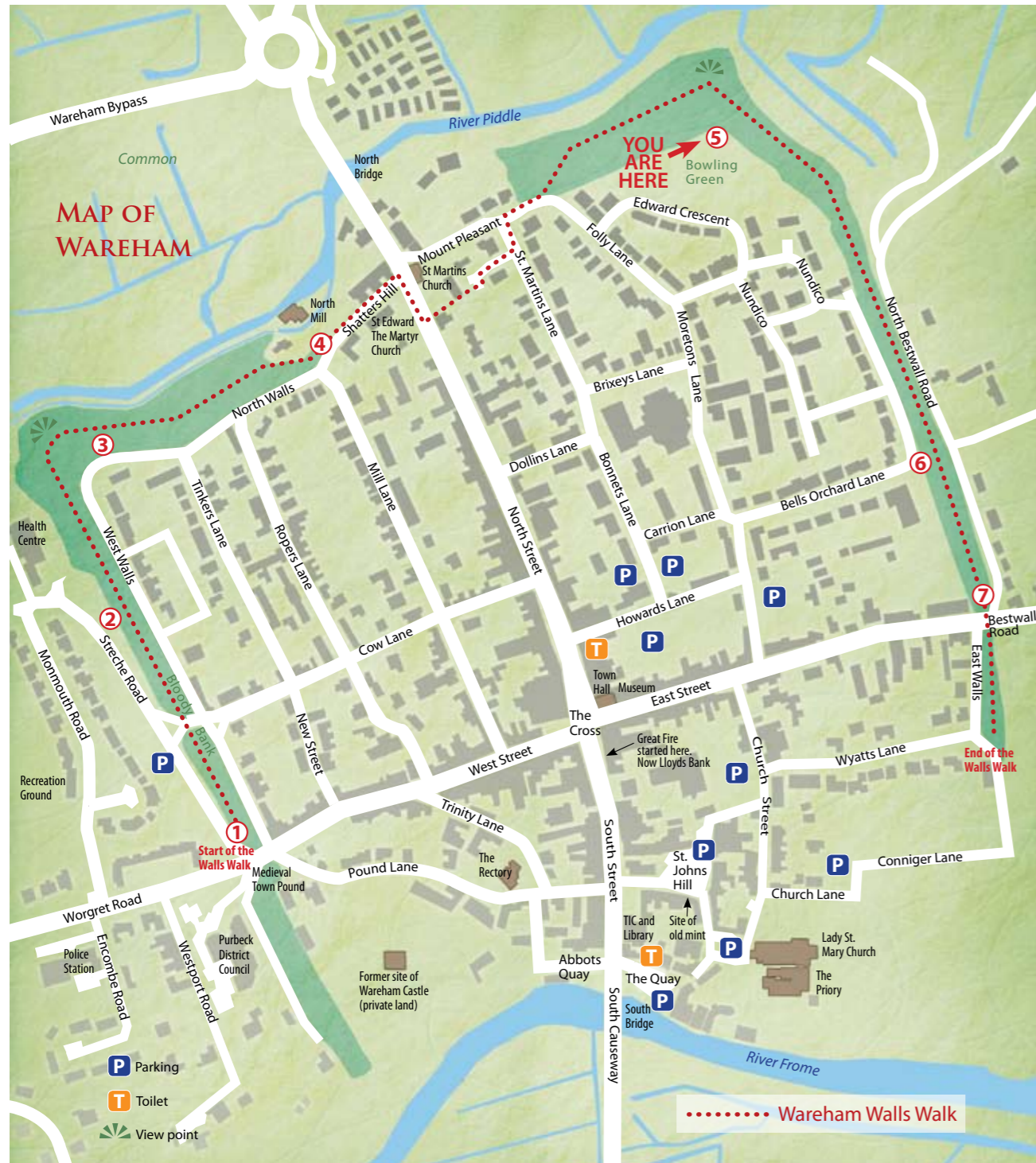


WAREHAM WALLS WALK ~ POINT 5, BOWLING GREEN



BOWLING GREEN

The small rectangular area bounded by low banks has been known as 'the bowling green' for centuries. Whether or not it ever was used for that purpose is open to debate but its size is certainly suitable for that function. It is possible that it might have been used for archery practice; in the 15th and 16th centuries most Wareham adult males were expected to provide their own arms and practice regularly.



How bowling may have looked in Tudor times



Tudor archery practice

In 1746 it was known as 'Bowling Green Garden' and archaeological excavation in the 1970s tentatively dated the structure to the mid 18th century. At that time, almost the whole of the north east quarter of the town was open land and divided up into allotments and gardens.

FAIRS AND MARKETS

The 13th century town charter permitted a weekly market and an annual fair which was held on St John's Day – 24th June. At this time there were no permanent shops, and traders and dealers came in from around the countryside to sell their wares and produce. The weekly markets provided goods for everyday use whilst traders from far and wide attended the annual fair which was held on a 'Holy Day'. These were public holidays when the highlight would be visiting the fair and purchasing exotic goods not otherwise available. By the 18th century, as well as a weekly market, there were also fairs in April and September.



During the 19th century, fairs were occasionally held on the Bowling Green, St John's Hill or on the Quay. Not only were a wide variety of goods and trinkets available for sale but there were boxing booths, shooting stalls, hoopla, and helter skelter for entertainment. Stallholders held the same pitches year after year.



Victorian fair on the Bowling Green

WATER MEADOWS

Below the Walls is an area of wet woodland, swamp and fen in the floodplain of the River Piddle within the Wareham Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The swamp and fen habitats are widely used by dragonflies to shelter in and to feed, and for breeding wetland birds. Banded demoiselles, which breed in the adjoining River Piddle, are particularly abundant.



Banded demoiselle

The meadows lie within an internationally important wetland Ramsar site and a EU designated Special Protected Area for wetland birds on the fringe of Poole Harbour.



Cetti's warbler

The rare Cetti's warbler breeds in the wet woodland, where there are pollarded willows and almond willow.



Snipe



Curlew



Lapwing



Black-tailed godwit



Marsh marigold



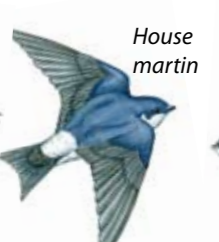
Flag iris

BIRDS OFTEN SEEN ON THE WALLS

A wide variety of birds have been recorded on the walls. Here are some that you have a good chance of spotting.



Swallow



House martin



Swift

When flying swallows, swifts and house martins can look very similar. You can tell them apart by their silhouettes.



Great tit



Long-tailed tit



Buzzard



Kestrel



Goldfinch

GRASSLAND

On the south facing slopes north of the Bowling Green conditions are perfect for red fescue, sheep's fescue and sweet vernal grass which occur along with annual grasses such as squirrel-tail fescue and early hair-grass. There is also a small area of sheep's bit, which has pale blue flowers in the summer. On the north facing slopes there are burnet rose and pignut.

