

Cultural Route Testing Kit

by Colin Bownes, Aug 2020

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to test the waymarking on the MK Cultural Routes. We want these routes to be simple to follow and as unambiguous as possible so that riders who may not know MK Redways and Cycle Paths very well can ride them with confidence.

Testing the routes is a very important part of waymarking. The waymarks have been placed by the MK Council Cycling Team who, as you would expect, know them very well. This is a problem because if you know the routes, you won't necessarily rely on the waymarks to find your way around, and may assume that the direction to go is obvious when it isn't to a newcomer to them.

For this reason we would like the routes tested by the people who are likely to use them – or at least by people who perhaps know the routes roughly and who are only following the waymarkers.

When you have tested a route we need to know what you think so that we can make changes where the waymarks are not clear or are confusing.

To help you do this the kit contains three maps of each route which have numbered references at each junction on the route. The first map will be an overview of the whole route and the second and third more detailed maps of the two 'shortcut' versions of the route. This should help you identify where the problem lies. If possible, where you find a problem and it helps to clarify what the problem is please take a photo of the area involved.

The maps will also be useful if you get lost, but please use the waymarks as your main guide.

About the Routes

The routes were originally designed in 2017/2018 as part of the MK Council/Arts Council project Pedalling Culture (see <http://www.pedallingculture.com/>) which was created to promote sustainable travel and the huge number of cultural venues and public installations in MK:

Promoting the wealth of culture within Milton Keynes is at the heart of Pedaling Culture. As a partnership initiative, between the public and private sectors, we have been created with the aid of funding from the Arts Council England's Cultural Destination projects. Our partners include MK Council, MK Gallery, Bletchley Park Trust, Destination MK, Amazing CMK, and Arts & Heritage Alliance.

Our mission is to ensure that every community across Milton Keynes realises the culturally diverse city we live in, and the fact that these cultural destinations can be reached from the many green transport links we have available to us. There are over 280 miles of Redway routes zigzagging their way through the city, plus ongoing initiatives to develop specific green transport methods, ensuring that everyone has sustainable access to our cultural venues.

The basis for the routes was the existing waymarked Millennium Route and the two National Cycle Network routes which pass through MK (NCR6 and NCR51). Part of the remit was to include as many cultural venues and public art as possible – hence the name – but also to try to create an extendable ‘network’ of routes which could be combined into various lengths to suit runners, walkers, cyclists, and people of different levels of activity.

In addition, the routes should be as safe as possible for inexperienced or young riders and only use, wherever possible, redways, cycle routes, and cycle friendly roads.

Each route is (more or less) 10 miles long, but can be shortened to about 5 miles using ‘shortcuts’. In this way it was hoped that users would be able to make-up and navigate a route of their choice at the distance they feel comfortable with.



1 A Blue Route Waymark Plate

Each route was allocated a different colour to differentiate it from the others, but also to try to reflect the local nature of the countryside it was passing through :-

- Blue Route – 17.0km - based on the original logo colour of The Centre MK:
- Iron Route – 15.3km - based on the ‘Iron Rails’ of the railway.
- Cornflower Route – 13.3km - inspired by the cornflowers that used to adorn the arable fields of this area.
- Green Route – 16.2km - to reflect the ‘Green Lungs’ of the city – the lakes and rivers of the Ouzel Valley.
- Yellow Route – 14.6km - remembering one of the major Newport Pagnell industries – Taylors Mustard.

In total the routes are 76 km long and almost all of it (68 km) is on redways or cycle routes. There is a total of 6.6 km of route on quiet cycle friendly roads and, unavoidably a total of 1 km on busier roads. The parts on busier roads all have footpaths and can easily be walked. There is a 400 mtr stretch in Newport Pagnell which goes along Tickford Street to the top of Silver Street, and a 500 mtr stretch in Stony Stratford which goes along the Wolverton Road until the redway starts at the Queen Eleanor Street roundabout. These are the only parts of the routes which less experienced cyclists may feel uncomfortable riding.

About the Waymarking

The waymarks used on the routes are round colour coded stickers or plates. There are usually waymarks on each junction in the route, although on some minor junctions have been missed because it’s so obvious which way you go. The general rule is ‘**if in doubt, go straight ahead**’. The stickers are used on metal posts, and the plates are screwed to wooden posts.

Normal Junctions

The waymarks are normally fixed at eye level and there is a pointer for each direction (clockwise or counter clockwise). Normally the marks would be placed on the same post but occasionally are on different posts if that makes the route clearer in different directions.

The markers are typically 2-300 mtrs apart, although there are some longer stretches (e.g. along the Railway Walk there is one stretch 1.3km long – but as there are no junctions you have to go straight ahead) and where this happens stickers have usually been placed between junctions to give riders re-assurance that they are still on the right route.

The markers are placed on :

1. Signposts – especially direction posts.
2. Lamp Posts
3. Newly erected metal posts about 1mtr tall – these have been placed where there was no alternative post to use.
4. Redway Yellow Bollards.
5. Wooden posts by the side of the road.

Preference is from 1 to 5.

Each of the routes, at some stage, runs along the same route as another one (usually the Blue Route). If this is the case both coloured stickers are used (e.g. Blue and Yellow)

Junctions with Shortcuts

The most complicated areas are where the shortcut for a route joins the main route. In these areas the normal stickers are used to indicate both the main and shortcut directions, but the shortcut direction has a rectangular 'Shortcut' sticker underneath it (see Fig 2).

2 A shortcut Junction



Fig 2 represents an Iron Route Junction with a shortcut. The top sticker means that the main route goes straight ahead and the bottom one means turn left to take the shortcut.

Figure 3 is even more complicated. It is a fictional route junction where an iron route shortcut diverges and the main route goes straight-on. The Blue Route coincides with the Iron Route Path but actually diverges at this point.



3 - A Fictional Junction where two routes coincide.

We are especially anxious that these junctions are easy to follow, so please let us know if you had any problems with them.

Please feed back your thoughts about the waymarks either on the Get Cycling Facebook Group or by email to Cycling@Milton-keynes.gov.uk .

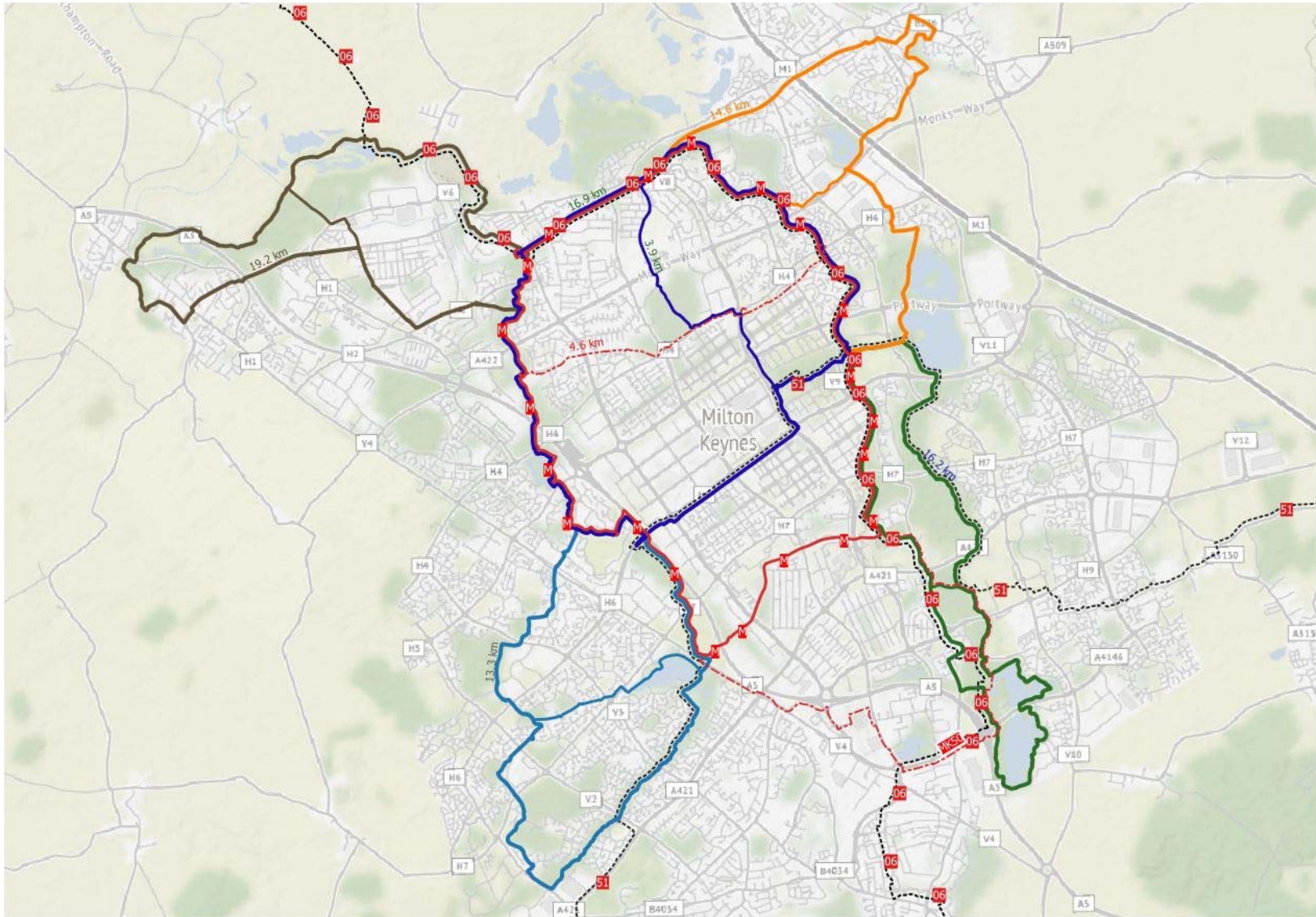
If you have a mapping app or navigator you can download gpx files of each route from <https://www.getsmartertravelmk.org/cycling/cultural-routes> . On that site are also the descriptive pdfs of the points of interest along the routes.

Thanks for helping and I hope you enjoy the rides.

Colin

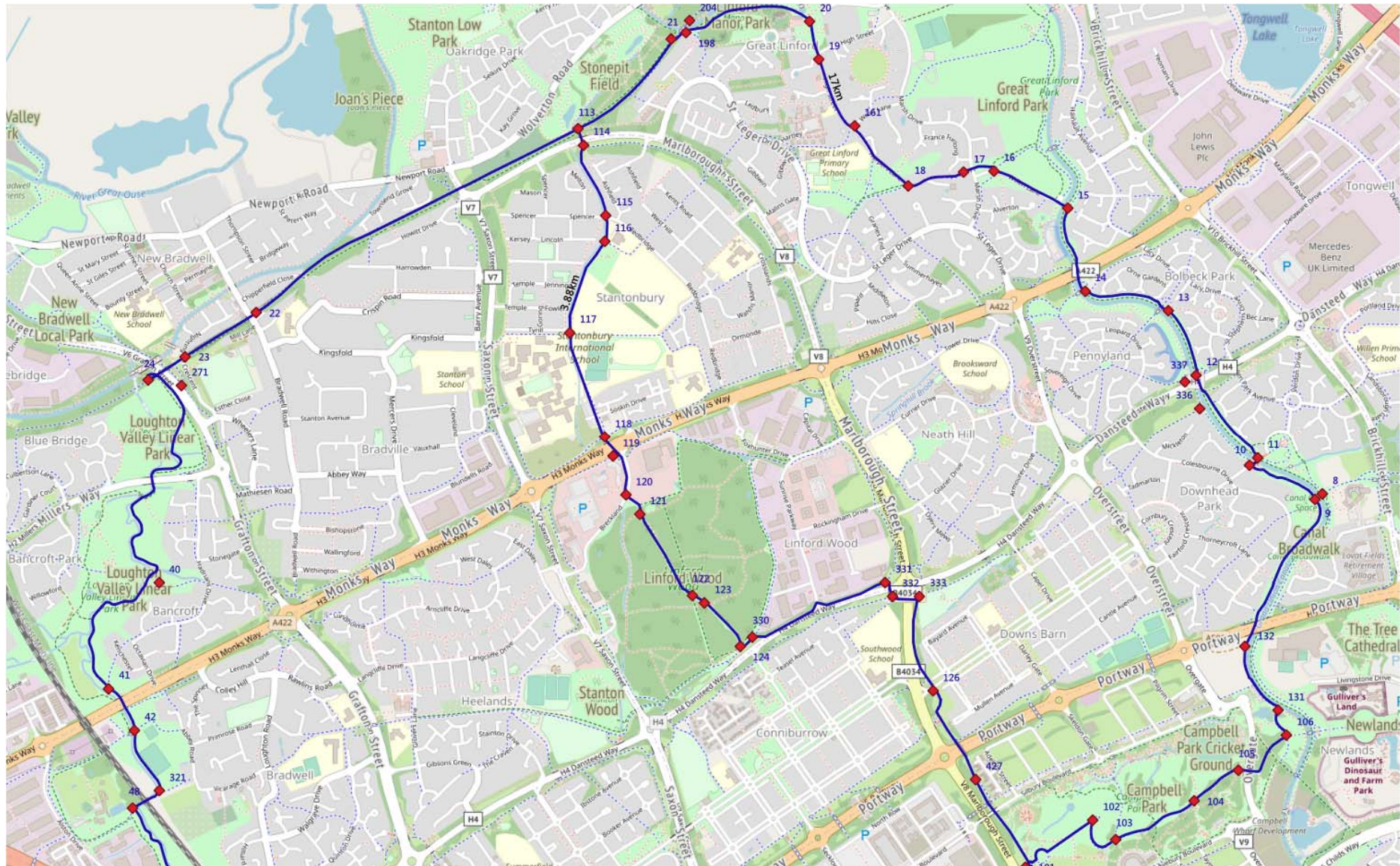
The Cultural Route Network

Note: On the following maps dotted green lines indicate cycle friendly roads used by the route. Dotted red lines indicate normally busy or main roads.

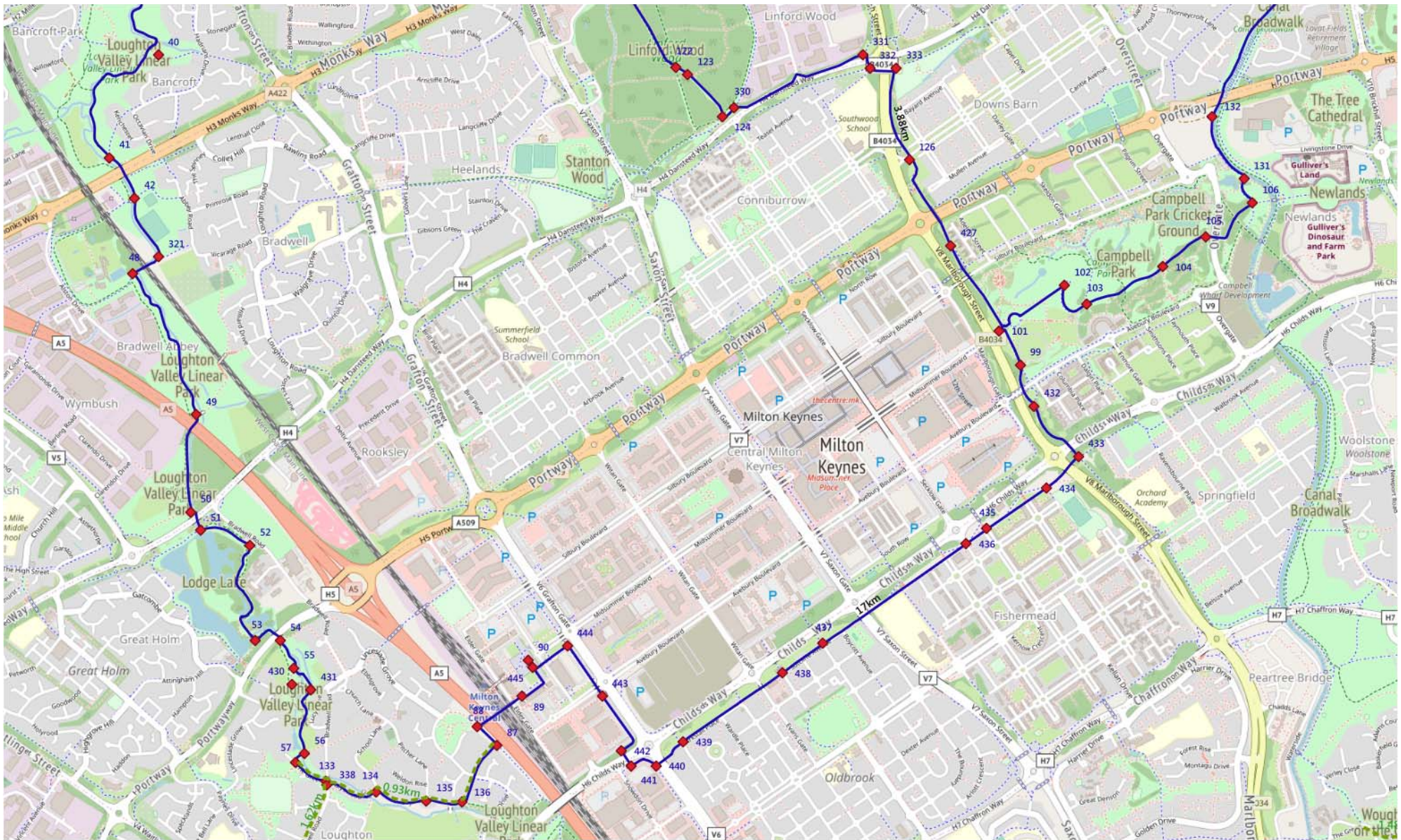


The map displays a blue route with 57 numbered stops, starting from the top left and ending at the bottom right. The route passes through several key locations, including Stanton Low Park, Loughborough Valley Linear Park, Bradwell, and Milton Keynes. Major roads shown include A422, A509, and A5. The map also features various landmarks such as Loughborough Valley Linear Park, Stanton Low Park, Bradwell, and Milton Keynes. The route is marked with red diamonds at each stop, and the map includes labels for roads, parks, and other local features.

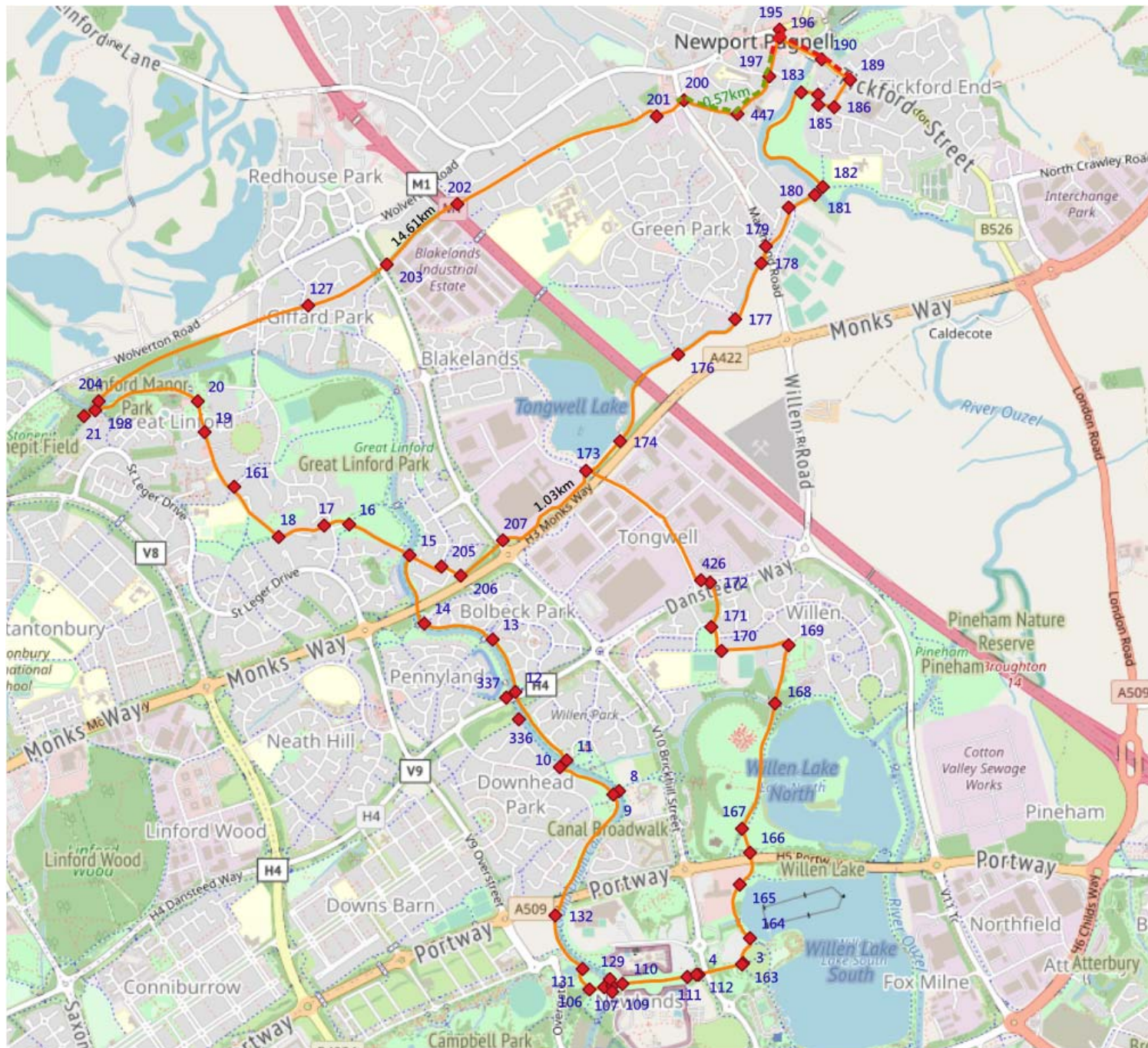
Blue Route North



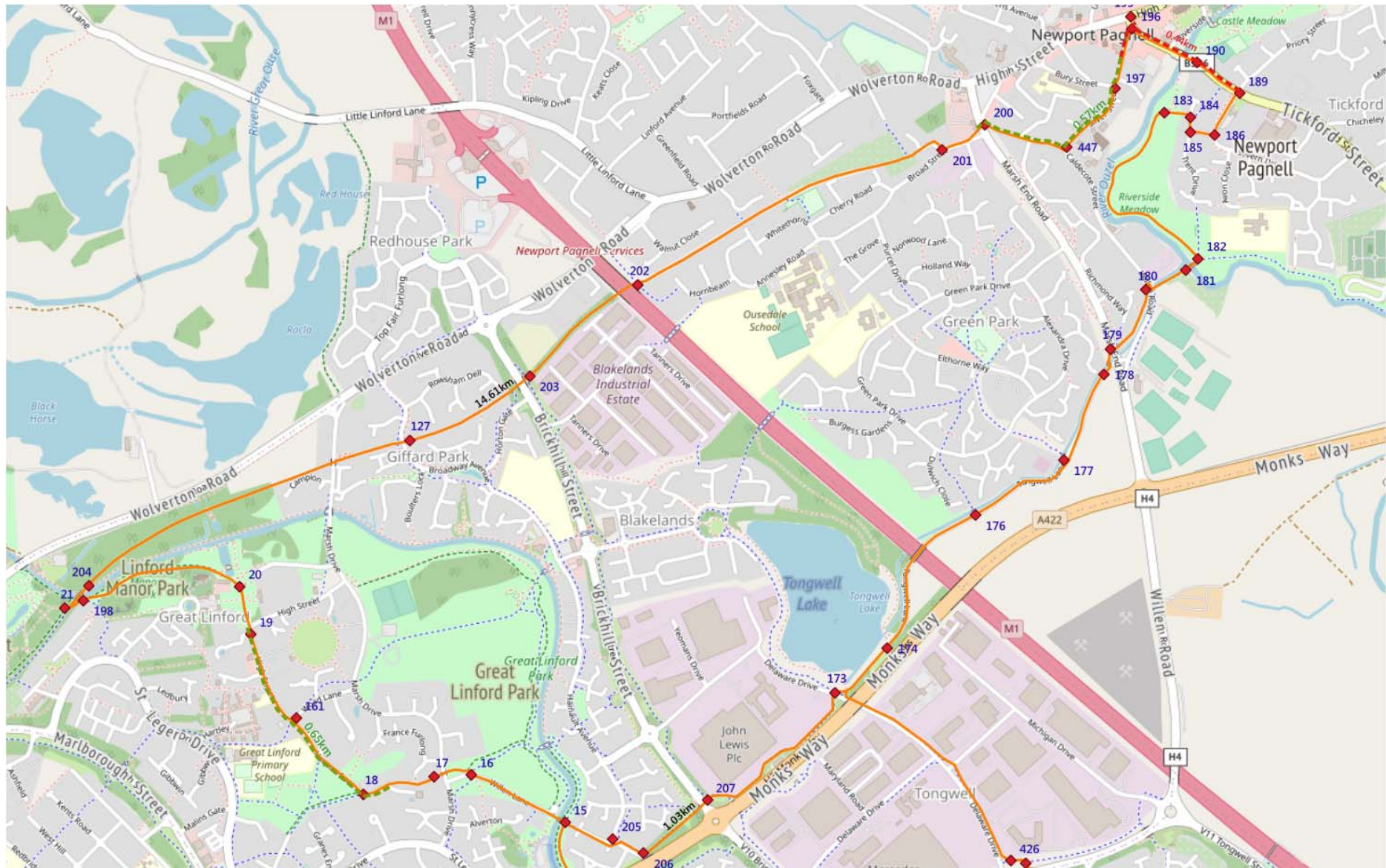
Blue Route South



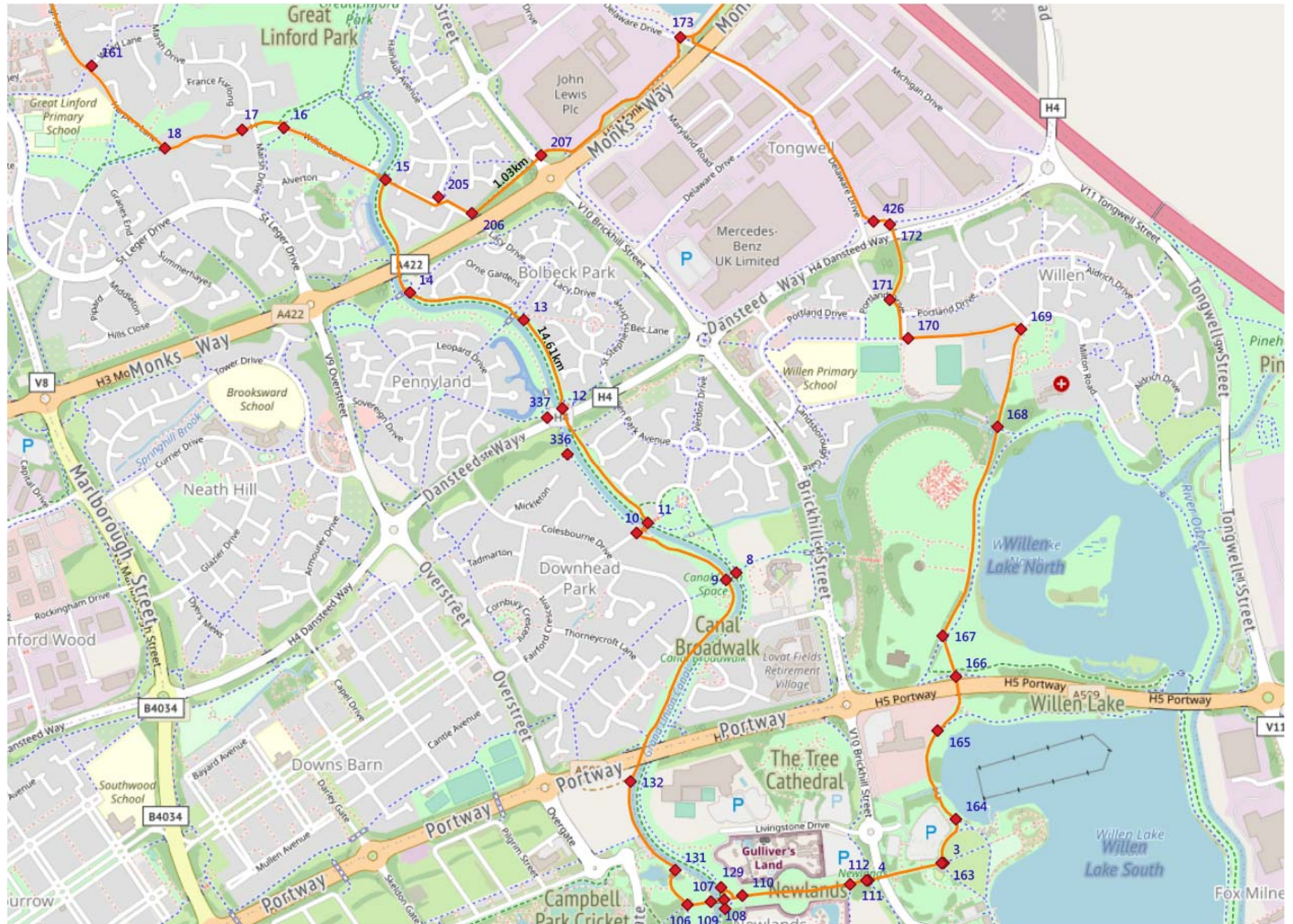
The Yellow Route Summary



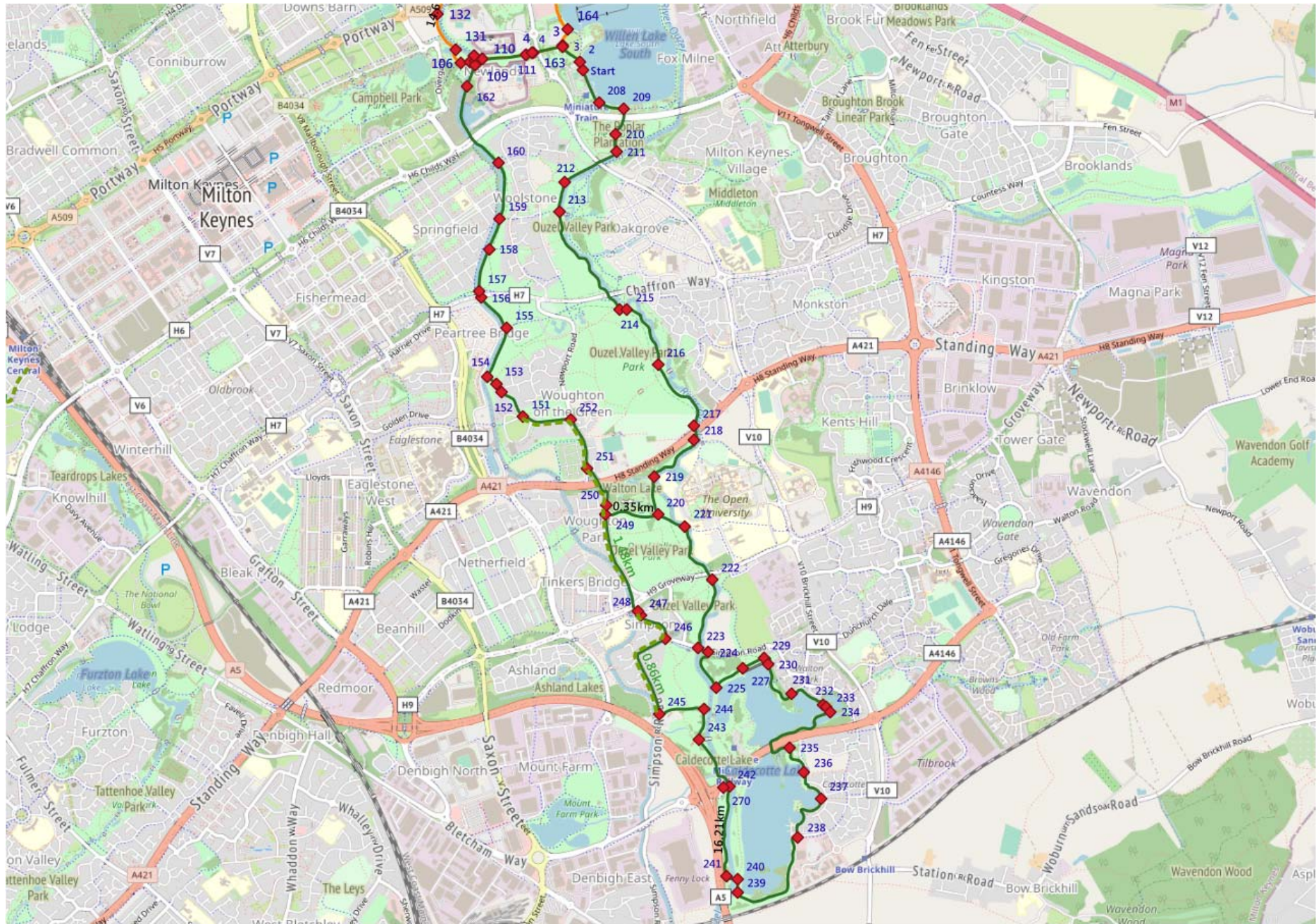
Yellow Route North



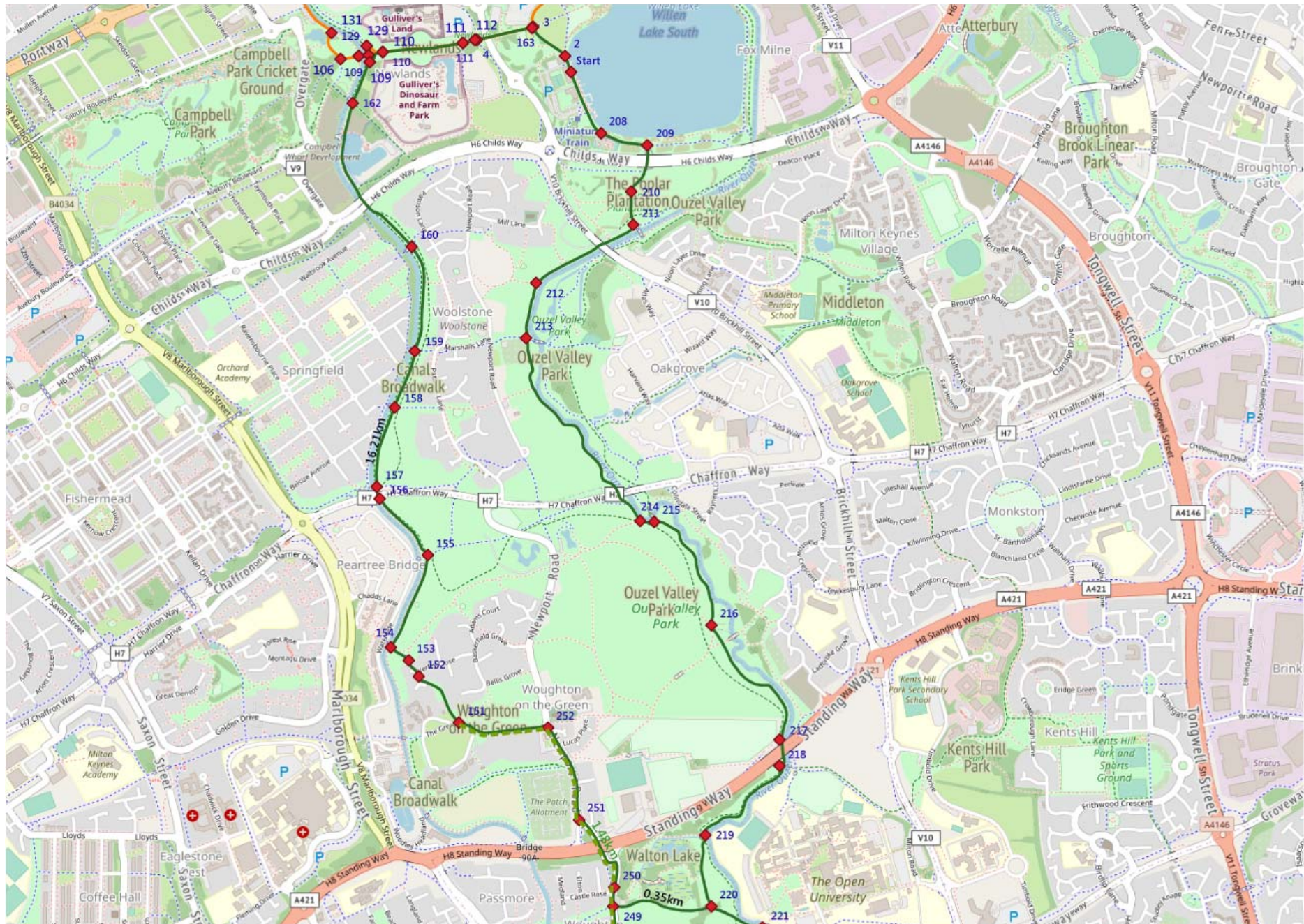
Yellow Route South



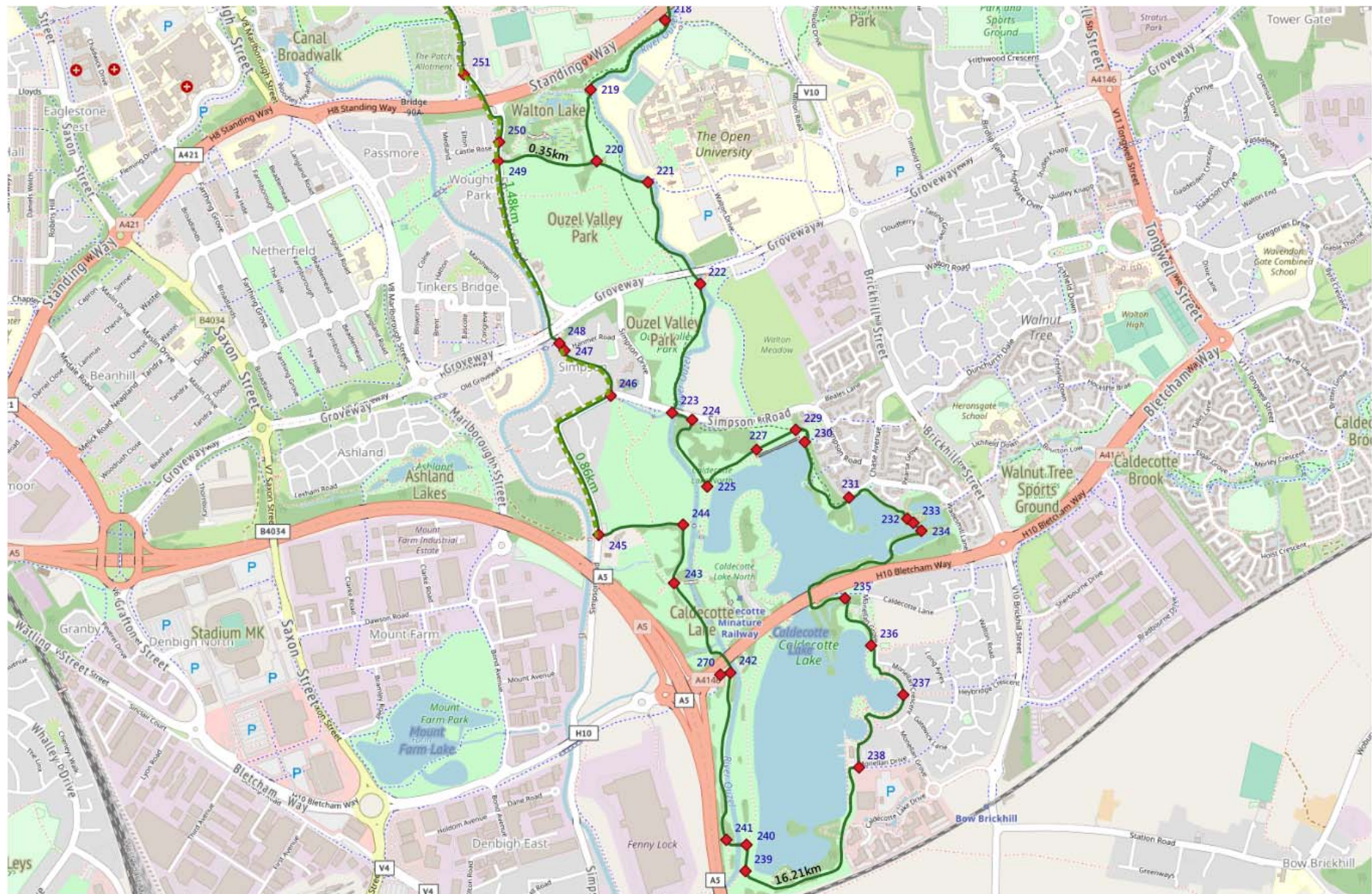
The Green Route Summary



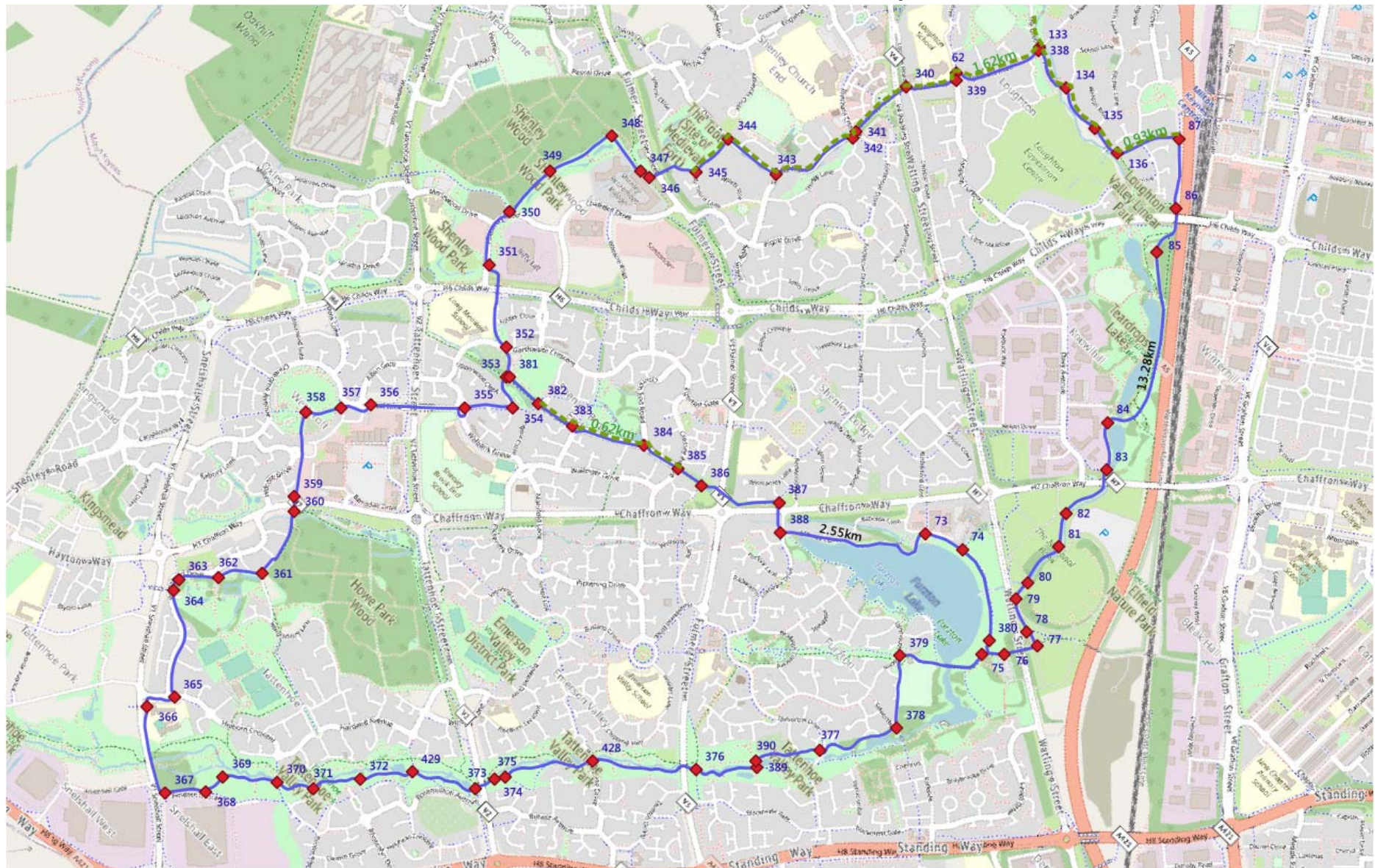
Green Route North



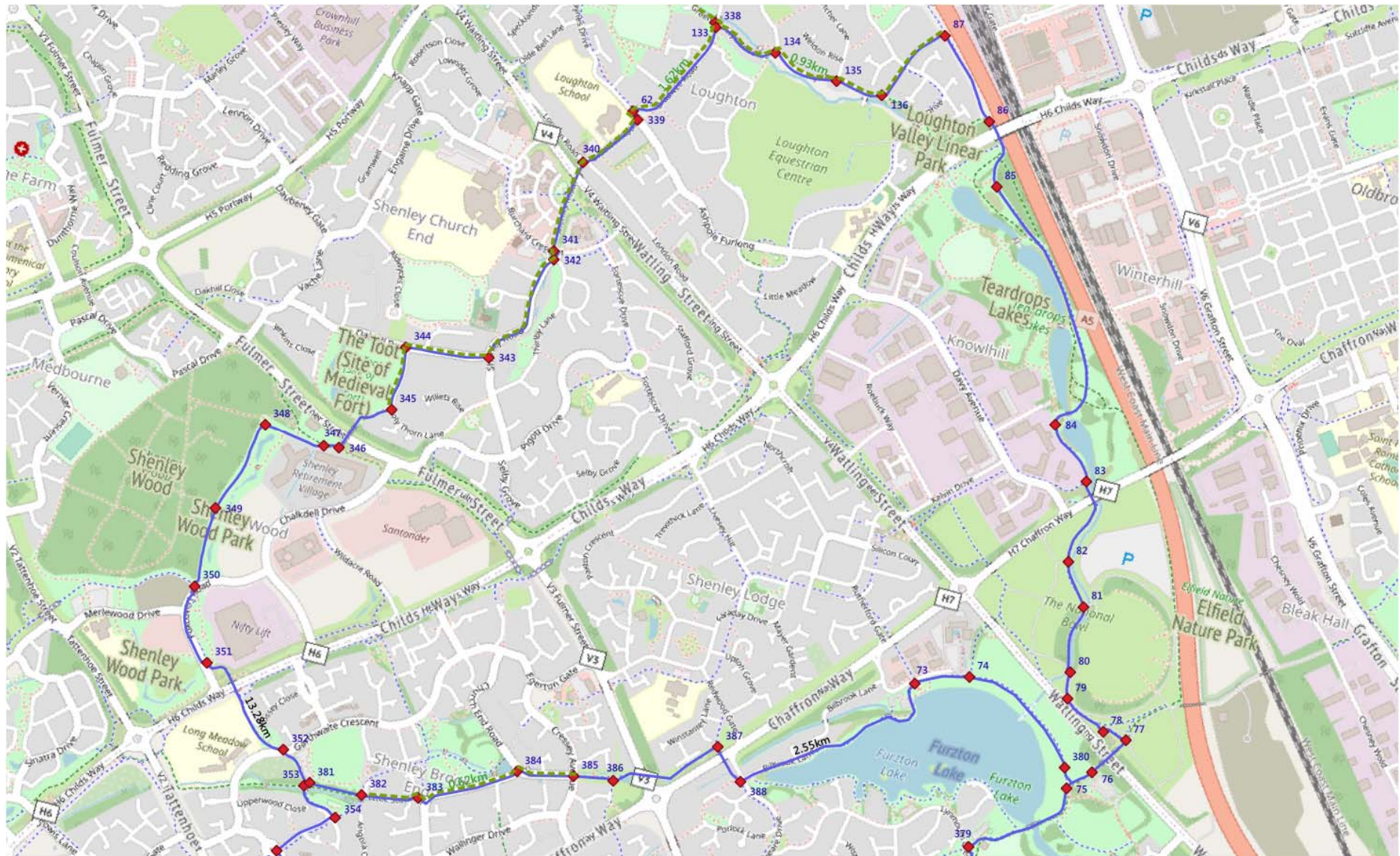
Green Route South



The Cornflower Route Summary



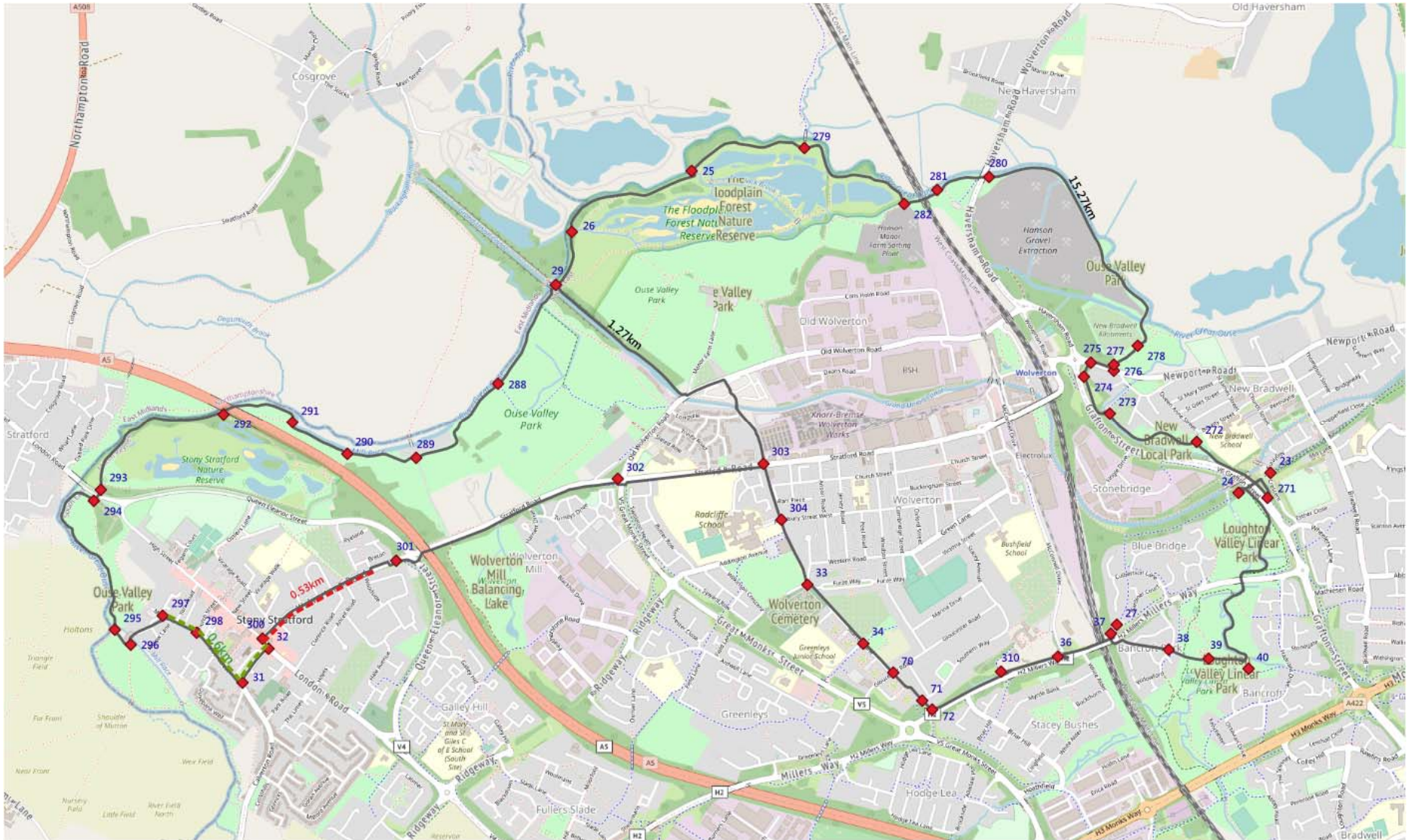
Cornflower North



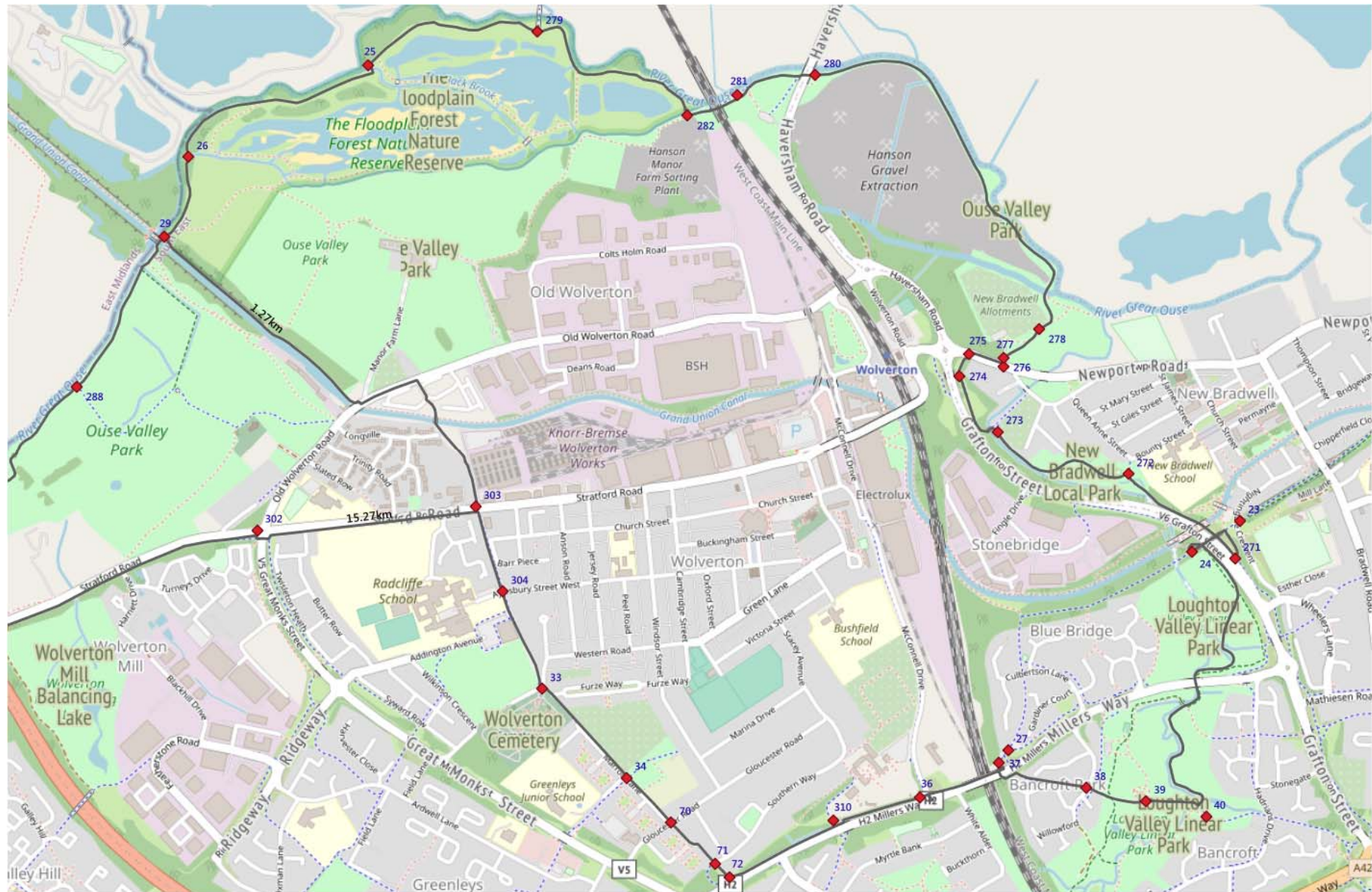
Cornflower South



The Iron Route Summary



Iron Route East



Iron Route West

