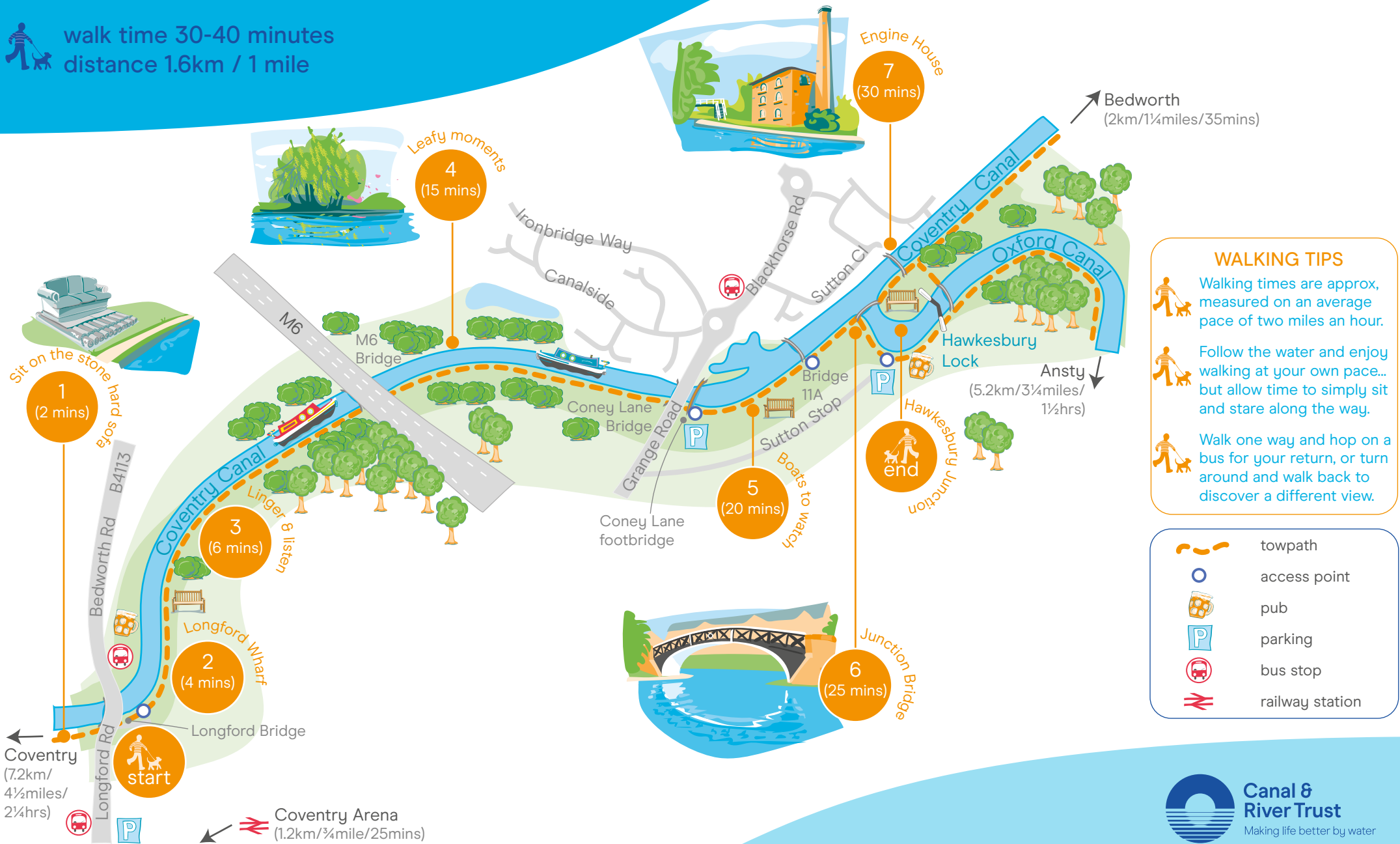





Dog Friendly Pub Walk

Longford to Hawkesbury

 walk time 30-40 minutes
distance 1.6km / 1 mile



WALKING TIPS

-  Walking times are approx, measured on an average pace of two miles an hour.
-  Follow the water and enjoy walking at your own pace... but allow time to simply sit and stare along the way.
-  Walk one way and hop on a bus for your return, or turn around and walk back to discover a different view.

-  towpath
-  access point
-  pub
-  parking
-  bus stop
-  railway station

The Walk - Step by Step

Listen beyond the faint noise of traffic and you'll hear birds calling you onwards. Each step brings calmness as you follow the water and steep yourself in stories from historic buildings that surround this amble. Interesting benches dotted along the way tempt you to linger. Hawkesbury Junction holds the beating life of canals - it's where waters meet and people gather to stare. Charismatic iron bridges criss-cross the lapping water and murmurs of the past are held firmly in every brick. This isn't a walk of remote rurality, it's an escape of intrigue and leafy calm.



Step down onto the towpath by Longford Bridge.

- 1 Before you head off towards Hawkesbury Junction, turn left under the bridge, noting its rhythmic cast iron arches. A few yards away is 'Pleasure Craft' (or the Stone Sofa), one of the artworks along the Coventry Art Trail running from Coventry Basin to Hawkesbury. A mighty 3.5 tonnes of sandstone make a rock hard sofa that teases you to find out how comfy it is.
- 2 Back through the bridge, you'll notice the wide open feel of the canal as it curves away from the busy main road. This used to be the junction between the Coventry and Oxford Canals and, because the canal companies couldn't decide among themselves how to charge tolls along this stretch, they built the canals side by side from here to Hawkesbury. Where there are boats moored on the opposite bank was the first wharf built on the canal by the Coventry Canal Company.
- 3 Three more artworks come in quick succession as you pass a wide patch of green (and well-placed bench). Houses back on to the canal on the opposite bank but as you move away from the road, lush hedgerows, nature and birdsong take over.
- 4 As the canal rounds a bend, the birds sing louder to compete with the inescapable volume of the M6 which crosses the canal here, but as you round the next bend, it becomes a distant hum as birdsong takes over again.
- 5 Just beyond bridge 11 and its adjacent footbridge, the colourful boats moored at Exhall Basin come into view. A couple of benches, including 'The Hawkesbury lock seat' from the art trail, offer a perfect spot to watch the ducks, moorhens and coots, and of course any boat action from the basin. Look up as you walk under bridge 11a at another artwork, Wings over Water, crafted from galvanised steel and representing local wildlife.

- 6 Hawkesbury Junction is where the Coventry and Oxford Canals finally part ways. It is also known as Sutton's Stop, named after Richard and Henry Sutton who were lock-keepers here between 1807 and 1876. The Junction is a designated Conservation Area, and most of the buildings and bridges are Grade II-listed.

The cast-iron bridge over the unusual H-shaped junction spans 50ft and was built in 1837 at a cost of £630. It is the perfect vantage point for you to take in any boating action, as boats manoeuvre the difficult 90-degree turn or work through the shallow stop lock (the result of a 7-inch discrepancy between the levels of the two canals).

At the heart of the junction sits the toll house, built in 1777 by the Coventry Canal Company. It sat alone until it became surrounded by more buildings needed to serve both canals.

Overlooking the junction and built in 1825, the Greyhound Inn was first run by a local farmer, and used to provide food for the boatmen and stabling for their horses.

- 7 The Engine House initially pumped water up into the canal from a local stream then later a deep well. Its first steam engine, appropriately named 'Lady Godiva', was installed in 1821, having spent almost 100 years before at a colliery a few miles away. The engine can now be seen in Dartmouth Museum, birthplace of its engineer Thomas Newcomen.

- END** Once you have had your fill of the junction and all it has to offer, either walk the towpath back to Longford, hop on a bus or, if time allows, take advantage of the choice of canals to explore further along either the Coventry or the Oxford.

CANAL: Coventry

START: Longford Bridge
OS Grid ref: SP350839 Postcode: CV6 6BG

FINISH: Hawkesbury Junction
OS Grid ref: SP361845 Postcode: CV6 6DF

DISTANCE: 1.6km / 1 mile
(double if walk back to start)

APPROX TIME: 30-40 minutes

PUB: Greyhound Inn canalside at the Junction

PARKING: Car parks on Longford Road (postcode: CV6 6DW), Grange Road (postcode: CV6 6TB) and at Hawkesbury Junction (postcode: CV6 6DF)

TRAIN: Nearest train station - Coventry Arena
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

BUS: Traveline
Tel: 0871 2002233 www.traveline.info

