

# FAIRLANDS VALLEY CHALLENGE – July 2024

Should you be forced to retire from the event, please do so at a check point, where we will arrange for transport back to the start as soon as possible. If you become hopelessly lost or are in difficulty, you can contact the organisers on the emergency number: **07753 58151**.

You may wish to install a GPX viewer app on your phone to use the GPX files.

You may wish to install What3Words on your phone to help you to the next checkpoint should you get lost.

All distances are approximate.

Please note that the GPX files and text descriptions have been updated for 2024. Please use the updates.

Key:	AH – ahead	GR – grid reference	thru - through
	BL – bear left	imm – immediately	TL – turn left
	BR – bear right	junc – junction	TR –turn right
	cont – continue	KG – kissing gate	W3W- What3Words
	CP – checkpoint	L- left	WP- waymarker post
	encl - enclosed	opp – opposite	X – cross
	FP - footpath	R – right	

Please note that the tarmac cycleways/cycle tracks are sometimes quite wide, but do not confuse them with roads.

**PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN MUG/BOTTLE. CUPS ARE NOT PROVIDED AT DRINK STATIONS**

**Start: Marriotts School - GR 255244 - W3W . ///rings.cotton.park**

This is the 26 mile route

## Section A - Marriotts School to Watton

At school gates TR down Telford Ave to end, ignoring side turnings. X over Faraday R and enter woods to L of bin, and take right hand path thru wood. At end TL on concrete path, then AH to X grass in front of Phoenix Nursery. AH down road to pass concrete bollards and trees to cycle track by main road. TL down cycle track passing bus stop to road (Chells Way). X with great care. AH opp uphill to reach small road. X road and AH up grassy track to just before road (Blackwell Close). TR and take enclosed path and follow to footbridge.

X footbridge and cont AH on FP to black posts at road. **(All routes now go right!)**

TR on road. TL at T junc (Tatlers Lane). Soon after LH bend, TR into small lane(signposted No Through Road and Public Footpath/Aston). Follow to tall metal gate at end. Go thru KG to L of tall gate then thru further 3 KGs and over footbridge.

Follow fenced path uphill. Thru gap, X lane and AH on encl path to road. X road and TR on path (signed New Park Lane). Stay outside wooden fence. TL at corner. At end, TR thru gap and along path. At WP, AH on encl path to sports field. Pass to right of play area and on to path. **(Routes split here)**

At corner of play area fence, by bin, cont AH on encl path thru barrier to road. Cont SLOT, onto enclosed FP, and AH to road. TR to road junc. X and take road opp signed Bragbury End. After approx 100m, imm after House 1A, TL into FP 24 (signed Sacombe Corner Wood), then thru barrier, down to exit into field. Cont SLOT, then down to WP in far corner (STOOP). Cont AH and at WP bear R uphill. Cont past gardens to reach road.

TL and cont on road. In 600m (30m after "Waterbridge" on L) TL downhill. At T junc TR **on busy road** and cont on road 1 mile to X bridge over bypass.

40m after bridge, X road and follow Byway sign (Mill Lane) down narrow path & cont AH ignoring side turnings to exit from wood. Straight AH downhill & BL at corner of fence. Follow track, fence on L, ignoring side turnings to emerge on tarmac path. TR to CP 80m at Scout Hut on L.

### **CHECKPOINT 1 - WATTON SCOUT HQ - 5.4 miles**

#### **TOILETS AVAILABLE IN THE SCOUT HQ**

**GR 300194 - W3W: ///inch.zips.wins**

**OPEN 9:00 - 11:30**

Section B Watton to Chapmore End

TR from Scout Hut on tarmac track thru concrete bollards (signed Bypass) & cont uphill on track. At FP (signed Watton House) by large tree, TR on lower FP & then uphill thru woodland & up steps to emerge from trees. TR & follow edge of wood, then fence, then wood, ignoring all side paths, to emerge on road. TR on FP, over footbridge & cont to X road by mini roundabout (**with great care**). Go thru KG opp and up field to further KG to pass thru churchyard. At church doors TL to road. X, TL and at small grass triangle TR up Perry Wood Lane. TL on track (signed Stapleford 1). AH thru gap in fence. At gap by Woodhall Estate sign, go thru & AH ½L thru young trees then field to enter woodland. Cont on FP thru trees to emerge by WP in to field. Cont AH over field to track where BL to pass wooden garages to road.

X (**WITH GREAT CARE**) and thru entrance of Woodhall Park. AH down drive, over bridge then TR to cont to R of buildings thru KG to junc. TR over bridge along track. Over further bridge and immed BR over grass to KG in fence. Thru & follow path over brow of hill & down to KG following river. Thru & follow path with bushes & river on R. When reaching wooden bridge on R, TL thru KG & AH uphill. Thru KG/gap & uphill thru woodland. When emerge from trees cont AH over open field towards trees. Bear L to reach track. TR on track and cont on track thru KG and on to road junc.

Imm TL on FP uphill (signed Stoneyhills) thru field towards house, to go thru gap in hedge to road. TR on road & at bottom of slope, 40m past SLOW sign on road, TL on bridleway (signed Waterford Heath), trees on R. At corner, by bench, thru gap, and AH hedge on L. Enter encl path between gardens to emerge on road. TL to reach CP by pond & Woodman Public House.

### **CHECKPOINT 2 - CHAPMORE END - 9.5 miles**

**GR 328165 - W3W: ///hears.damage.behave**

**OPENING TIMES 9:30 TO 12:30**

Section C - Chapmore End to Stapleford

Retrace steps along road & cont on road to L bend. Cont AH on track (Byway 22) between hedges to reach open area where AH keeping right to edge of wood. Cont on track, wood on R. (**NEW HERE!**) Cont 80m past path junc at finger post. TL through gap and then R on path to next junc. Cont AH down steep gravel path. Cont AH in dip, then at Y junc take L path uphill, to road. TL and in 15m TR on FP into trees by

wooden barrier. TL & follow path round to R, on to pass barrier & cont to L of small car park down to road by posts.

X to FP opp & go up between fences. TL up to KG, then in front of KG TR on enclosed path. Cont down. At Y junc take LH path, fence on L, then up to just before road. TR thru gap into Great Mole Wood. Take R-hand path downhill to WP where TL thru gap. At track TR & cont round L bend to reach FP on R, by WP and wooden seat on L. TR down FP to X footbridge. AH thru small field, under railway bridge and thru metal gate. TR & follow grass path bearing R before river. Thru KG and AH to go thru second KG to road.

TR on road and at next junc TL along Barleycroft residential road to end, to FP which turns R to go thru gap. AH over field to KG, thru & under bridge. AH, River Beane on L, to road where TL. 80m, where road bends L, TR on rd (Do not go under bridge). Where road bears R, cont AH on track (signed Stapleford) past gate then barn to gate on L. Thru gap by gate & down encl FP alongside River Beane (900m) to corner by churchyard where BL & cont to reach green. TL out of churchyard up road to T junc. TR, X road to village hall **(WITH GREAT CARE)**.

### **CHECKPOINT 3 - STAPLEFORD VILLAGE HALL - 13.5 miles**

#### **TOILETS AVAILABLE IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**GR 309169 - W3W: [///invite.ideal.kite](http://invite.ideal.kite)**

**OPENING TIMES 10:00 TO 13:30**

Section D - Stapleford to Tewin

Take gravel track to L of Village Hall (FP signed Bramfield). AH up track and under railway bridge. AH between wooden fences thru trees, to exit woods. TL, follow edge of wood. TL at corner & uphill. At hedges TR, bank/hedge on L. TL at WP, wood on R. At end of wood BR passing 'Wildlife Conservation Area' sign to X field, thru gap to WP on R. X field diagonally, going downhill to trees at bottom corner. Follow track, bending L thru gap and TR at T junc. Follow track to road at corner. AH on road. On reaching wide track entrance on L ("The Old Dairy") TR along bridleway (signed Sally Rainbow's Dell) into edge of wood.

AH to reach main track junc. TR uphill. AH on main track thru wood, 1100m to reach barrier at 4 track junc (white red-topped pole on L). **(18 mile route rejoins here)**. TL thru 2nd barrier.

Follow main track which later descends to road. X to road opp. AH (signed Tewin Hill/Queen Hoo). In 500m, at junc, BL to corner (Queen Hoo Hall). TL on track (bridleway signed Tewin) & follow as it passes between fields & enters wood.

Cont AH on main track. In 250m, keep L on path (NOT INTO FIELD). In 450m, at WP on L, TL. Just before field, TR down encl path which descends to road. TR up hill into village. BR at village green to CP.

### **CHECKPOINT 4 - TEWIN - 17.8 miles**

**GR 272147 - W3W: [///barn.filer.dated](http://barn.filer.dated)**

**OPENING TIMES: 10:30 TO 14:30**

## Section E - Tewin to Datchworth

Leave CP & X road to go along track to L of Rose & Crown Public House (Back Lane). Keep L along encl path for 700m to pond on R. TL at track junc at WP (red arrow) for 70m. Turn sharp R thru gap to pass WP and follow up thru trees. Cont AH following path along R field edge and on to KG. Thru & cont between fences. X track and AH thru KG & AH along FP thru another KG. Cross grass area, cream house on L, to reach road.

TL on road to X-roads. X to road opp (White Horse Lane). AH past pub (The White Horse!) on L for 80m to FP sign on R (signed Coltsfoot Lane), before speed de-restriction sign. TR, follow FP to reach road. (50k coming in opposite direction!) TL on road downhill. TR at 'Restricted Byway' sign on R (signed Datchworth Green) on encl path. AH thru trees to emerge at green. TL and L again at Cricket nets (signposted "Robbery Bottom Lane"). AH 120m to WP where TR thru gap. X sports field to gap in fence. AH X field to reach road and then road junc. TR and X road into Village Hall car park. TL at end of car park to CP.

### **CHECKPOINT 5 - DATCHWORTH SCOUT HQ - 20.8 miles**

#### **TOILETS AVAILABLE IN THE SCOUT HQ**

**GR 265184 - W3W: [///cycles.bond.giant](http://cycles.bond.giant)**

**OPENING TIMES 11:00 to 16:30**

## Section F - Datchworth to Finish

Return to road, TL from car park and imm TL on encl path. Thru kissing gate, SLOT towards church, fence on right, playing field on left. Thru gap in hedge. Cont up RH side of field and at corner TL up field towards Church. At tarmac path TR and follow edge of churchyard to road. TL.

Cont 0.5 miles on road, ignoring side turnings, to house on RH bend where cont AH onto track (bridleway 24, to Stevenage). SLOT down and up track to just before road, where TR on grass verge. Before crematorium, X road to bridleway opp and cont to barrier at railway bridge. TL up narrow path to top, then TR and follow metal fence on R to corner at path junc. TR down path, under railway bridge and at corner of fence TL.

On grass verge, follow fence for approx 1100m with railway line on L to wooden fence at end. TR between houses then BL to road. Cont down road (Carisbrooke Close) to main road. X (**with great care**) and TL on FP, crossing Ashburnam Walk and Roebuck Gate. Cont SLOT on cycle track to football ground. X Monkswood Lane and cont on cycle track. At junc TL under underpass, then imm TR under further underpass, then imm TR up cycle track bearing L at top past car park.

Cont on main path passing cross paths to bench with bin. Bear slightly R over grass, aiming for gate in far corner passing to L of copse of trees. Thru gate and AH under underpass. X cycle track & cont, bearing R, up narrow path into trees. Cont to lake. TR along lake edge path. At "Water Rescue" pillar, turn ½R up path into small car park.

Exit top of car park, and TL. Stay on main path, passing barriers to "Fairlands Valley Park" sign, where keep R on path. Stay on path, passing brick building (Stevenage Cycling Hub), smaller lake and wooden bridge with 3 "No Cycling" bollards on left.

Cont on main path, to pass bin and bench on right. As path swings L, cont AH up and across grass slope to go thru gap in hedges in corner by bin to path. Do not go up steps opp. TR up path and at road TR to go thru school gates to finish.

**Finish - GR 255244 - 26.4 miles**

**WELL DONE!**