



Moat House Farm



Pear Tree Farm House



Millennium Church Gates



Shepherd's Cottage

Swineshead is a quiet village of about 60 homes in North Bedfordshire, near to the borders with Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book, (but then spelt as Swineshefet). Many of the houses are timber-framed with several dating from the C16th and over 15 are grade 2 listed.

Local geology and soils

Swineshead is several miles East of the limestone belt extending from North West Bedfordshire through Northamptonshire towards Stamford. The underlying geology is predominantly Oxford clay with some glacial deposits to the North West and some sand and gravel to the south. The clay land is good for arable farming, but generally needs artificial drainage.

Waymarking

Yellow Discs - Public Footpaths
Blue Discs - Public Bridleway

Planning your walk

All the walks start from the C14th church of St Nicolas which is particularly attractive at the focal point of the village. This and several of the other properties adjacent to the walks are described under Points of Interest overleaf. Parts of the walks may be muddy especially after heavy rain so strong waterproof footwear is recommended. Where walks pass livestock, dogs should be kept under close control and preferably on a lead.

Swineshead is a living community most of which has been designated a Conservation Area to preserve it for future generations. We hope that you will enjoy the walks around the village.

Public Transport

There is a bus service four times a day through Swineshead that travels between Bedford and Kimbolton. For details, contact Traveline on 0871 2002233 or go to www.traveline/info

Acknowledgements

This leaflet was produced with support from Bedford Borough Council and Pertenhall and Swineshead Parish Council.

Points of Interest

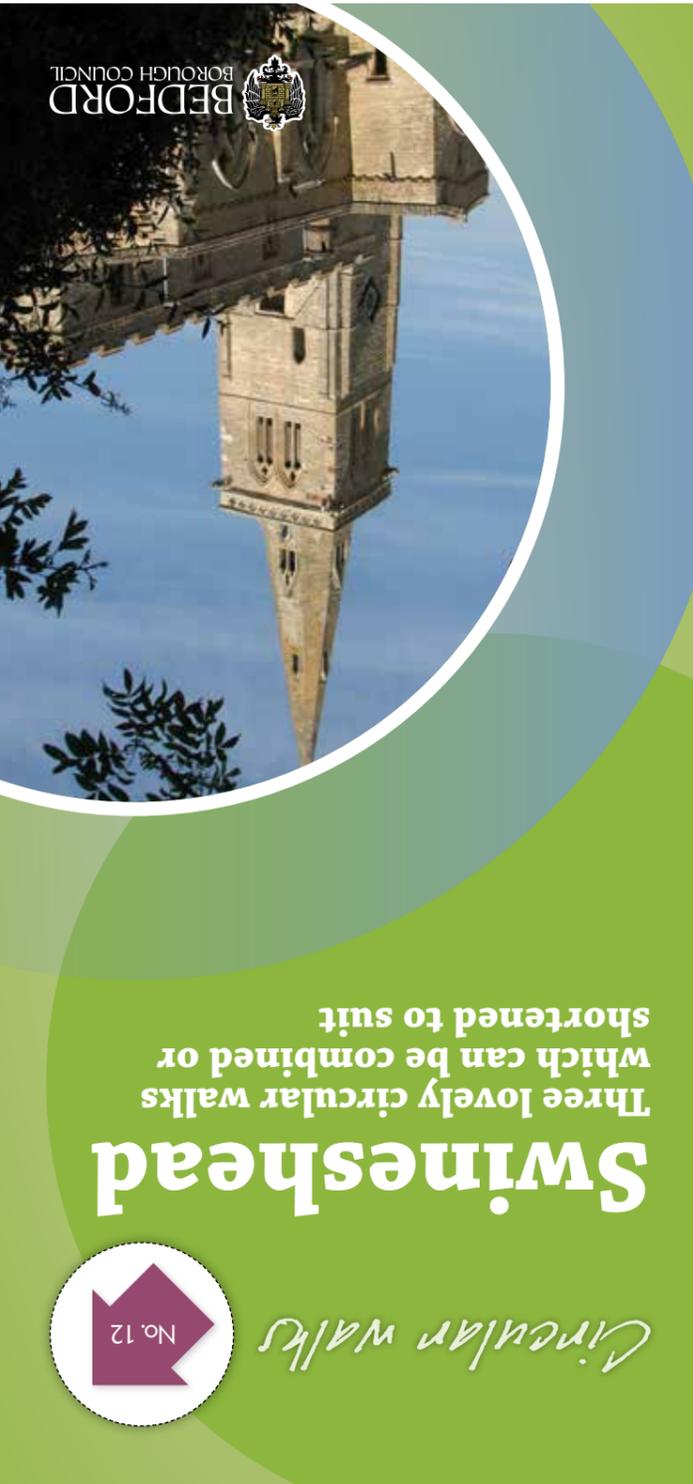
The Church of St Nicholas (1) dates from the early C14th and was built in the Decorative style on the site of a Saxon church. The painted rood screen and chancel stalls with misericords date from the C15th. The church is normally open during daylight hours but a key is available from a Churchwarden when the church is locked (see notice in the porch). The War Memorial is by the gate at the southwest corner of the churchyard.

The Old School House (2) next to the Church was once three cottages, one of which had been the home of the school mistress. The village school, which was re-opened during the Second World War, was next door. Built in 1870, it is now **The Village Hall (3)** and has been much improved in recent years with the help of grants from Bedford Borough Council, the Harper Trust and WREN Landfill Fund.

Home Farm House (4) was faithfully restored using traditional building techniques after being burnt down in 1988. The fire started in the thatched roof, which has been replaced by tiles. Note the well near the entrance. It is one of 23 which used to serve the village.

Three Horseshoes (5) is the house further down the High Street. It was formerly an alehouse and farriers. The forge, then open to the High Street, was in the single storey part of the house.

Brook Farm (6) is a working arable farm with parts of the farmhouse dating from C16th with a Victorian frontage facing the High Street.



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Swineshead

Three lovely circular walks which can be combined or shortened to suit

Circular walks

No. 12



Swineshead High Street



The Old School House



Swineshead High Street



Bluebells in Swineshead Wood



Find out about more of Bedfordshire's walking and riding routes as well as nature reserves and country parks by visiting www.lets-go.org.uk

Other walks

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people
- Keep to the rights of way

Countryside Code

Moat Farm House (15) across Sandye Lane from the Church is a C17th ochre-washed timber-framed building with part of the original moat remaining at the front. It was used as the Rectory until about 1879 and was known as Clebe Farm well into the C20th. A document from 1644 ("The Solemn League and Covenant") was found in the roof during restoration in 1846 and is available to be viewed in Huntingdon Records Office.

Swineshead (16) and Spanoak (17) Woods are areas of ancient woodland owned by the Woodland Trust. Please keep to the paths to avoid damage to these Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Lower Farm House (7) is said to be the oldest farmhouse in the village, dating from the C16th. It was extensively restored from a very dilapidated state in 1982, when most of the original timbers were found to be still in excellent condition.

Shepherd's Cottage (8) is an attractive timber-framed house overlooking the High Street. It has been converted from three earlier cottages.

The Old Chapel (9) is a 1980s conversion of the former Methodist Chapel. Note the decorative gable end and engraved rosette: "Wesleyan Chapel 1864"

The Post House (10) was originally three cottages, now combined, one of which was the village post office in the 1930s. It was restored with aid from Bedford Borough Council.

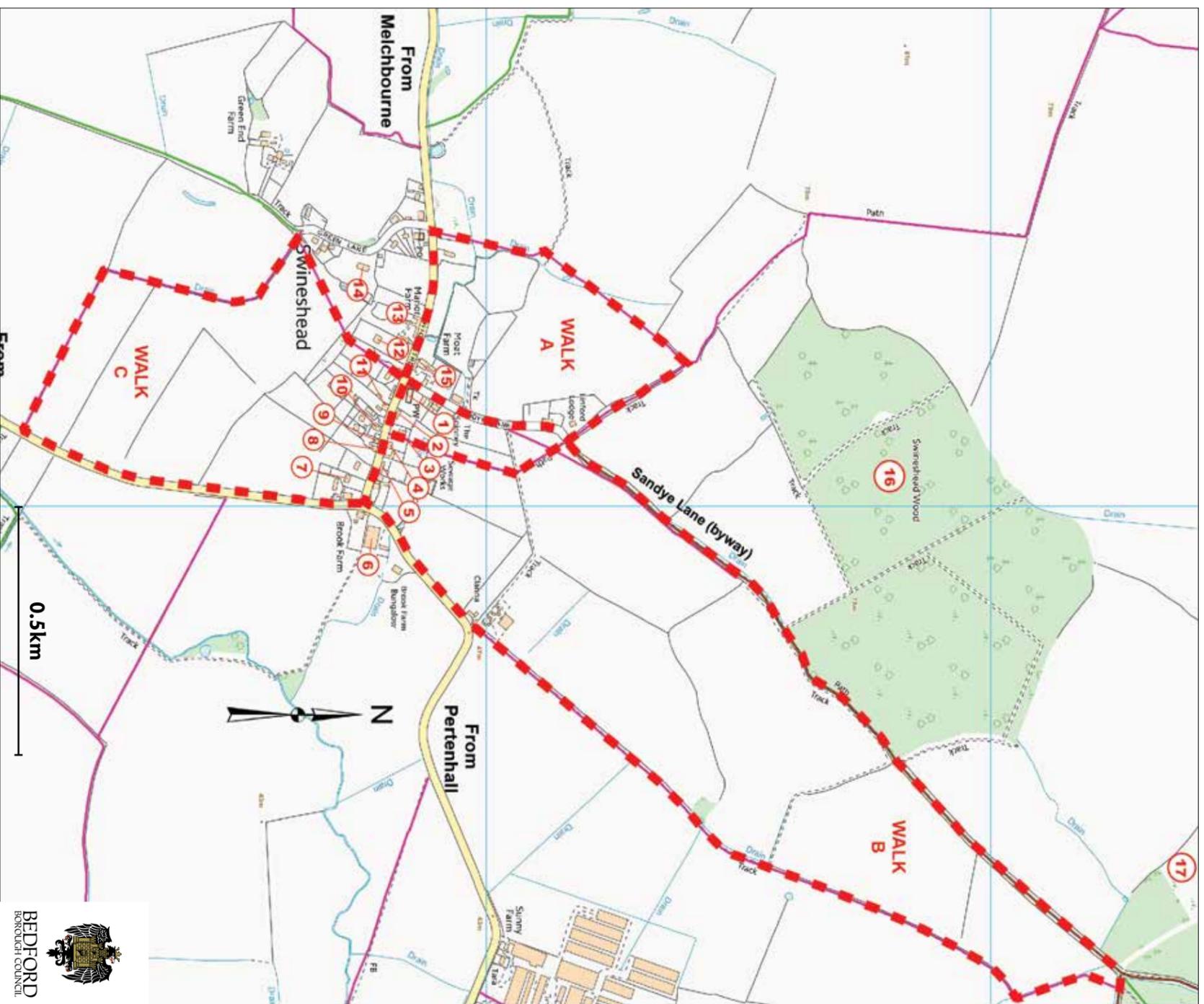
The Old Five Bells (11) was the last village pub until it was closed by Charles Wells Ltd in 1993. It was originally three small cottages, one of which became an ale house and has been extensively renovated.

The Old Rectory (12) was built in 1879 for the sum of £890 from Queen Anne's Bounty, and was used as the Rectory for 50 years until sold by the Church for only £500 in 1928.

Manor Farm House (13) is an interesting combination of buildings with Queen Anne and Victorian additions to a small Tudor farmhouse. It has been much restored in recent years.

The Manor House (14) is the largest house on the outskirts of the village with parts dating to the C15th.

Circular walks



Walk A – approx 1 mile/ 30 minutes

Starting from the Church (1), head west along the High Street until opposite Green Lane. Turn right at the footpath sign by a gap in the hedge and follow the path through the field and over a wooden bridge at the brook. Keep straight on, with the ditch on your left, aiming for another lone bush at the corner of the field. Follow the hedge to a waymark post, where a footpath turns left across a field towards Upper Dean, or turn right onto a farm track which leads down to Sandye Lane. Crossing over the lane and through a gap in the hedge the path takes you across the field to a stile and into a pasture. Follow the hedge to the bottom (see the historical ridge and furrow pattern for improved drainage still in the field on the left), where there is another stile and a bridge over the brook. Continue directly on to a third stile, into a paddock and then through a gate past Home Farm (4) back into the High Street. Turn right to return to the Church (1).

Walk B – approx 2 ½ miles / 1 hour

Starting at the church (1) head north up Sandye Lane and continue along the byway past the eastern edge of Swineshead Wood (16), then near the point where the track reaches Spanoak Woods (17) turn right at the waymark along another farm track (or continue straight on the byway to Lower and Upper Dean). After about 25 yards turn right again at a wooden bridge over the ditch and aim towards a waymark post across the corner of the field. Continue along the edge of the field until reaching a wide concrete bridge on the right over the ditch. Crossing this, follow the grass track by the hedge to the brow of the hill and then straight down the other side by a wide surfaced farm track to Pertenhall Road and a gap in the fence. Turn right to return to Swineshead by the road, up the High Street to the Church (1).

Walk C – approx 1 ¼ miles / 30 minutes

Starting from the Church (1) cross the High Street and take a farm track to the south opposite Sandye Lane. Go through the gate and then across the field to a stile and cross the spinney, bearing to the right, to a second stile into a field and then follow the path to a yellow waymark post by the end of Green Lane. Turn right here to return, on Green Lane, to the High Street, or carry straight on by a bridleway towards Riseley, or turn left to follow the path to the corner of a field. Then, crossing the ditch, turn left and follow the hedge down to Riseley Road. Turn left to return to the High Street (see the uneven field on the left where there are sunken remains of old cottages from the time when Swineshead was much bigger than today) and then back to the Church (1).

Key

-  **The walk**
-  **Public Bridleway**
-  **Public Footpath**
-  **Byway open to all traffic**
-  **Woodland**
-  **Points of interest**