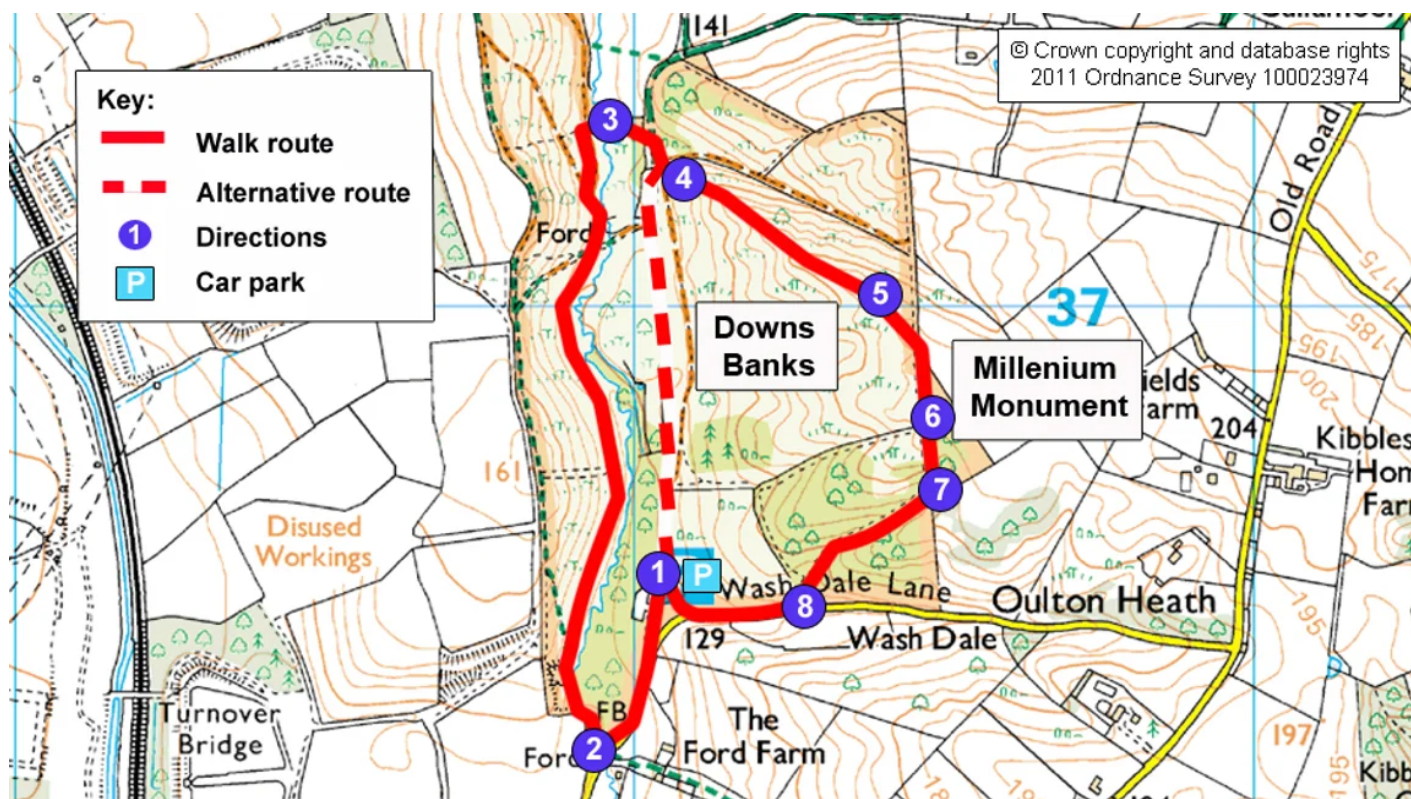


SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

## Downs Banks dog walk

Take a little exercise with your dog and enjoy the fresh air on this 1.5-mile (2.4km) route alongside the stream, or if you're both feeling energetic, add half a mile (0.8km) more and climb uphill for fantastic panoramic views.



### Information

Address: Downs Banks, near Stone, Staffordshire. ST15 8US. grid ref: ST15 8US

OS map: Landranger 127; Explorer 258, 243

Activity: Walking

Easy: Easy-going on well-surfaced paths, suitable for rugged pushchairs and adventurous wheelchair users. For further information visit the section marked Terrain.

Dog friendly: Dogs are always welcome at Downs Banks. Please help us to keep the area special by clearing up dog mess and taking it home with you as there are no disposal facilities on-site. Well behaved dogs can be let off their leads. Bins and water bowls available at Nimmings Wood car park.

Full trail: Miles: 2 (km: 3.2)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 40 mins

### Terrain

A 1.5-mile (2.4km) route along the valley floor. Easy-going on well-surfaced paths. A 0.5 mile (0.8km) extension up onto the hill tops is a little more strenuous and uneven.

### Total steps: 8

Start point: National Trust Downs Banks car park, grid ref: SJ900365

1. Head south out of the car park and turn right on to Wash Dale Lane. Keep your dog on a lead for now in case of traffic.
2. Carry on for a short distance until reaching the stream. Cross the footbridge and turn right into the woods. (If your dog is safe around people, other dogs and wildlife, you may wish to let it off its lead here.) This babbling stream runs the length of Downs Banks along a serene rolling valley. Keep your eyes open and you may see the fantastic blue flash of a kingfisher.
3. Follow this path along beside the water's edge all the way to another footbridge and cross the stream again. (This is the last chance for dogs to paddle.)
4. Once over the stream follow the path to a set of steps down one bank and up the other side. This hilly area was once the site of an ancient watermill. You now have two choices: turn right and take the shorter, flatter route along the valley bottom, back to the car park (the dashed line on the map), or follow the Ridge Path up a steep hill to the highest viewpoint at Downs Banks.
5. If you choose to go uphill, follow a path that rises sharply ahead of you. There are benches on the way to the top, so take a rest any time you like.
6. Pass the Millennium Monument and stay on the same route. The Millennium Monument is a rock pillar standing at the highest point on the Downs and shows you what landmarks can be seen in the distance. On a clear day you have marvellous views across the Staffordshire countryside of up to 40 miles (64.3km).
7. When you reach a fence, turn right and follow the path through a gate. Once through the gate head straight on, back into woodland. Continue down steps along a wooded valley.
8. When you reach Wash Dale Lane again, put your dog onto their lead and turn right onto the lane. The car park where you started will soon appear on your right.

