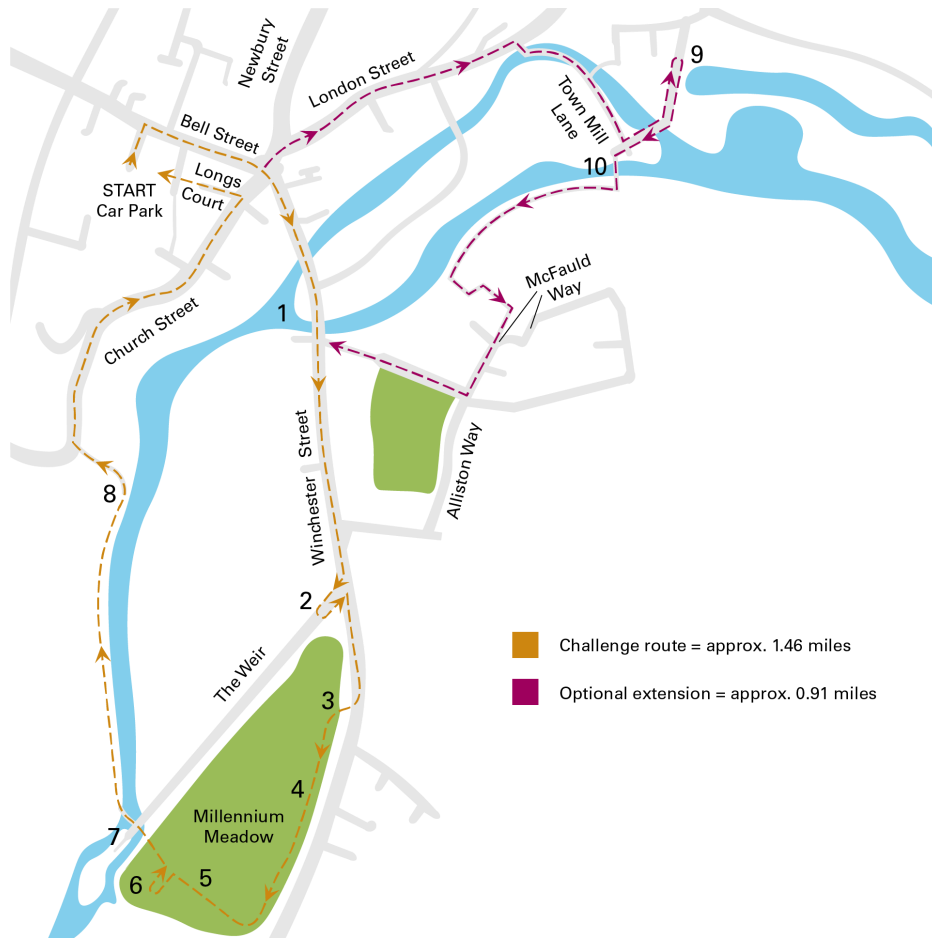


## Route Map



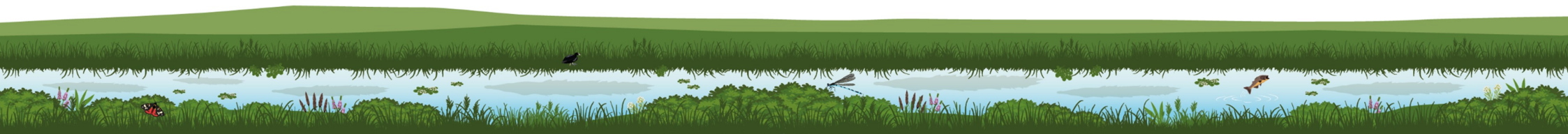
Watercress and Winterbournes is a Landscape Partnership Scheme that is protecting, enhancing and celebrating the seven chalk streams that make up the headwaters of the Rivers Test and Itchen: the Bourne Rivulet, Candover Brook, Cheriton Stream, Pillhill Brook, River Arle, Upper Anton and Upper Test. The scheme is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and brings together 16 partner organisations. To learn more visit [www.hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes](http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes)



## Chalk Stream Challenge



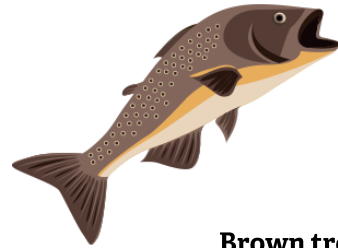
## Challenge Route: The Upper Test at Whitchurch



## Route Guide

Park in the car park off Bell Street where there are public toilets. Walk from the car park back onto Bell Street, turning right towards the roundabout in the middle of town. Carefully navigate the roundabout, using the pedestrian crossings available, and take Winchester Street towards Whitchurch Silk Mill (1).

The Mill is built on Frog Island, around which the Upper Test and its tributary flow. These crystal clear waters have provided the Mill with power for over 200 years, driving a cast iron waterwheel which was made in the 1890s.



**Brown trout**

The waterwheel is an undershot waterwheel, which means that the river flows under the wheel, with the force of the water turning it as it passes. If you choose to visit the Mill, you can discover how a system of interconnecting gears and shafts transmit the power from the waterwheel to the silk winding frames.

Powered by electricity since the 1920s (the flow of water was too inconsistent, leading to blemishes in the woven fabric), the Mill is a working mill and items are still created today from silk woven on the historic machinery. You will also find a café, shop (which sells duck food) and toilets at the Mill. Even without going into the Mill, you should be able to look down into the river for fish like brown trout and grayling.

Continue along Winchester Street until you reach The Weir. If you walk a short way up The Weir and look through the trees and across the water meadows on the right, you will see a 17th century granary building (2). It was relocated here when its original site was built upon.

Note the staddle stones underneath the structure. These were used to support the bases of granaries, hayricks and game ladders as they lifted the structure off the ground, thereby protecting it from vermin and water seepage.

Turn and head back towards Winchester Street. One back at Winchester Street, turn right and continue along the road until you reach the elaborate Millennium gates, which are just after the allotments on the right hand side and mark the entrance to the Millennium Green (3).

Enter the Millennium Green through the metal gates. This site is an old water meadow and would have been flooded in the spring by the opening of sluice gates by farmers. This flooding would have produced early grass for sheep and cattle.

Once inside the Green, bear left to follow the grassy path adjacent to the tree line on the left hand side. You should reach a dipping platform on your right (4). Look into the water here for plants and other wildlife.

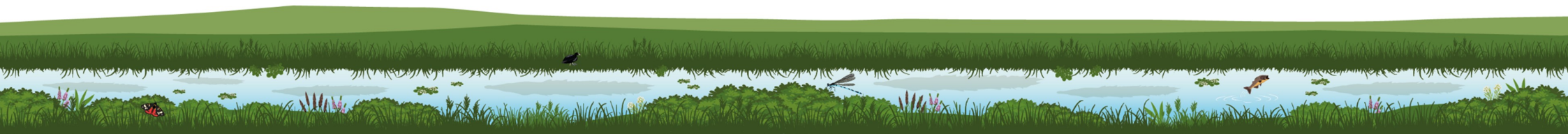
Continue along the same path then on reaching a junction turn right. Part way along this path you will see what resembles a bridge but it is in fact part of a man-made sheep dip or bath (5). Farmers would stand here to plunge their sheep into the water below, hoping to rid them of parasites such as lice, blow-flies, ticks or mites.

As insecticides and fungicides were developed, this form of sheep dipping was replaced by permanent in ground structures, often made from concrete, or mobile transportable steel structures in an attempt to contain the chemicals being used and prevent soil contamination and water pollution.



**Water vole**

Continue across the meadow in the same direction, looking for a path to your left towards a green picnic bench. Here there is an excellent spot for stream dipping and other activities such as looking at flow or the clarity of the water (6). Return back to the path and turn left to leave the Millennium Green.



Keep walking straight ahead (you will pass the top of The Weir) and cross the bridge in front of the Fulling Mill (7) where you can see a sluice, mill race and mill pond. This is another good place to look for fish in the river below.

Stay on this path as it runs adjacent to the river, keeping a watchful eye on both banks for water vole and other wildlife. At the far end of this path you will find a small stretch of the river fenced off to your right (8). This is a dog dip, but it is also a good place to feed the ducks and take a closer look at the river bed below.

Turn left and walk up the lane until you reach Church Street. Carefully cross the road and turn right. Continue along Church Street until you reach Long's Court on the left. At the far end of this, take the footpath between the houses and you will find yourself by the public toilets in the Bell Street car park.

### Route extensions

An extra loop could be added into your walk at either the beginning or end from the roundabout in the town centre. This loop takes in old watercress beds and the Town Mill.

Carefully navigate the roundabout, using the pedestrian crossings available, and take Newbury Street before immediately crossing over to take London Street. Continue along London Street until you reach Town Mill Lane on the right hand side. Walk down Town Mill Lane and on reaching the bottom, turn left onto a footpath that takes you behind Town Mill Cottage.

Stay on this footpath, crossing over two bridges and look through the vegetation to your right for the old watercress beds. A little further along the path you will see a larger and more open area of watercress beds, again on the right (9).

Turn and walk back to bottom of Town Mill Lane, this time taking the bridge on your left in front of the Town Mill (10). Look into the river for fish.

Follow the path round to the right (straight ahead is into the school grounds) and look immediately right (through the hedge) to the water wheel on the end of the mill. This mill ground corn for flour.

Keep following the footpath round the school field and at the end exit straight onto McFauld Way (Sheppard Close will be immediately on your right). Continue straight ahead on McFauld Way, looking for a path on your right at the junction with Alliston Way (before the open green space). At the end of this path, you will emerge onto Winchester Street by the Silk Mill and the Gill Nethercott Centre car park.

You should be able to cover these parts of the challenge on this walk:

**Section 2:** 2, 3

**Section 3:** 7 (on route extension), 8, 9, 10, 11

**Section 4:** 12, 13

**Section 5:** 16, 18, 19

### Additional information (please check opening times and costs)

- Useful map OS Explorer 144
- Parking in car park on Bell Street RG28 7DD (W3W /// slice.succeed.surveyors)
- Alternative parking at the Gill Nethercott Centre, next door to Whitchurch Silk Mill (you could adjust the route and start / finish here instead) RG28 7HP (W3W ///brambles.jogged.canines)
- Public toilets at the Bell Street car park and at Whitchurch Silk Mill
- Paths are a mix of pavement, grass and bare earth, the latter can get muddy after heavy or prolonged rainfall

### Useful websites

[Whitchurch Association](#) (landowner, Millennium Green)

[Whitchurch Town Council](#)

[The Test Way](#)

[The Mill Trail](#)

[Whitchurch Silk Mill](#)

[Whitchurch Conservation Group](#)

[Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council](#)

