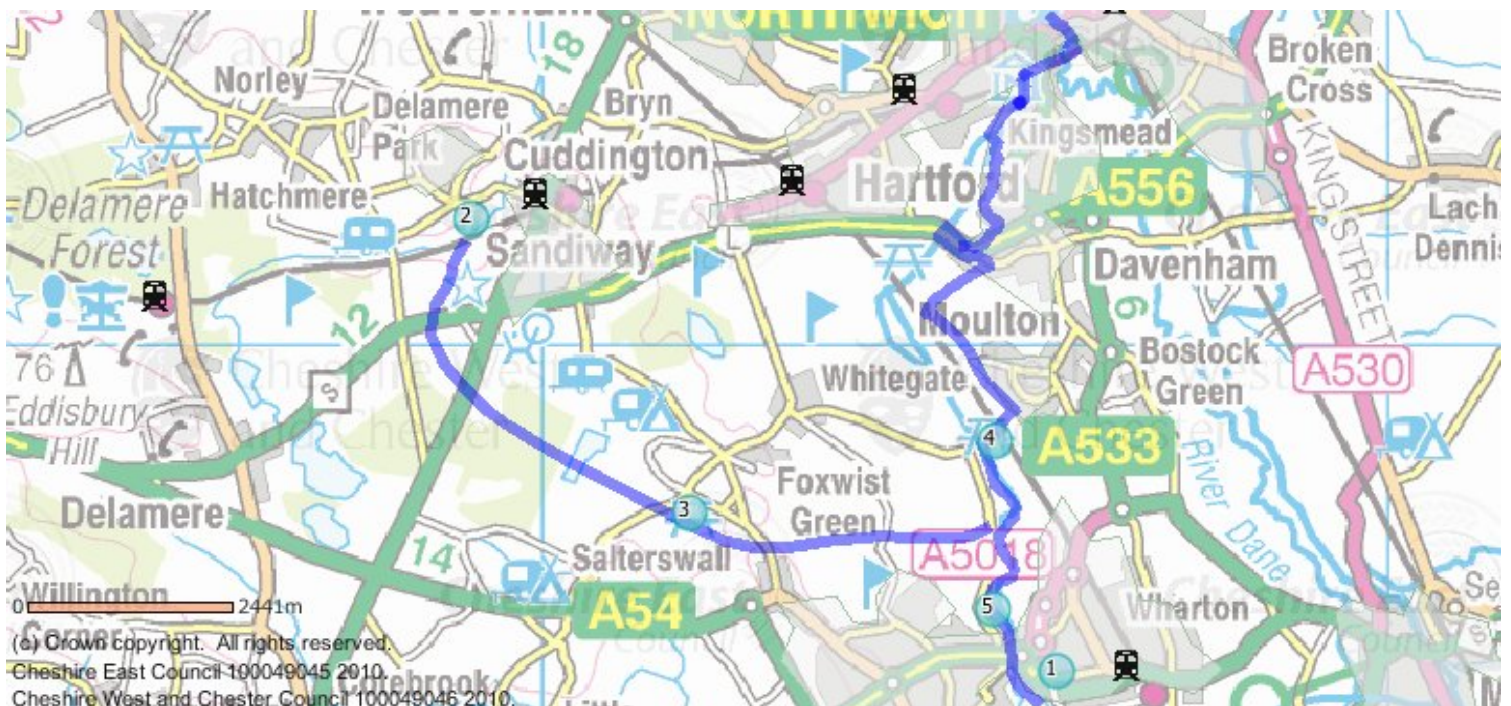


Whitegate Way and Weaver Parkway

Cycle along the Whitegate Way and Weaver Parkway, ideal traffic-free routes between Winsford and Cuddington, near Delamere Forest Park.

Grade	Traffic free
Distance	10km/6miles (Whitegate Way) 4km/2.5miles (Weaver Parkway)
Time	Approx. 30 - 45 mins (Whitegate Way end to end) 30 mins (Weaver Parkway end to end)
Start	Bradford Road car park, Whitegate Station car park (Whitegate Way) Weaver Valley Road car park (Weaver Parkway)
Map	OS Explorer 267
Terrain	Firm, level surface. Some sections can be wet/muddy in winter. Sections of the Weaver Parkway are undulating and there are some chicanes.
Barriers	N/A
Toilets	Whitegate Station picnic area (including accessible toilet), no toilets on site for Weaver Parkway
Contact	Cheshire West and Chester Council Tel: 01606 271736



Route Details

The Whitegate Way and Weaver Parkway are two traffic-free sections of NCN route 5 and 71 which can be linked via a short section on road cycling.

The Whitegate line was opened 1st June 1870 to transport salt from the mines and works along the west bank of the river Weaver. It took the most direct route, avoiding all villages of Whitegate and Sandiway, from Winsford to Cuddington where it joined the main Chester-Manchester line.

A passenger service opened a month later but closed after only 4 years because of competition with the main LNWR line. It was re-started in 1886 with three passenger trains a day. The journey was slow and uncomfortable because the trains were mixed and passengers had to wait while goods wagons were shunted on and off, into the many sidings. The line almost closed in 1958 but a joint arrangement between British Rail and ICI kept it in use to transport rock salt until 1966.

Today there are a few reminders of the past. The load gauge is still at Whitegate Station, and sections of track remain at Catsclough and Newchurch Common. Both these were busy crossings and the rails were set in wooden blocks to provide an even surface.

The Way is managed for the maximum benefit of wildlife as well as providing an attractive environment for people to enjoy. Much of the work is carried out with the help of volunteers as there is always plenty to do.

Summer brings fresh flowers such as harebell and toadflax. Butterflies and dragonflies enjoy the shelter of the Way and can be seen either busy feeding or resting in the sunshine.

The Weaver Parkway is an extensive area of open green space alongside the River Weaver on the fringe of Winsford. The Parkway was created on land steeped in the history of brine working and salt mining industries dating back to Roman times. Unusual plants and animals are present as a direct result of this unique legacy.

The River Weaver is perfect for watching wildlife and over four kilometres of footpath and cycleway provide an ideal opportunity to explore the hidden parts of the Parkway.

Directions

Stretching for six miles (10km) from the heart of Winsford (1) to Cuddington (2), the Whitegate Way offers easy cycling along a varied route. Whitegate Station (3) has been developed into a picnic area with car parking and toilet facilities (includes an accessible toilet). Take time to look around the station area or use it as a starting point to explore the attractive countryside around Whitegate. There is also a car park at Bradford Road, Winsford (1).

Close by, the Weaver Parkway offers over 4km of cycleway alongside the River Weaver. There is a picnic area at Newbridge (4) where cyclists can take a break on the way to Northwich. Parking for the Weaver Parkway is on Weaver Valley Road (5) but please note that there are no public toilets at the site.

Both the Whitegate Way and the Weaver Parkway are level with wide, firm surfaces (mostly crushed stone). The two routes can be linked via a short stretch of road cycling along New Road and Bradford Road (6).