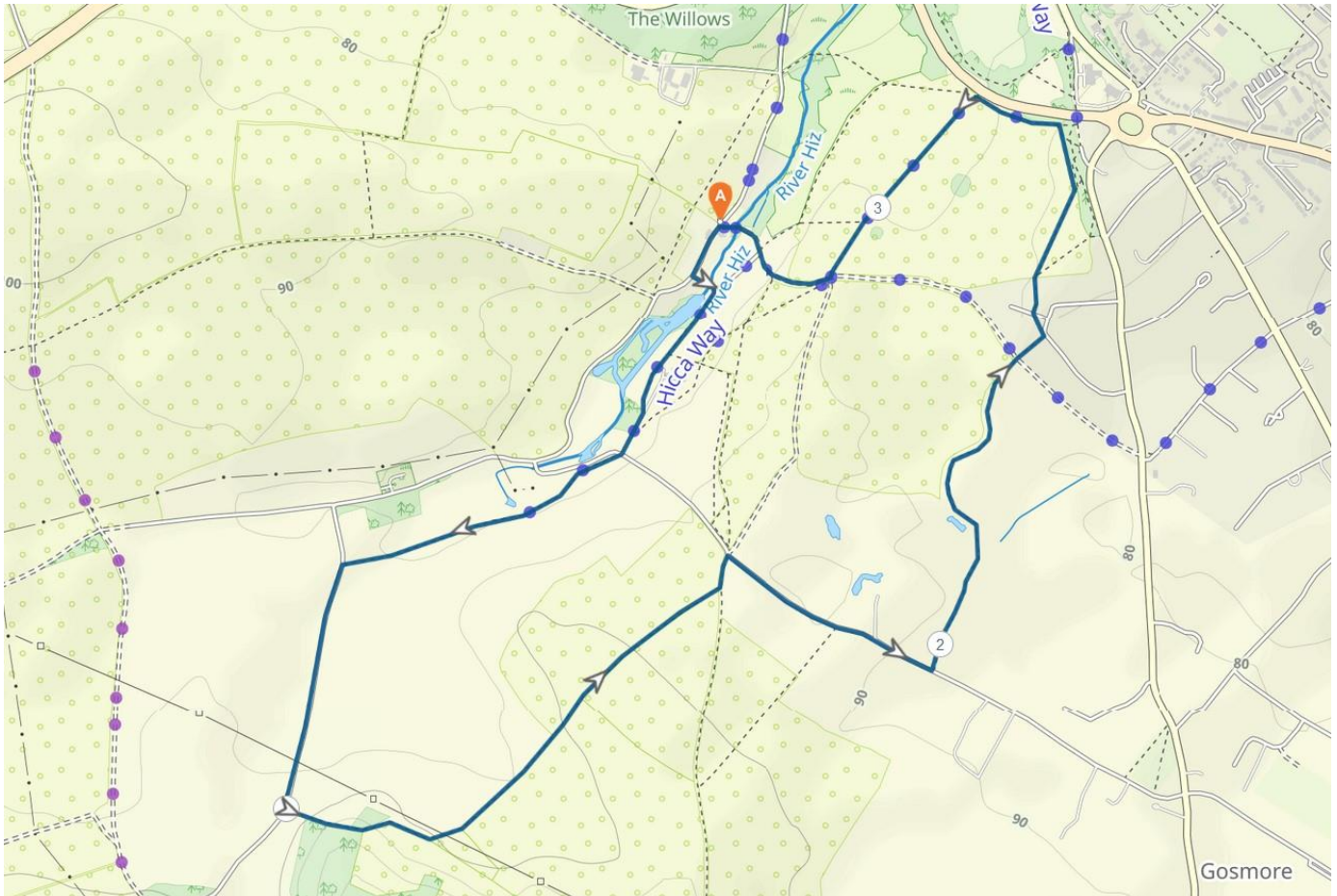




The countryside charity  
Hertfordshire

## Charlton



Charlton village dates back to before the Domesday Book. This is a circular walk of 3.3 miles, crossing rolling farmland with the foothills of the Chilterns beckoning and providing beautiful views.

Distance: 3.3 miles / 5.3 km

Ascent: 230 feet / 70 metres

Duration: 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Start / Finish: The Windmill pub, Charlton village, about 1 mile south of Hitchin.

Refreshments: The Windmill pub, Charlton

Park on the wider section of public highway (Charlton Road) at the north end of Charlton village. Alternatively, park in any of the public car parks in Hitchin and walk south about a mile to reach the village.

Walk into the village to find the Windmill pub where the walk starts and ends.

*On the other side of the road is Charlton House with a prominent blue plaque commemorating Sir Henry Bessemer, the English inventor. His steel-making process was granted a patent in 1855 and would become the most important technique for making steel for almost a hundred years. A prolific inventor, he also held over 100 other patents primarily in the fields of iron, steel and glass.*

With your back to The Windmill pub turn left (south) and walk along the lane for approximately 100 metres until you come to the sign for Mill Farm. Turn left down the farm track.



Shortly you will see a footpath sign (Public Footpath 42) pointing to the right. Take this path.

You will soon come to a waymarked gate saying Hicca Way. Go through the kissing gate and follow the right hand side of the field to the gate on the far side.



Once through this gate follow the path until it passes Well Head pumping station. Continue ahead onto the concrete drive for the pumping station and follow it down to Maydencroft Lane.

Immediately opposite is a sign-posted flight of steps (Public Footpath 4) leading up onto the next field.



Carry on the path around the field margin, keeping the hedge to your right. After 250 metres a shallow pond bordered by large beech and willow trees can be seen on the right-hand side; this is the source of the River Hiz. Starting at this spring the beautiful chalk stream River Hiz flows ten miles to feed the River Ivel that, in turn, feeds the River Great Ouse.



Continue until you come to a road. Turn left and walk along the road. Just after passing under the power lines as you are approaching a wood, look for a public bridleway on the left.

Take this Bridleway 008, to the left, up an incline to the edge of the wood.



Go through the wood and upon exiting curve left back under the power lines, and continue on the bridleway until you reach a track marked Public Highway. Turn left following the arrow to Maydencroft Lane, which you will reach after a few yards.

Turn right onto Maydencroft Lane and walk along the lane past Maydencroft Manor.



*Maydencroft Manor has a remarkable history with records dating back to 1269. It is a former royal open hall house owned by the English royal family from Medieval and Tudor times. Queen Isabella and later King Henry VIII stayed there. Henry VIII used it for hunting and hawking and was once rescued from drowning in a ditch when at Maydencroft. Nowadays Maydencroft Manor Native Breeds Farm is a family business based on a working farm. They are passionate about the heritage native breeds reared there and sustainable, low input, high welfare farming methods.*

Beyond the Manor (and opposite the gate to riding stables) look for steps and a footpath sign on the left, hidden amongst the hedge, leading up to Footpath 2.

Go through the gate and walk along the left-hand field margin until you come to a second, way-marked gate.

Through the gate follow the path across the field to a sharp left to continue along the path which now has a hedgerow on the left and a field with a wire fence on the right.



Follow the path until it meets Public Restricted Byway 96 which cuts across it. Cross the byway and take the footpath between two houses.

At the end of that path you are in a residential street (Priory Way) with a green to your left. Cross over the green diagonally to the left and continue up the footpath between Nos. 27 and 29 into the field beyond.



Go straight (slight diagonal right and ignoring left and right options) across the field to the end of the path and turn left, carrying on to the post-and-rail fence along the embankment to the A602.

Follow the path along and downhill with the fence on your right. Take the first path to your left, across the field and uphill to the sign for Byway 96.



Turn right on to the Byway, downhill past the thatched cottage, across the river via the bridge and up to the Windmill pub again.

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This route last walked by CPRE in September 2024.

If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and promote the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone. For more information on our work, or to sign up for our newsletter, make a donation, or volunteer with us, please visit [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk)

CPRE Hertfordshire is a registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended.