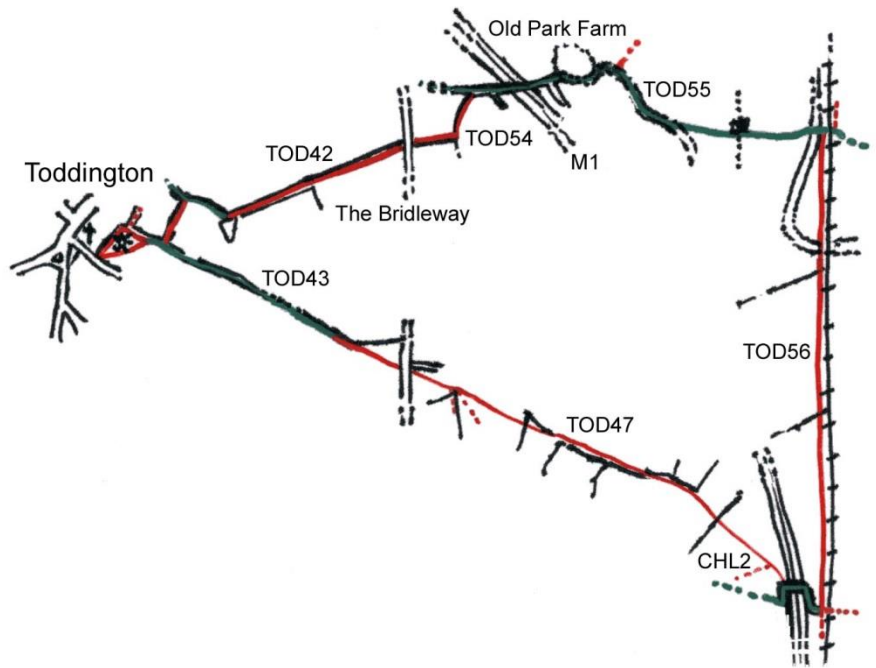


Circular Walk around Toddington Motorway Services

One of a series of circular walks around Toddington.

A 4¾ mile (7½ km) walk largely over arable with some grazing fields so it is good when the ground is dry, but can be difficult after recent ploughing. Much of the land is managed by Heathcote Farms who normally keep the paths clear of crops. The route is stile free with twelve gates on this route, some fields may have grazing horses or sheep. In good weather with firm ground allow over 2 hours for the walk.



1. Set off from the old pump on the village green down Conger Lane past the Oddfellows Arms, at the Griffin farm entrance go through the kissing gate. Walk along the side of the field, through the next metal gate keeping Griffin farm on your left and Conger hill on your right.
2. At the gravel farm road (before you reach the wooden kissing gate) turn right continuing to keep Conger Hill on your right. The cemetery is on your left behind the black curved farm buildings.
3. At the corner of the cemetery turn left along the wide grass path to the next corner of the cemetery and take the path to your right. Here you get your first view of the white buildings of Toddington motorway services. At the waymark post follow the path (TOD42) down to the left through a wooded area, over a couple of wooden walkways and two kissing gates. This section of fenced in path it is cut twice a year, but it can still get overgrown with nettles.
4. Continue straight on keeping the hedge on your left until you reach a road incongruously called the 'bridleway'. Although you have reasonable visibility here, the traffic is very fast, so cross carefully. Depending on the wind strength and direction you may start to hear the M1 traffic.
5. Go across this paddock (TOD54) with the wire fence on your right through the next two kissing gates. After the bridge turn left and follow the hedge, keeping it on your left, until you come to a gap beside the field gate taking you onto the motorway services access road, turn right.
6. Cross the motorway bridge, take care as vehicles treat this road like the motorway and do not expect to meet walkers. Note the plaque on the northern bridge parapet. Just over the motorway bridge go left down the drive towards Old Park farmhouse, then just before the farmhouse, go right through the bridleway gate. Follow the farm track (TOD55) keeping the buildings on your left. Follow the track around to the right by the second waymark post, ignore the footpath towards Harlington station. The 1999 OS map are incorrect as these paths have been rationalised into this single path.

7. Follow the track for about 400m until a waymark post, where the path continues left across the field to the pylon in the middle of the field, then toward the smaller pylon by the railway embankment.
8. Do not go under the railway, but continue south with the railway on your left. Walk under the pylons with a leachate treatment works on the right. The works was installed to treat the leachate from the Sundon tip to the east of the railway. The ground here used to get very wet but the new raised path ensures it is accessible throughout the year.
9. Cross the former haul road where it crosses under the railway. Continue south beside the railway for about a mile under the pylons, through a hedge and along the field edge. On the right is the south bound Toddington motorway service area.



10. The field ends as the M1 and railway converge but there are bridges over both. Turn right onto a concrete farm track over the motorway bridge. Looking over the bridge parapet you appreciate the speed that everyone rushes past on the motorway. As the (north side) parapet of the bridge ends, there is a gap in the wooden fence, go through this gap and down the wooded bank (CHL2), keeping the motorway fence on your right. At the bottom there is another gap into the field.
11. In the field there is a pylon and another in the field beyond, aim for the gap in the hedge between nearer right hand pylon where you should be able to see a yellow topped way mark post. Pass through the stagger and straight across the field to the hedge line, keeping the hedge on your right follow the hedge up the hill past a wood called Hipsey Spinney. This wood and Woodcock Spinney ahead are areas where wildlife is encouraged, so please keep dogs under control. Pass through the hedge, now keeping it on your left. On the right is a view of the sprawling northbound service area. The Parish Council have been trying for years (without any success) to have tree screening of the services – hence this unattractive view.

12. At the top of the hill we pass a waymark post, continue down the field edge passing Woodcock Spinney on our left. Another waymark post indicates where to cross the ditch on a bridge. From here we go diagonally across the field to a bridge over the River Flit in the hedge line.



right as you head up the hill. At the brow of the hill you see Toddington St George's church tower - stop and turn around to appreciate the vista where you may be able to make out the route you have walked.

13. From the River Flit bridge aim straight across the field to the finger post where the path crosses the Bridleway road.
14. Carefully cross over the road, on the other side is a finger post pointing across the field (clipping the corner of the cultivated field) to a broad field edge path. Keep the ditch on your
15. As you follow this track back towards Toddington you again pass the Cemetery, this time on your right, then turn left through two gates keeping Conger Hill on your right. Back through the kissing gate into Conger Lane, then turn



right and you are back at the village green. Pick any one of the many pubs to refresh yourself!

Advice for Dog Walkers – Subject to following the Country Code, for much of the route a dog can be off the lead, except for the sections over grazing fields and some minimal distance along the motorway services/Old Park farm access road. There are dog bins on Toddington village green. Dependent on the time of year there is water in various streams & ditches.

Last updated: 31 Aug 2024. Comments and suggestions to: Tom@Toddington.Info
For more routes visit: www.Toddington.Info