



Windmill Hill & Canal Circular

A nature-filled circular walk through windmill hill woods, and along the peaceful towpath of Bridgewater canal.

Distance 2.6 kilometers / 1.6 miles

Duration 40 minutes



Wildlife



Water feature



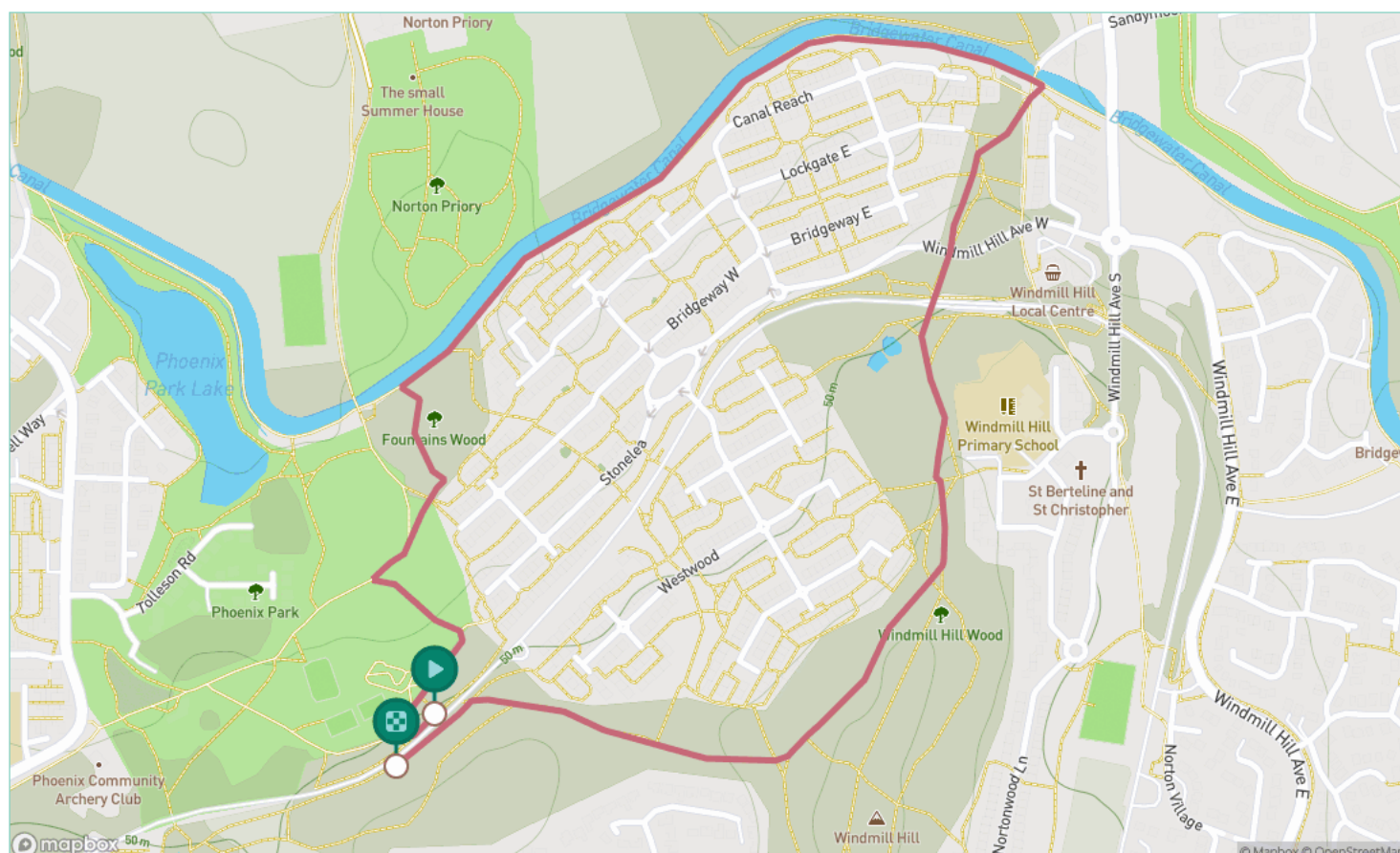
Public transport



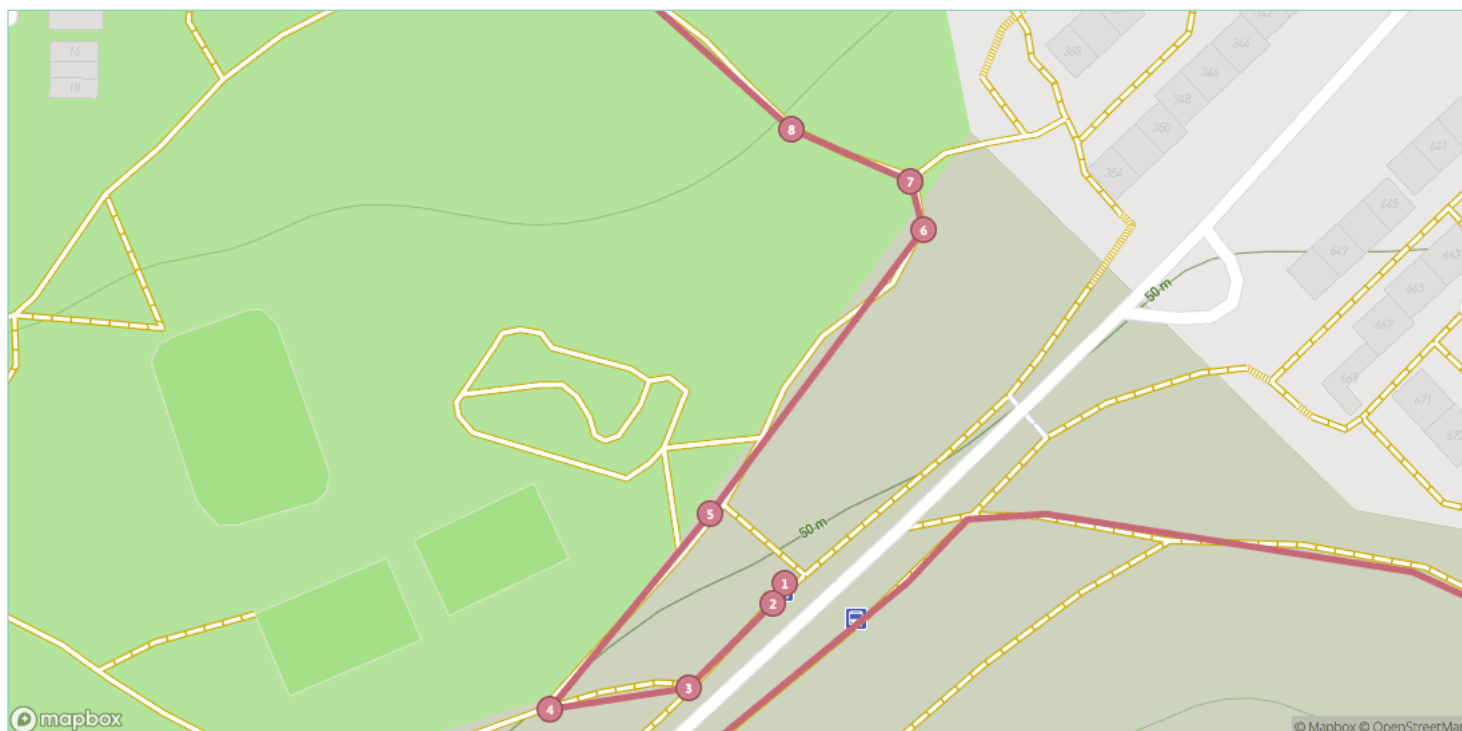
Dog friendly



Child 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.
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Step 1: The walk begins at the Norton Priory Bus stop. Jump off the bus and walk back on yourself. Look out for a path right into the park.

Step 8: Can you spot any sloes growing here? They are the fruiting berries of the blackthorn tree.

Step 2: Welcome to Phoenix Park, a Green Flag awarded public space, with nature activities and outdoor play equipment.

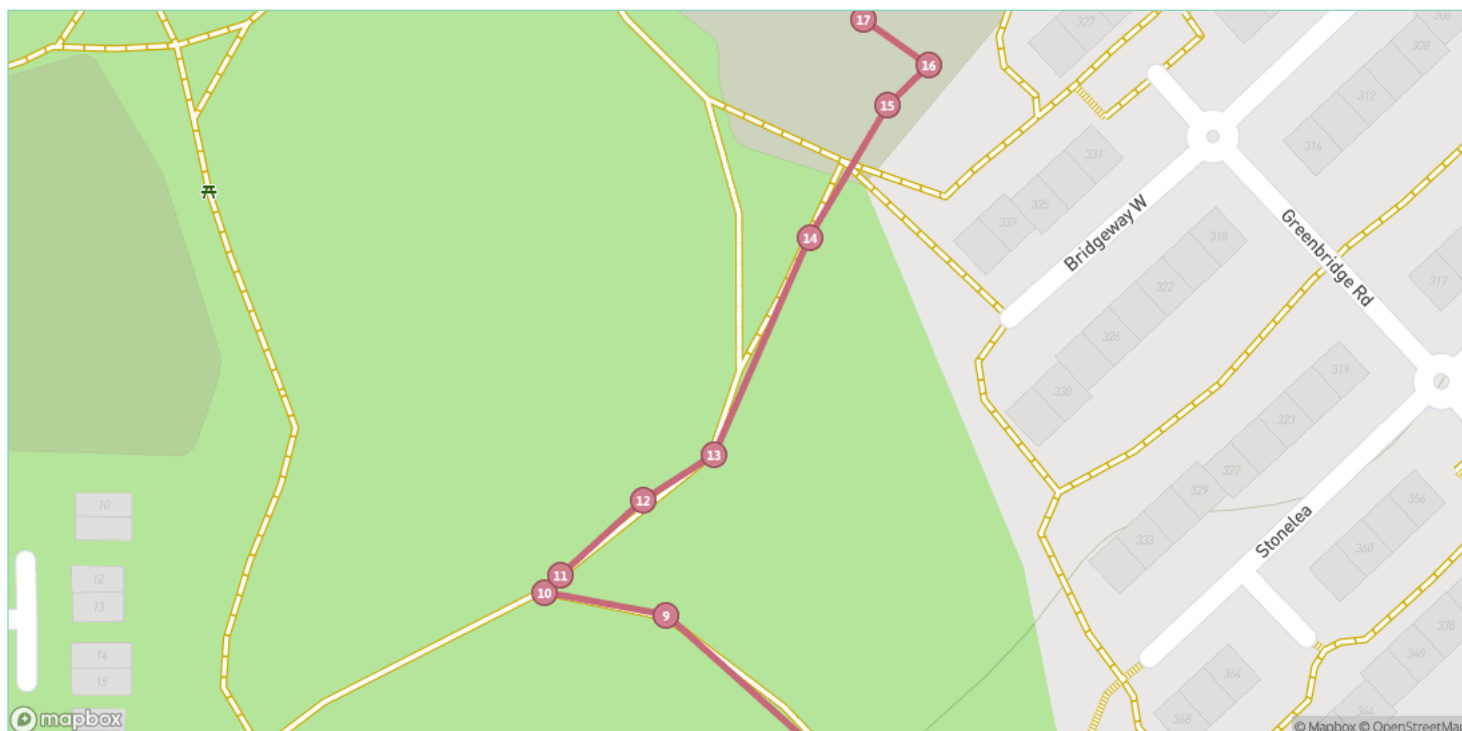
Step 3: Turn right down a sloped pathway to enter the park and get ready to turn right.

Step 4: Shortly after, take a sharp right onto the red path.

Step 5: Continue along the meandering path with sports pitches to your left.

Step 6: At the path junction, take the left path.

Step 7: Continue on this path, enjoy the nature all around you.



Step 9: Get ready to take a sharp right at the next path junction.

Step 10: Turn right onto the red path.

Step 11: Continue along the red path passing a few benches.

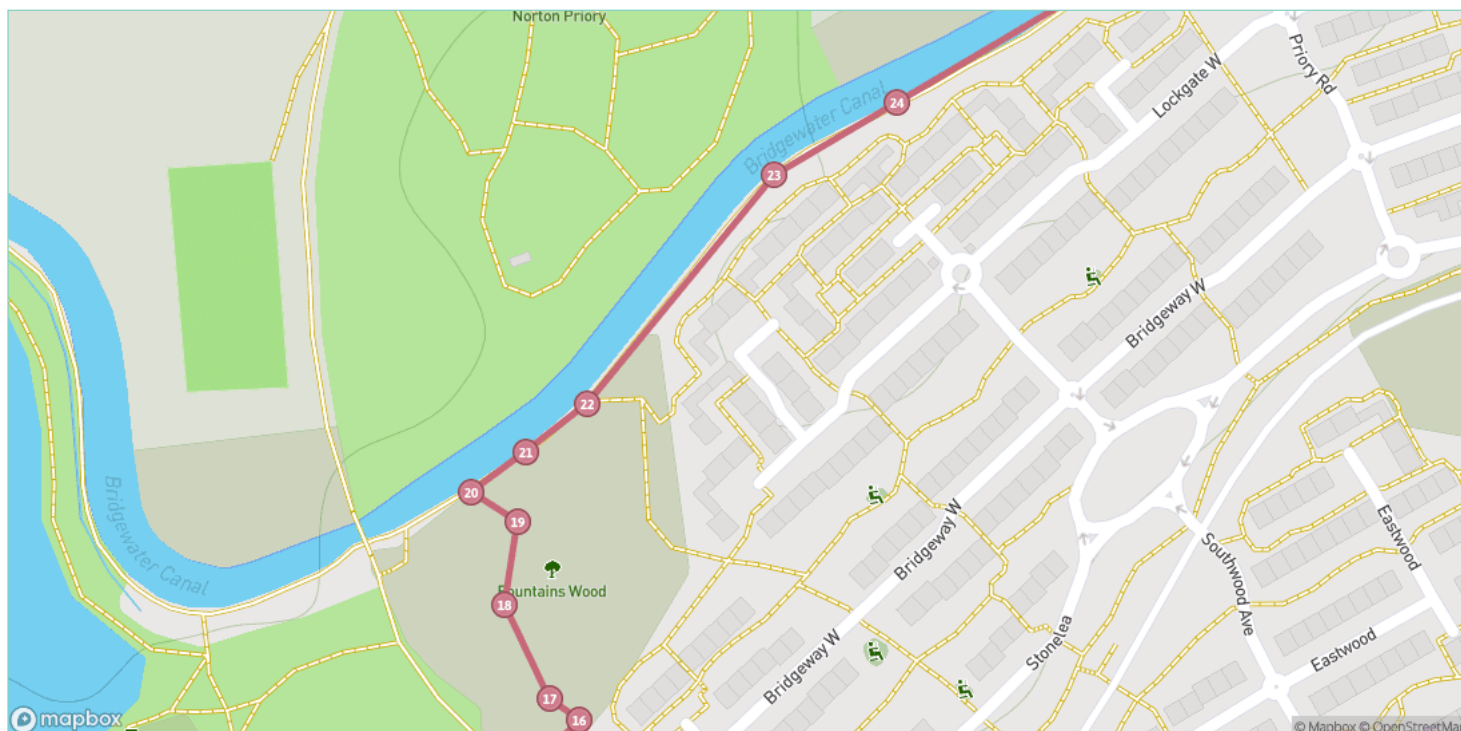
Step 12: Can you spot Runcorn's iconic Silver Jubilee Bridge in the distance?

Step 13: Take the right hand path when you reach a fork.

Step 14: Continue along the path until you reach Windmill Hill.

Step 15: Look out for a trail on the left that takes you into Fountains Wood.

Step 16: The trail may be a little muddy so take care.



Step 17: Keep following the trail for a few minutes.

Step 18: What different trees can you notice in the forest?

Step 19: Keep on the trail until you reach Bridgewater Canal.

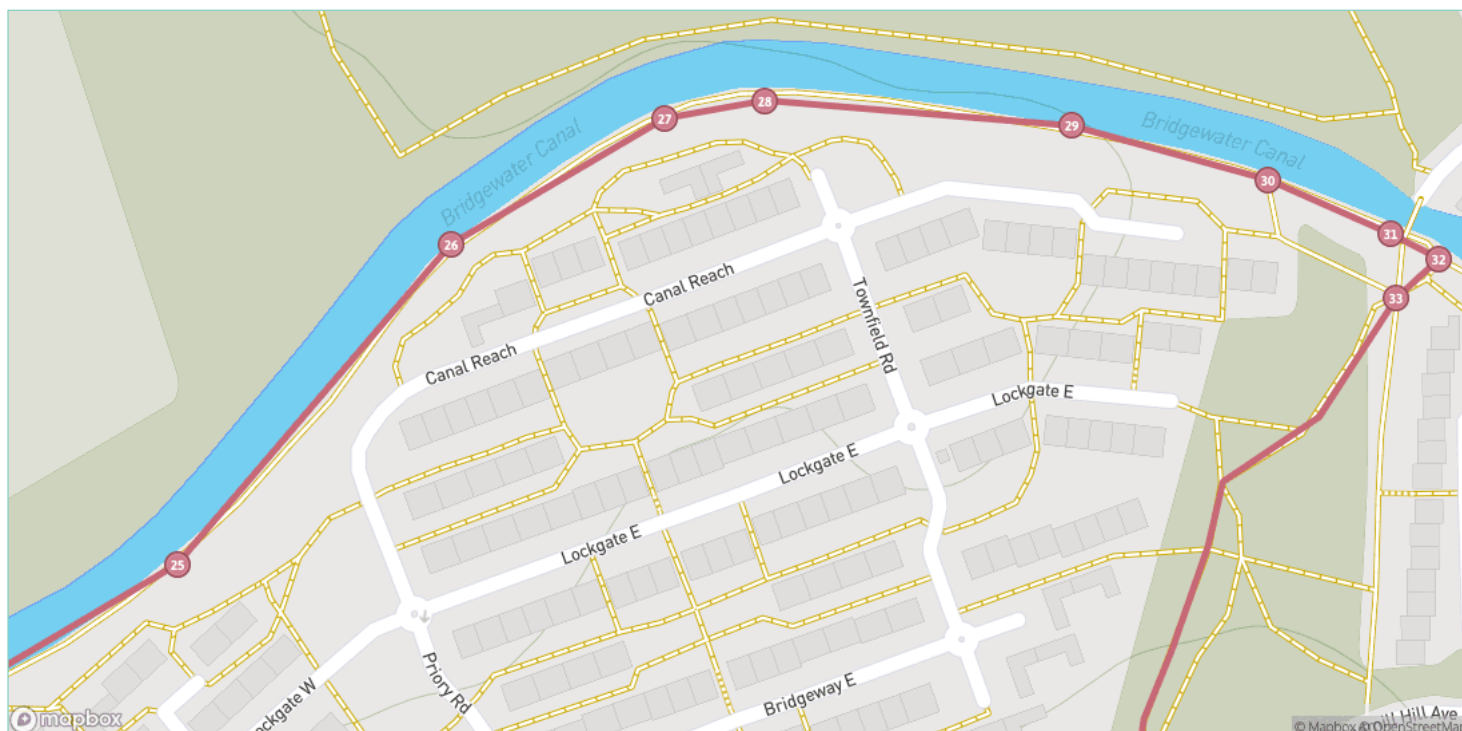
Step 20: Turn right and walk along the tow path. There is a drop into the water on your left!

Step 21: Completed to Runcorn in 1776, the Bridgewater Canal was an engineering marvel of its day.

Step 22: The locks down to the Mersey closed in 1966, but the towpath remains a peaceful green corridor for walkers, cyclists and waterbirds.

Step 23: Can you spot any waterbirds enjoying the canal?

Step 24: Follow the towpath for a few more minutes.



Step 25: James Brindley built this canal for the Duke of Bridgewater, barges once descended ten locks to the Mersey, laden with coal, salt & pottery.

Step 26: Enjoy the peaceful tranquillity and greenery around you.

Step 27: We are close to John Lennon Airport so you may spot some planes flying up above.

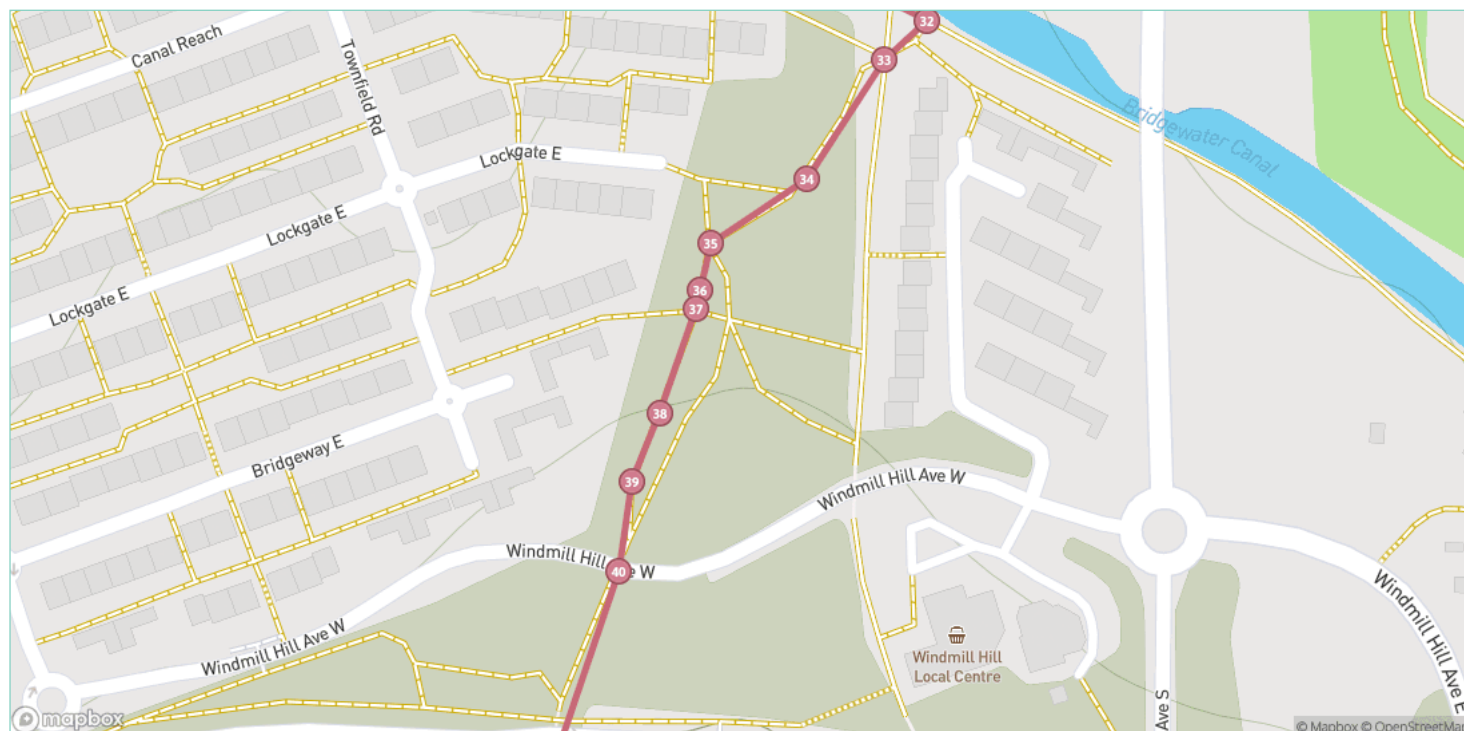
Step 28: Look out for these beautiful conifer trees on the other side.

Step 29: What else can you see growing here?

Step 30: Keep an eye out for the bridge and get ready to turn right.

Step 31: Head under the bridge and then turn right.

Step 32: Turn right up some stairs.



Step 33: Continue onto the footpath that leads into the woodland.

Step 34: Continue straight, ignore any left or right turns.

Step 35: Keep right when the path forks.

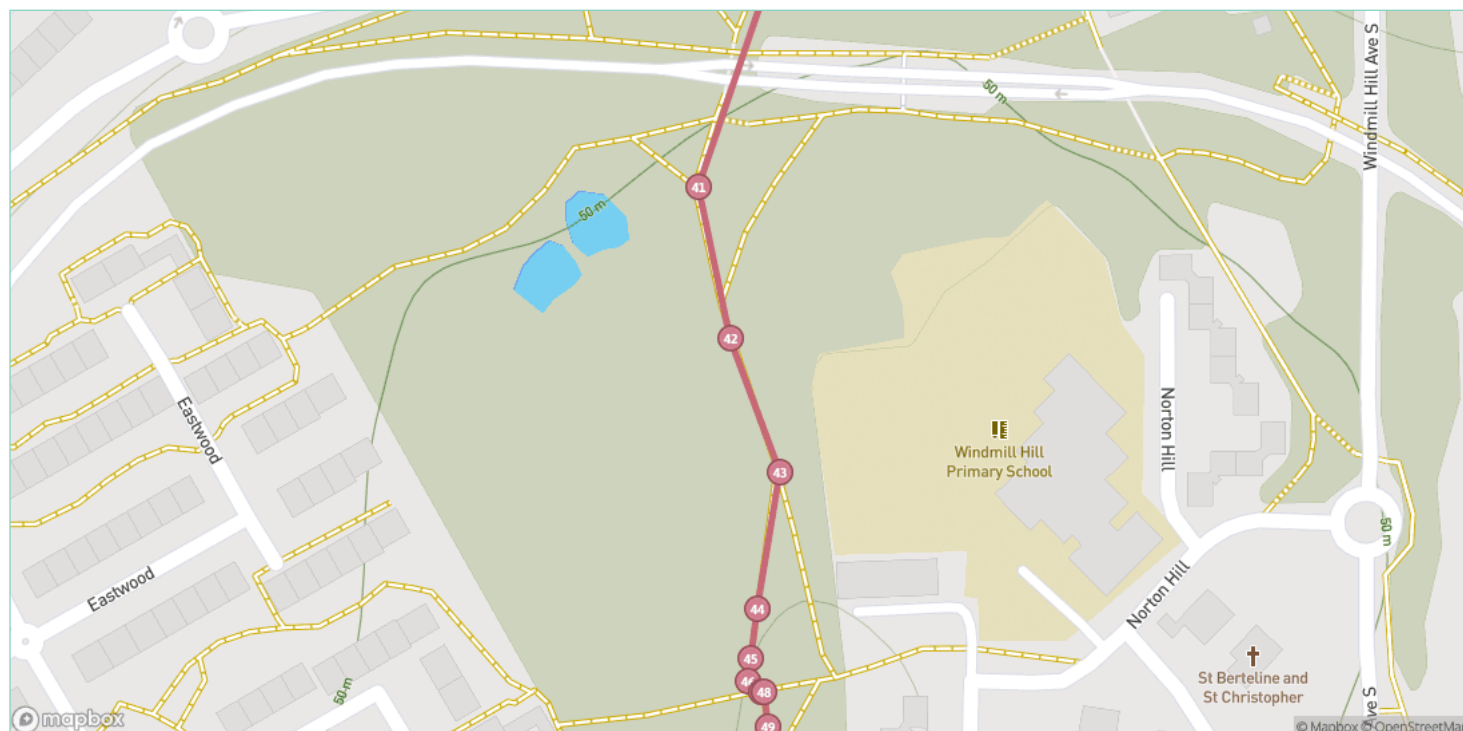
Step 36: Look up. Can you hear any birds or see any birds nests?

Step 37: Notice the textures of the tree bark, what does it feel like?

Step 38: Continue ahead and stick to the path.

Step 39: You'll soon reach an underpass, continue under.

Step 40: You'll see another underpass, continue under this one too.



Step 41: Keep on straight and bear slight left.
Enjoy the nature all around you.

Step 42: Can you notice any signs of the seasons,
spring, summer, autumn or winter?

Step 43: Take the right hand trail when the path
forks.

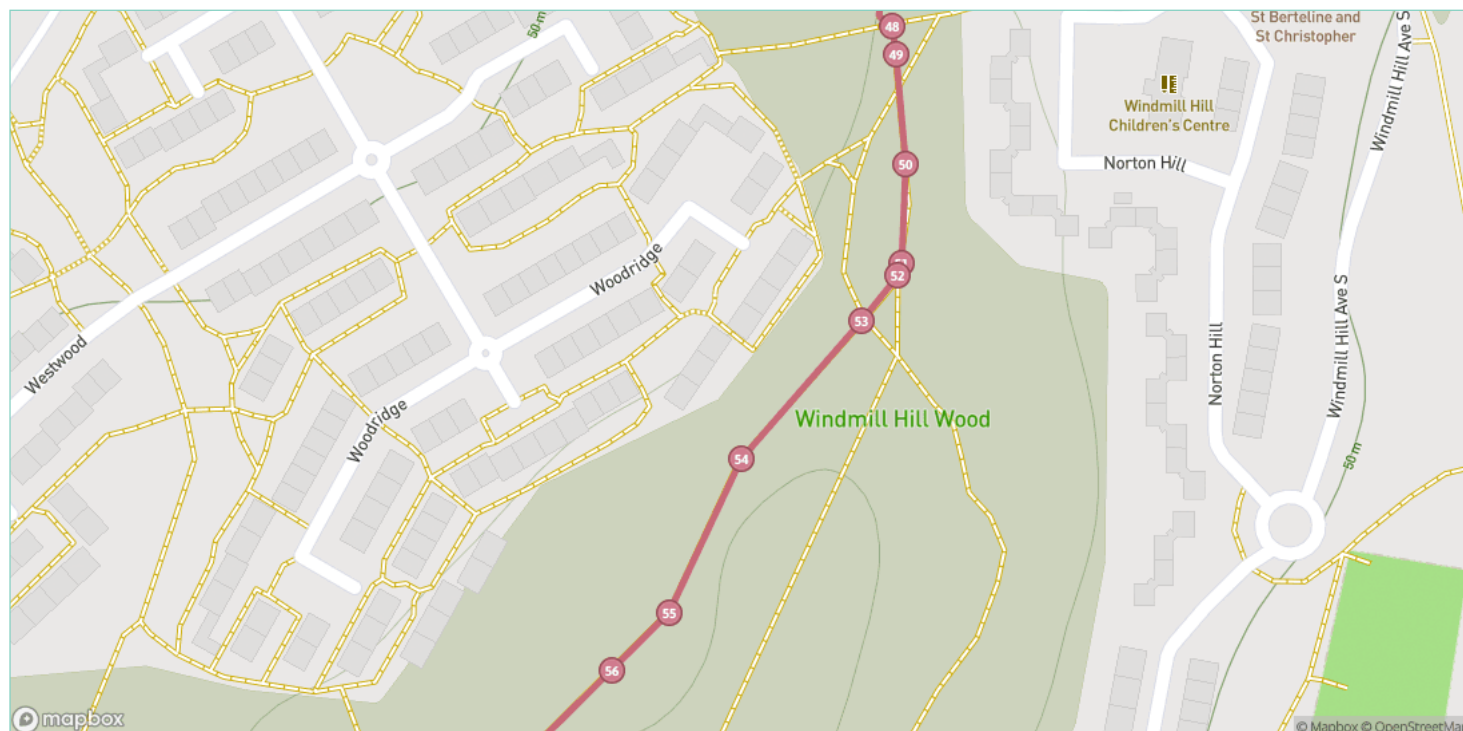
Step 44: Head towards the metal kissing gate
ahead.

Step 45: Go through the gate.

Step 46: Windmill Hill Wood is looked after by
the Woodland Trust.

Step 47: Cross over a path and enter the woods
through another kissing gate.

Step 48: Norton Hill's woodland was once part of
the Norton Priory estate.



Step 49: Continue on the path ahead.

Step 50: Can you spot any moss, what does it feel like to touch?

Step 51: Oak, birch, sycamore, horse chestnut and beech all grow here.

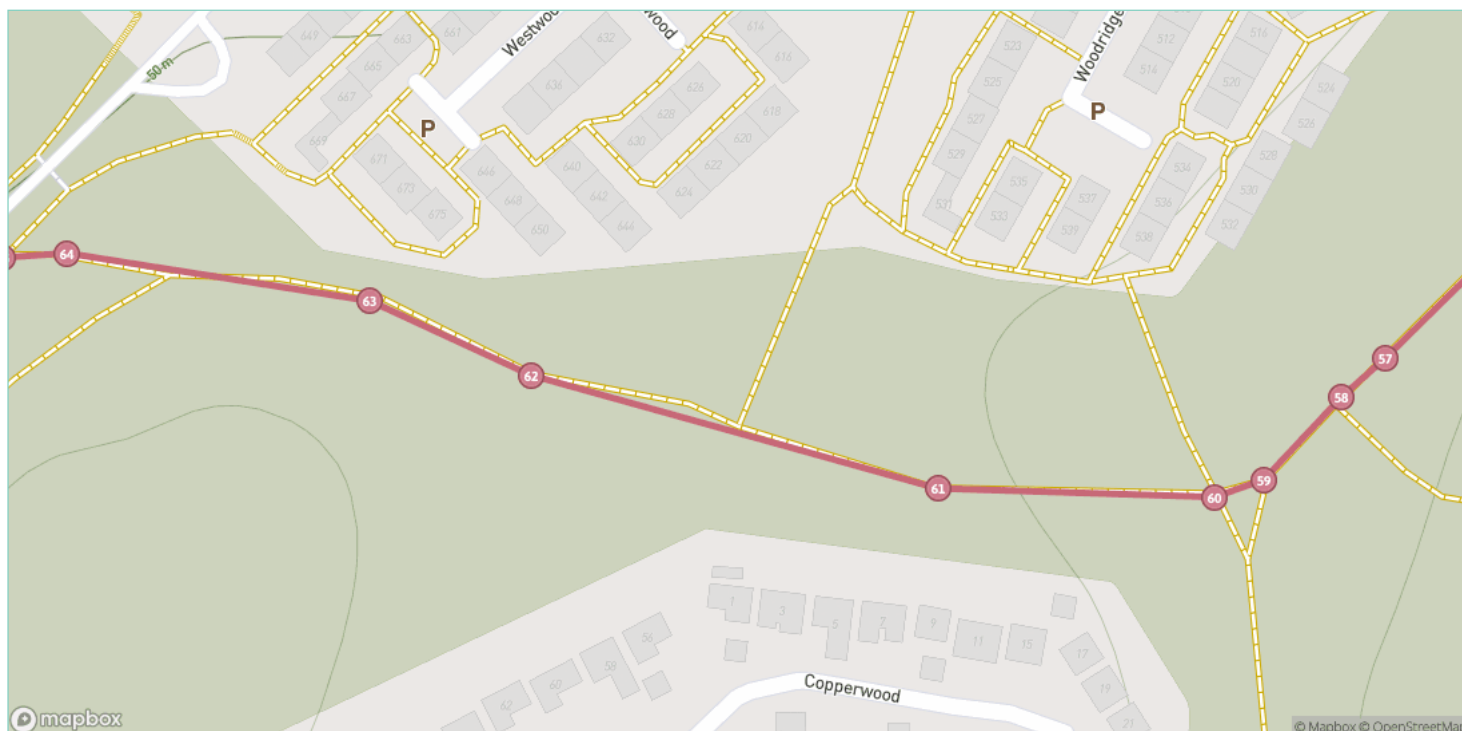
Step 52: Keep right to stay on the right hand side of the woods.

Step 53: On your right will be some houses.

Step 54: Continue for a few minutes.

Step 55: Look low along the path edges for ferns: fronds unfurling in spring, then holding their green long after the leaves above have gone.

Step 56: Enjoy the dappled light from the trees.



Step 57: Can you spot any fungi growing?

Step 58: Keep wandering and get ready to turn right soon.

Step 59: Take the trail right here.

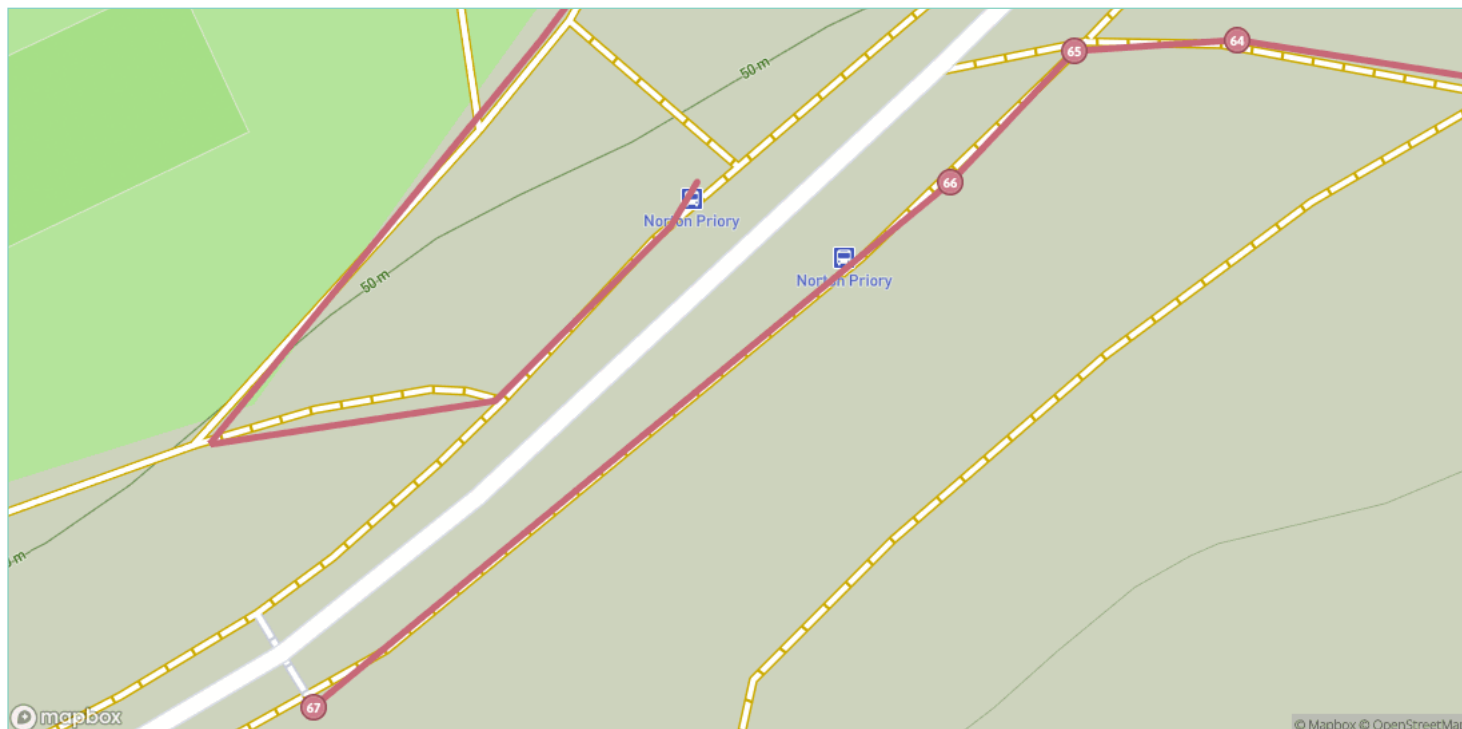
Step 60: Continue straight.

Step 61: Continue on the wooded trail.

Step 62: Continue for a few more minutes.

Step 63: Continue downhill towards a gate.

Step 64: Go through the gate (or around the sides!).



Step 65: We are back at the start of the walk. Turn left to find the bus stop.

Step 66: Continue straight along the bus way.

Step 67: Continue until you reach the bus stop where the walk ends. We hope you enjoyed it!