



Meandering & Mysteries in Widnes

A circular walk around Appleton Village and Victoria Park. With fascinating history and cafes en route.

Distance 2 kilometers / 1.2 miles

Duration 45 minutes



Wildlife



Refreshments



Parking



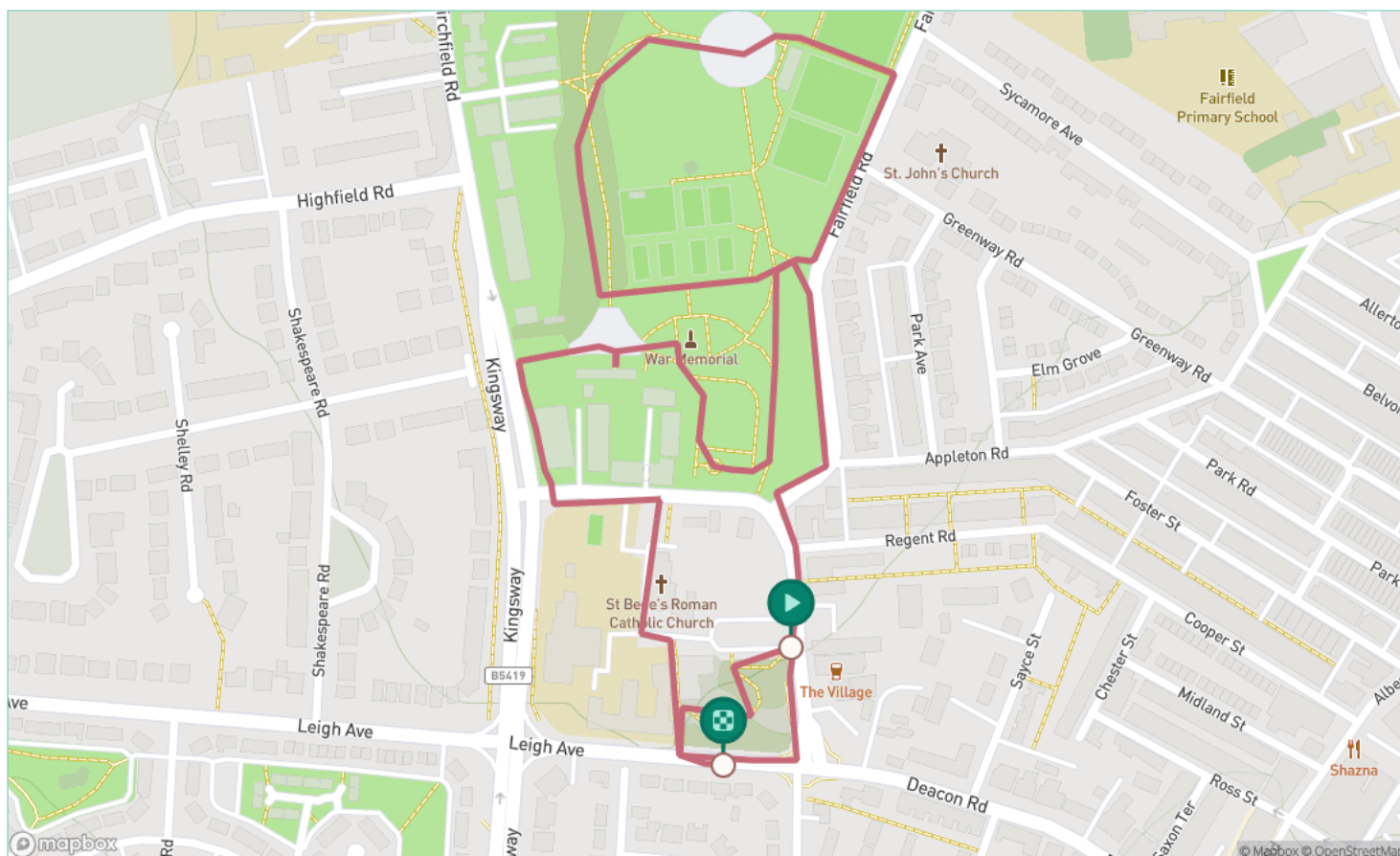
History



Dog friendly

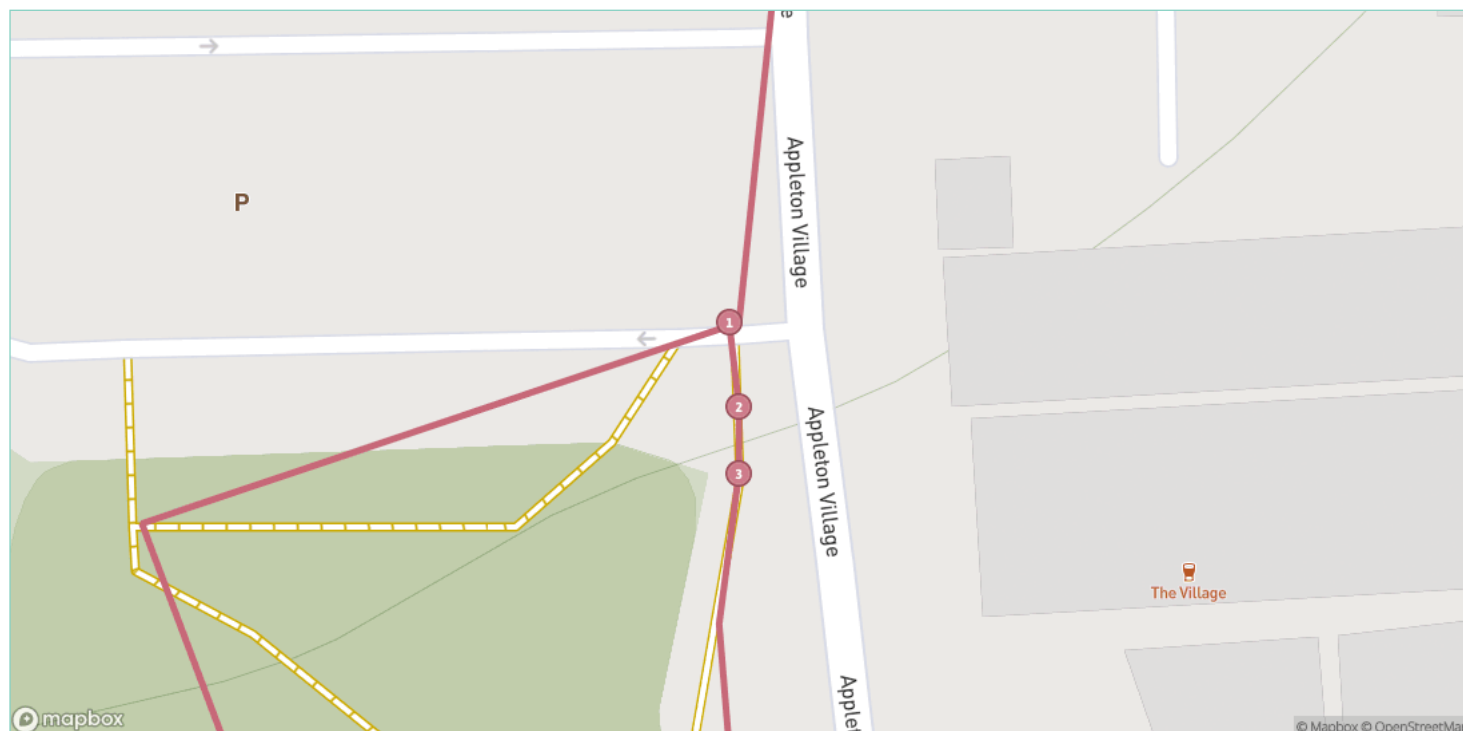


Child friendly



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.

Created by Go Jauntly Ltd © 2026. Last Updated: 04 September 2026.

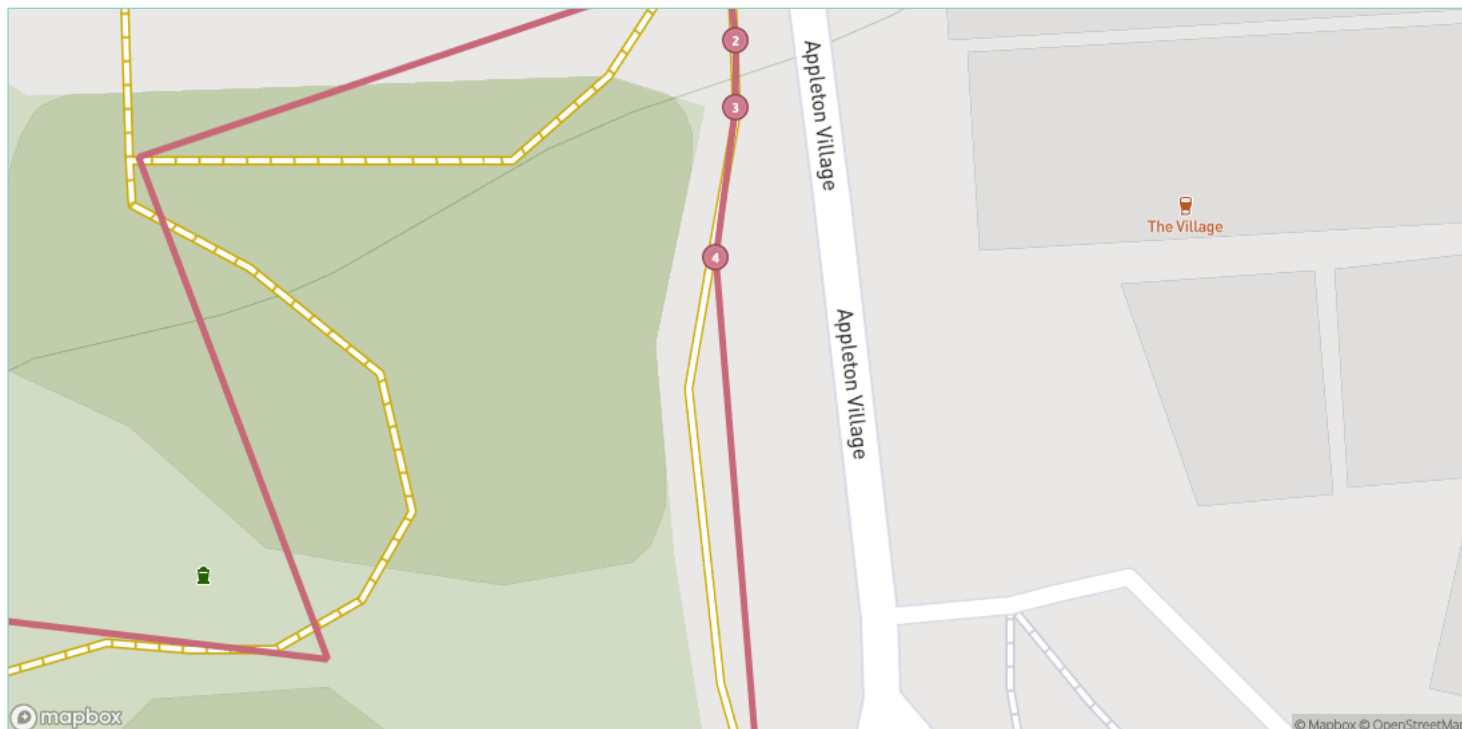


Step 1: Begin the walk at Appleton Village Car Park, Widnes WA8 6EQ. You can take the 61 bus which drops you nearby.

Step 2: Welcome to Appleton Village. This walk through Appleton Village and Victoria Park uncovers a Widnes that takes some imagining. [Read more](#)

Introduction

Beneath today's streets and green lawns lie old quarries, wire works, tiny cottages and hollow lanes, all reshaped by generations of change. Along the way, imagine the wire makers, cricketers, gardeners and washerwomen who called this place home, and discover how their working lives shaped the town you see now. Appleton was a place for hard work. Red sandstone was quarried from its open fields, wire was drawn and tools were made, and watchmakers mingled with laundresses, chemical workers and domestic servants. The Heyes family ran the wire works through the late 1800s, while builder Frederick Guy hung his sign in what is now the Village Surgery. The area has seen dramatic upheaval too: in 1912 the roads and land around the old quarry were raised by over two metres, hiding the reason the village road was once called Hollow Lane. Lanes, yards, terraces and grand houses have all made way for progress, and new homes on the old wire



works site continue that story of change today. This 1897 drawing below, shows bowling greens and other ideas for park land to the East. It is hard to imagine climbing the huge steep sided mound to stand atop, but what a long distance view it would have provided.

Step 3: With the car park behind you, turn right onto Appleton Village Road.

Step 4: The site of Appleton Lodge is near here. [Read more](#)

Appleton Lodge

John Hutchinson (1825 – 24 March 1865), known as the “father of Widnes” was a chemist and industrialist who established the first chemical factory in Widnes. John and his wife Mary lived at Appleton Lodge, Widnes, and had five children, three daughters and two sons, including John, Arthur, Mary and Gertrude. He opened his alkali works at 25, in 1847.



Hutchinson's West Bank Works, c1895



Step 5: Before turning right onto Leigh Avenue. Look behind and up Appleton Village Road. Read more [👉](#)

Step 7: Here's the bus stop if you're taking public transport. Public buses arrived here in 1909. Read more [👉](#)

Appleton Quarry

Look up Appleton Village road from Deacon Road. The high wall on the left has St Bede's cemetery behind it. The church was built in 1847 using sandstone from here. On early maps an old quarry is also shown south of Deacon Rd. In 1914 the hollow space was filled in and the road level raised by over 2m.



Step 6: Continue along Leigh Avenue and look out for a passageway on the right.

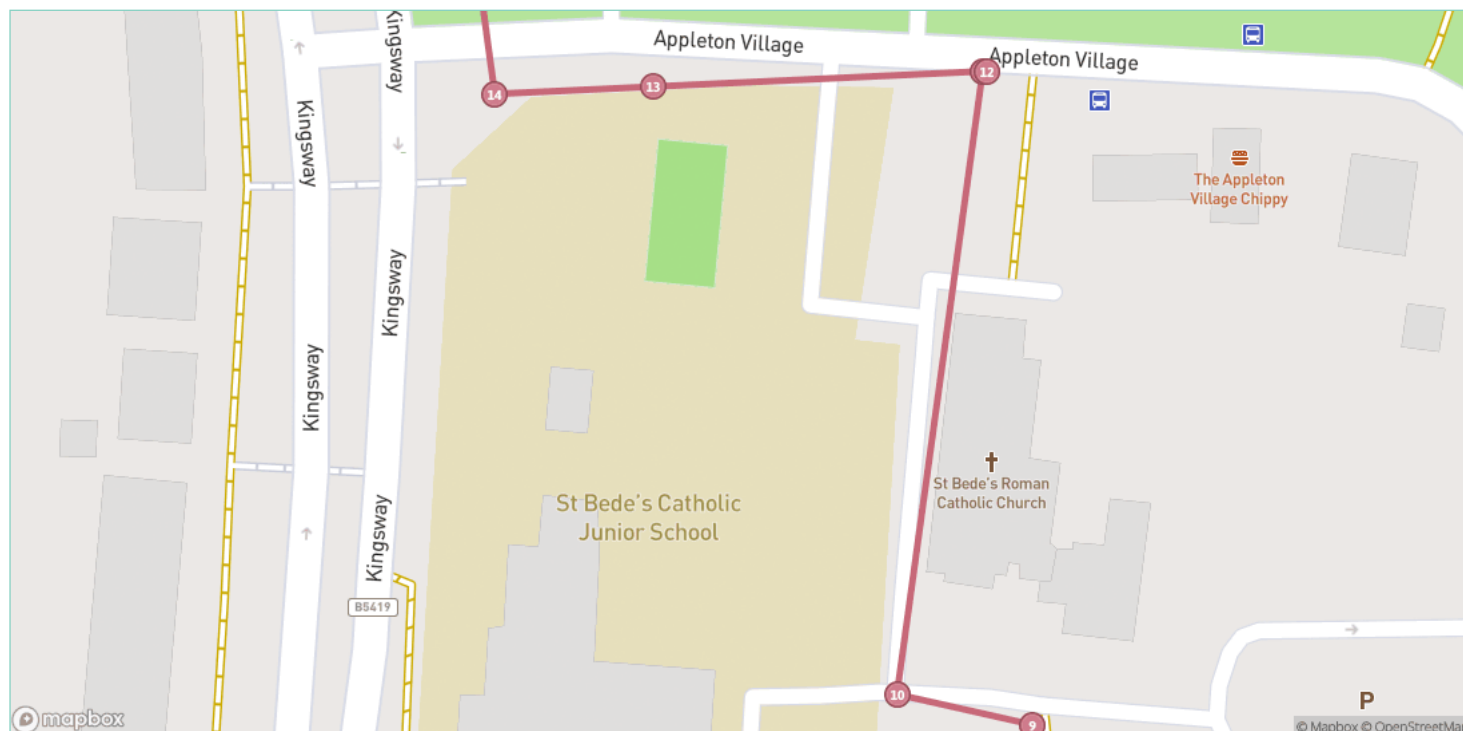
Public Buses

Public buses arrived in 1909. This bus stopped at Appleton Village on its way to Rainhill. The red ticket is for two days of free trips celebrating 65 years of public transport when in 1974 control moved to Halton District Council from Widnes Corporation.



Step 8: Turn right onto the passageway towards St Bede's Church, passing through a school.

Step 9: St Bede's Church was built in 1847.



Step 10: Follow the footpath with the church now on your right.

Step 11: Turn left onto Appleton Village Road.

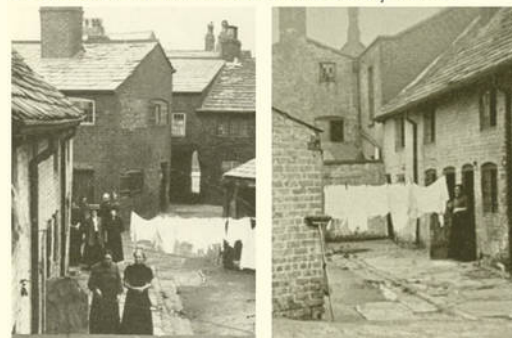
Step 12: Opposite the road was the site of Francis Heyes Wire Works. Many villagers in the 19th century worked as wire drawers & watch and tool makers.

Step 13: The playground on your left is built over the former Tithebarn St. Read more [👉](#)

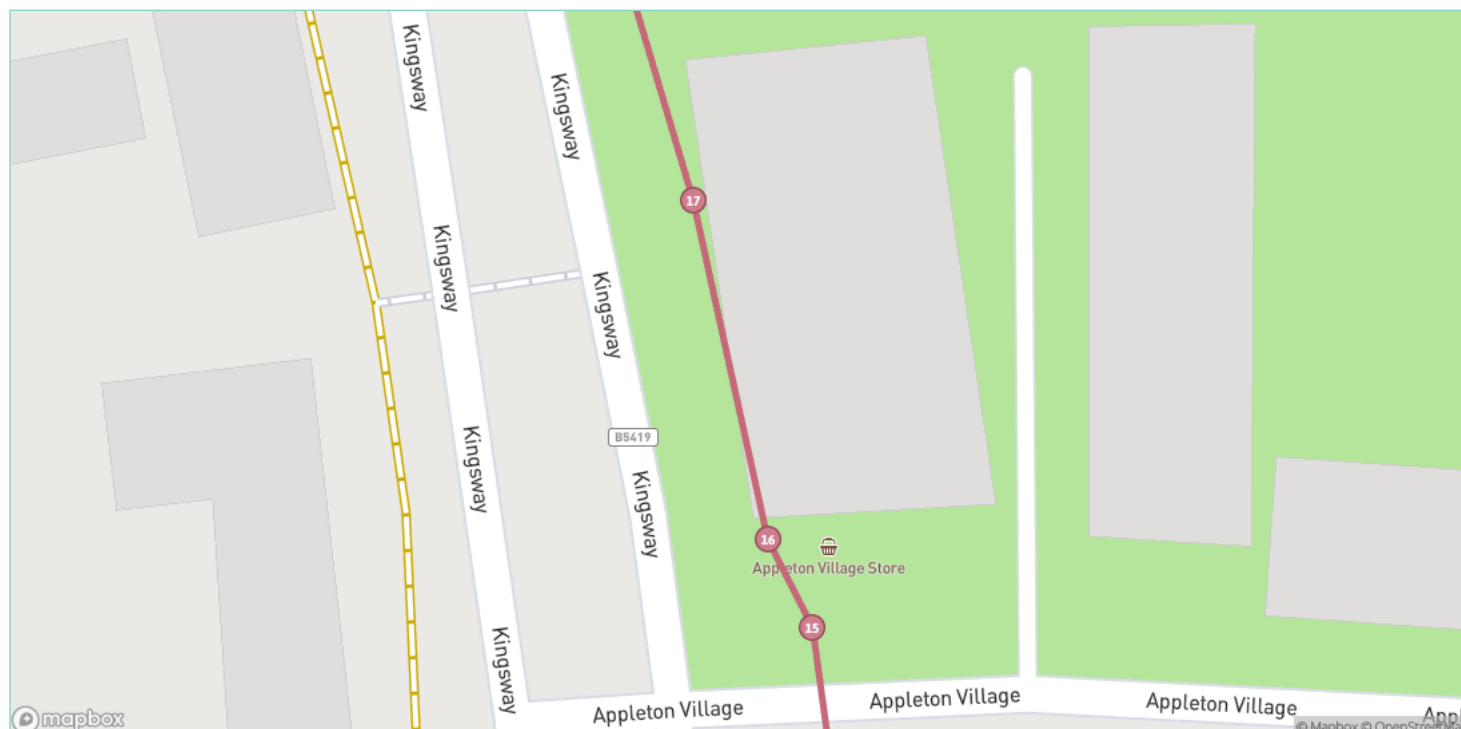
Tithebarn Street

There were quite a few houses here, where the playground is now. Do you think the broom was used to clean up for the photo?

Front & rear views of Tithebarn St, early 1900s



Step 14: Cross over Appleton Village Road onto Birchfield Rd.



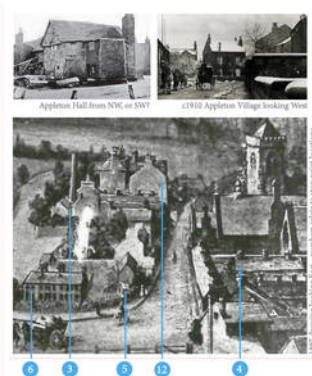
Step 15: Read more about the mystery of Appleton Hall.

The Mystery of Appleton Hall

Built c16th for the Appleton family, its location seems to be a mystery. Suggested as sited at the Birchfield Rd & Appleton Village junction, or the Wire Works site. Do these images & the 1875 Roper map give a few more clues to help you decide? Maybe we need to dig more, here's a few questions to ponder:

1. Can we assume the 1897 drawing is 'building' accurate? 2. If so, what is the building directly behind Pineapple Terrace? 3. What is the gable end (back right) on the c1910 image? 4. If the image below is the Hall, its footprint would relate to the Roper map if the photo was taken from the NW, was it? 5. Was the Hall completely demolished in 1873?

What do you think, we hope it intrigues you to find out more...

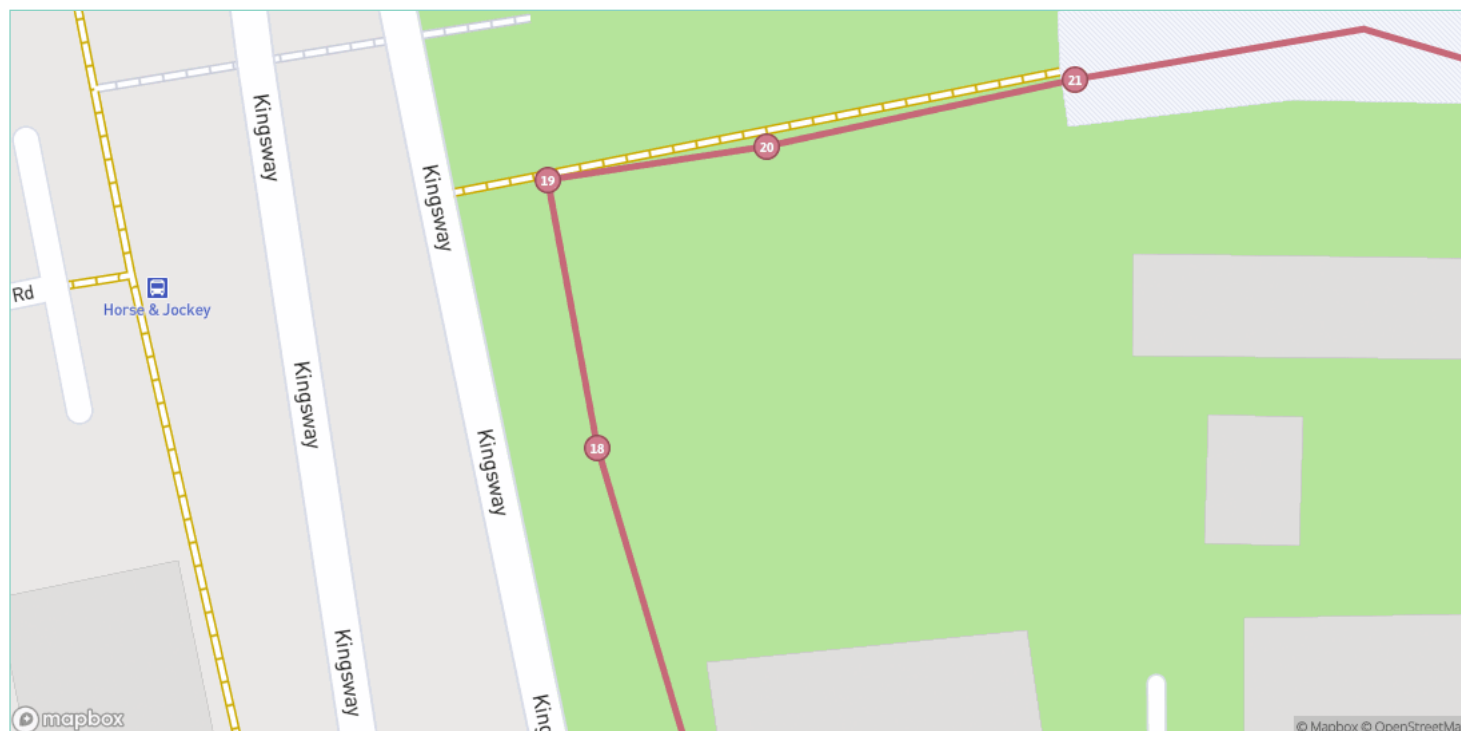


Step 16: Continue on Birchfield Road / Kingsway.

Step 17: Look up to see Pineapple Terrace. Read more.

Pineapple Terrace

This fruit was a curiosity when first introduced into Britain. Many wealthy people were keen to grow them. It is said that Appleton Hall had pineapple stores, which may have been very near here. Could it be the building where the terrace is now.



Step 18: Continue and get ready to turn right into Victoria Park.

Step 19: Enter the park through the gates. Read more. 

Park Gates

This well loved image from after 1902 shows the ornate iron work park gates which were donated by Widnes Foundry and behind is the Gladstone Fountain in its original position.

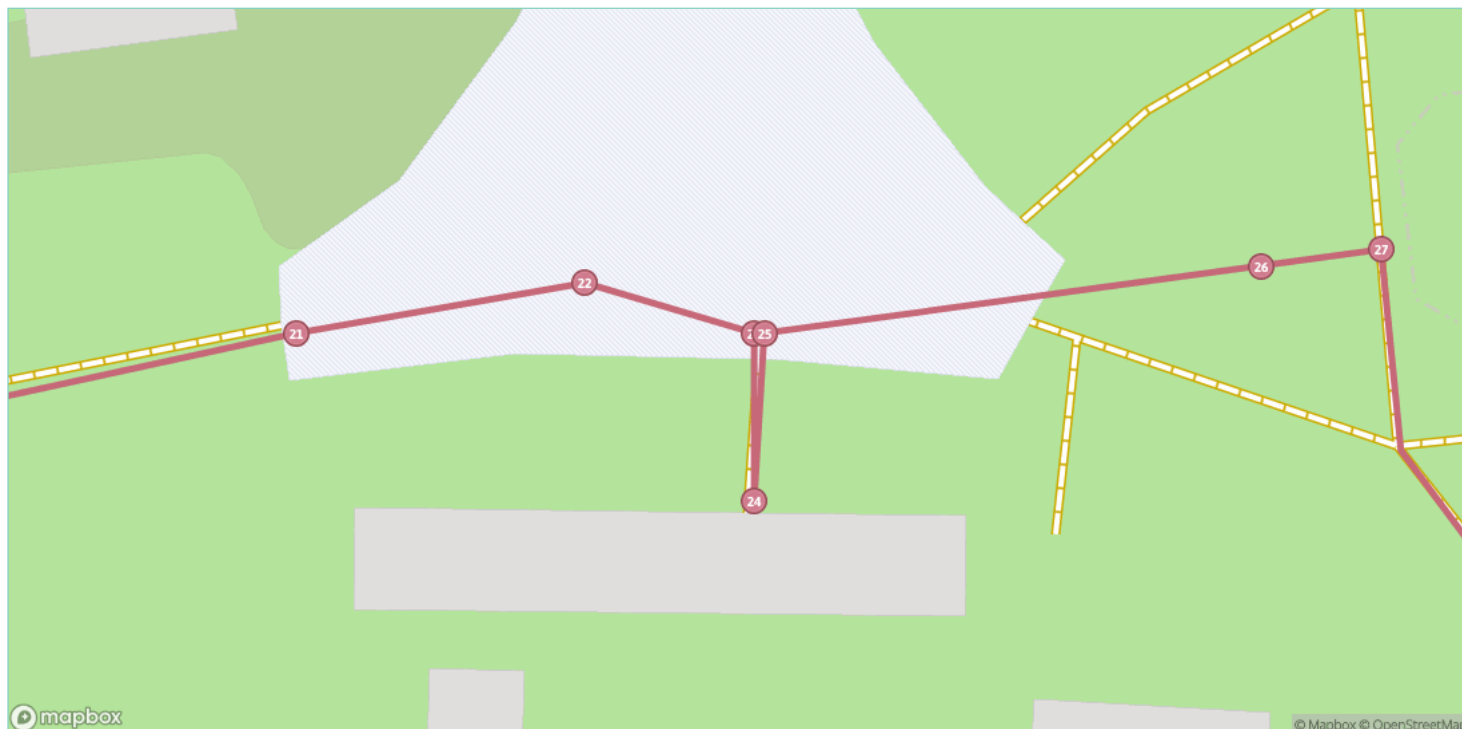


Step 20: Welcome to Victoria Park. Let's head inside. Read more. 

Victoria Park

Widnes opened to the public in 1900, commemorating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. It was described as having fine views of Childwall Valley, Mersey Estuary and the Welsh Hills.

These are some of the key dates: 1893 - Land north of Appleton House mostly fields Deacon family installed new greenhouses 1897 - Park established and dated gates erected 1902 - Gladstone memorial fountain installed 1904 - Northern area lost to Lockett Road & housing 1906 - Appleton House demolished 1911 - Bowling greens added on Eastern extension 1913- King George V & Queen Mary visit 1921 - War Memorial erected 1930s - Lake & paddling pool added 1991 - Gladstone memorial moved to Town Centre 2000s - £2m restoration including landscaping, cafe, ice-cream parlour & climbing boulder



Step 21: You'll pass the VC memorial on your left. Read the information board to learn more.

Step 22: In front of you is the Gladstone Fountain. Now opposite the Butterfly House. How many fish can you see swimming around it?

Step 23: Opposite the fountain is the butterfly house 🦋

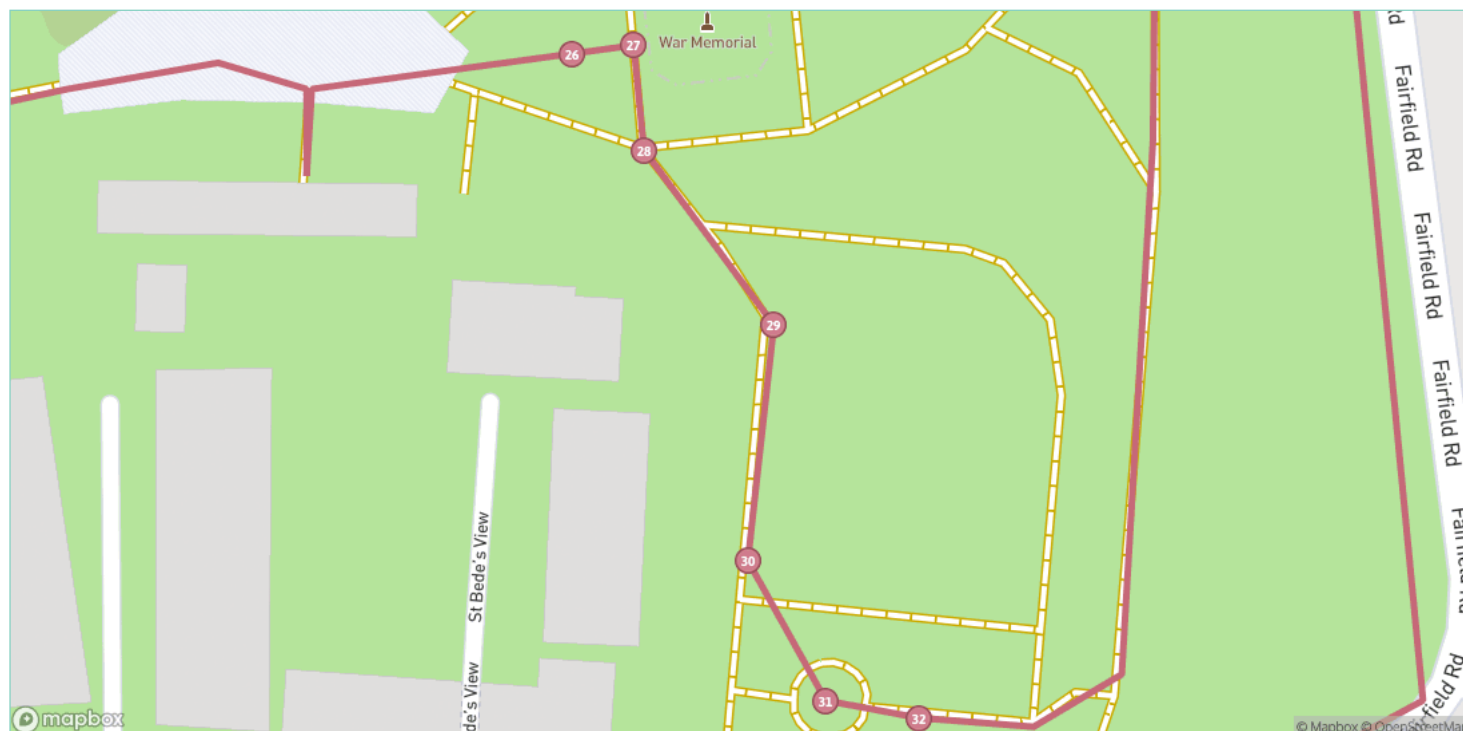
Step 24: If you have time, head inside and enjoy the delicate creatures flutter-by. Here are the opening times.

Step 25: With your back to the butterfly house turn right and continue into the park.

Step 26: You'll soon reach this bomb damaged milepost. Read more. 🖱️

Bomb-damaged Milepost

In 1918 on the night the milepost was damaged, 21-yr old Harry Antrobus was on duty at Randall's Sluices on the Manchester Ship Canal, outside Moore. He felt the hair prickle on the back of his neck as the Zeppelin flew overhead. He was armed with just a broomstick.



Step 27: Behind is the War Memorial. Read more.



War Memorial Silver Statuette

In front of you stands the Widnes War Memorial, honouring local men who lost their lives in both world wars. A Portland stone obelisk on a York stone plinth, it was unveiled in 1921 and is now Grade II listed.

Alderman Edwin Wood, Mayor of Widnes (1919-21) was presented with this silver statuette for his service to the inauguration and promotion of the Widnes War Memorial.



Step 28: With the war memorial in front of you, turn right towards a path through some hedges.

Step 29: Continue on this path, you'll pass a bench if you need a rest.

Step 30: Head towards the curved wall in front.

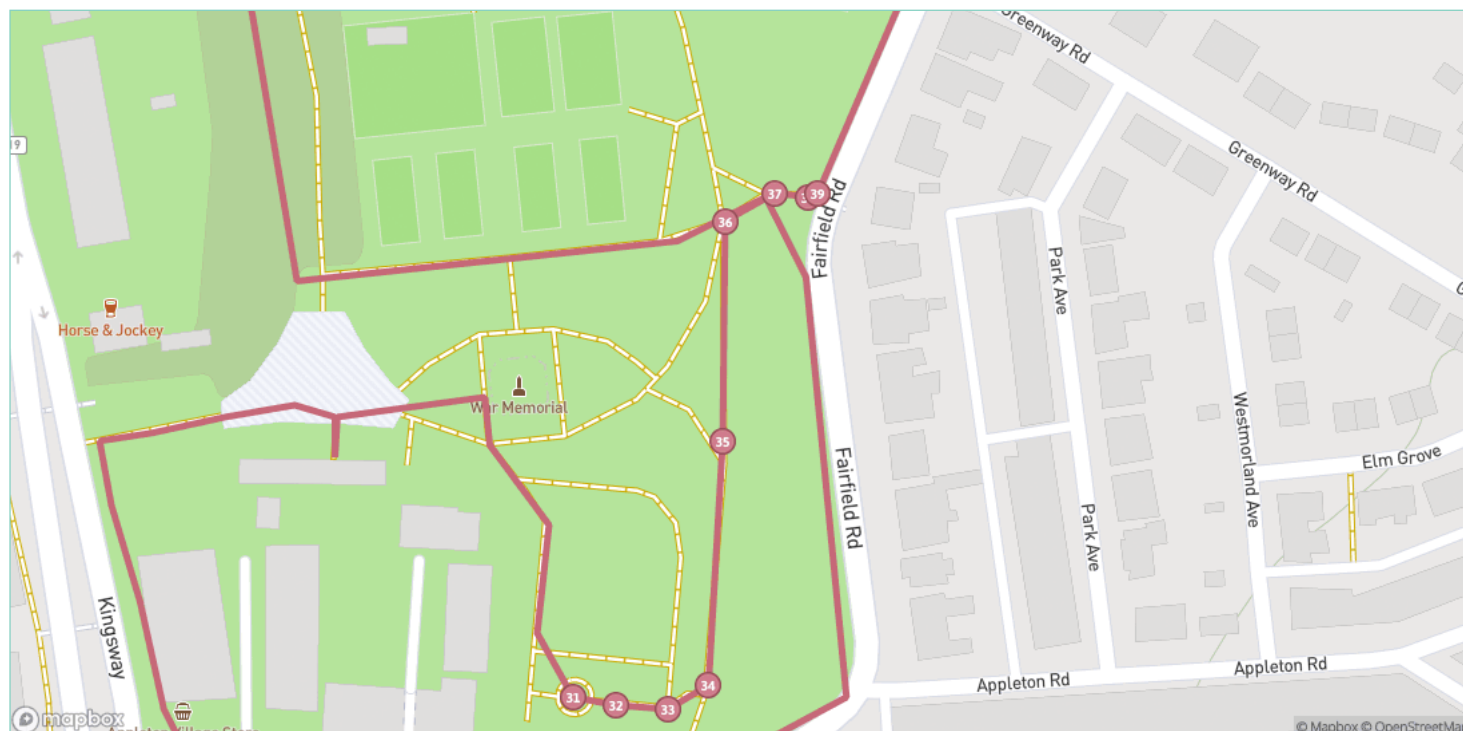
Step 31: This marks the site of Appleton House. Read more.



Site of Appleton House

When Henry Deacon died in 1876, his 2nd wife Caroline continued living here with her children & step-son Henry Wade Deacon. By the 1901 census Henry & Caroline were recorded as staying at a hotel in Colwyn Bay, with Holbrook Gaskell and his daughter Eliza.





Step 32: Read the information board for more about the history of the Appleton Garden.

Step 33: Head down some steps and turn left to stay inside the park.

Step 34: Continue along this treelined path. Read more. 

Tree Surveys

Then, the park had around 850 trees with 71% over 40 years old, 18% 25-39, 11% up to 24 years, more younger, indicating recent planting. Sycamore dominate at 76% that's a lot of 'helicopter' seeds. The others are a mix of elm, cherry, lime, poplar, whitebeam, london plane & norway maple with a final few rowan, ash, laburnum, thorn, horse chestnut, willow, birch, oak, beech, alder and holly - and there's one ginkgo biloba. How many can you identify?

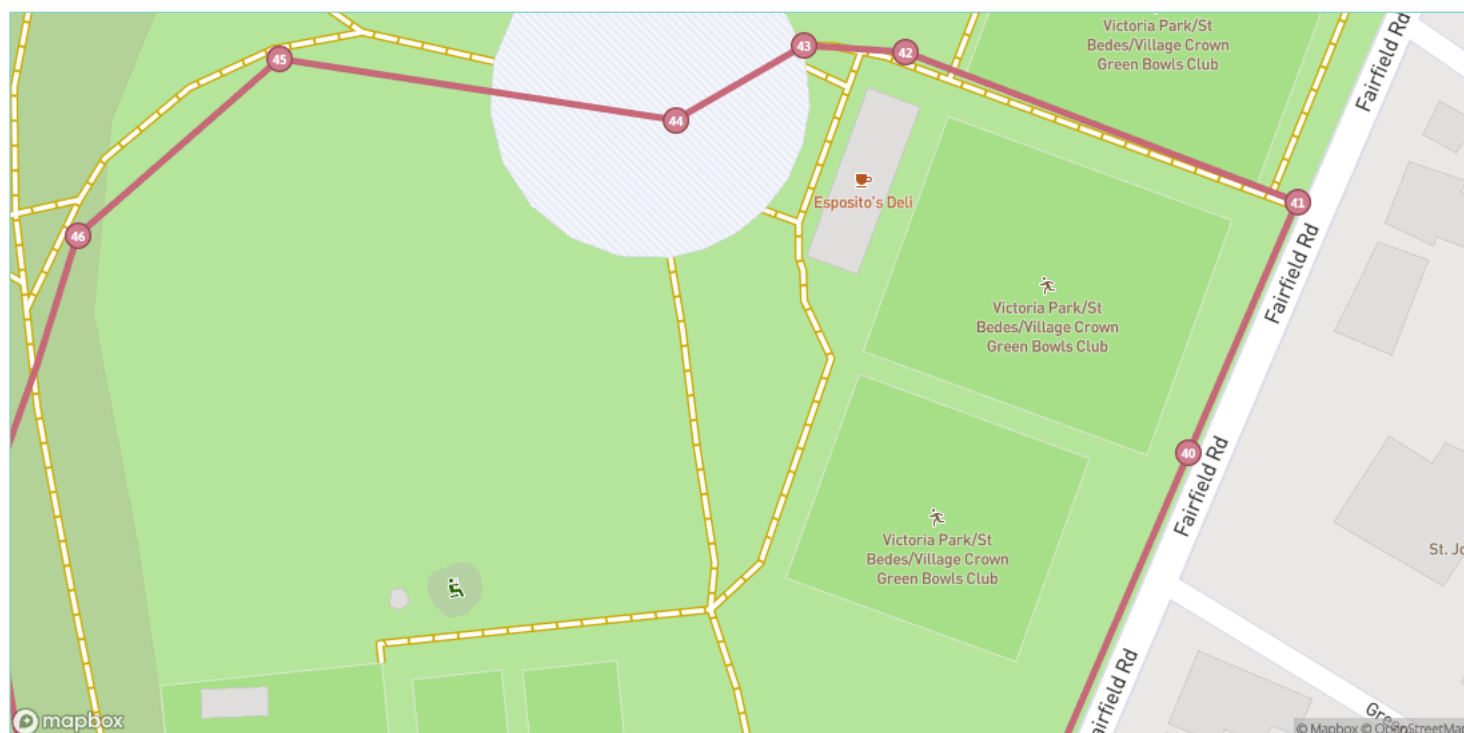
Step 35: You'll pass some trees in flower beds on the left.

Step 36: When you come to a crossroad of paths, turn right to exit the park.

Step 37: Head out the park gate and turn left onto Fairfield Rd.

Step 38: Fairfield Road marks the eastern park boundary, perhaps it was the place where fairs took place?

Step 39: Continue on Fairfield Rd. We'll enter the park again soon.



Step 40: On your left are four bowling greens. Read more 

Park Changes

The park changed shape in the early years, removing the section above Lockett Rd and adding the eastern section here for four bowling greens. In later years changes occurred for the war effort, removing the bandstand and railings. Now we focus on environmental aspects; seeing a wider range of tree types and the cafe has a living sedum roof.

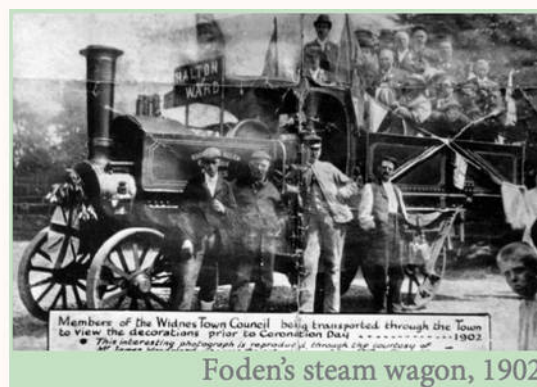
Step 41: When you reach the park gate head back inside the park and continue straight towards the bandstand.

Step 42: There's a cafe & deli here if you want to stop for some refreshments. 

Step 43: Head towards the bandstand. The Fodens band played in the 1920s & 30s earning £35-40 each time they played here. See more below.

Foden's Band

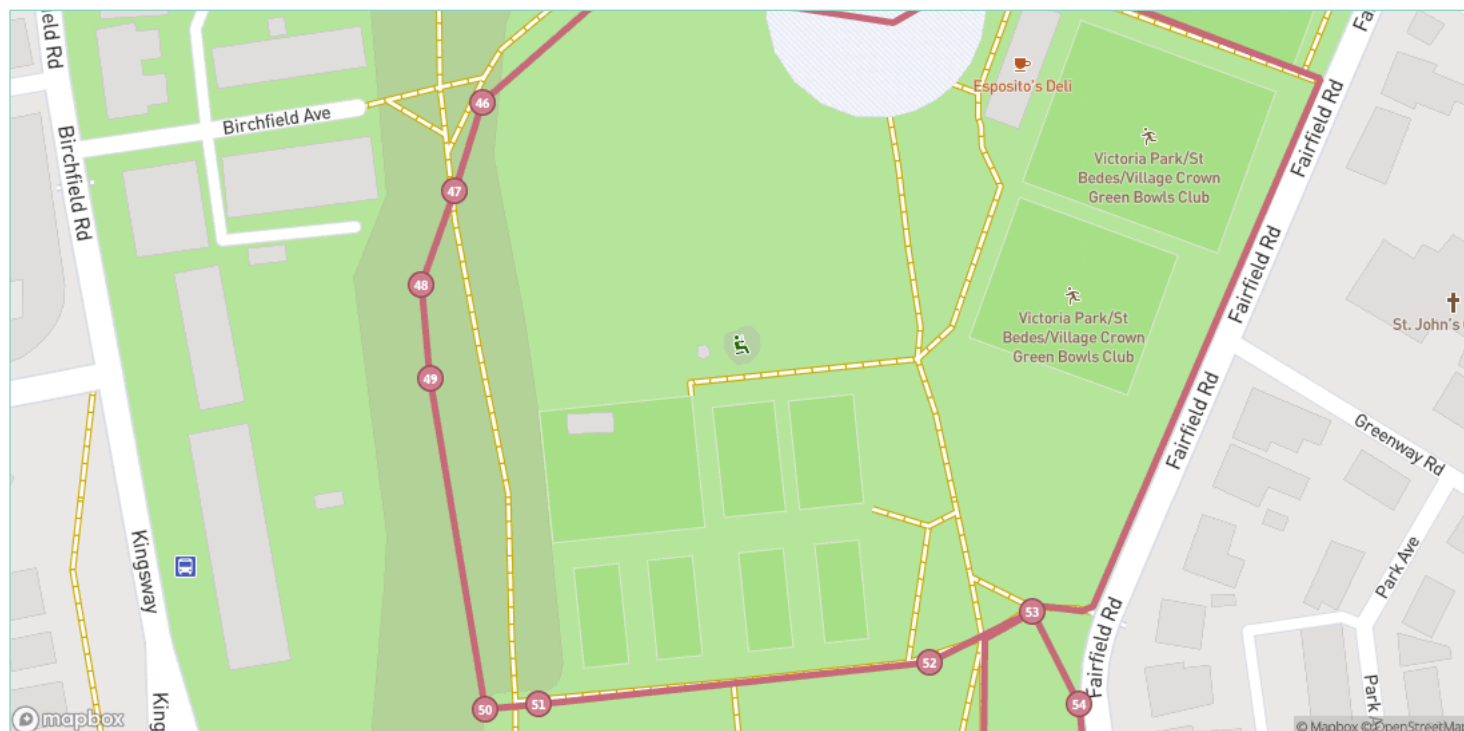
Here's a picture of the band and steam wagon.



Foden's steam wagon, 1902

Step 44: Continue in the same direction.

Step 45: Follow the path as it bends to the left.



Step 46: Keep following the path left, ignoring a right turn.

Step 47: Here you can stay on the path ahead or take the woodland walk to the right.

Step 48: Head into the trees to take a woodland walk. [Read more.](#) 

Woodland Walk

This is a very different area in the park which seems wrapped in a magical cloak of denser trees & shrubs. Hidden from view, it is accessed from the west pathways. You'll spot all sorts of woodland creatures out exploring. What things will you find?

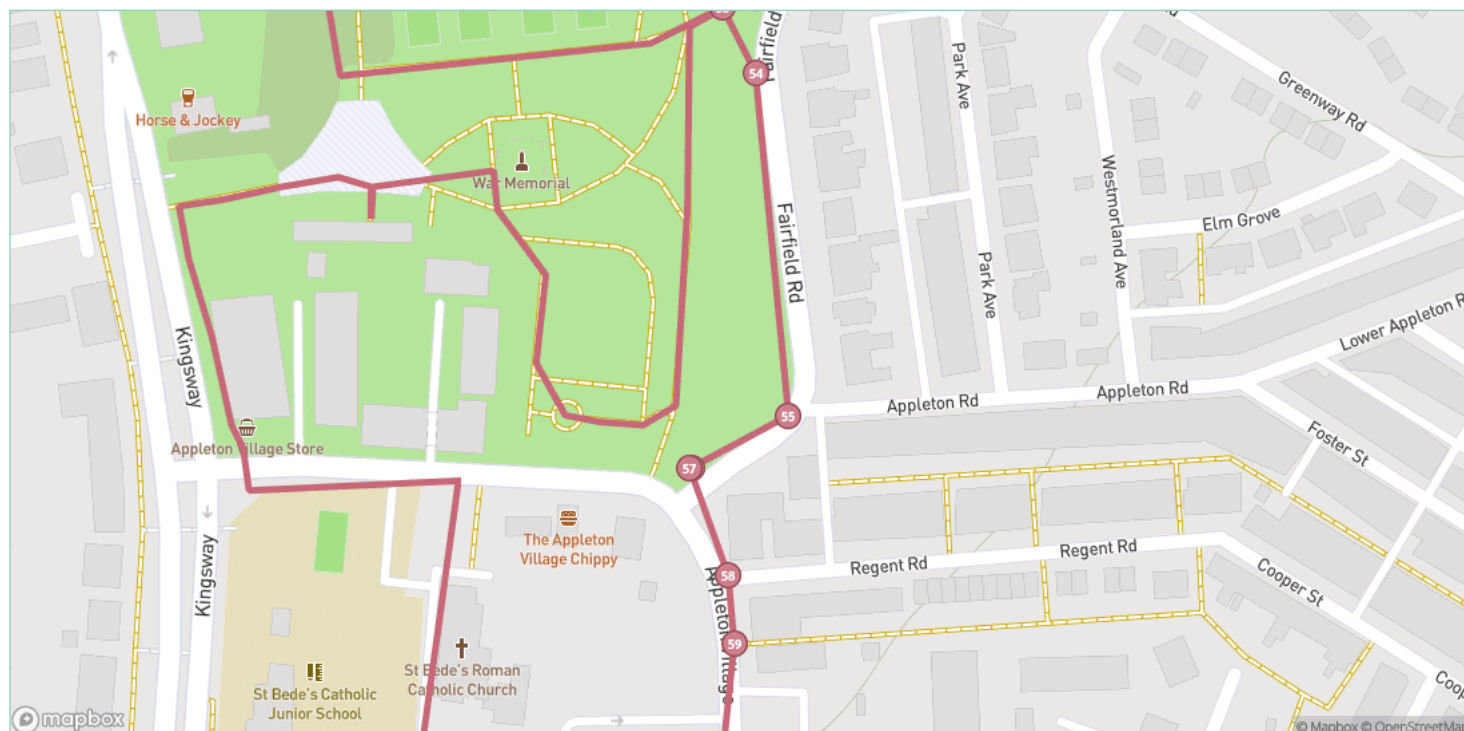
Step 49: Continue through trees or on the path.

Step 50: Turn left at the end of the path or woodland walk.

Step 51: Continue with some tennis courts on your left.

Step 52: Head towards the park exit again onto Fairfield Rd.

Step 53: Exit the park and turn right this time.



Step 54: Continue on Fairfield Rd and follow the road as it turns right around the park perimeter.

Step 55: Bear right to stay on Fairfield Rd.

Step 56: Across the road is Fairfield House which now houses a nursery.

Step 57: Carefully cross Fairfield Rd to join Appleton Village Rd.

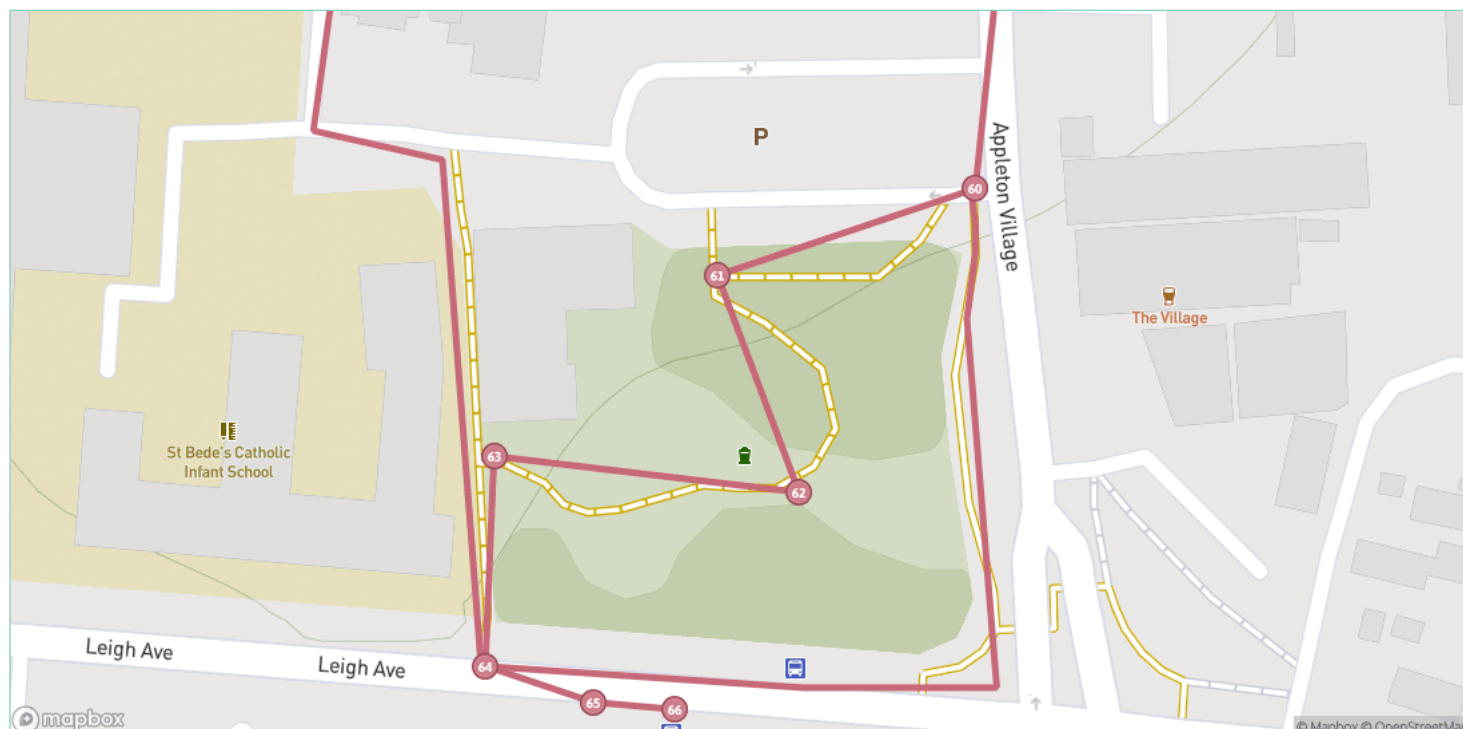
Step 58: Cross Regent Rd.

Step 59: What is currently Appleton Surgery used to be Frederick Guy's office and a shop. Read more. 

James Randle and Frederick Guy Builders

This 1912 image shows what is currently Appleton Surgery, then Frederick Guy's office and a shop. He built many local houses, particularly along Appleton Rd. He lived in Fairfield House after James Randle (1891/1901) who was also a builder and managed the Quarry under the name of Sayce & Randle. The quarry wall is to the right of the image and the property is on the far right of the top two images, below.





Step 60: The walk ends here at the Village Kitchen, a great place for a rest. To extend the walk a little...

Step 61: ...you can follow the green path through the cemetery back to the bus stop.

Step 62: Enjoy the peaceful cemetery of St. Bede's with views towards the Mersey.

Step 63: Turn left onto an alleyway.

Step 64: Cross the road to the bus stop on the other side.

Step 65: Enjoy views of the cooling towers in the distance of the former power station.

Step 66: We hope you enjoyed learning about Appleton Village's history! Please tap 'Read More' for the walk acknowledgements. Come back soon to enjoy your next walk.

Thank You

This walk was researched and designed by Project Artist Jeni McConnell for Halton Heritage Partnership, a collaboration between public and community history and heritage organisations in the Borough of Halton, using images and information from partner organisations. The route was first tested by walkers for 'A Walk in the Park', commissioned by Halton CCG.

Discover More

<https://haltonheritage.co.uk/>