



1 LITTLE NESTON & THE WIRRAL WAY

4½ miles (7.2 km)

With convenient car parking and a wide belt of grassy marshland where dogs can run about to their heart's content, the Dee shoreline at Little Neston is rightly something of a magnet for local dog-owners.

This route is a little more ambitious and explores some of the other delights of the surrounding area: it sets off inland along dog-friendly paths between fields and includes a section of the Wirral Way, a converted rail trail, before returning to the Dee for a pleasant stroll back along the marshes' edge to the Harp. Keep your eye open for interesting birds: the marshes are home to several uncommon species, including Little Egrets, Short-eared Owls and Hen Harriers.

Start & Finish: The Harp Inn, 19 Quayside, Little Neston.

Sat Nav: CH64 0TB.

How to get there: Travelling towards Heswall on the A540 from Chester, turn left (signposted 'Ness 1¼') at a set of traffic lights. Follow the narrow lane to Ness village, where you turn right, past the Wheatsheaf pub. Continue for ½ mile to a roundabout, where you turn left (Marshlands Road). Pass under a railway bridge and continue until you reach the estuary. Bear left to the Harp Inn.

Parking: There are free car parking areas either side of the Harp Inn and a small car park for patrons.

OS Map: Explorer 266 Wirral & Chester/Caer. **Grid ref:** SJ289762.

THE THE HARP INN is open all day from 12 noon but **PUB** serves food until 3pm (apart from Curry Night on Tuesday evenings). The fairly short menu includes light bites, a children's menu and a range of sandwiches; mains are mostly pub staples. There are one or two vegetarian choices in each category. Dogs are welcome throughout, and water bowls and treats are provided.

☎ 01513 366980



THE WHEATSHEAF at Ness has a longer menu, though still focusing on 'pub classics', and serves food into the early evenings. There are numerous pubs and cafés just off the route in Neston and, a little further afield, at Parkgate. 🌐 wheatsheafpubandkitchen.co.uk

☎ 01513 366336



Terrain: Rail trails, green lanes and estuarine paths with occasional streams, puddles and marshy pools.

Livestock: Horses may be encountered on the Wirral Way and in the fields leading down to the estuary; there may be sheep or cattle in adjoining fields on the opening section, but you should always be separated from them by a hedge or fence.

Stiles and roads: One low stone step-stile at Neston Old Quay should be easily negotiated by all but the least agile of dogs. The route includes a couple of short tarmac sections, but the vast majority is on paths and tracks, mostly firm and dry underfoot.

Nearest vets: Neston Veterinary Surgery, 43–45 West Vale, Neston, Cheshire CH64 9SE. ☎ 0151 336 3335.

The Walk

① From the front of the pub, facing the estuary, turn left and walk along the road, passing Denhall Quay and a car parking area on your right.

② After a row of houses on your right, turn left, before a pair of bollards, onto a footpath, surfaced at first. Follow it along the edge of a housing estate, keeping to the right of the houses at every opportunity, until you join a farm track. Follow the track under a railway bridge and climb up to the road.

CHESHIRE – Dog Friendly Pub Walks



3 Turn right and follow the lane, passing junctions with Snab Lane and Well Close to reach the crossroads at the centre of Ness village. Turn left, past the Wheatsheaf pub, then right into Cumbers Lane. When the lane bends left, carry straight on past a row of terraced cottages to a kissing gate into fields. Bear left to a further kissing gate and continue past a play area to a road at the corner of the school grounds.

4 Turn right and take a hedged path leading straight ahead when the road bends left. After 350 metres, turn left into an attractive sunken path between gappy hedges and trees.

5 On meeting a major bridleway by a bench, turn right. At a junction with a footpath, keep left on the most obvious path. This leads gently downhill to the Wirral Way.

6 Just before the underbridge, turn left up steps onto the former railway embankment and turn left. Follow the Way for 600 metres, passing a carved log on the left and ignoring paths leading off to a car park on the right, before passing under a road bridge. Beyond the bridge, the Wirral Way follows a deep, gloomy cutting





with sheer sandstone walls passing under a high bridge, before climbing to a road.

7 Cross into Station Road, opposite, and cross the end of Bushell Road. Walk down to a bridge under the railway; if your dog needs a run-around off the lead, there is an alleyway into Stanney Fields Park on the right. Beyond the railway, bear left back onto the Wirral Way and cross an ornamental metal bridge.

8 Having passed over Church Lane, turn left at a waymark post pointing to 'Old Quay' (or for Neston church and town centre, turn right and left along Church Lane). Follow the right-hand side of the field down to a gap in the far corner, and then cross to a gate.

9 Turn left along the hedged path and follow it as it bends right into a field. There may be horses in the paddocks for the next few hundred metres. Follow the obvious surfaced path to a footbridge and through fields (with the water treatment works to your right) to the scant remains of the Old Quay above the saltmarshes of the Dee.

10 Turn left over a stone step-stile and follow the path beyond, which leads above the marshes to the road at Little Neston and back to the Harp Inn.