

PAGHAM HARBOUR AND SIDLESHAM QUAY, WEST SUSSEX



Easy Terrain

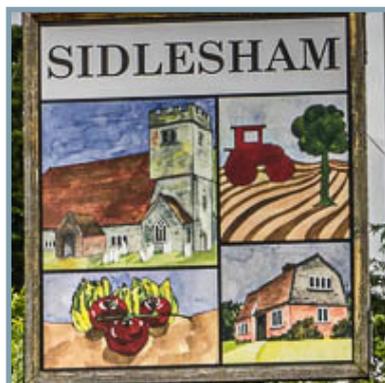
Hi, I'm Elise and this is my West Sussex Weekends walk.

It's a 2 mile easy access circular walk exploring the Pagham Harbour local nature reserve, just south of Chichester. Take in the salty air as you enjoy the views across the vast expanse of tidal salt marsh, mud flats and lagoons which are famed for attracting a wide range of birds. To read my full story visit www.west-sussex-weekends.com so I can tell you why I think you will love this walk and what highlights to expect. The West Sussex Weekends website is a great resource where you will also find ideas for places to stay, eat and drink plus plenty more inspirational stories to tempt you to explore more corners of West Sussex.

If you are looking for refreshments, the RSPB visitor centre (at the start of the walk) sells hot drinks and there is a high-end restaurant (specialising in local seafood) in Sidlesham Quay at the half way point. Alternatively, if you are looking for the middle ground, you could drive 2 miles south to Selsey Bill where there are lots of pub and cafe options including The Lifeboat Inn which serves fresh fish dishes right by the seafront.

2 miles
Circular
1 hours

080816



Getting there

The walk starts and finishes at the RSPB Pagham Harbour visitor centre. From the A27 at Chichester, take the B2145 south towards Selsey and follow the road through the villages of Hunston and Sidlesham. About 200 metres south of Sidlesham you will find the RSPB site on your left. The centre has its own car park for which a voluntary donation is requested. If you are coming by public transport, there are bus stops directly outside the visitor centre which are served by buses from Chichester to Selsey.

Approximate post code **PO20 7NE**

Walk Sections

Go → 1 **Start to Ferry Pool Hide**



Access Notes

1. The walk is entirely flat and follows compacted stone or stone and grass paths for the whole length.
2. The paths are well-maintained but in between verge cuttings, they can become quite narrow in part due to encroaching tall grasses.
3. There are no stiles or steps on route, but you will need to negotiate one single gate. With all this in mind, the route would be suitable for pushchairs.
4. Dogs are welcome in the reserve but please keep them on leads.

The walk starts at the RSPB Pagham Harbour visitor centre. Standing with your back to the visitor centre entrance, walk at about 10 o'clock, passing alongside a vehicle barrier to join the surfaced path. The path leads you past the fenced discovery area on your right, which you can explore should you wish (although no dogs are allowed within this area). Either way, this is a good place to pause and understand the background to this site.

Pagham Harbour is a glorious and peaceful nature reserve, one of the few undeveloped stretches of the

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Sussex coast, and an internationally important wetland site for wildlife. Most of this land was used as landfill for household waste but, after the closure of the landfill site, the land has been turned over to a nature reserve and has been managed by the RSPB since 2012. The discovery area is used to demonstrate the small things we can all do to help wildlife at home such as stacking some old logs as an insect house or leaving a patch of nettles to help butterflies.

Continue on the main surfaced path which swings right and then steadily left to reach the Ferry Pool Bird Hide on your right. This bird hide overlooks a small lake within the reserve, giving an opportunity for some bird spotting.

1 → 2 Ferry Pool Hide to Sidlesham Quay



When you have finished at the bird hide, continue your journey along the surfaced path and, just a few metres along you will come to a junction at the edge of the estuary. Turn left here, continuing on the main surfaced path with the estuary running on your right. Pass a bench on your right then bear left to join the stone and grass path which continues alongside the estuary. NOTE: The vegetation alongside this path is cut and maintained several times per year, but some sections can get a bit overgrown in between cuttings.

On a clear day the views here stretch for miles. The estuary at Pagham Harbour is a big, sheltered inlet that fills and empties with each tide. There is a deeper channel running within the estuary that was once navigated by barges. There is something of interest all year round. Resident bird species include little egrets, ringed plovers and lapwings. In spring and autumn, all sorts of migrant birds pass through. In the summer, lapwings and little terns breed, and butterflies flit along the hedgerows, dragonflies patrol the ponds, and lizards bask in the sun. The usual grey green expanse of estuary plants burst into colourful flowers. Autumn and winter brings a waterbird spectacle, with up to 20,000 ducks, geese and waders feeding and roosting across the reserve.

Simply continue ahead along the main path, ignoring all the paths signed off to the left. At the end, you will come to a T-junction with Mill Lane. Turn right along the lane, taking care of occasional traffic, passing between the estuary on your right and an old mill pond on your left. The grass area with benches on your right was once the quay wall of Sidlesham Quay which served the mill.

Follow the road as it bends right (passing the old Quay House on your left) and then left where you will find the Crab and Lobster restaurant (the halfway point on this walk).

2 → 3 Sidlesham Quay to End



When you have finished at Sidlesham Quay, retrace your steps following Mill Lane back across the estuary. Immediately after the estuary crossing, turn left to retrace your steps back along the stone path (signed as Cycle Route 88).

Ignore the first two footpaths signed off to the right and take the third path on your right (this is immediately after crossing a side arm of the estuary). Pass through the gate and follow the surfaced path which leads you directly back to the visitor centre where the walk began. If you want to extend your outing, we would highly recommend heading down to the beach at Selsey (just two miles south of here) where there's plenty of ways to while away the rest of your day!

If you enjoyed this walk, remember to visit www.west-sussex-weekends.com where you will also find ideas for places to stay, eat and drink plus plenty more inspirational stories to tempt you to explore more corners of West Sussex.

