



**A 2-3 hour stroll through the woodland scrub, swallow hole & ephemeral lake landscape of this SSSI.**

This self guided trip begins at the Woodman Inn Public House [Point 1] on Warrengate Road, near Welham Green. Limited on road parking is available at this end of Warrengate Road, but please ask the public house staff if you are leaving your vehicle in the Woodman Inn Car Park.

The time it takes to complete the full walk will depend on you, the weather, and underfoot conditions (allow at least 2 ½ hours for a leisurely visit).



as you enter the 'lake bed' - **Note:** keep to the footpath; particularly in wet conditions or when foliage is high; many steep sided gulleys and 'pot' holes of significant depth may be 'hidden' just off the marked route.

At the third waymarker post [Point 2a] a meandering narrow feeder channel of the Mimmshall Brook (which may be dry) can be seen to the left hand side of a small narrow footbridge (Figure 4). This feeds northward to



the swallow hole in Figure 3. Most of this trip is on beaten paths and there are no significant inclines. A few wooden steps are involved and conditions are likely to be damp underfoot in all parts; apart from when on the roadway. **Note:** there are no toilet facilities on this walk other than at the start & finish point - where patronage of the Inn may be required - or in Brookmans Park or Welham Green villages.

Bradmore Lane ½ and Welham Green ¾ (Figure 1) and follow the fence line on your right to where the footpath becomes enclosed toward the rear of the car park. Follow the footpath and bear round to the left before emerging at the west edge of Water End 'estate' at the Hertfordshire County Council Public Footpath waymarker post on your left [Point 2; Figure 2].

There is a major swallow hole to the left hand side of the path (Figure 3)



the swallow hole in Figure 3.

To the south of this point the Mimmshall Brook area of the 'lake bed' is crossed by anastomosing shallow gulleys and numerous swallow holes of varying size (see HGS website for more photos in this area and 'sink point' of the Mimmshall Brook as of January 2022).

The view of these features to the south will be determined largely by vegetation state. Post flood regrowth of plants is noted in the small 'pot' swallowhole illustrated in Figure 6. Moving forward there is a slight rise out of the 'lake bed' and a fenced off small swallow hole is observable just to the right of the path (Figure 17). This rise in topography approximates to the western edge of the Lambeth Group which is comprised of vertically and laterally variable sequences of clay, some silty or sandy, with some sands





gravels, minor limestones and lignites and occasional sandstone and conglomerate. The Lambeth Group was deposited in fluvial, estuarine, lagoonal or proximal marine environments. It is Late Paleocene to Early Eocene (late Thanetian to early Ypresian) in age. Here at the eastern edge of the Water End 'estate' it directly overlies the Chalk Group which comprises undifferentiated Lewes Nodular Chalk and Seaford

of Bradmore Lane and Warrengate Road and follow Warrengate Road north back to the Woodman Inn. Once again, there is no sidewalk or verge to utilise, but this is also a relatively quiet stretch of road which can be traversed safely.

Continue beyond the front of the Woodman Inn to the nearby junction of Warrengate Road with Swanland Road.

Directly across Swanland Road there is a marker pole for Public Bridleway

82 Tollgate Road which leads to North Mymms Park and other adventures along the Overflow Channel and Tollgate Road. This constitutes an optional extension to the current walk which is separately described elsewhere. DO not cross and follow today!

At the road junction bear around the corner just a few steps to the corner of the [closed] "Water End Spice" property. Between this property and "PT Motors" a marker pole for Footpath 032

Station Road 3/4 is situated

[Point 6; Figure 10]. This gives access across the Water End 'lake bed' north side to the overflow channel [Point 6a] and also direct access (when dry) to the Potterells Stream swallow hole [Point 9a]

**but we ignore** this entry point and continue north along Swanland Road a short distance following the Cycle/pedestrian footpath parallel to the road on the right hand side (Figure 11).

At the Public Footpath 31 marker pole on the far side of the bridge over the Water End overflow channel there are steps down to a meandering path which is taken to re-enter the Water End 'estate' (Point 7; Figure 12). The overflow channel exits the Water End 'estate' at this point and passes under Swanland Road and the A1(M) to parallel Toll gate Road northwestward before joining the River Colne in North Mymms Park.

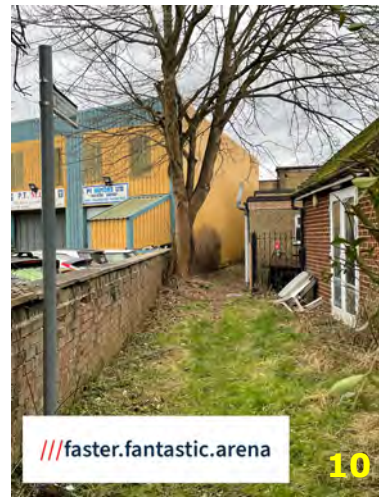
Follow the snaking dirt path as it passes the overflow channel to the right (is there any water flowing? note the size of this channel) and a small number of 'pot' swallow holes on the left. Shortly re-emerge from the wood/scrubland to open field once again (Point 8). The footpath leading directly ahead accesses Welham Green at Dixons Hill Road, but to

Chalk Formation which is Santonian to Turonian in age - notwithstanding the River Terrace deposits (Quaternary) that are a function of Potterells Stream, the Mimmshall Brook and its feeder stream (Ray Brook) a little further south - it is this boundary at which the swallow holes are developed.

Move forward to exit the Water End 'estate' at the woodland/scrub boundary with an open field to the east (Point 3; Figure 5).

Turning right follow the field boundary footpath south-eastward around the perimeter of the Water End 'estate' - a disappointing amount of anthropogenic waste is usually observable in the swallow hole depressions down the slope to your right when the trees are not in leaf (Figure 7).

Bear a little to the right as the footpath approaches Bradmore Lane and exit on to the road at the somewhat obscured gap in the hedge at waymarker pole for Footpath 8 to Welham Green 3/4 [Point 4; Figure 8]. Turn right on to the road and follow it south and west down to the junction with Warrengate Road. Bradmore Lane is a relatively 'quiet' lane in terms of traffic volume, but always be aware and alert for traffic as there is no 'sidewalk' or substantial verge to utilise. Always walk on the right hand side of the road to face oncoming traffic.



Just before the junction with Warrengate Road directly ahead the Mimmshall Brook is viewed to the right in the grounds of a private garden as it enters the Water End 'estate'. Cross the bridge and the Mimmshall Brook is viewed again to the south (left) - where its flood potential is clearly denoted by the flattened vegetation (on left) and the high retaining wall (on right). [Point 5; Figure 9].

Turn right at the junction





remain on the Water End 'estate' walk it is ignored.

Turn right and follow the field boundary once again to the first footpath waymarker [Point 9; Figure 13]. Re-enter the Water End 'estate' at this footpath waymarker post (Footpath 54 & 30) and follow the snaking dirt path (No.54) for a short distance to another footpath waymarker post. At the

after turning left and rising toward the field boundary.

Turn left and follow the field boundary footpath to a further waymarker post [Point 12].

At this junction a diversion up Potterells stream to further swallow holes in the direction of Welham Green is possible - to access these carry on past this waymarker post and follow the path as it trends around to



time of writing this is the location of the swallow hole into which Potterells Stream currently 'sinks'. [Point 9a; Figure 14]. Water from Potterells Stream can be seen coming into the deep depression from which it is not currently exiting.

Looking carefully at the lithologies near here the Lambeth Group pebbles and clays can be differentiated from the thinly developed Quaternary river deposits. There is currently no known locality within the 'estate' at which chalk is clearly visible.

Note with interest the relatively high overflow lip to the right handside of the swallow hole depression and the 'overflow' gully that travels southwestward beneath the footpath just to your right. Cross the outlet gully (dry?) and follow the footpath to the waymarker post (No.32) directly opposite.

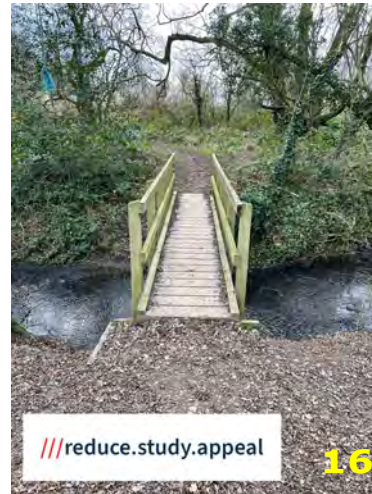
Take a left turn at this waymarker post and follow the footpath out of scrub/ woodland once again to the field boundary at the northeastern edge of the Water End 'estate' [Point 10]. A good view of Potterells Stream entering the swallow hole is observed shortly

the north east with the water course behind scrub and trees to the left. In the far left hand corner of the open field the footpath enters the scrub/woodland [Point 11] at the furthest footpath waymarker post and the

'upper' swallow holes on the Potterells Stream are visible down to the right at a footbridge. This footpath enters the Potterells stream catchment and very shortly exits and continues in the direction of Welham Green (Station Road). It is recommended to turn around here and return to the waymarker post previously mentioned [Point 12] at the eastern boundary of the Water End 'estate'.

Re-enter the wood/ scrubland near a bench; bearing right if entering from the northeast or take a left turn if entering directly on arrival from Point 10 to the south - and follow Footpath No.30.

Potterells Stream is immediately visible on the right. Observe an old 'shutter' dam across the stream (Figure 15) a short distance to the right which is now breached permanently. Clearly an attempt in the past to regulate flow into the Water End 'estate'.





The stream bed is littered with bricks a short distance downstream of this point indicating the presence of a building or structure at, or near to, this location at one time. A short distance further down the footpath is a new footbridge that crosses Potterells Stream (Figure 16). Cross here and the stream follows the winding track on your left, but out of

scrub. In dry conditions this footpath (Footpath 32) can be followed directly ahead [Point 6a] between industrial buildings to exit the 'estate' and shortly arrive on Swanland Road at Point 6. Turn right and return to the Woodman Inn Public House starting point. However, to complete the "full" Water End 'estate' experience it is recommended to take an 'about turn' and return to the Potterells Stream swallow hole [Point 9a] vicinity waymarker post for FP 32. Here turn right and follow the beaten dirt path through the slightly elevated woodland area - as it sits upon



sight. Exit the Water End 'estate' at the Footpath 30 waymarker post [Point 13]; then follow the field boundary path to the left and re-enter the 'estate' at the previously used HCCPF 30 & 54 waymarker post [Point 9; Figure 13].

At the previously visited Potterells Stream swallow hole [Point 9a; Figure 14] where Potterells Stream currently



passes underground (January 2022) cross the dry gully at the next waymarker post and turn right (where previously turned left). Follow this dirt track to observe the anastomosing overflow stream bed to the right and reach a waymarker post approximately fifty metres ahead.

Here the lake bed opens out to the left (south) and the 'central' footpath becomes visible in the near distance across the northern part of the 'lake bed' (see Figure 15; but taken looking back toward this location from Point 6a). To the right of your current location the overflow channel makes its way westward out of the Water End 'estate' toward Point 7 behind Blackthorn

the Lambeth Group overlying the chalk below with an estimated thickness of just a few metres - to shortly return to previously visited Point 2a. Turn right to return to the small footbridge

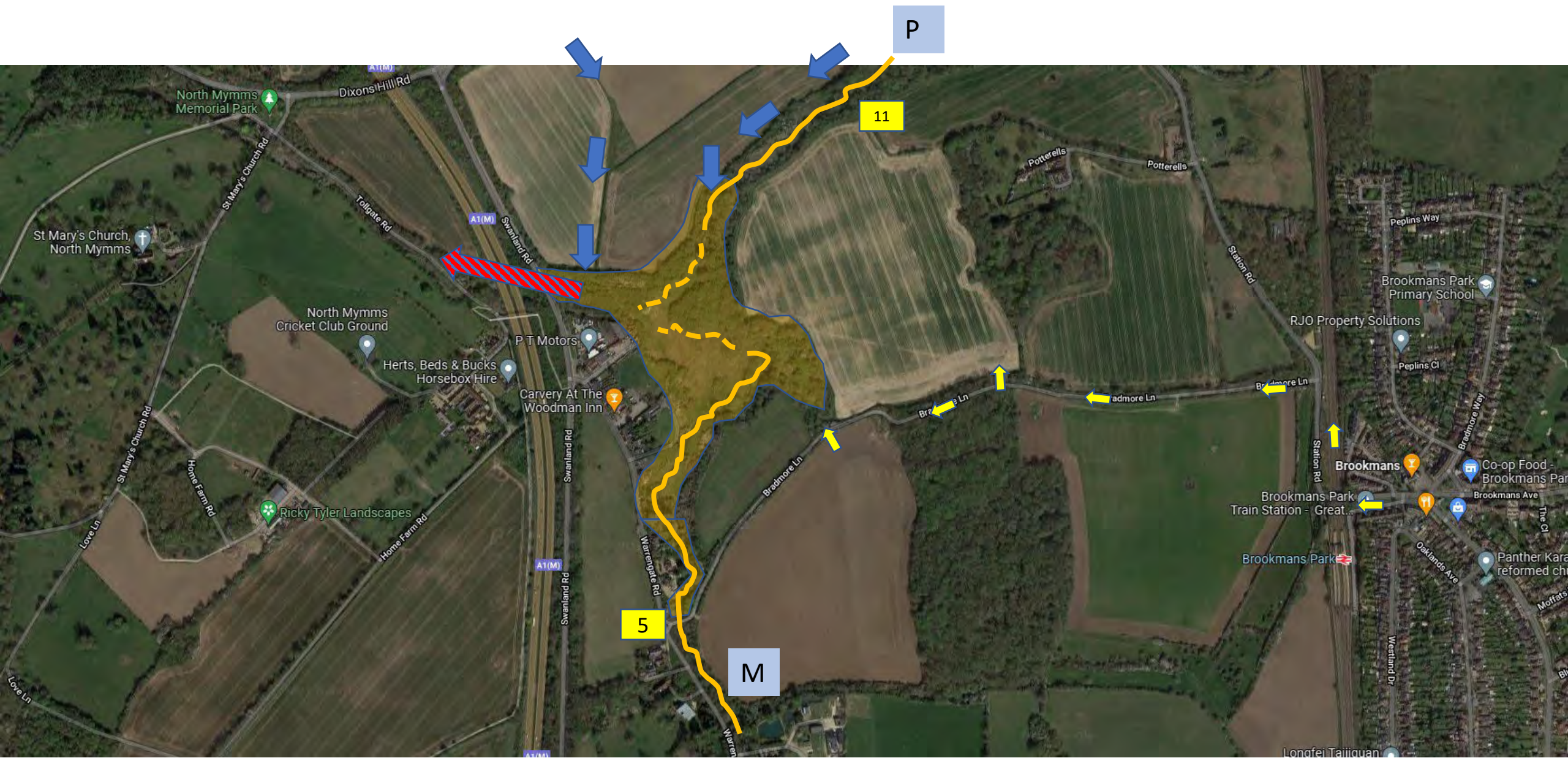
(previously crossed in the opposite direction; Figure 18) leading back to Point 2 and from there back to the Woodman Inn Car Park. Figure 19 shows the current (January 2022) sink

point of the Mimms Hall Brook - off the path to the south and not routinely accessible.

Taking the central footpath south westward the winding gulleys of the lower Mimms Hall Brook are seen again to the right hand side and a large swallow hole to the left hand side that can be viewed more closely with care by leaving the footpath at a right angle and returning directly back (Figure 20).

Continue on the waymarked footpath to Point 2 and then back to the starting point in the car park [Point 1].





Aerial view of Water End SSSI and environs – see key on following page

The Water End Swallow Hole “estate” is approximately enclosed by Grid References TL 229042 - TL 232043 - TL 231044 and TL 228044



Zoomed in Aerial view of Water End SSSI and environs – see key on following page



\* Do not attempt walk from/  
to Point 6a-Point 14  
OR  
from/to Point 2-Point 2a  
when paths across the 'lake'  
are flooded



Reference points on the guided walk



Walking route from Brookmans Park Station



Approximate extent of the informally termed Water End 'estate'



Walking route from Welham Green



Overflow channel route



Approximate extent of Water End 'Lake' when in flood



Potterells Stream – solid line ends at current 'sink' point [January 22 2022]



Mimmshall Stream – solid line ends at current 'sink' point [January 22 2022]





Point 1: Woodman Inn Public House & Restaurant: Car park entrance (GR TL 229042; 51.72296°N 0.22187°W) = **/// tooth.tour.plot**

Point 2: HCCFP Waymarker Post: Access footpath across 'lake' in dry conditions marker (GR TL 230042; 51.72375°N 0.22056°W) = **/// belong.fight.twice**

Point 2a: Narrow footbridge across Mimmshall [dry] gully = **/// budget.sobs.inches**

Point 3: Exit from Water End 'estate' at footpath waymarker post: (GR TL 231043; 51.72454°N 0.21892°W) = **/// badly.chief.nature**

Point 4: Exit onto Bradmore Lane at footpath waymarker post (GR TL 2325 042; 51.72294°N 0.21689°W) = **/// deal.bliss.green**

Point 5: Junction of Bradmore Lane & Warrengate Road; Mimmshall Brook entry to Water End 'estate' =

**/// reduce.sits.next**

Point 6: Footpath 032 entry/exit point to Water End 'estate' (GR 2280425; 51.72384°N 0.22276°W) = **/// orders.lifted.couches**

Point 7: Footpath entry/exit point to Water End 'estate' at overflow channel (GR TL228044; 51.72471°N 0.22319°W) = **/// early.rating.cooks**

Point 8: Entry/exit point to Water End 'estate' via Welham Green (GR TL228044; 51.72471°N 0.22319°W) = **/// mouth.model.hatch**

Point 9: Footpath entry/exit point to Water End 'estate' at HCCFP Waymarker post 34 & 54 (GR TL 230445; 51.72524°N 0.22109°W) = **/// aura.angel.jabs**

Point 9a: Current swallow hole position on Potterells stream =

**/// locals.fault.jukebox**

Point 10: Footpath entry/exit point to Water End 'estate' at Waymarker post =

**/// quite.caged.charge**

Point 11: Footpath entry/exit point to Potterells stream upper swallow hole (GR TL2330475) =

**/// swift.draw.soup**

Point 12: Footpath 30 entry/exit point to Potterells stream shutter dam & footbridge =

**/// coal.sticks.powder**

Point 13: Footpath 30 entry/exit point to Field boundary =

**/// wipe.loops.rubble**

Point 14: Waymarker post south of Point 9a; leading directing along dirt path to Point 6 =

**/// sends.boxing.finds**

**Bradmore Lane approached from Brookmans Park Station:** Footpath sign at (GR TL 236043) = **/// energetic.appeal.about** on Bradmore Lane - then diagonally across field to Point 3 =

**/// badly.chief.nature**

If underfoot conditions are not conducive to cross field access continue down Bradmore Lane to footpath sign at Point 4 = **/// deal.bliss.green** and follow footpath to Point 3 = **/// friend.idea.carbon** - accesses footpath across central part of Water End 'estate' in dry conditions - links to point 2 = **/// budget.sobs.inches**

Swanland Road: (Point 6) = **/// orders.lifted.couches** follow footpath between industrial buildings to reach northwest edge of lake at Point 6a = **/// panels.spray.combining** - dry

weather access to flowing water of overflow channel at north east edge by following footpath ahead to Point 6b = **/// stuck.tame.cross** - follow footpath out to Points 9a & 10.

The overflow channel is accessed from Swanland Road at Point 7= **/// early.rating.cooks**