



# Banbury South-East Circular Walk

This circular walk starts in the town centre and follows a stretch of the Banbury Fringe Walk. Features Oxford Canal and Bodicote Village.

**Distance** 8.9 kilometers / 5.5 miles

**Duration** 3 hours



Wildlife



Water feature



Great views



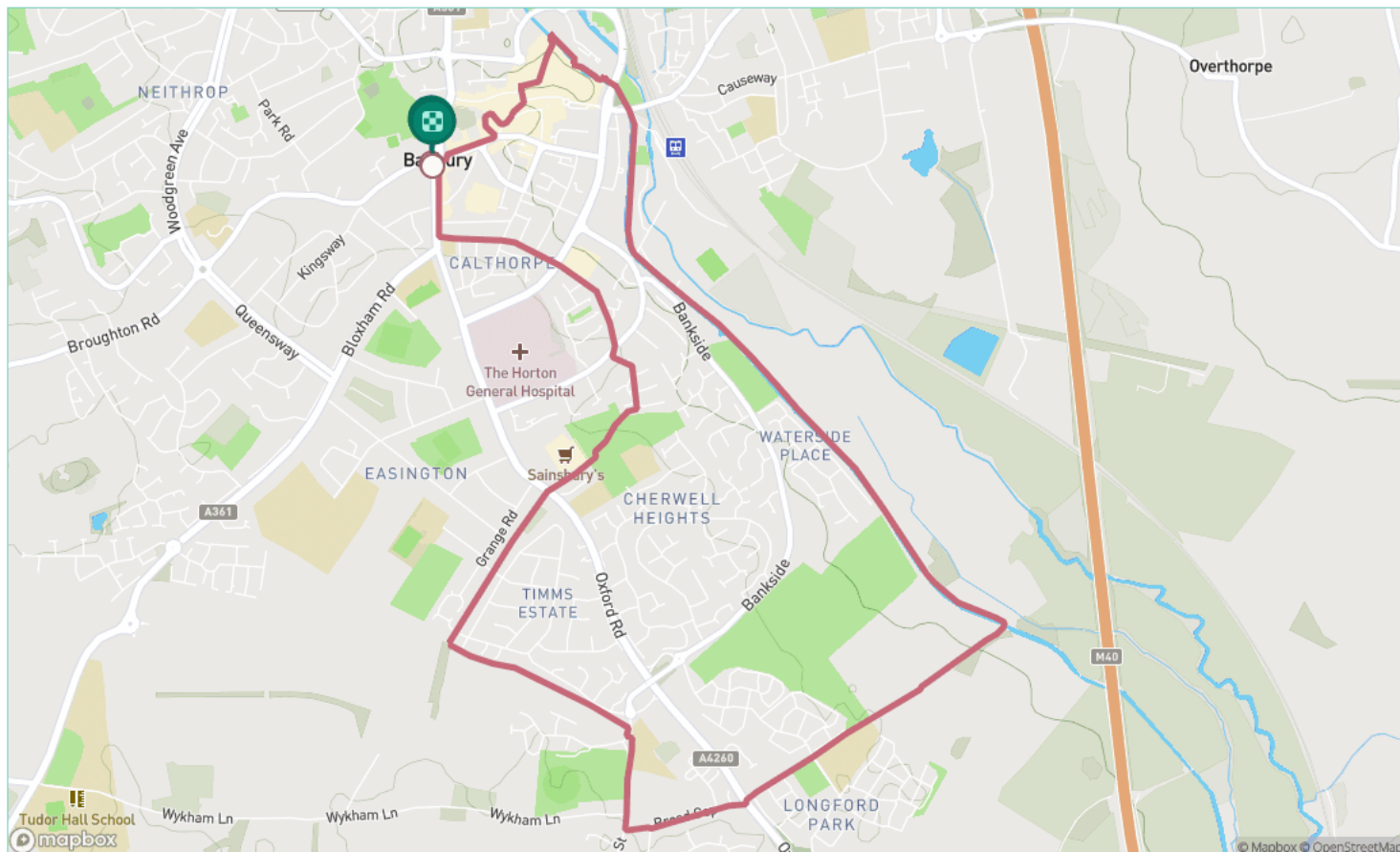
Public transport



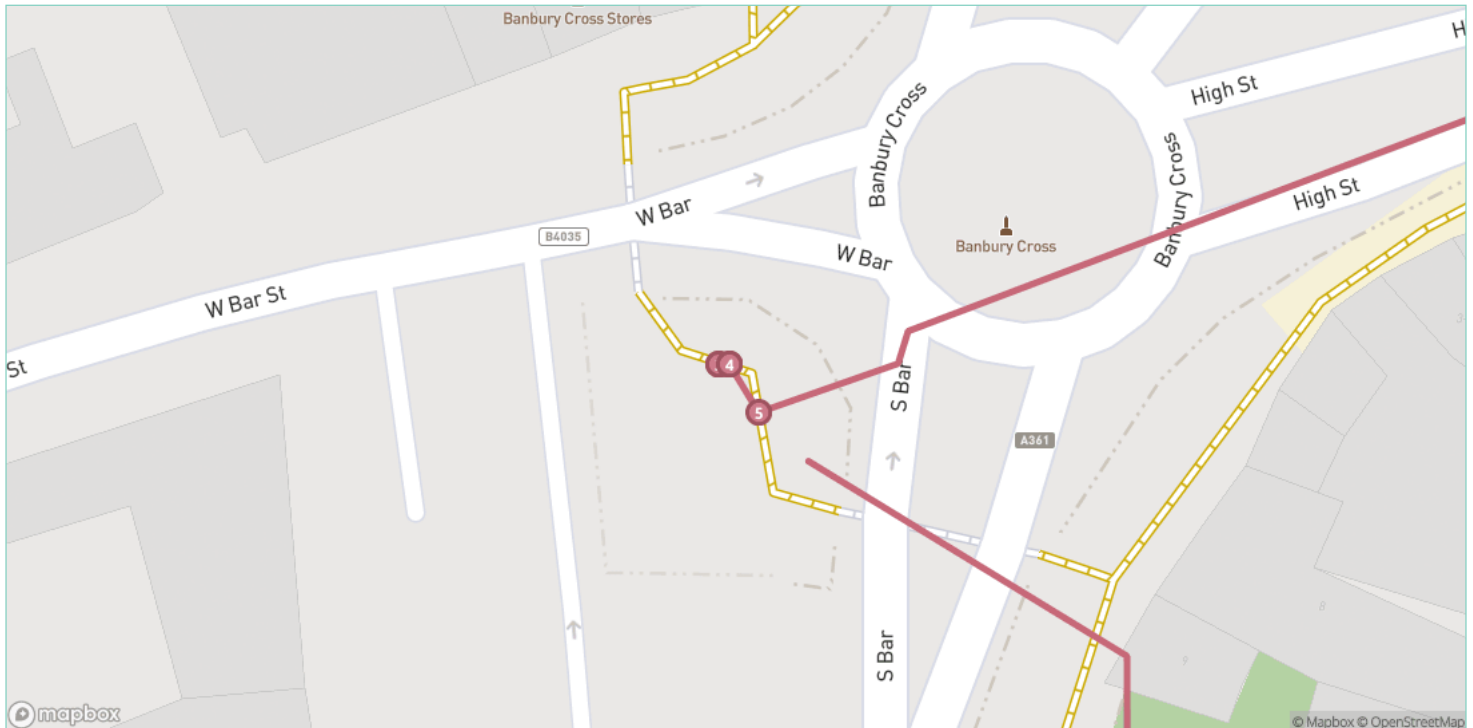
Parking



Botanics



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: 27 October 2023.



**Step 1:** This walk was created in partnership with Cherwell District Council. Enjoy over 30 walks across North Oxfordshire and experience the sights and sounds of nature as you go.

**Step 2:** Welcome to the south-east Banbury Circular walk. This walk starts and ends at the Banbury Cross (OX16 9AA) and includes a segment of the circular Banbury Fringe route.

**Step 3:** The Banbury Fringe Walk Challenge is a 16km route around the edge of Banbury which is also available in this app.

**Step 4:** You are advised to wear stout, waterproof footwear as walking in the countryside can be muddy and wet, even in the summer months. For advice on best ways to walk in the countryside check out the read more panel below.

## North Oxfordshire

### Best Ways to Walk

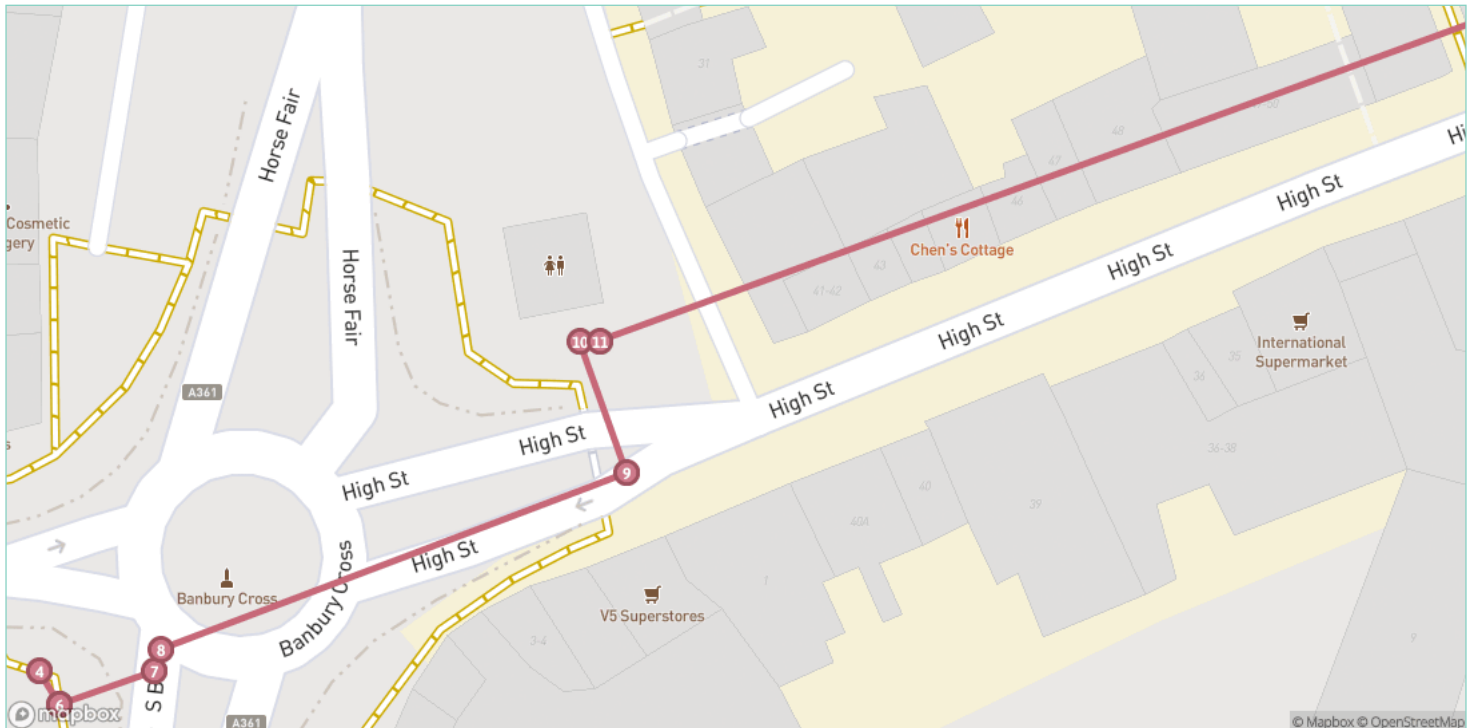
We want you to have fun outdoors, whilst looking after yourself, those around you and the natural environment. So here's some guidance to help you prepare for and enjoy your walk.

Check the weather. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear as walking can be wet and muddy.

Trousers are recommended as parts of the route can be overgrown with vegetation and nettles. Charge your phone. Take a mobile phone battery pack if you have one. Bear in mind that coverage can be patchy in rural areas so download this walk for offline mode in advance if you can.

Take water. If you're walking alone it's sensible, as a simple precaution, to let someone know where you are and when you expect to return.

Respect landowners. Remember that the countryside is a working place so leave crops, buildings, machinery and livestock well alone. Leave gates as you find them and please keep to the line of the path.



Respect local people. Park your car responsibly. Do not obstruct gateways, narrow lanes and village facilities. Consider leaving valuables at home.

Respect nature. Pick up any litter you see and never leave your own. Ground nesting birds can be disturbed by dogs, particularly in the Spring. Their poo can be bad for the environment so please keep them close by and clean up after them.

Look after your dogs. Dogs should be kept under your control and on a lead if animals are in the fields. Current advice recommends you should not walk between a cow and her calf and, if you are threatened by cattle, you should let the dog off the lead.

Stay safe. Take great care when crossing or walking along roads and narrow paths.

More guidance for users of the countryside - follow the Countryside Code using the link below.

**Step 5:** All of the circular segments begin at the Banbury Cross, at the statue of the “fine lady.”

**Step 6:** This references the famous nursery rhyme: “Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross / To see a fine lady upon a white horse / Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes / And she shall have music wherever she goes.”

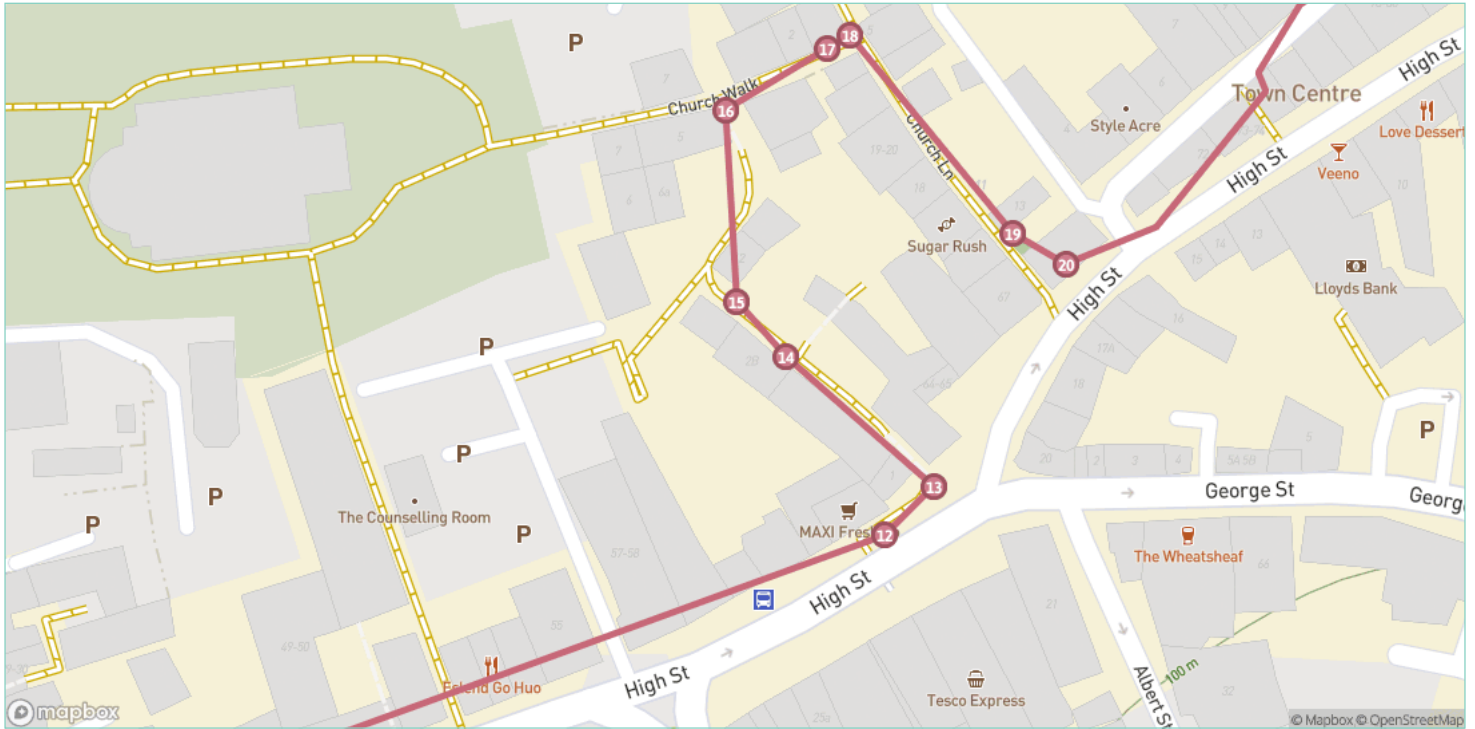
**Step 7:** The Banbury Cross monument commemorates the wedding of Queen Victoria’s eldest daughter in 1859.

**Step 8:** When you’re ready, let’s head out! Cross the street in front of you, with the Banbury Cross to your left.

**Step 9:** On the other side, turn left and use the next zebra crossing.

**Step 10:** Letter carver Giles McDonald shaped old Banbury street names into the wall of the public toilets here.

**Step 11:** Feel free to stop and take a look - you might recognise some of the place names!



**Step 12:** When you're ready, turn right and head down the left-hand side of High Street. Soon, you'll come to a lovely town square. Veer left.

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**Step 13:** If you're interested, you can take a brief diversion along White Lion Walk to your left.

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**Step 14:** Continue ahead to the White Lion, which commemorates one of Banbury's earliest inns.

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**Step 15:** With its large courtyard and outbuildings, together with its position on the High Street, the White Lion was well placed to become one of the main coaching inns in the town.

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**Step 16:** Bear right and continue along White Lion Walk. Then turn right onto Church Walk.

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**Step 17:** On the wall on your right, you'll find some lovely paintings outside Church Lane gallery.

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**Step 18:** Next, turn right onto Church Lane just ahead.

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**Step 19:** Continue past the sun mural on your left back to the High Street.

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**Step 20:** Turn left to continue on. Try not to get too distracted by all the shopping in the lively town centre.

**Step 21:** Take your next left, onto Butchers Row.

**Step 22:** As you walk down Butchers Row, keep your eye out for the Spandrels.

**Step 23:** These spandrels celebrate Banbury as an important market town. The tree-like roots reflect the town's rural character, and the sun motif is a central feature of its armorial bearings. The spandrels were made by Avril Wilson.

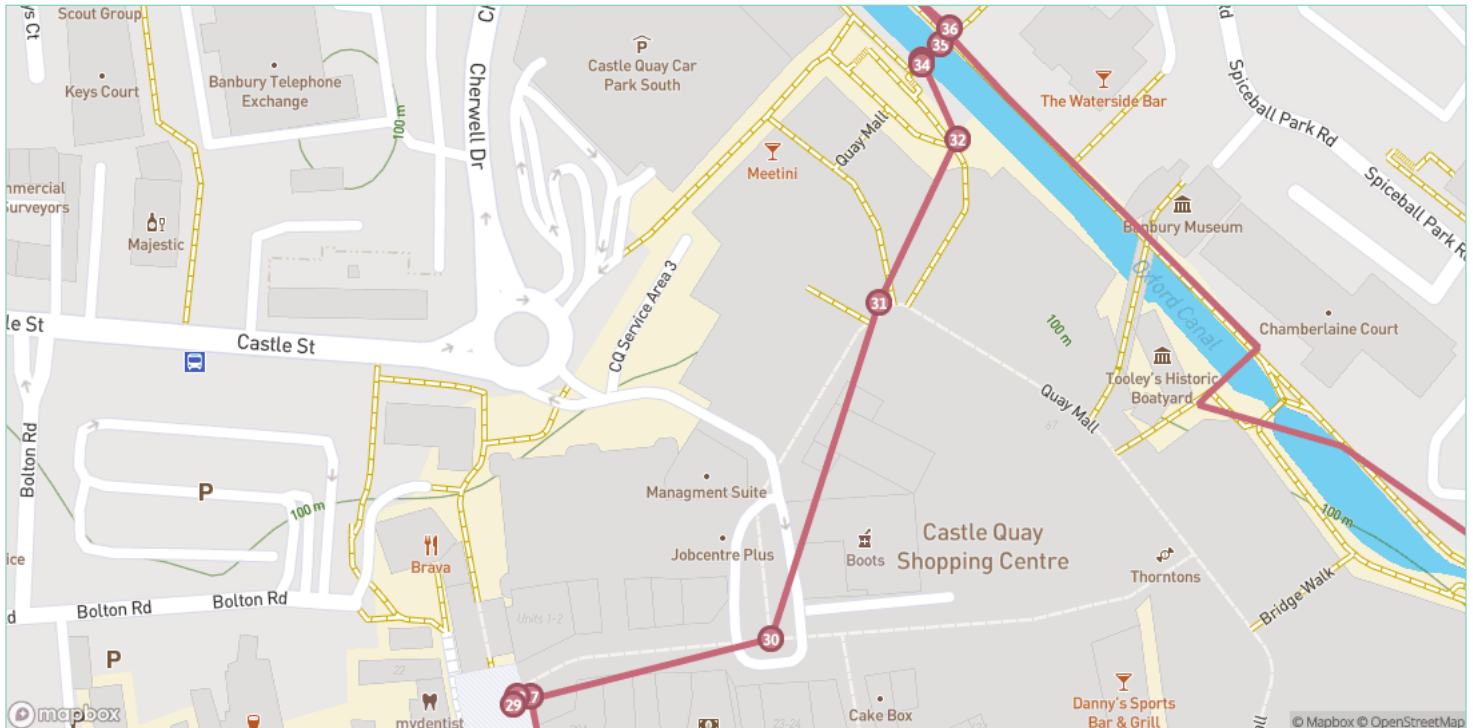
**Step 24:** Look out on your left for this Banksy-like painting, thought to have been done by the building owner around 2015.

**Step 25:** As you continue along Butchers Row, there's another spandrel at the end of the alleyway on your right.

**Step 26:** Continue along Butchers Row and then emerge into Banbury Market Square.

**Step 27:** Head towards the entrance to the Castle Quay shopping centre.





**Step 28:** The Castle Quay shopping centre was opened in 2000. The ground on which it is built includes the site of Banbury Castle, which was the subject of two intense and bloody sieges during the English civil war.

**Step 29:** At the entrance to the shopping centre, you'll see a brass plaque on the ground denoting the site where Banbury High Cross once stood, before it was destroyed by Puritans in 1600.

**Step 30:** When you're ready to continue on, enter Castle Quay here and after a while take your first left.

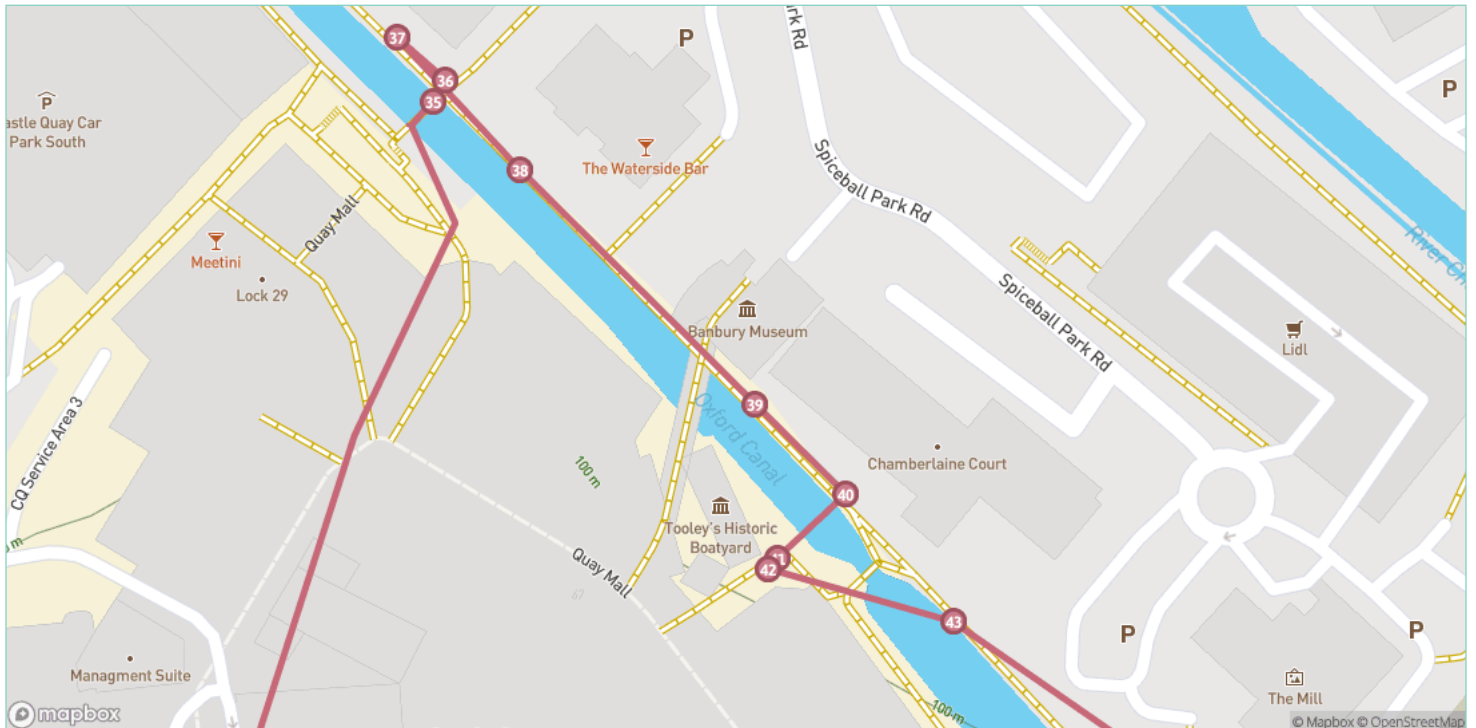
**Step 31:** Next, continue on towards the exit straight ahead.

**Step 32:** When you exit the shopping centre, you're now facing the Oxford Canal. Take the stairs or ramp up to the bridge over the canal.

**Step 33:** The canal is lined by houseboats, and in this stretch they have easy access to the town centre.

**Step 34:** Running from Coventry to Oxford, the Oxford Canal was a thriving commercial success from its completion in 1790 until the rise of competition from the railways in the late 19th century.

**Step 35:** It continued to carry commercial traffic up until the 1930s and now has a new lease of life as a recreational waterway.



**Step 36:** On the other side of the bridge, take the stairs down on your left, then follow the ramp straight ahead.

**Step 37:** Make a U-turn at the bottom to follow the canal towpath, with the water on your right. You're now officially on the Banbury Fringe walk!

**Step 38:** The Banbury Fringe walk is a 12.5 mile route that goes round the outskirts of Banbury. Along the way, you can take in spectacular countryside views where you feel miles from town. The whole loop is in the app if you're interested.

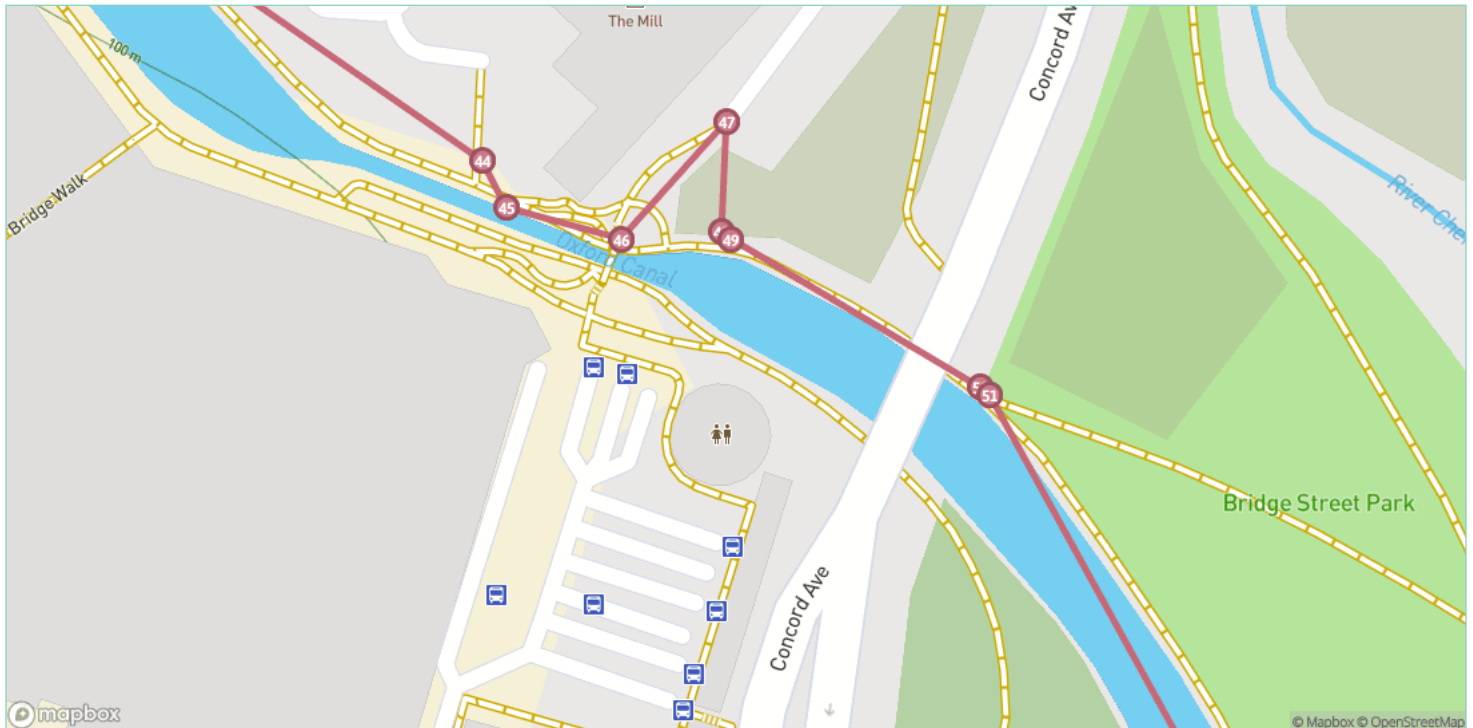
**Step 39:** On your left as you continue down the canal is the Banbury Museum, a family-friendly museum telling the story of Banbury. There's a café and shop, too, if you'd like to pop in.

**Step 40:** Stay left at the bridge to continue along the towpath.

**Step 41:** Across the bridge is Tooley's historic boatyard, said to be the oldest continuously working dry docks in Britain.

**Step 42:** Today boats are still repaired at the boatyard as they have been for over 200 years.

**Step 43:** When you're ready, return to the side of the canal (opposite to the shops). Stay left at the lock gate and continue along the towpath.



**Step 44:** On your left is the Mill Arts Centre. This sculpture is “The Dancers,” by students from learning disability arts classes from July 2005.

**Step 45:** Bear left to follow the ramp down. Hold the handrail if you need to.

**Step 46:** Walkers can join the route from the central bus station here. Cross the canal bridge (No 165) from the back of the bus station and turn right along the canal towpath.

**Step 47:** The entrance to the centre is here, and there’s a small cafe inside where you can learn more about all they have going on every week.

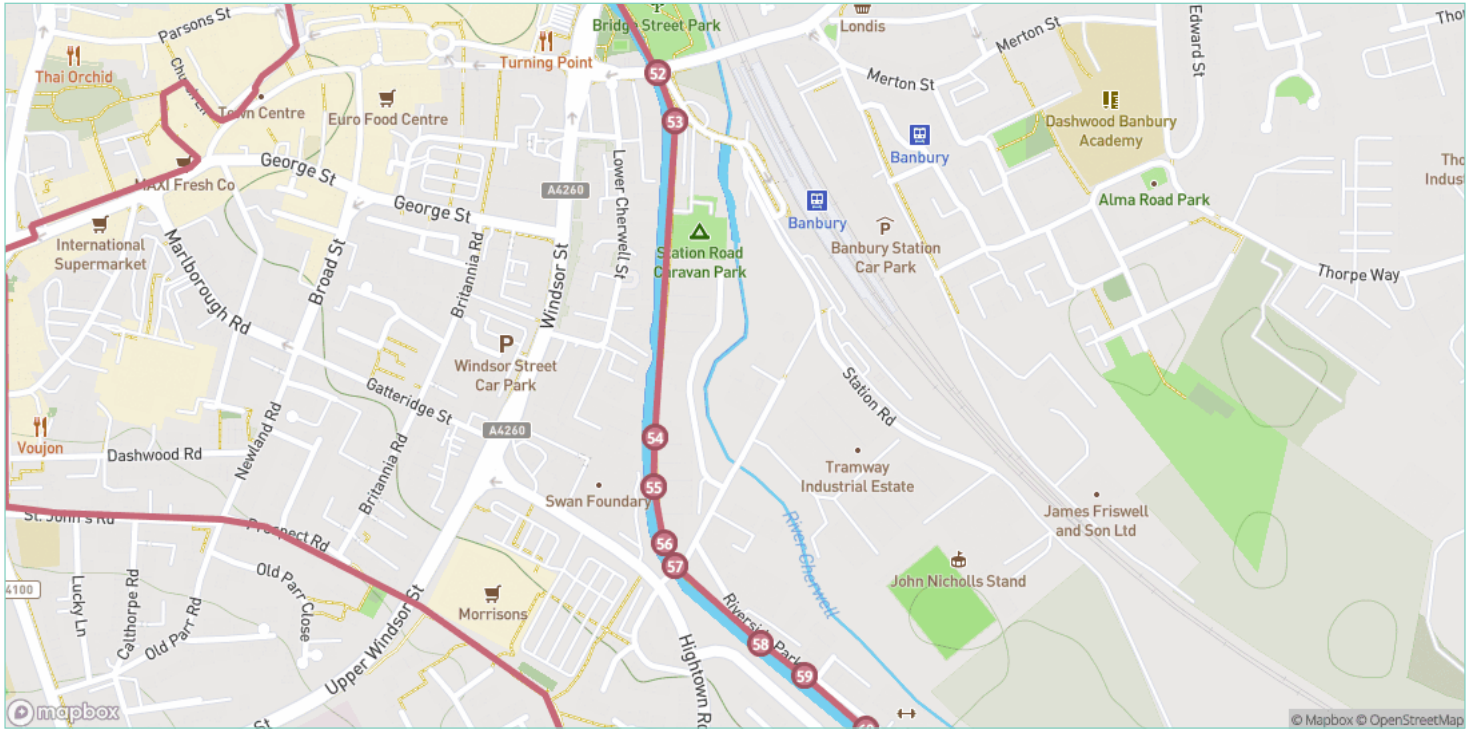
**Step 48:** This sculpture, by Michael Fairfax, features the poem “Flow,” by Jamie McKendrick. The two worked together on the beautiful canalside piece.

**Step 49:** The tops represent hump backed bridges, immediately below are lock gate cogs, and under the inscriptions are ripples on the surface of the water.

**Step 50:** Bear right to stay alongside the canal.

**Step 51:** Walkers can join the route from the train station here. Walk out of the station to Bridge Street, cross over, follow the signs to the towpath and on reaching the canal, turn left.





**Step 52:** Pass under the bridge's brick arch.

**Step 53:** The towpath follows the whole canal, 80 miles! We're not going that far today.

**Step 54:** The towpath is compacted dirt, so it can get muddy in spots after rain.

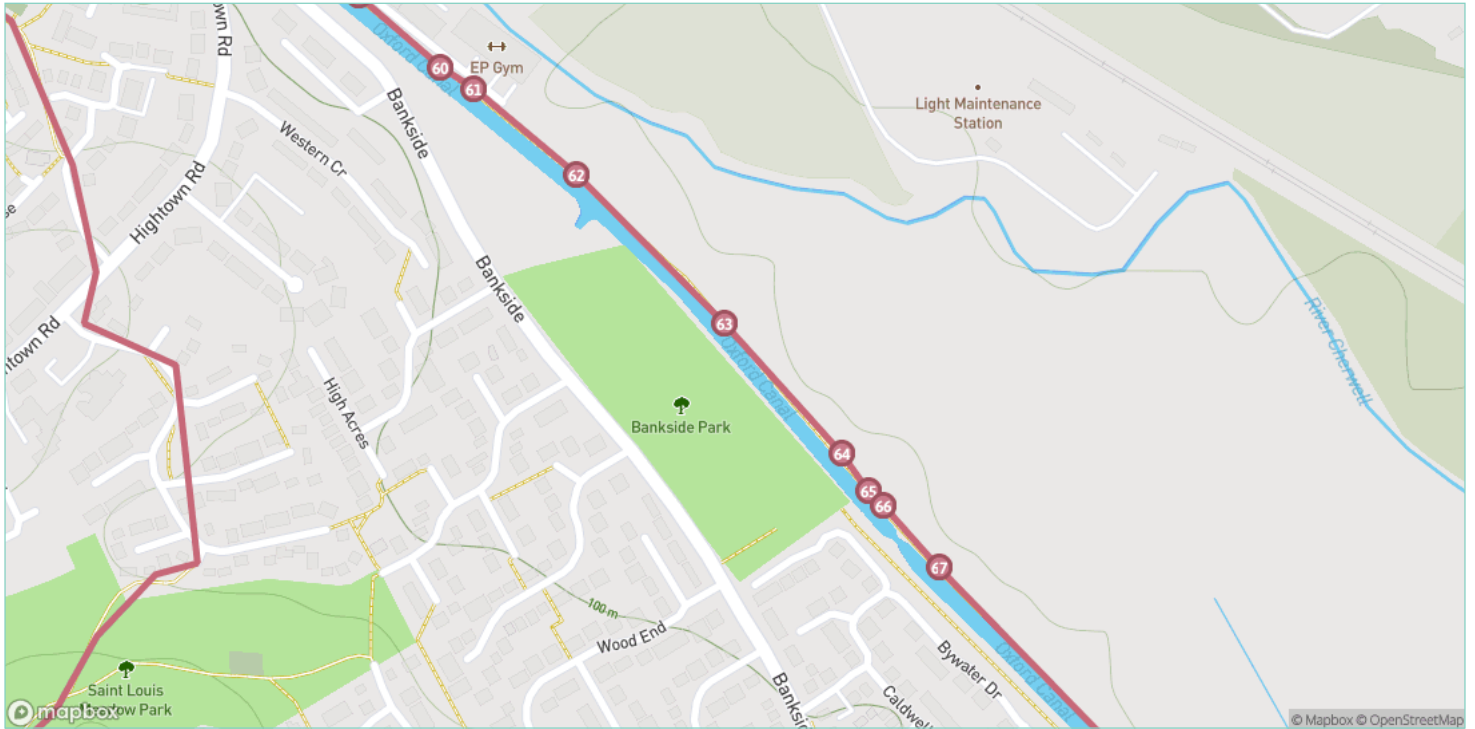
**Step 55:** Canals have historically been good places for industries. Most don't need direct access anymore, but the industrial activity often remains.

**Step 56:** Up the stairs to your left is a sign pointing to the Banbury Station. It's a direct walk along Tramway Road.

**Step 57:** Pass under the bridge which is number 168. The route follows the canal until number 172. Be on the lookout for other numbers in between.

**Step 58:** What sorts of little signs of activity can you notice from the areas around the houseboats?

**Step 59:** Do remember that people live in the houseboats, so please try to be respectful as you pass by.



**Step 60:** British Waterways used to oversee most canals in Britain. Now, the Canal & River Trust manage these waterways in England and Wales.

**Step 61:** Can you spot this little fella long the way? We're not sure that this is where a frog belongs! 😊

**Step 62:** What's been your favourite of all the boat names you've seen so far?

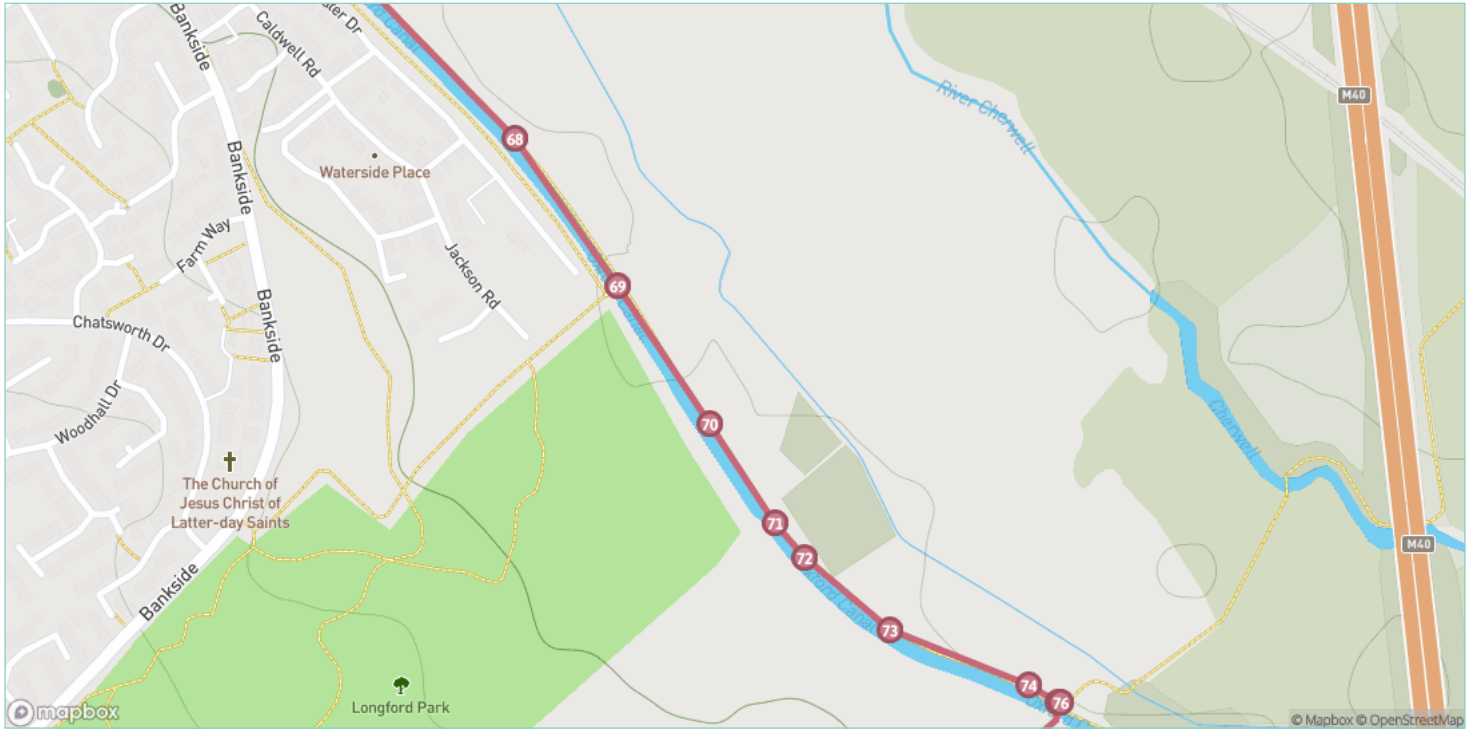
**Step 63:** On your right, the lovely Bankside Park comes into view.

**Step 64:** Just walking along, this little duck didn't seem to mind at all. What signs of life can you spot whilst on your walk?

**Step 65:** Keep your eye out for these Banbury Fringe signs as you continue straight along the towpath.

**Step 66:** The vegetation alongside the towpath provides food and shelter for a wide variety of animals.

**Step 67:** On your left, meanwhile, are some active fields for agriculture.



**Step 68:** Did you know towpaths were originally meant for animals such as horses, to physically pull barges down the canal?

**Step 75:** Come up from the towpath past the remains of a stile. It's a bit steep, so tread carefully.

**Step 69:** This is Bridge 170. Almost to 172.

**Step 70:** In the distance, you can see some new homes under construction. You'll pass through one of these sites shortly.

**Step 71:** Looks like the remains of an old bridge. Beneath canal bridges, there's often a submerged upside-down brick arch built for stability.

**Step 72:** Keep walking straight and admire the small woodland that appears on your left.

**Step 73:** Almost to the end of the canal segment now.

**Step 74:** Made it to bridge 172, also known as 'Nadkey Bridge.' Here, you'll take your leave from the Oxford Canal.



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**Step 76:** Turn right to cross over the bridge. Soak in one last view of the canal.

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**Step 77:** Continue on towards the gate. You can open it by reaching around and undoing the latch.

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**Step 78:** Please make sure to close the gate and leave it as you found it before you continue on.

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**Step 79:** Next, head straight up the hill with the trees on your left.

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**Step 80:** It can be a bit muddy, so please proceed slowly and carefully. Take your time during your climb.

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**Step 81:** Why not spend a moment admiring the views behind you as you catch your breath.

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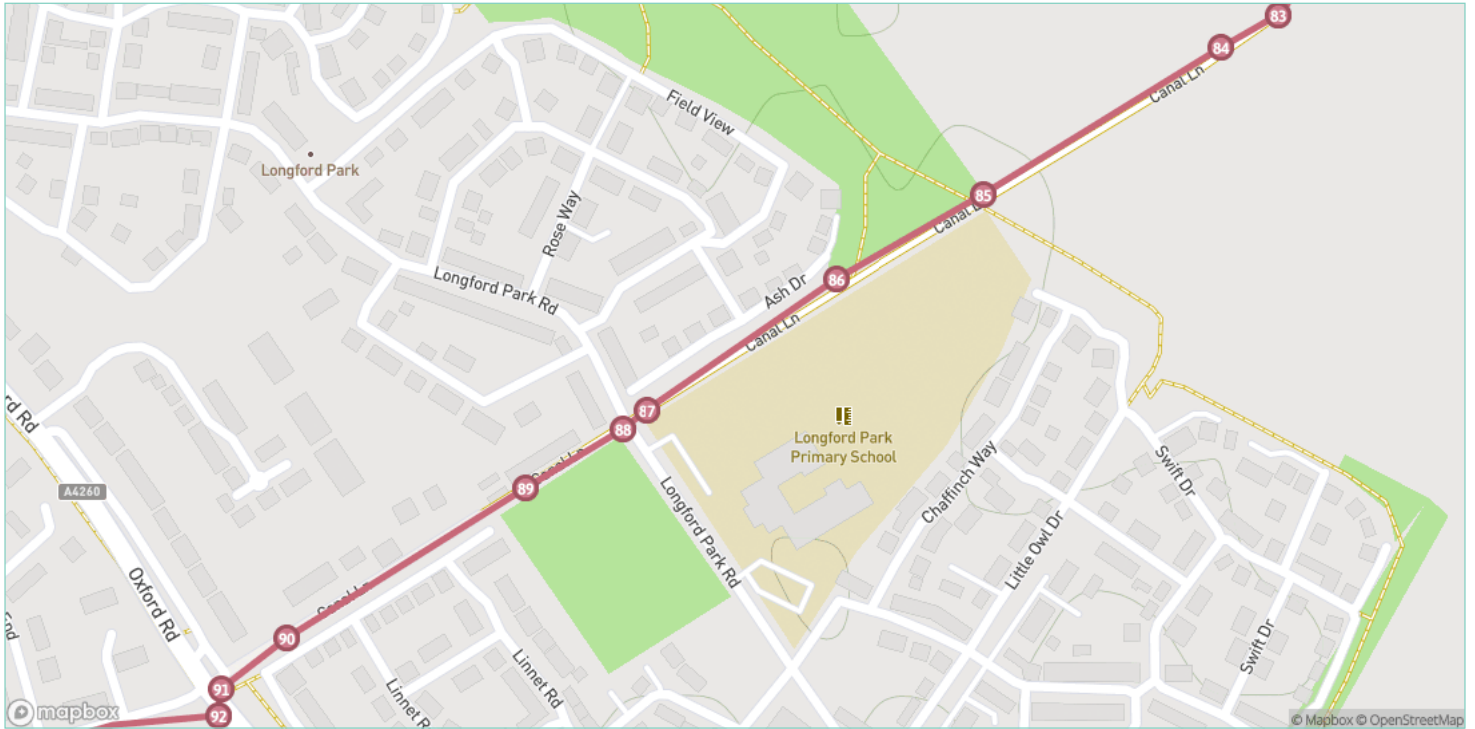
**Step 82:** Head for the gate straight ahead and pass through it.

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**Step 83:** Again, please leave it as you find it and close it behind you.

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**Step 84:** Follow the track straight ahead through the Longford Park housing estate.

**Step 85:** Stick to the dirt road and continue straight across the paved crossing.

**Step 86:** Hopefully your day is as glorious as this one looks in the pictures.

**Step 87:** Walk around this wide gate and carefully cross the road.

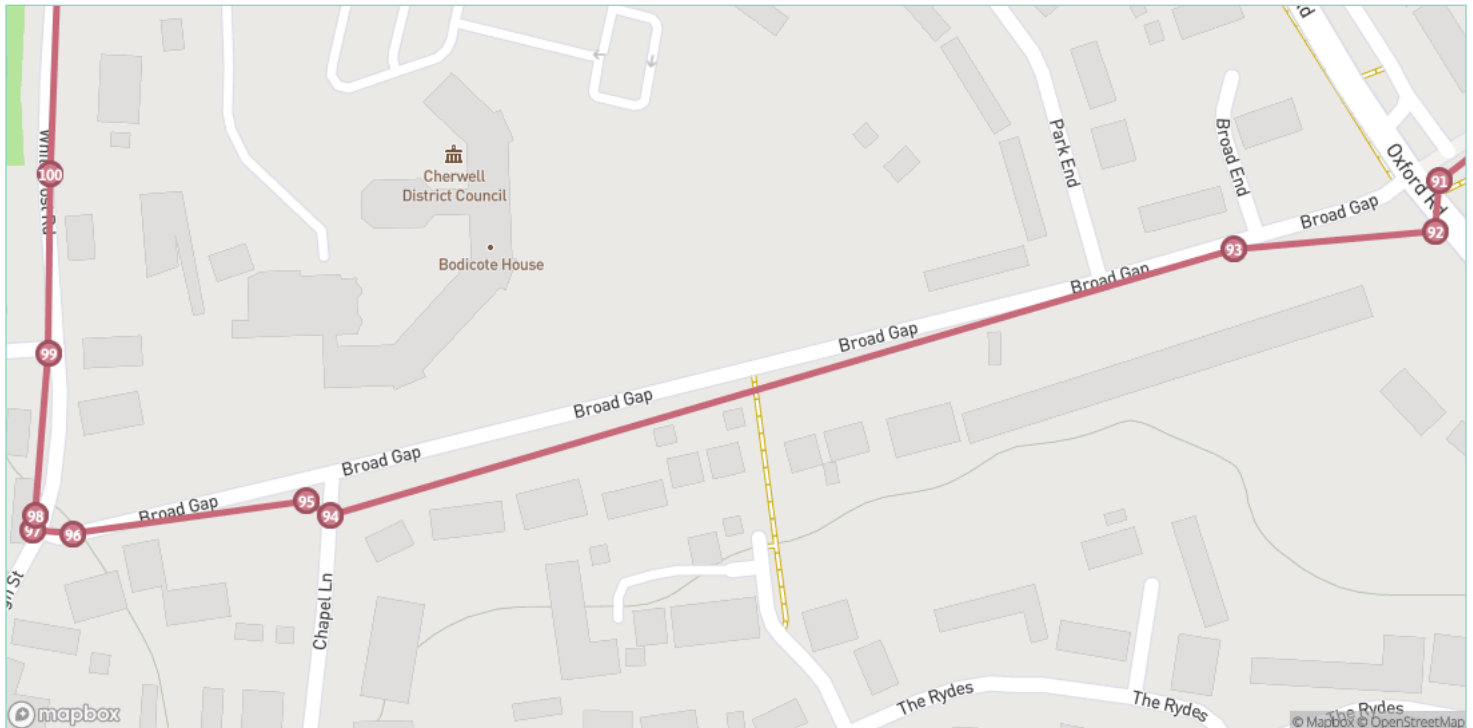
**Step 88:** Walk around the other gate on the other side and continue straight on.

**Step 89:** Another gate to walk around.

**Step 90:** As you approach Oxford Road, the path becomes more and more like a road, but it stays quiet and largely traffic free.

**Step 91:** Cross the road using the light controlled crossing to your left.





**Step 92:** Continue straight on along Broad Gap towards Bodicote village.

**Step 93:** The pavement here is fairly consistent, flat and easy to follow.

**Step 94:** Continue straight across Chapel Lane and follow the pavement along the stone wall.

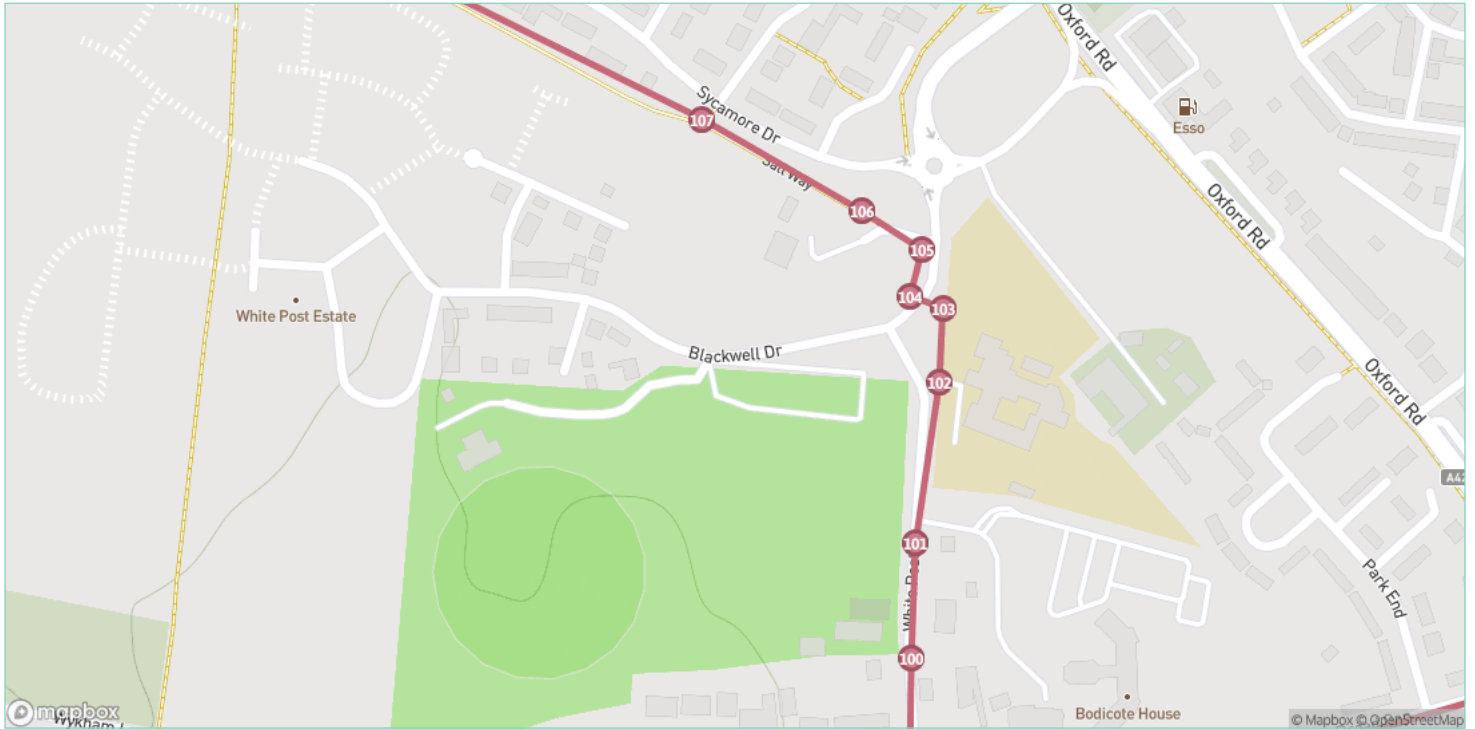
**Step 95:** The pavement here is a bit narrow, especially if there are people walking towards you, too.

**Step 96:** At the end turn right, crossing over Broad Gap and continuing along High Street, which becomes White Post Road.

**Step 97:** Bodicote is a large village with the original centre (now a conservation area) set amidst more recent development.

**Step 98:** If you feel thirsty or want to see some of the historical buildings of the village and the two pubs, you could turn left here rather than right.

**Step 99:** Bodicote also provides the focus for another circular walk which connects with the Fringe Walk along the Salt Way.



**Step 100:** Pass the playing field on your left and the Council Offices and School on the right.

**Step 101:** Bodicote House on your right is Georgian, with modern extensions to house the administration headquarters of Cherwell District Council.

**Step 102:** Stick to the pavement along the hedge as the road bends away from you.

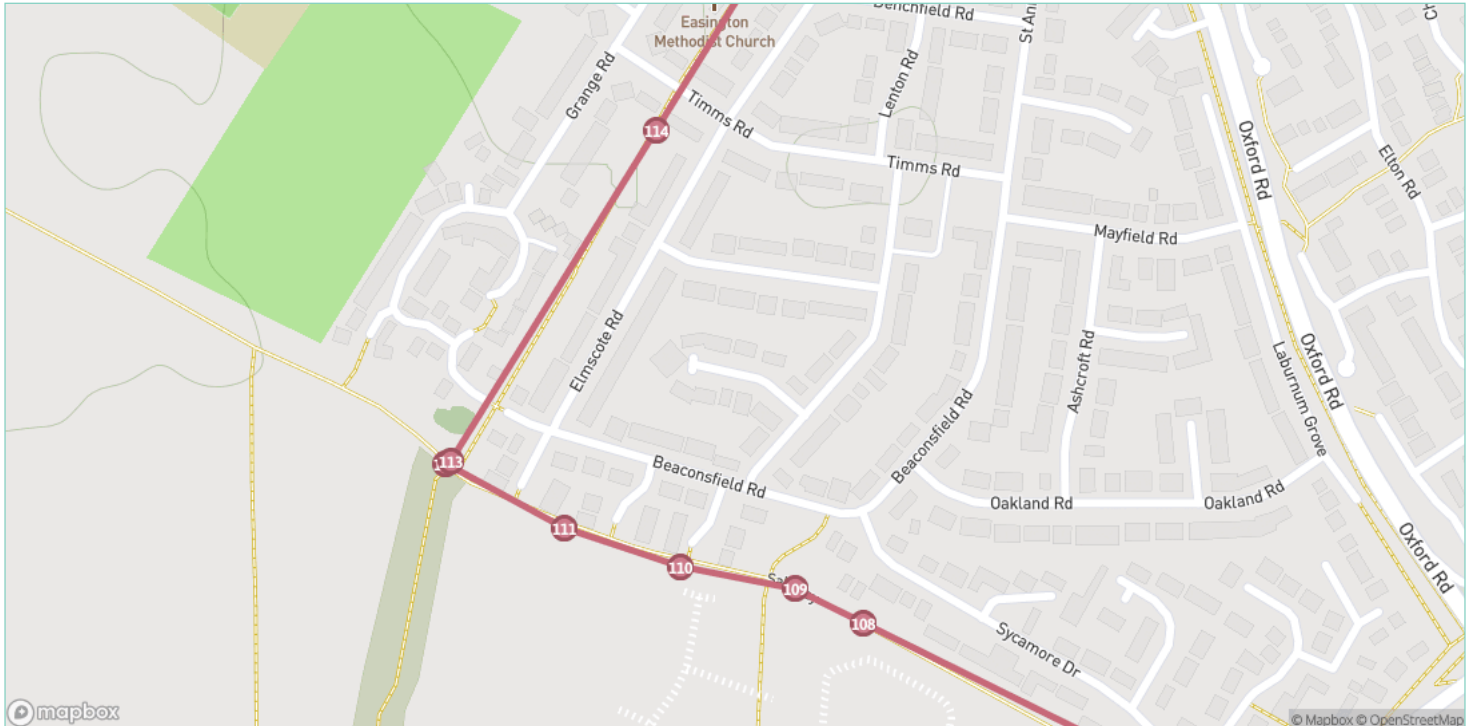
**Step 103:** Turn left and use the zebra crossing here.

**Step 104:** On the other side, turn right.

**Step 105:** You've reached the Salt Way. The route follows Salt Way for about a mile.

**Step 106:** The Salt Way was once the main road from Droitwich to London and it is thought to have been for the carrying of salt to the South-East.

**Step 107:** Today, from Bodicote all the way to the Broughton Road, it has retained its green-lane character for recreation.



**Step 108:** The sound of birds was overwhelming! Can you spot any as the route passes amid patches of trees?

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**Step 109:** A lovely place to sit for a break.

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**Step 110:** Keep your eye on your left as countryside views appear through the trees once you are past the new housing development.

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**Step 111:** Be ready for some stretches of mud if walking during wetter seasons.

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**Step 112:** Soon, there's a path junction with a signpost. The Banbury Fringe continues ahead, but it's time for us to return to the town centre.

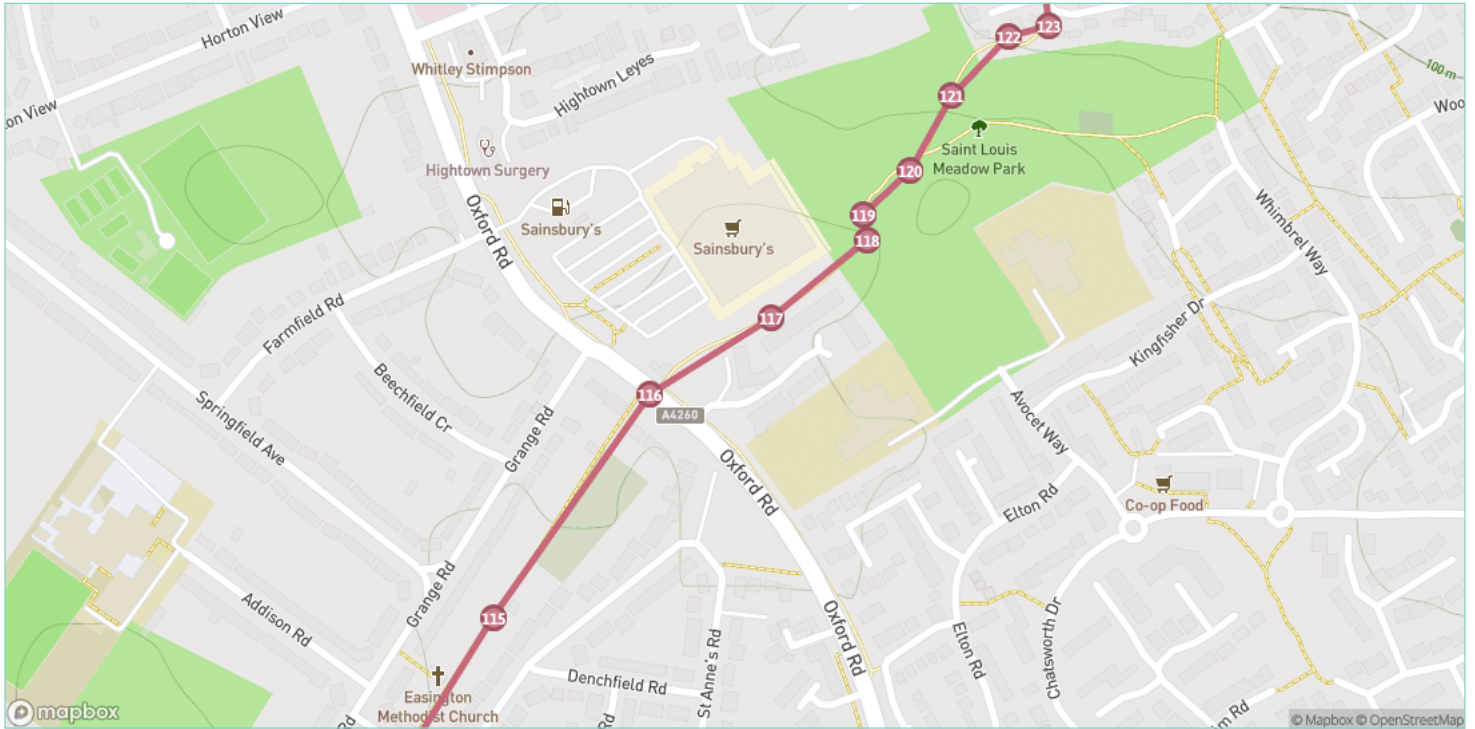
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**Step 113:** Turn right to begin the journey back towards the Banbury Cross.

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**Step 114:** Continue straight along the dirt path, crossing intersecting streets with care.

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**Step 115:** You might spot a lively community garden on your right as you go.

**Step 122:** Pass through another set of wooden barriers.

**Step 116:** Carefully cross the Oxford Road when it's clear, and continue straight on the other side.

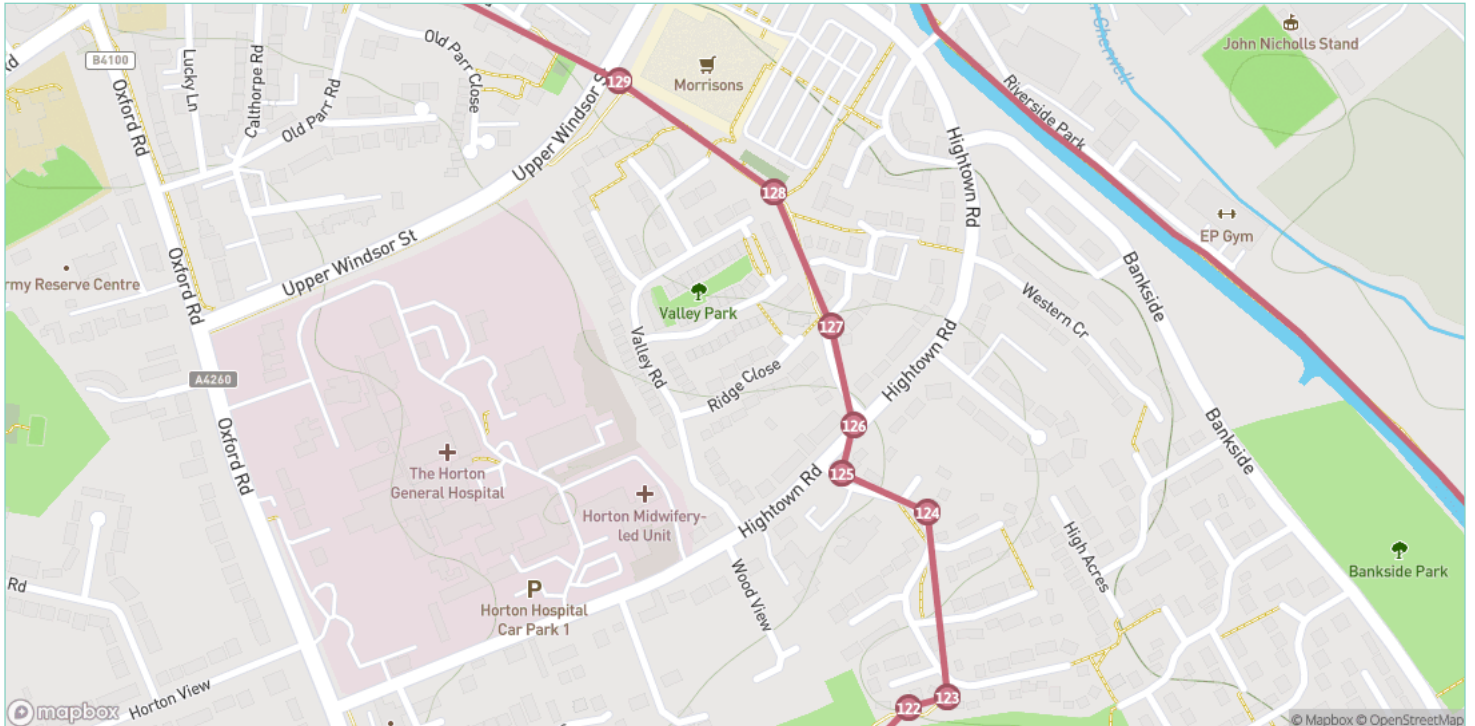
**Step 117:** We spotted some rubbish along the route, so we picked up a few pieces to dispose of it properly.

**Step 118:** Soon, you'll come to a wooden gate on your left. Pass through this to enter the St Louis Meadow Park.

**Step 119:** Follow the paved path through the gorgeous park.

**Step 120:** At the fork, veer left to head down the hill.

**Step 121:** This park feels so far away from built up areas! Only a brief glimpse through the trees reminds you how close you are to town centre.



**Step 123:** Now, you'll be following pavements through a quiet neighbourhood. Turn left to head up the hill.

**Step 124:** Stay along Fosco Rise as it bends left and right.

**Step 125:** When you come to Hightown Road, carefully cross to the other side.

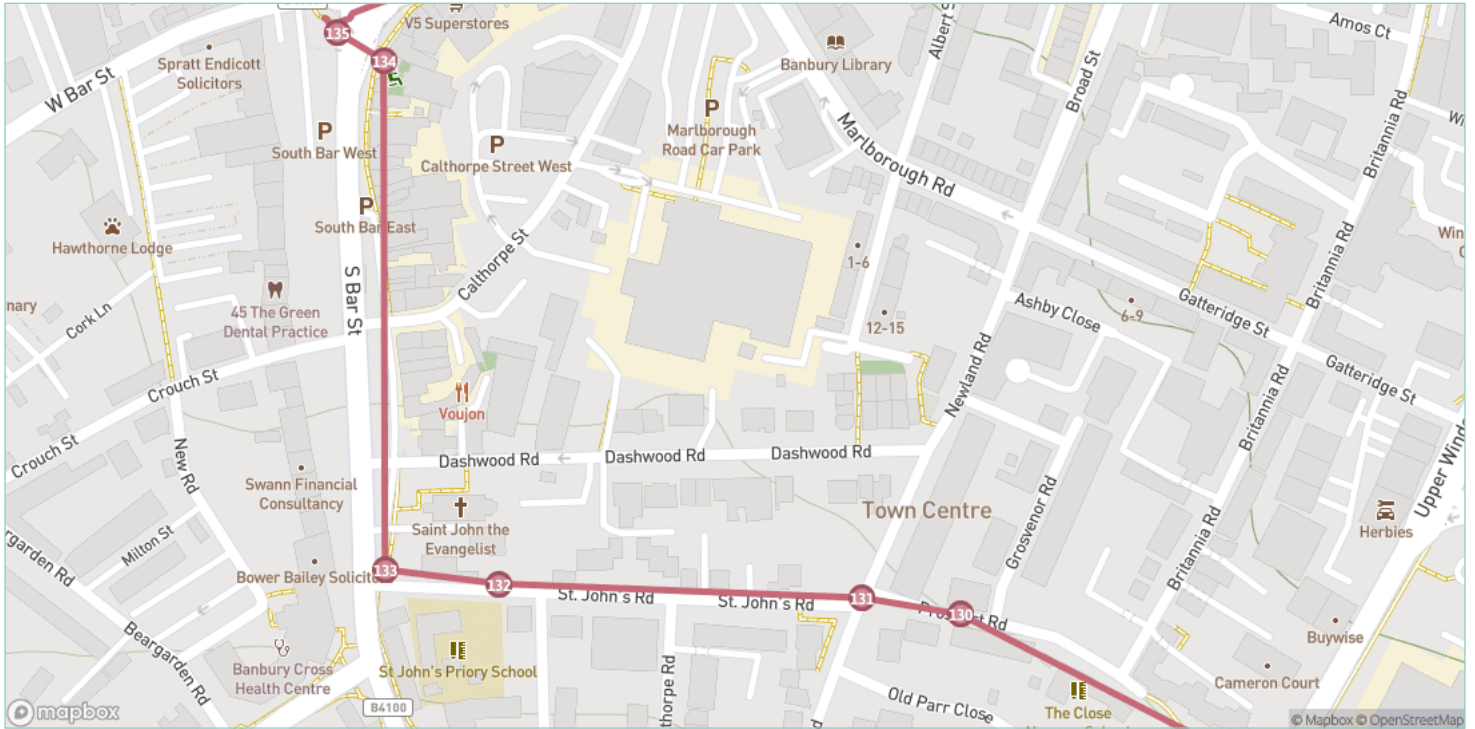
**Step 126:** Next, turn right. Cross to the far side of Green Lane, then turn left.

**Step 127:** Soon, you'll see a paved path on your left. Take this to head down the hill towards town.

**Step 128:** Depending on when you walk, you might spot lots of wild blackberries along this stretch.

**Step 129:** Continue up and over the footbridge over the A road. It's nice to have a quiet green corridor separated from the traffic down below!





**Step 130:** Emerge from the path onto Prospect Road, and continue straight ahead along the pavement.

**Step 131:** At the junction, go straight across to the left to continue down St John's Road.

**Step 132:** Soon, you'll get your first glimpses of the church of St John on your right.

**Step 133:** At South Bar Street, turn right. The Banbury Cross is just up ahead.

**Step 134:** And here we are, back where we started! Excellent walking today. We hope you enjoyed this circular walk of the Banbury Fringe.

**Step 135:** Why not try out the other three circular walks from the Banbury Cross? They're each unique, so there's always more to discover.