

The Route

Millennium Routes 5 and 56 in Cheshire start at the boundary of Cheshire and Wirral near Thornton Hough, they are in ideal cycling country with very few hills, stretching for a distance of approximately 36km.

History is high on the agenda along the route. From the north the first port of call is Parkgate.

The route follows part of the Wirral Way, in Wirral Country Park, which was the first such park to be developed in Britain to provide what was then a pioneering recreational facility for all. Vantage points allow users to take in the magnificent views over farmland and the Dee to the Welsh hills beyond. The Country Park was created along the track of a railway line linking Chester to West Kirby, which ceased to operate in 1963.

Pick marks can still be seen in the rock cutting south of Neston which was gouged out of sandstone by hand.

Hadlow Road station at Willaston has been sympathetically restored by Cheshire County Council to how it would have looked during its active life.

From the nineteenth century to the twenty-first in just a few miles. The huge BNFL plant is at the cutting edge of new technology but within a few minutes you are back in the Cheshire countryside and dropping onto the Shropshire Union Canal at Backford. Leaving the canal towpath at Pretty Bridge, the route follows a brideway through the heart of Chester Zoo.

The route has now reached the edge of the historic city of Chester. It has been designed to provide links in residential areas and the route passes two secondary schools before returning to another disused railway line at Fairfield Road. The route now becomes Millennium Route 5.

The Mickle Trafford to Dee Marsh railway line once carried steel to and from the steelworks on the banks of the Dee at Hawarden Bridge and runs just to the north of the city.

A few miles further along the track the County and national boundary is reached and the mountains of North Wales stretch ahead in the distance.

This leaflet is designed to illustrate the line of the Millennium Route in Cheshire and to highlight local attractions and places of interest. It may be used in conjunction with OS Landranger 117 & OS Explorer 266.

This route is signed in both directions but occasionally signs go missing. The Cycling Officer at Cheshire County Council would appreciate notification of any missing or damaged signs.

Tourist Attractions

The Eureka Café

Woodbank, Chester
0151-339 5629

Open 09.00, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. Please telephone to check opening times as these may vary from those published. Famous café for cycling clubs.

Ness Botanic Gardens

Ness, Neston, South Wirral. CH64 4AY.
0151-353 0123

Open 09.30 - dusk, March to October; 09.30 - 16.00 November to February. Extensive collections of specimen trees and shrubs, especially rhododendron and azalea. Renowned heather, rock, rose and water gardens; stunning herbaceous border. Facilities include: licensed tea rooms, gift shop, plant nursery, visitor centre, picnic ground and children's adventure playground.

Chester Zoo

Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH
01244 380280

e-mail: marketing@chesterzoo.co.uk

Open 10.00 every day, except Christmas Day.

Largest Garden Zoo in the country - 110 Acres to explore. Facilities include: shops, restaurants and cafeterias to suit all tastes and picnic facilities.

The Boat Museum

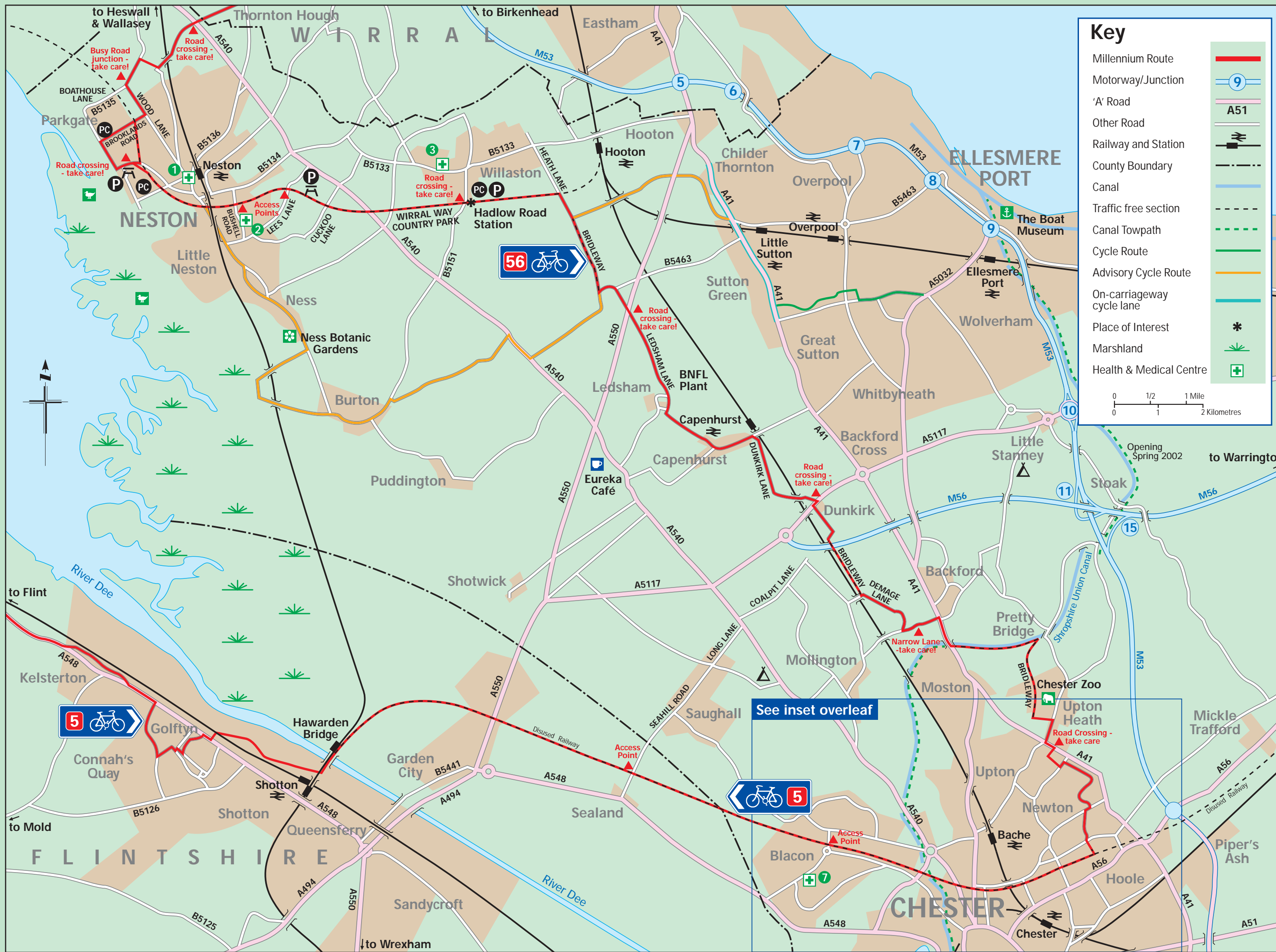
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, L65 4FW
0151-355 5017

Open April to October 10.00 to 17.00 every day. November to March 11.00 to 16.00 (Closed Thursdays and Fridays)

A living museum with a unique collection of boats, exhibitions, engines and many other attractions. Facilities include a gift shop and café.

Chester

Many varied attractions are to be found in the historic city of Chester. For further information please contact the Tourist Information Centre on 01244 402111



Parkgate

Parkgate's name derives from Neston Park, which was enclosed in about 1250 and served as a deer park for 350 years.

The river shore beside Neston Park was recorded as one of several anchorages where ships would unload their goods if they were too large to reach Chester. From the 1680s passenger ships began to call at Parkgate, and a village began to grow. Until 1815, Parkgate was renowned as a terminal for packet ships taking passengers to and from Dublin.

From 1760 to 1830, Parkgate was also well known as a resort where people came to take the seabathing cure, for their health rather than for fun.

Parkgate died as a port with the canalisation of the River Dee for five miles below Chester, which changed the course of the river in 1815. The tide came in twice a day until about 1940. The marsh then spread rapidly and is now a bird reserve, visited by many thousands of migrant waders and wildfowl.

Parkgate became a Conservation Area in 1973.

A visit to the village is a must. You will find it situated on the edge of the Dee Estuary just north west of Neston. It is famous for its locally caught seafood, so a visit to a local restaurant is advisable! Locally made ice cream is also a speciality.

Parkgate has a variety of shops providing for all your local needs. There are several hostels, cafés and restaurants. Overnight accommodation can be found at The Ship Hotel, where a secure cycle store is available.

Willaston

The delightful village of Willaston, winner of a recent best kept village award, is worthy of a slight detour off your route. You will find a variety of useful shops including general stores, chemist and Post Office. There is also a market in the Memorial Hall run by the W.I. where a fine selection of home made produce is to be found on Friday mornings.

A number of establishments are available for your refreshment including Aston's Tea Rooms, The Pollard Inn, and The Nag's Head, the latter two also having overnight accommodation.

During the soft fruit season ready picked strawberries are available at Heathfield Nursery, Heath Lane, Willaston.

Make sure you find the time to stop at Hadlow Road Station situated on the Wirral Way where you will experience a brief encounter with times gone by.

Wildlife along the Wirral Way

Cycling is an excellent way to spot wildlife, so keep your eyes open as you journey along the Wirral Way. There's plenty to see whatever the time of year. Hazel catkins appear early, followed closely by the first hawthorn leaves. Soon blackthorn bursts into blossom and the first chiffchaff can be heard, heralding the arrival of spring.



In summer, much of the Wirral Way is transformed into a leafy, green tunnel. Look out for blue tits, busy gathering caterpillars to feed their hungry young. Foxgloves and knapweed line the way, attracting bees and brightly coloured butterflies. See the speckled wood butterflies, flitting around the bramble or soaking up the last of the summer sun.

In Autumn, as the weather starts to turn colder, redwing and fieldfare join the resident thrushes to feast on abundant hawthorn berries. Winter is the best time to watch out for woodpeckers, working their way up the trees or glimpse a fox across the fields. Why not stop and rest for a while and see what's about?

Wheels for All!



The opportunity to enjoy cycling for themselves. Specially designed handcycles, tricycles, quadcycles and recumbents for one or two people are made available for hire through a network of hire centres, one of which is situated in Hadlow Road Station.

This service is administered by Cheshire County Council's Countryside Management Service. For further information, contact Saul Burton on: 0151-327 5145.

Other handcycles will be available in the Chester area from August 2001, please contact the cycling officer for more details.

An initiative created by the Cycling Project for the North West.

The Cycling Project believes that the pleasure of cycling should be available to all. 'Wheels for All!' offers people, of all ages, with disabilities and differing needs,

WELCOME TO CHESHIRE County of Contrasts



The Millennium Cycle Route in CHESHIRE Parkgate to Chester & North Wales



Tourist Information

- Chester Visitor Services 01244 402111
- Easy Book Accommodation 01244 402506
- Birkenhead (for Wirral Area) 0151-647 6780
- Llandudno (for North Wales) 01492 876413

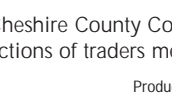
Useful Numbers

- Emergency Police, Fire and Ambulance **DIAL 999**
- Police HQ Chester 01244 350000
- British Waterways 01244 390372
- Environmental Transport Association 01932 828882
- Cycling Project for the North West 0161-745 9088
- C.T.C. Ann Taylor 0151-327 4667
- C.T.C. Arthur Miller 01244 831361
- Wirral Borough Council Cycling officer - Steven Atkins 0151-643 7145
- Flintshire County Council Cycling Officer - Richard Flood 01352 704633

The following services are provided by Cheshire County Council:-

- CCC General Enquiries 01244 602424 or www.cheshire.gov.uk
- CCC Countryside Management Service (Wirral Country Park) 0151-327 5145
- Cheshire Bus Hot Line 01244 602666

For further information on cycling and cycle routes in Cheshire contact the County Council's Cycling Officer, Anna Geroni, on 01244 603617 or geronia@cheshire.gov.uk



Cheshire County Council does not accept any responsibility for the actions of traders mentioned in this guide.

Produced by FWT London - 25.6.01 www.fwt.co.uk



CHESTER

Key

- Millennium Cycle Routes 5 and 56
- Cycle track
- Canal towpath
- On-carriageway cycle lanes
- Advisory cycle route
- Cheshire Cycleway
- Pedestrianised area (no cycling 10.30 - 16.30)
- Traffic-calmed roads (existing & proposed)
- Cycle shop
- Toucan crossing
- Health/Medical Centre
- Cycle Parking
- Public Convenience/Toilets
- Chester City Walls

Cycle Shops

- Halfords
Caldy Valley Road
Great Boughton
Chester
01244 322370
- The Bike Factory
153-161 Boughton
Chester
01244 317893
- Dave Miller Cycles
41 Frodsham Street
Chester
01244 326506
- The Cycle Centre
19 Charles Street
Hoole
01244 340420
- P Morgan & Co.
44 Chester Road
Saltney
01244 671264
- Halfords
Greyhound Park
Chester
01244 390600
- JJB Sports
Chester Retail Park
Old Seals Way
Chester
01244 370146
- K Davies
89 Garden Lane
Chester
01244 373408
- The Edge
14 Upper Northgate St.
Chester
01244 399888
- Other Shops within the vicinity
- JJB Sports
Unit 16
Broughton Shopping Park
01244 539341
- Sutton Cycles
35-37 Station Road
Little Sutton
0151-3391695

Mobile Cycle Repairs

- Pedal Power
Mobile Cycle Repairs
2 Talbot Gardens
Neston
0151-336 8766
Mobile: 0976 243 587

A nationwide cycle rescue service is offered by the Environmental Transport Association. Details available from ETA, 10 Church Street, Weybridge KT13 8RS. 01932 828882

Rail Transport

Using the train to get to and from the route makes a sensible alternative to any other form of transport - unless you can cycle all the way.

For information regarding the carriage of cycles on trains please contact:
First North Western: 0845 604 0231
Merseyrail: 0151-702 2071

For information on train timetables please contact:
National Rail Enquiries: 08457 48 49 50

Stations are at:

- Neston (Wrexham - Bidston)
- Hooton (Chester - Liverpool)
- Little Sutton (Hooton - Helsby)
- Capenhurst (Chester - Liverpool)
- The Bache (Upton by Chester) (Chester - Liverpool)
- Chester General
- Hawarden Bridge (Wrexham - Bidston) (Limited Service)
- Shotton (Crewe - Holyhead) (Wrexham - Bidston)

Always check the information before setting off as timetables may change

Good Cycling Code

The cyclepaths, roads, bridleways and towpaths which make up the route are open to everyone. Please follow this simple code to ensure enjoyable riding and the safety of yourself and others.

Consideration for Others

Always give way to walkers and horse riders, and to farm and forest workers. They may not hear you approaching. Be courteous and considerate to others and keep your speed down.

Respect other land management activities. You may encounter livestock on certain sections - please follow the advice of farm operatives.

Whilst cycling is permitted on the sections of canal towpaths shown in this leaflet, please remember that pedestrians always have priority. For advice on cycling on other towpaths please contact British Waterways.

Important advice when meeting horses

Remember that horses can be easily frightened. Do not make unnecessary noise and disturbance around them.

If you are approaching horses from behind, it is a good idea to call out so they know you are there.

Please do not race past horses, especially if you are in a group. The speed and noise can be alarming and cause a horse to panic.

Care for the Environment

Keep erosion to a minimum; do not cut corners. Avoid fierce breaking and skids to minimise damage to path surfaces. Walk over very soft ground to avoid cutting it up.

Leave the countryside as you find it. In particular, take all litter home.

Look after yourself

Take special care when cycling downhill.

Match your speed to the surface and your skills.

Cycle within your capabilities, as an accident or a breakdown in remote areas can be frustrating, if not more serious.

Be self-sufficient. Carry warm and waterproof clothing, emergency food, a cycle lamp and a compass.

Ensure your bike is safe to ride.

Always take tools and a puncture repair kit.

Consider wearing a helmet and protective clothing.



Accommodation

- The Nag's Head
Hooton Road
Willaston
0151-327 2439
Grid ref. 330777
- Pollards Inn
Village Square
Willaston
0151-327 4615
Grid ref. 329776
- The Ship Hotel
The Parade
Parkgate
0151-336 3931
(secure bike store)
Grid ref. 279782
- Woodcote Hotel
Hooton Road
Hooton, South Wirral
0151-327 1542
Grid ref. 362785
- YHA
40 Hough Green
Chester
01244 680056
(cycle store)
Grid ref. 397651
- Fairoaks
Rake Lane, Little Stanney
Chester
0151-355 1600
Grid ref. 410736
- Astbury Villa
Parkgate Road
Saughall, Chester
01244 851032
Grid ref. 375705

Public Houses

These are just a selection of local hostleries on route

- The Boathouse
The Parade
Parkgate
0151-336 4187
Grid ref. 275788
- Brewer's Arms Hotel
Park Street
Neston
0151-336 1627
Grid ref. 291777
- The Harp Inn
19 Quayside
Little Neston
0151-336 6980
Grid ref. 289761
- The Lode Star
Brook Street
Neston
0151-353 0233
Grid ref. 293775
- The Old Quay
The Parade
Parkgate
0151-336 4343
Grid ref. 281779
- The Old Wirral Hundred
Capenhurst Lane
Great Sutton
0151-348 0259
Grid ref. 379743
- Red Lion
The Parade
Parkgate
0151-336 1548
Grid ref. 278784

Health Centres

in case of emergency dial 999

The following is a list of medical centres within easy reach of the route:

- Neston Medical Centre
Liverpool Road,
Neston CH64 3RA
0151-336 4121
- Neston Surgery
Medlock Lane,
Little Neston CH64 4BN
0151-336 3951
- The Willaston Surgery
Neston Road
Willaston CH64 2TN
0151-327 4593
- Dr A. K. Bland
71 Hoole Road
Hoole, Chester CH2 3NJ
01244 325721
- Park Medical Centre
Shavington Avenue
Newton Lane
Chester CH2 3RD
01244 324136
- The Elms Medical Centre
Hoole Road
Chester CH2 3NH
01244 351000
- Western Avenue Medical Centre
Gordon Road, off Western Avenue
Blacon, Chester CH1 5PA
01244 390755

Accident & Emergency facilities are available at:
Countess of Chester Hospital
Liverpool Road, Chester
01244 365000