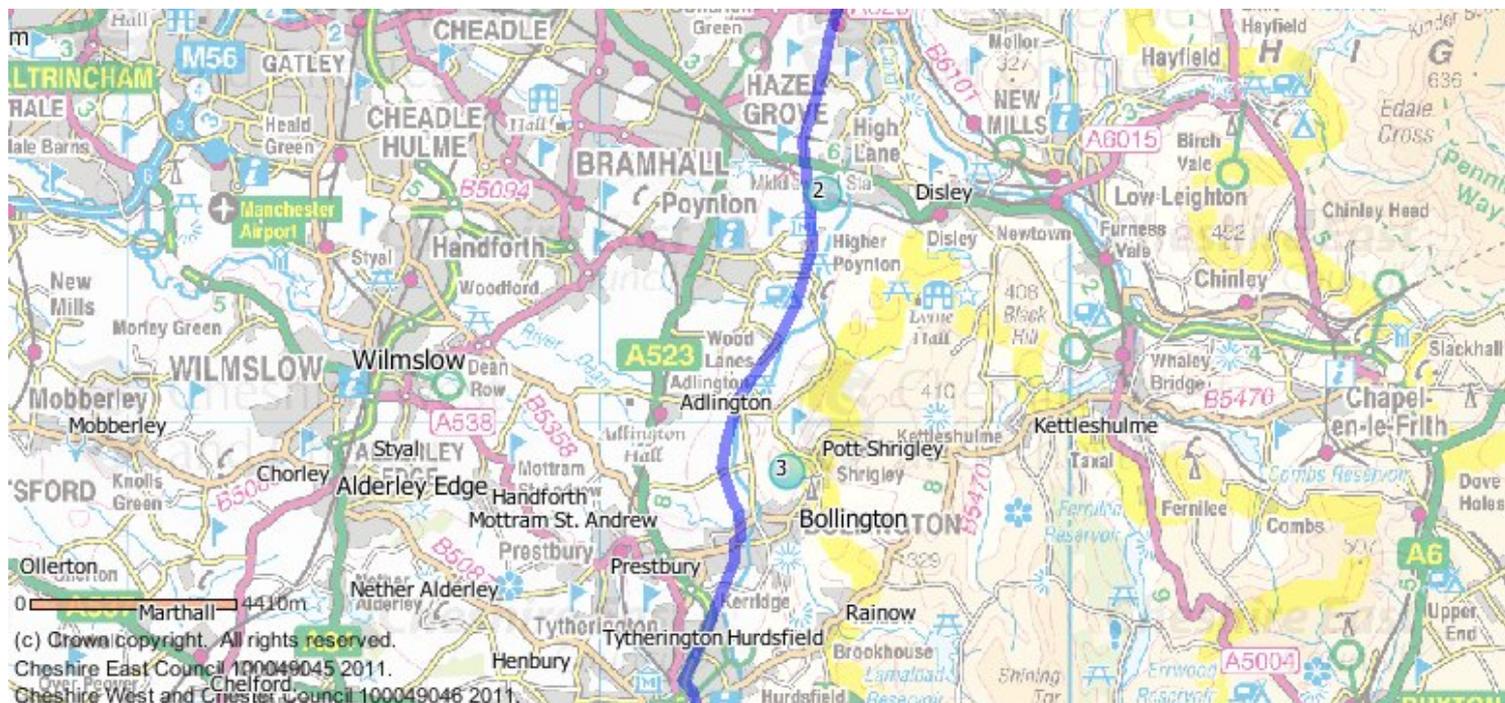


Middlewood Way

The Way offers a 16km/10mile traffic-free route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Grade	Traffic free
Distance	11km/7miles
Time	1-2 hours (end to end)
Start	Either from south, at access point by Bollington viaduct, or from north, at Rose Hill, Marple. Other access points available along the way. Parking available at Macclesfield, Bollington, Poynton and Jackson's brickworks
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Terrain Level and flat with compacted surface; cyclists share a parallel route with horseriders for part.
Barriers	N/A
Toilets	Bollington viaduct, Nelson Pit Visitor Centre, Marple
Contact	Cheshire East Council 01625 383700 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council 0161 4744512



Route Details

The Middlewood Way, part of NCN 55 offers a 10-mile (16-km) traffic-free route ideal for cyclists. It follows the line of the former Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple Railway through picturesque Cheshire countryside and between historic mill towns. For much of its length, the Middlewood Way runs close to the Macclesfield Canal.

In 1863, the town of Marple, Bollington and Macclesfield were facing economic depression. Local dignitaries, in particular the cotton mill owners of Bollington, hoped that a new railway would improve their fortunes, and presented a scheme to Parliament. The Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple Railway opened in 1869.

The line carried cotton, silk, coal and passengers, but always struggled to make a profit. It was closed in 1970 and redeveloped for recreation as the Middlewood Way in 1985. The Macclesfield Canal was completed in 1831, very late for a canal – so late that it was almost a railway! Coal from Poynton, stone from Kerridge and hats from Stockport were some of the cargoes carried. The canal was threatened with closure in the 1950s. A campaign by pleasure boaters saved it and today the canal is a popular leisure destination.

Directions

The Middlewood Way runs between the borough of Macclesfield and Stockport.

From Macclesfield (1) to Middlewood Station (2), the Way is owned and managed by Cheshire East Council, from Middlewood (2) to Marple (3) by Stockton Metropolitan Borough Council. The Macclesfield Canal is managed by British Waterways.

At Bollington the path diverts through the site of the Adelphi Mill (4) before crossing Grimshaw Lane and rejoining the course of the old railway line.

Where the Way is separated into two paths, we recommend using the wider path, which is shared with horse riders.