



Thames Estuary Path Section 4

A linear walk from between the C2C stations of Pitsea and Benfleet. Bird watching, estuary views and wildflowers enjoy-route.

Distance 6.9 kilometers / 4.3 miles

Duration 2 hours and 15 minutes



Wildlife



Water feature



Great views



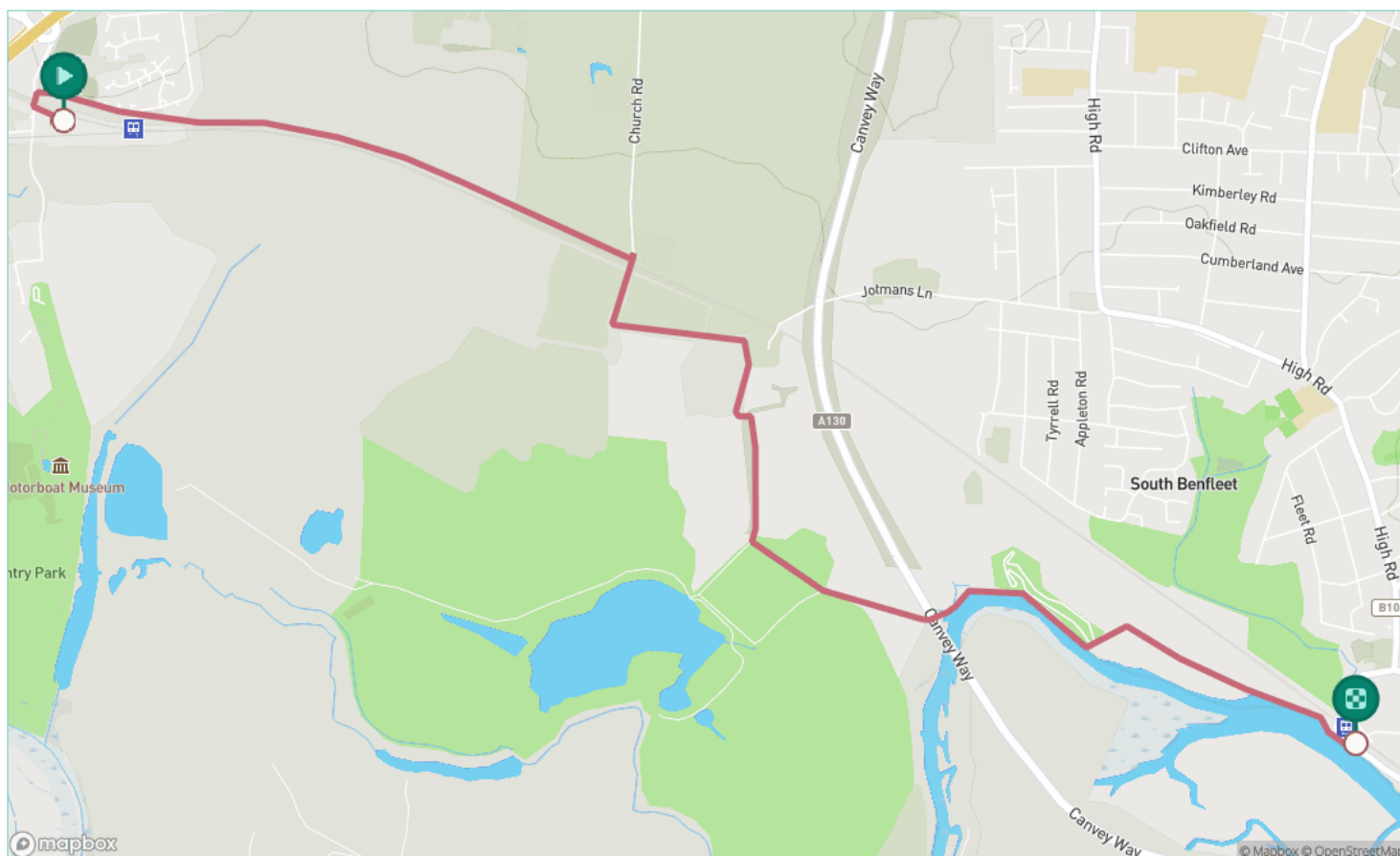
Public transport



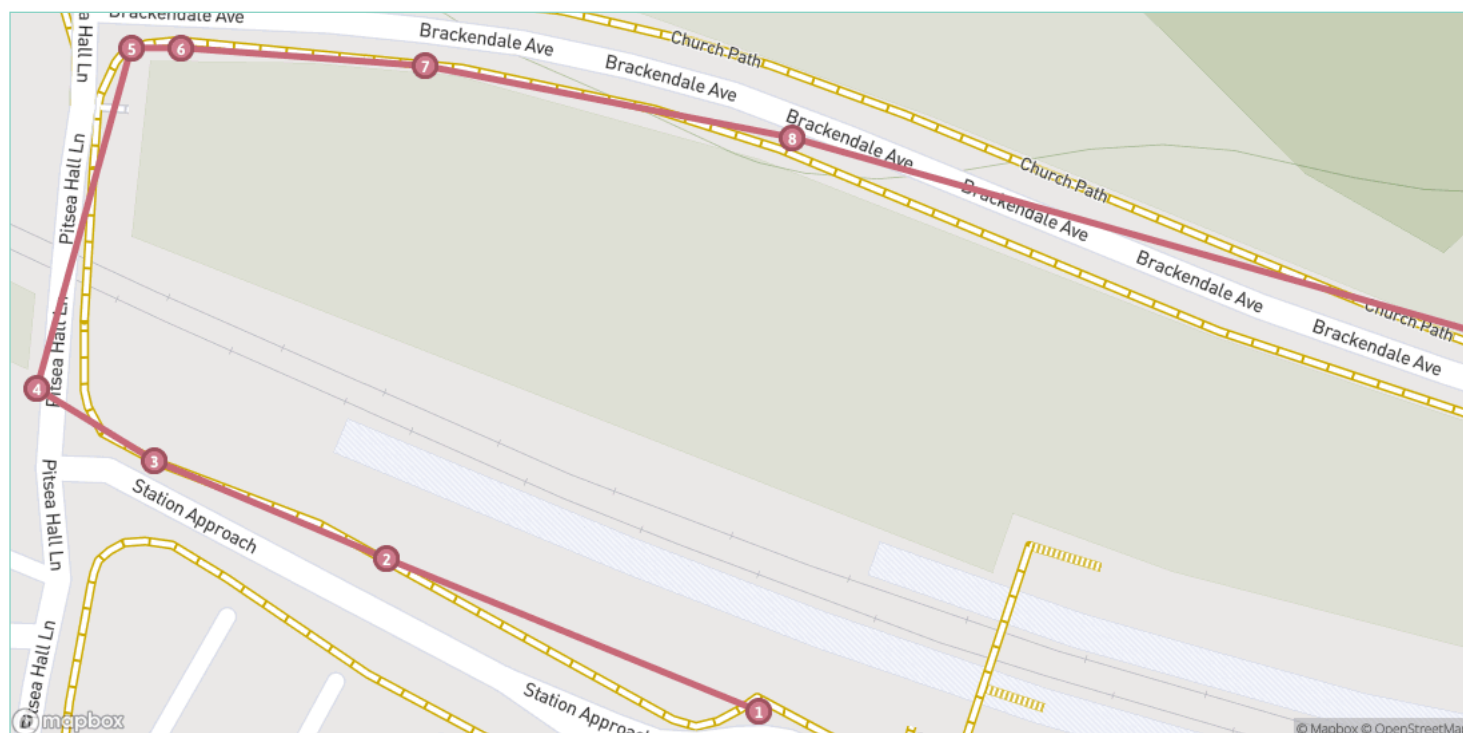
Parking



Dog friendly



Disclaimer: Directions are provided as guidance only. Weather, construction, closures or other factors may affect routes. Please take care when crossing roads and avoid private land. Always follow local signage and use common sense. Created by Go Jauntly Ltd © 2023. Last Updated: 22 September 2022.



Step 1: Welcome to the Pitsea to Benfleet section of the Thames Estuary Path.

Step 2: The Thames Estuary Path is a 30 mile route from Tilbury to Southend, taking you past Thameside Forts, ancient Churches, through Thames Marshes and along the sea wall overlooking internationally important marshes and mudflats.

Step 3: All Thames Estuary Path walks are shadowed by the C2C railway line, making it extremely accessible by train. Trains run between Shoeburyness and London Fenchurch Street, via Southend, Basildon and more local stations.

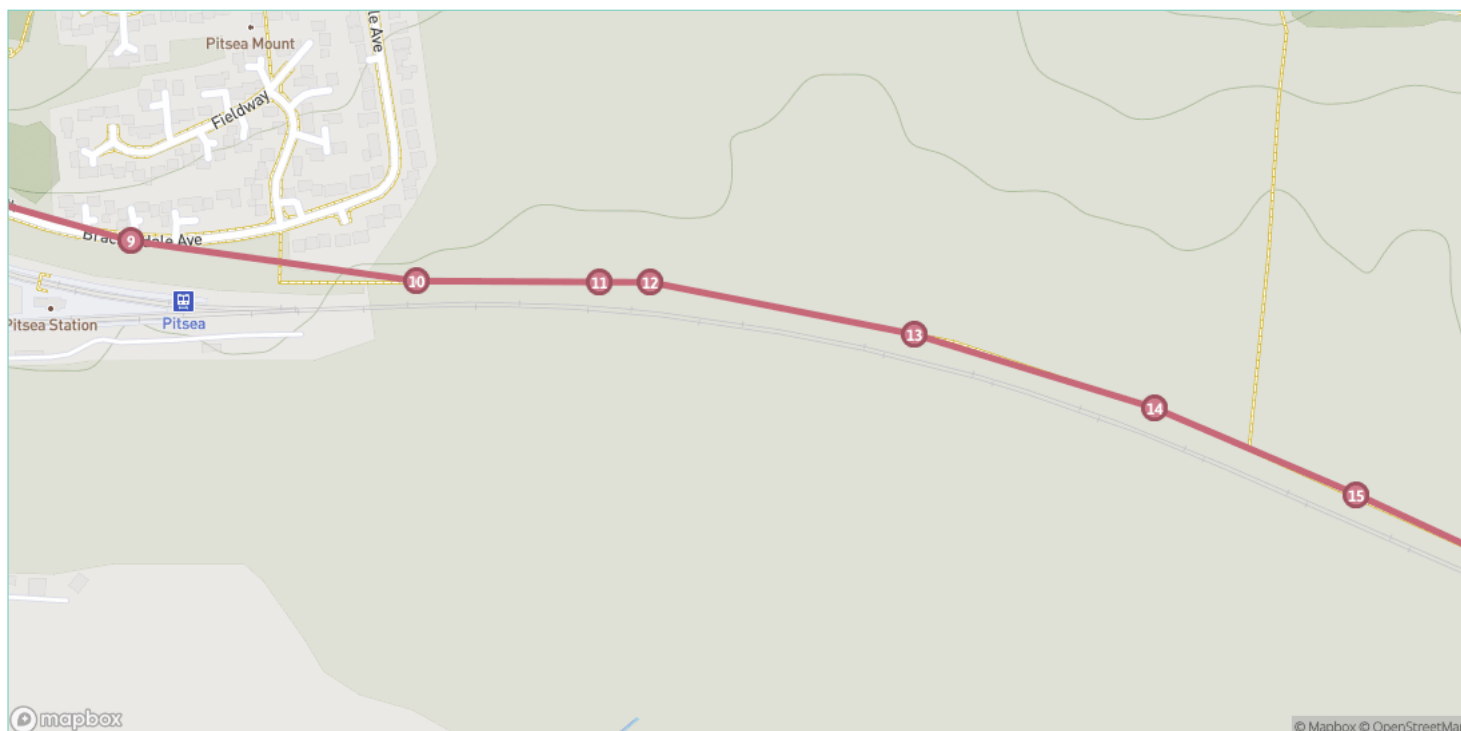
Step 4: To join the Thames Estuary path from the station, turn right out of Station Approach, Then over the Railway Bridge and take the first right

Step 5: Above you is St Michael's on Pitsea Mount. There is little known history about Pitsea but its earliest recorded name is Piceseia which was in 1086 and probably recorded as this in the Domesday Book.

Step 6: The most prominent landmark is that of the 13th century church of St Michael, situated on Pitsea Mount. The church fell into ruin and only the main tower now survives.

Step 7: Keep on the right hand pavement of the road with the railway on your right. A small green appears before some houses on the left.

Step 8: Bear right to the corner of the green by the railway fence and in the trees is the footpath which runs between the houses and the railway.



Step 9: During the summer months this can be a little overgrown with brambles & nettles. There are some low hanging branches along this stretch too.

Step 10: After about 500 metres, through a kissing gate, the footpath opens out into a huge field with views north.

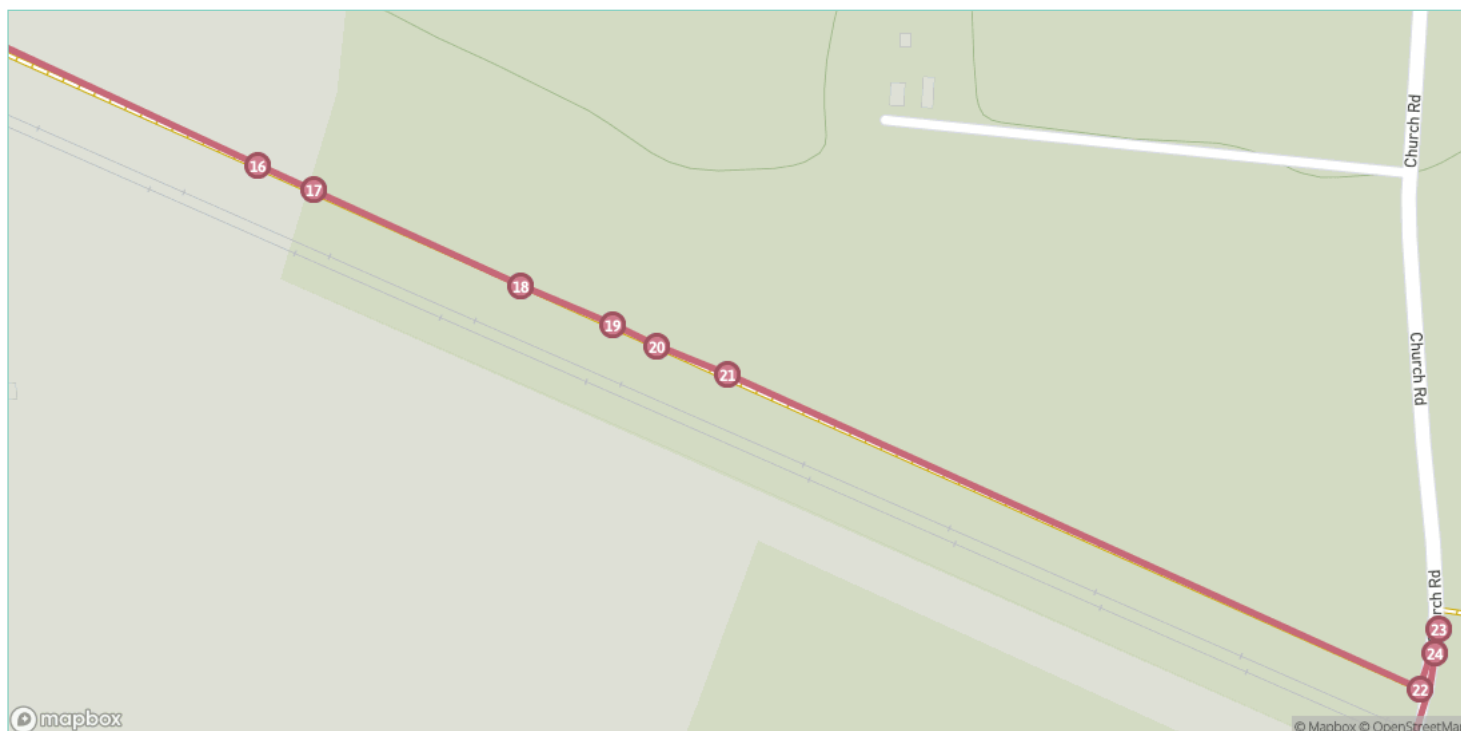
Step 11: The path continues along the side of the railway fence crossing several small bridges across ditches.

Step 12: The field often has horses and the fence to the railway is open so it is advisable to put dogs on leads.

Step 13: Continue following the way-marked path.

Step 14: Pass over this wooden footbridge. There is a metal railing on the left hand side to help if you need it.

Step 15: There are lots of wildflowers growing in the meadow. A haven for bees and butterflies.



Step 16: Pass through a green metal gate and continue ahead.

Step 17: As you enter this field, there will be a World War Two pillbox. As this is private land please enjoy the history from the path.

Step 18: The Bowers Church will soon come into view

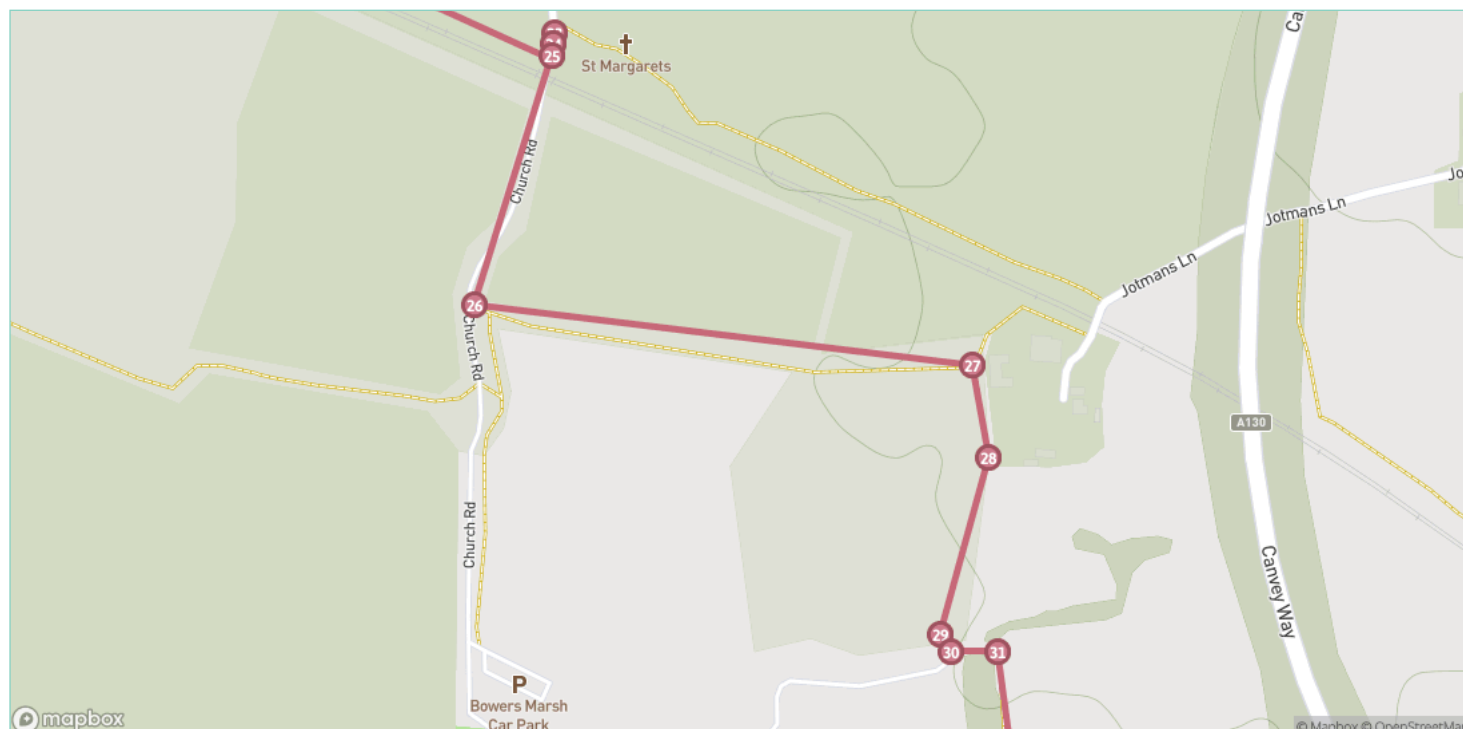
Step 19: A stone church was built by Sir John Giffard in the early fourteenth century and traces of this building still remain in the South Wall (circa 1320) and West Doorway.

Step 20: The church was a gift of the Lords of the manor, the Giffards, who eventually gave their name to the small village of Bowers Gifford.

Step 21: Head up one step to this wooden footbridge, with metal hand rails on either side.

Step 22: The footpath comes out on Church Ln, turn right under the railway & continue on the track until you see a gate on the left which is signed.

Step 23: Bowers Church is on your left. It was a gift of the Lords of the manor, the Giffards, who gave their name to the village Bowers Giffards.



Step 24: The church is built mainly with Kentish ragstone with a tower & wooden spire which was added in Tudor times. The three bells in the church are original 14th Century. They're among the oldest in the country!

Step 25: In the bell tower however, which is reached by 25 steeply winding steps, three bells are housed, all of which are original 14th Century.

Step 26: On your left is a way-marked path with a metal gate. Continue to the end of the track.

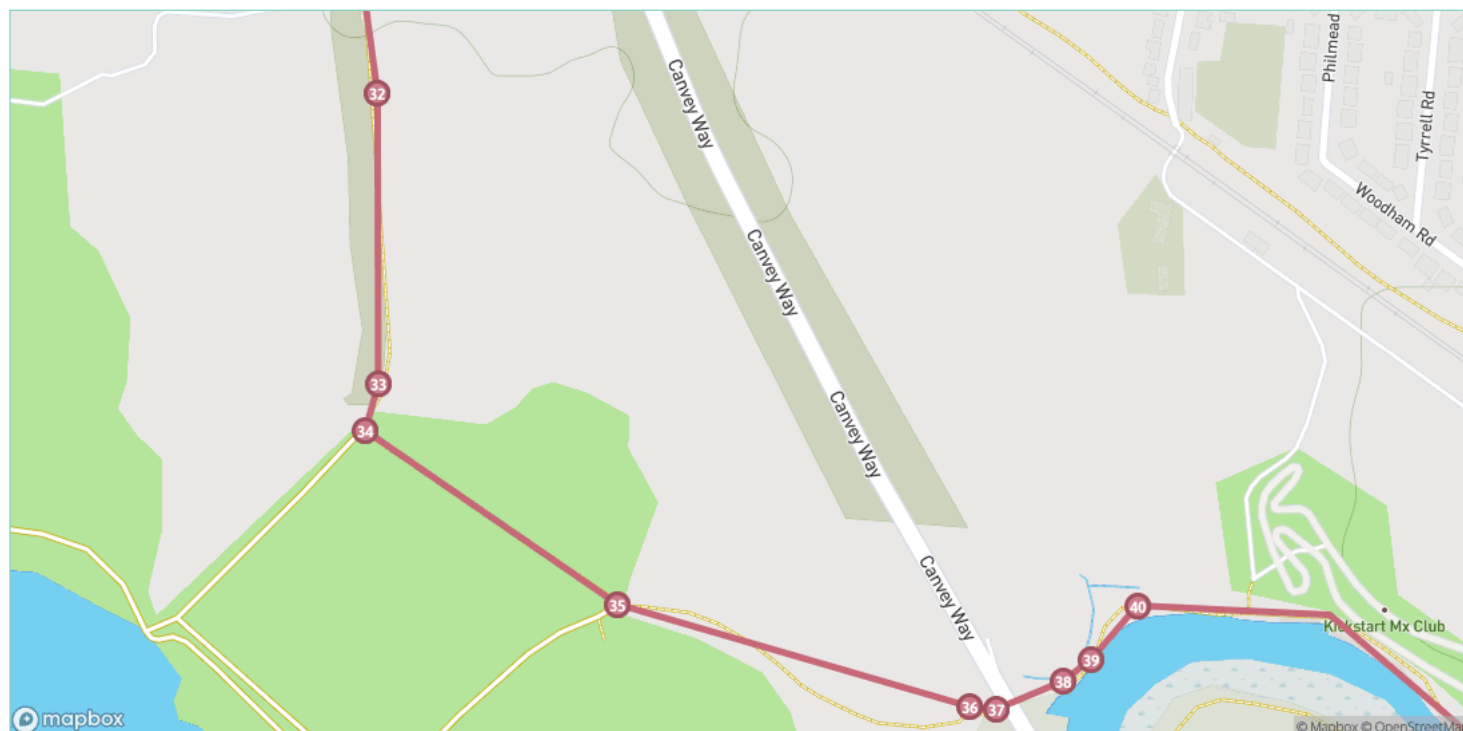
Step 27: You are now on the RSPB's Bowers Marsh Reserve.

Step 28: Bowers Marsh is made up of dry and wet grassland, fresh and saline lagoons, intertidal habitat, saltmarsh and arable areas.

Step 29: The different habitats provide feeding and breeding grounds for important wintering, migratory and breeding for adders and wildfowl. It also supports a range of important protected species such as water voles and reptiles.

Step 30: The path comes to a cross roads and there's a signpost to Benfleet station.

Step 31: The path begins to bear right and a large meadow appears on the left.



Step 32: You'll pass by an old tree stump, a perfect spot to take a break in your surroundings perhaps?

Step 33: Turn left, following the way-marked path.

Step 34: Keep following the track. What birds have you encountered today?

Step 35: Now turn left and head through the middle of the meadow towards the A130.

Step 36: At the eastern end of the meadow there are steps down to a bridge. The path leads to steps up to Benfleet Creek under the A130.

Step 37: Continue ahead, on top of the sea wall until you are forced to walk at the base of the sea wall.

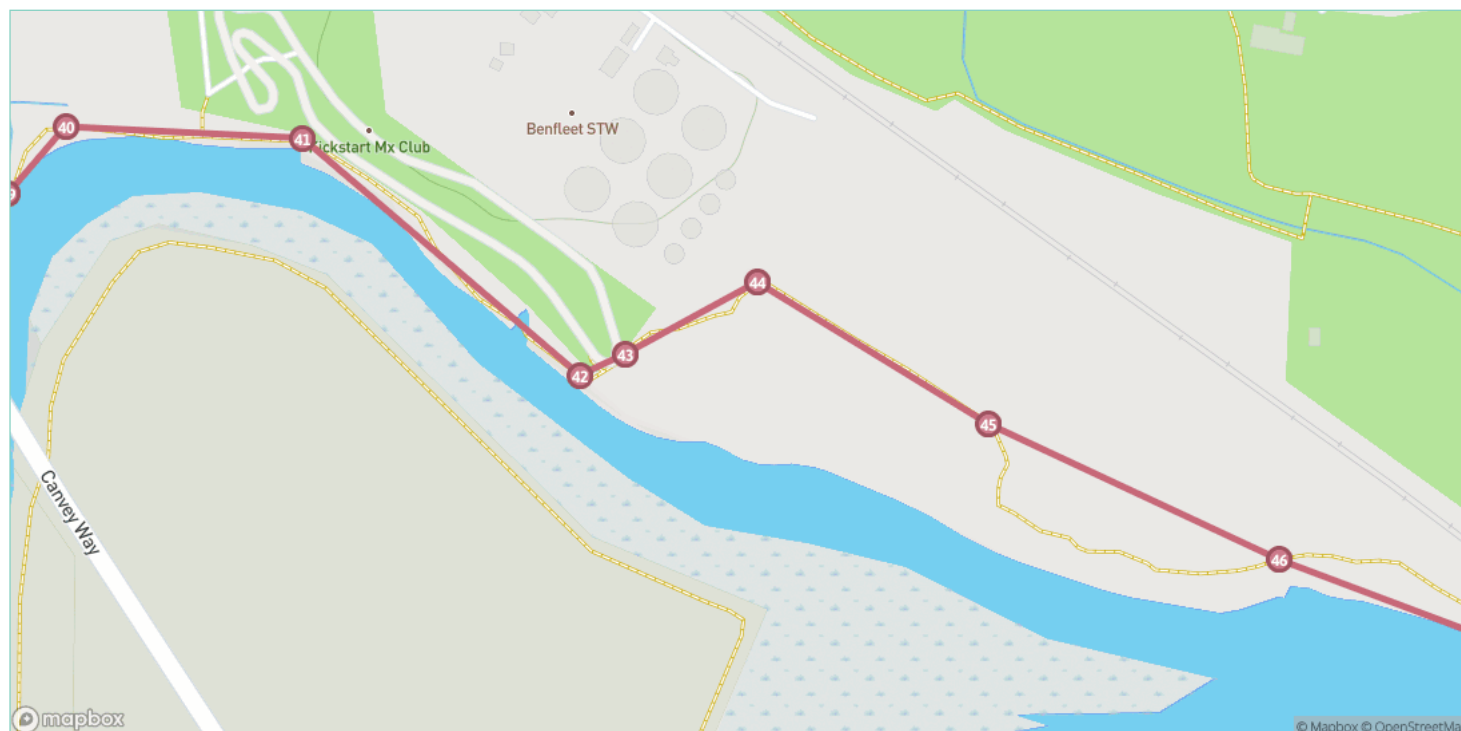
Step 38: It is muddy here occasionally at high tides.

Step 39: Benfleet Creek separates the mainland from Canvey Island opposite and is a fantastic natural area good for water birds

Be Bird Aware



Lots of birds spend time on this special coastline, so please share the shores with wildlife respectfully.



Step 40: As you walk you'll pass Sloe Berry trees, plus brambles filled with blackberries during the summer months.

Step 41: The path runs up a slope here.

Step 42: Pass through the metal fence and turn left.

Step 43: Keep the metal fence on the left.

Step 44: Continue along the edge of the rough grass and then continue ahead towards the fence.

Step 45: You'll soon pass by the house boats. This section of path leads along the creek.

Step 46: The path leads along the creek finally emerging on the road at Benfleet.



Step 47: Turn right to follow the path parallel to Ferry Road.

Step 48: Walk along the pavement overlooking the creek, as you head towards the end of this jaunt.

Step 49: Just past the bench on the left is a crossing, turn left once you have crossed the road, heading towards Benfleet station.

Step 50: You could choose to jump on a train here, or why not continue walking the Thames Estuary Path along the next section?
