

## CONNECTING THE PASTURES WITH THE VILLAGE CENTRE

### The Pastures to the Village Centre.

We have suggested three routes for walking or cycling between The Copt Oak Public House and Narborough Railway Station. To go with these routes, we have selected eleven Points of Interest to examine on your way. Read the QR codes shown with each (using a Smart Phone) if you would like more detailed information.

For walking or cycling, these are:  
Blue Route – 1.46km (1993 steps)  
Red Route – 1.63km (2225 steps)  
Yellow Route – 2.17 km (2962 steps)

### A Journey through Time.

Travelling from The Pastures to Narborough railway station is a journey through our village history.

Narborough owes much to being on the route of the old Roman road, The Fosse Way, that is followed by the path of King Edward Avenue (The Bypass) towards Leicester, the ancient, fortified Roman town of Ratae Corieltavorum and then on to Lincoln (Lindum Colonia). Alongside an extensive Roman history in Leicester, excavations at the site of Red Hill Fields School and by All Saints Church recovered Roman remains confirming local activity.

The origins of the name of Narborough go back to around 1143 when the first rector of All Saints Church was appointed. In Norman times, the village was called Norburg being 'North Fortification' in old English. There were settlements in the area well before that time, possibly because of its position by the River Soar.

Before the railway arrived in 1864, village life was based around wool weaving, hosiery and farming as well as services to travellers following the Fosse Way.

It was very much self-sufficient and largely inward looking. People in general travelled only short distances from home and movement of goods was dependent and at the speed of a horse and cart.

The Pastures area contained the fields where animals would have been, creating the wool on which the local hosiery depended. Since heating was largely from burning wood and charcoal produced from wood, Narborough Wood would have been a source of fuel. Closer to the village centre, crops were grown evidenced by ancient ridge and furrow ploughing we still see by the Council Offices.

The whole area had quarries that produced stone, that would have been moved by horse and cart.

The arrival of the railway improved communication and led to an increase in local population. The city centre was minutes away instead of time determined by the speed of a horse. Both passengers, and goods could be moved quickly by rail. It also meant that heavy materials could be brought in, such as coal, metals, slate and stone could be moved out in larger quantities. Finished manufactured product could also be taken out – notably by Empire Stone and the Wagon Works that had their own sidings.

The Village started to look at external opportunities. Along with more terraced housing, individual houses of quality were built, the principal ones being for prosperous Leicester business people. We look at three of these here – Copt Oak House with its farm, The Woodlands, Forest House together with the development of Leicester Road. The first of these has been lost to estate development while the next two have been taken over and extended for other uses. Perhaps these business people were able to travel from Narborough Station to the centre of Leicester in a time not significantly different from today.

The Carlton Hayes Hospital was completed in 1907 and had a profound influence on the Pastures area

through housing and employment. It closed in 1996 to become Carlton Park office site present in 2025. The village was extended to include the Pastures as the estates were built around 1991.



### 1. The Copt Oak Public House & Old Barn Nursery.

The name Copt Oak comes from old Saxon – 'cop' is an old English word for 'head' so it

means an Oak with its head cut back. Our much-loved Copt Oak Pub, Tesco's and neighbouring shops are all built on land that was Copt Oak Farm. The farm's last occupants, the Mellor family are still remembered by long term residents of the Village. The farm became derelict after its sale to developers and was demolished around 1991 to give way for the current Pastures estates. One piece of the old farm buildings remains as 'The Old Barn Nursery' at the corner of the car park. The path of the old Copt Oak Road also remains, following its original route but now part road and part footpath.



### 2. Red Hill Field School. A few hundred yards from the

Copt Oak car park down to Copt Oak Road is Red Hill Field School which was built in 1983 on

what was pasture land. As the foundations were being excavated, signs of Roman activity were found. The school was also just over the road from Copt Oak House on farmland. As a Primary School for three hundred children between 4 and 11 years, it was run by Leicestershire Council until 2017 when it became a member of Learn Academies Trust. By 2025, the Trust had nineteen schools spread across Leicestershire.



### 9. The Rectory (now Blaby District Council Offices).

This Rectory is present on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map as the residence attached

to All Saints Church. There were extensive gardens around it and a convenient, quick route to the Church through a back gate that opened onto Church Lane. The gate is still present and visible on Church Lane itself. The Rectory garden can also be seen at the rear of the current premises via the car park on the north side. In 1921, the then rector moved to 'The Rectory' on Leicester Road, itself built as a private residence in 1872 and this original premises became Blaby Rural Council Offices. The Rector moved again in 1983 to a newly-built house on Church View in the grounds of the Leicester Road property. Blaby Rural District Council is now Blaby District Council, and the Council Offices have been extended considerably.



### 11. The Auburn. The Auburn is an area of old Narborough

round the junction where the road to Huncote leaves Coventry Road. A quarry dated from the

1700s and was the scene of an exploding steam boiler in 1893 that killed a sixteen-year-old apprentice and injured a further five workers. The Quarry site is now filled in under the Pastures Squirrel Close. St Mary's was a large private house that was a school of 50 children in 1851, became a convent there with five nuns, 2 servants and 17 workers, the majority of which were listed as Laundresses. In 1911, it had reverted to being a private house occupied by the Breasley family. Cottages housed amongst others a police constable, quarry workers and hosiery frame knitters. By 1956, the buildings were empty and replaced by a market garden before being redeveloped as the Pastures estate to the north of Huncote Road and housing and the Cutters Close industrial estate to the south of Coventry Road.

*You might like to follow this with some refreshment our cafés and pubs*

If you would like more information on the historic points of interest in the village of Narborough, please follow the Narborough Heritage Trail. Free copies of this are available from Café Dales, The Coffee Club, The Bread Box and Narborough Parish Council.

*Produced by Connecting Narborough Community Group in association with Narborough Parish Council. March 2025.*



### 10. Ridge & Furrow Ploughing on Narborough

Park. The Ridge & Furrow profile in the grass surface was

produced by single direction ploughing which formed a ridge as the plough went backwards and forwards. It was a typical method used in the middle ages until the 17th Century. Ridges could be as high as 1.8m (6 feet). While the ridge is now lower than it was, its original form is still present. You can imagine that it was an easy walk from the houses in the village to tend crops. The area became a recreation ground in 1958, and playground equipment has been added progressively.

## CONNECTING THE PASTURES & VILLAGE CENTRE

*Three walking and cycling routes from Copt Oak to Narborough Railway Station.*



Trail lengths of 2.17km, 1.63km and 1.46km mostly metalled surfaces, easily accessible, gentle slopes.

**Please take care to use pedestrian crossings and wider pavements as you walk round.**

Some of the points of interest are better viewed from the opposite side of the road.