

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Whittlesey's rich history brought to life in new heritage walk

A new heritage walk encouraging people to explore the fascinating and often undiscovered history of the ancient market town of Whittlesey has been officially launched.

New signage and wayfinding information boards, a walk brochure and an interactive app now guide visitors along the much-anticipated Whittlesey Heritage Walk.

The walk was officially launched on Thursday 20 October when heavy rain failed to dampen the spirits of those who gathered for a special ceremony in Whittlesey Market Place.

The Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Dr Nik Johnson, was joined by Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Cllr Chris Seaton, Whittlesey Heritage Walk Steering Group Chair, Cllr Dee Laws; and Whittlesey Mayor, Cllr David Mason.

They were also joined by other representatives from the Steering Group and Whittlesey Town Council, and numerous local organisations including Whittlesey Society, Whittlesey Museum, Whittlesey In Bloom and Street Pride, Whittlesey Mud Wall Group, Whittlesey Business Forum, the Rotary Club and organisers of the town's Straw Bear festival.

Leading explorers on a circular route of the historic town, the Whittlesey Heritage Walk has options to follow a longer or shorter trail, each beginning and ending in the Market Place, with its late 17th century open market house, the Buttercross.

The routes take in much-loved landmarks, places of interest, and examples of well-preserved architecture spanning several centuries, highlighting fascinating facts and intriguing histories along the way.

There is also the option to add on a scenic riverside walk or follow routes to the Kings Dyke Nature Reserve, Lattersey Nature Reserve, and Whittlesea Railway Station.

To complete the Whittlesey Heritage Walk, visitors can:

- Head to the Market Place, Whittlesey, and follow the directions on the information boards at various points along the routes.
- Download the Whittlesey Heritage Walk brochure from www.fenland.gov.uk/WhittleseyHeritageWalk. Copies of the brochure are also available for those without internet access from the Whittlesey Town Council offices in Queen Street (check their website for opening hours: www.whittleseytowncouncil.gov.uk)
- Get a guided tour of the walk on mobile with the [Love Exploring app](#). The app, which is free to download, uses an interactive map to guide explorers round the walk and provides interesting insights into the town's hidden histories.

Families and youngsters will particularly enjoy the Love Exploring app's Augmented Reality and GEO-Location features, providing fun and games along the route! You can take on a Mini Beast Adventure, follow a treasure hunt and even do a Halloween dance with skeleton's this October half-term!

There are also plans in the pipeline to develop an Augmented Reality version of Whittlesey's famous Straw Bear to add to the app!

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder responsible for heritage, said: "If you love history and love getting outside to explore on foot, you'll love the Whittlesey Heritage Walk! Each route takes you on a journey into Whittlesey's past, taking in historic landmarks and points of interest along the way, with options to also include a walk along the river or to one of two fantastic nearby nature reserves.

"Everything you need to complete the walk is available, whether you want to follow the information boards around the town, download or pick up a copy of the walk brochure or get a guided tour on the Love Exploring app."

The Whittlesey Heritage Walk has been developed and delivered by Fenland District Council's Transport Team in collaboration with a steering group of key stakeholders and independent local representatives.

The idea for the walk was born through the Growing Fenland Whittlesey project, part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Market Town Masterplans programme, and made possible thanks to a £218,169 grant from the Combined Authority and £2,000 from Jones Brothers Construction.

Cllr Dee Laws, Chair of the Whittlesey Heritage Walk steering group, added: "I am very proud to have been part of this project from its original inception as a Growing Fenland proposal through to its launch. The walk takes you on your own private tour of the centre of Whittlesey, providing an opportunity to learn about the amazing built history of our town and encouraging people to get out and explore what it has to offer.

"I would like to thank members of the public and local community who engaged with the project through our consultations, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for funding the project and Jones Brothers for additional funding, and also the officers at Fenland District Council for bringing it to fruition, particularly Belinda Pedler and Wendy Otter and Steve Nicholson at Cambridgeshire County Council for his role in delivering the route improvements."

Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Dr Nik Johnson said: "The Combined Authority is committed to the Fens and we're here to help market towns thrive in the modern world. I'm delighted that our support has seen Whittlesey unlock its townscape and natural beauty in such an attractive and accessible way.

"It is wonderful that the town can harness its past to help build its future, making it even more of a visitor and tourist destination. But just as importantly, this will help Whittlesey people to enjoy their own place and history, their shared community, getting great exercise out in the fresh air."

As well as new information boards, the project has included new seating along the route and footpath improvements, including dropped kerbs to improve accessibility, new fencing, and some resurfacing works.

The walk also has its own bespoke logo chosen following an online public vote.

- For more information, and to view/download the Whittlesey Heritage Walk brochure, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/WhittleseyHeritageWalk

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