

The Route

Where Bedford to Sandy

National Route Numbers:

51 and 12

Distance: 10 miles traffic-free from Hastingbury Upper School in Kempston to the edge of Sandy

Terrain: smooth and level route, through Kempston, then along the bank of the Great Ouse and a former railway

Public transport:

railway stations close to the route in Bedford and Sandy

Bike hire: at Marina Cycles (Priory Country Park) - 01234 340090; and Danish Camp, Willington - 01234 838709

OS Maps: Landranger 153

Tourist information:

Bedford - 01234 215226

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping:

Kempston, Bedford, Willington, Sandy

Bedford to Sandy



River Ouse

The new traffic-free section of National Routes 51 and 12 linking communities between Sandy, Bedford and Milton Keynes provides a useful link for local cyclists' everyday journeys, but is also well worth exploring at a leisurely pace.

The ride begins in Kempston, taking you along the Great River Ouse and through the centre of Bedford via the elegant Victorian surroundings of the Embankment Gardens. The route continues along the river into Priory Country Park, where former gravel pits have been transformed into a haven for wildlife, particularly birds, as it is on a major migration route.

From here the ride continues along the trackbed of a former railway, passing 16th century Willington Dovecote which is in the care of the National Trust, viewing by appointment with the volunteer custodian - 01234 838278. The route rejoins the river for a while, bringing you to the Danish Camp, believed to have been used as a boatyard by the Vikings.

The Danish Camp visitor centre offers refreshments, bike hire, fishing and boat rides on the river. You then ride through the pretty village of Blunham and into Sandy. The Lodge nature reserve (home to the RSPB) is on the south-eastern side of the town, and is well worth a visit.

