

Waskerley Way Railway Path

What is special?

The Waskerley Way is a beautiful route passing through a varied landscape; from urban fringe through to upland sheep farms and then on to exposed heather moorland. Hownsgill Viaduct towers 46 metres above the tree canopy of Knitsley and High House Woods near Lydgetts Junction. This is one of the most impressive railway structures in the North East. From further up the Railway Path there are stunning views across Smiddy Shaw, Waskerley and Hisehope reservoirs.

The variety of habitats allows a great number of plants and animals to live here. Animals include red and black grouse, merlin, adder, slow worm and butterflies such as small pearl bordered fritillary, orange tip, dark green fritillary and dingy skipper. Some of the rarer plants include frog orchid, melancholy thistle and remote sedge.



Small
Pearl Bordered
Fritillary



Frog
Orchid



Slow Worm

At Lydgetts Junction, this route joins the Lanchester Valley Railway Path, the Derwent Walk Railway Path and the Consett to Sunderland cycle route. The Waskerley Way also forms part of the C2C route, making this one of our busiest Railway Paths.

Accessibility statement

This linear route rises gradually from Consett to Weatherhill. There are several gradients but only those which are particularly steep have been noted on the map and you are advised to refer to the route profile. The path consists of a hard, unsealed surface with occasional large stones. There is loose material on some of the slopes. The path width is generally 1.8m but there is one section between Palmers bridge and Burnhill junction which is 1m wide.

Photographs: www.wildstock.co.uk;
www.northeastwildlife.co.uk;
S Priestley; D Liddle.

maps...

Contact the Countryside Service
telephone: 0191 372 9100
email: countryside@durham.gov.uk
www.durham.gov.uk/countryside



Total length: 9.7 miles (15.6 km)

Grid References: **Park Head** NZ 002 431

Hawkburn Head NZ 031 453 **Waskerley Station** NZ 051 453

Whitehall NZ 076 478 **Rowley Station** NZ 086 478

Lydgetts Junction, Consett NZ 098 492

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 307

Directions:

Park Head From Stanhope follow B6278 Edmundbyers. Follow road for 2.5 miles, turn right at sign for Parkhead, follow track for 200m. Railway Path is accessible from the left of car park.

Hawkburn Head From A68 at Castleside, head towards Stanhope. Follow road for 6 miles. Site entrance is on the left. Signposted

Waskerley Station From A68 at Castleside, head towards Stanhope. Follow road for 5 miles. Site entrance is on the left. Signposted

Whitehall From A68 at Castleside, head towards Stanhope. Turn where road bears sharp right. Site entrance is 1.25 miles on right. Signposted

Rowley Located 3/4 of a mile south of Castleside on A68. Signposted

Lydgetts Junction, Consett From Consett centre, follow A692 towards Castleside. Turn left at The Grove. Signposted. Start of Railway Path can be accessed by crossing A692 behind Hermiston Retail Park, following the Consett to Sunderland cycle path for 0.5 miles to Lydgetts Junction.

Parking: Car parks at Park Head, Hawkburn, Waskerley Station, Whitehall, Rowley Station and Consett. No disabled parking bays.

Public transport: No bus service along this route. Nearest bus stops are at The Grove in Consett (Services: Weardale 764, Go Northern 8, 8a), Rowley (Weardale 764) and Crawleyside Bank, Stanhope (Weardale 103 - up to 4 journeys per day on request).

Dogs: Allowed under control. Please clean up after your dog. Between Park Head and Waskerley Village dogs must be on a lead.

Designation: Railway Path, picnic areas, UK Woodland Assurance Scheme certified, partial Local Wildlife Site, partial Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Suitable for: Walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, wheelchair users

Habitats: Scrub, moorland, woodland, wetland.

The map displays the Waskerley Way, a 9-mile route through Muggleswick Common. An elevation profile at the top left shows the route's altitude in feet (0 to 2000) against distance in miles (0 to 9). Key points marked on the profile include Weatherhill, Park Head, Hawkburn Head, Waskerley, Whitehall, Rowley, and Lydgetts Junction. The main map shows the route as a green line with red dots at key locations. Four red boxes highlight specific areas, each with a 'zoom in' icon:

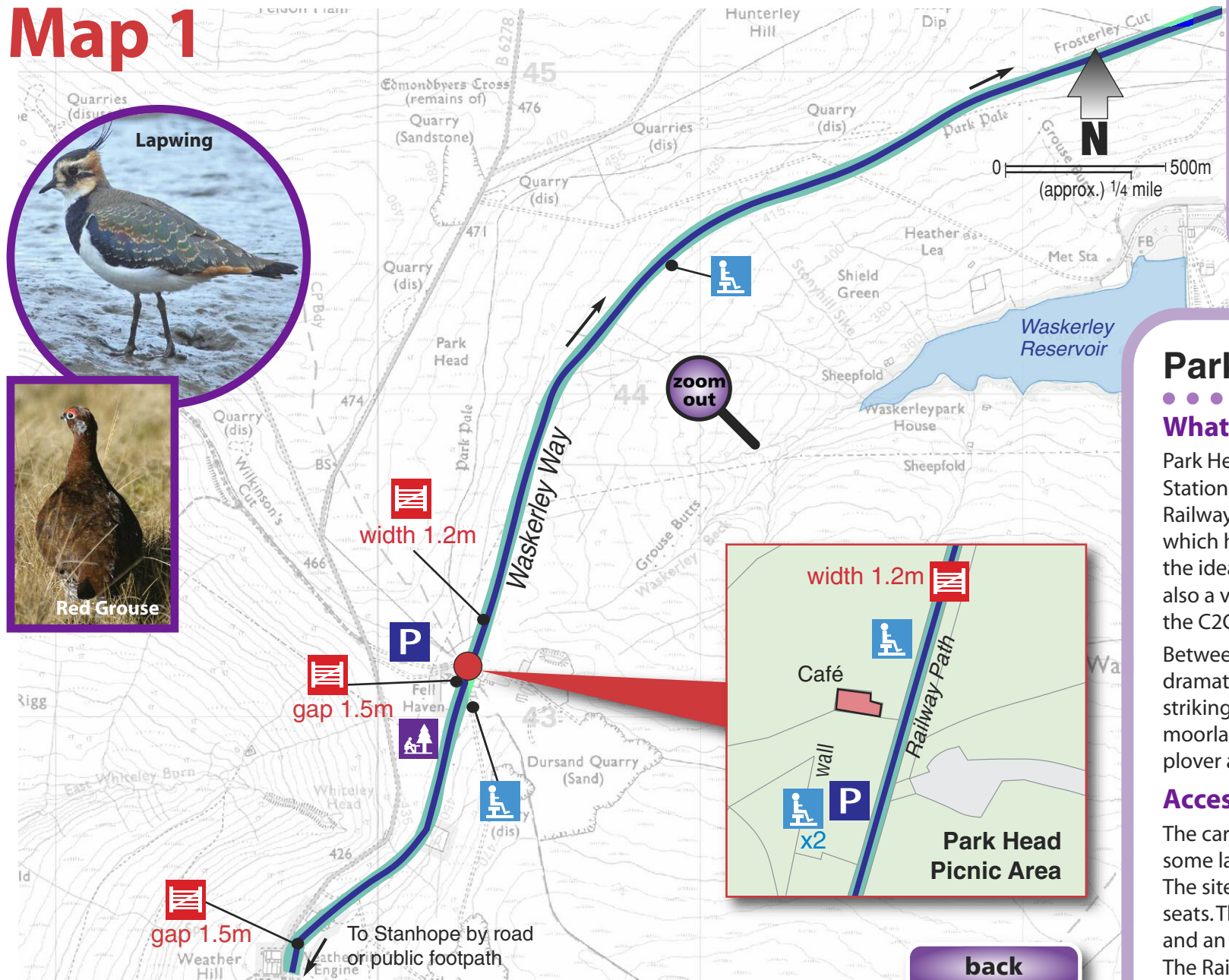
- Map 1:** Parkhead Picnic Area
- Map 2:** Hawkburn Head Picnic Area
- Map 3:** Waskerley Picnic Area
- Map 4:** Lydgetts Junction

Other features on the map include Muggleswick Common, Hise Hope, Waskerley Park, and various landmarks like Weatherhill Engine, Sand Pit, and Collier Law. A scale bar indicates 1 km (approx. 1/2 mile). A north arrow is also present.



Waskerley Way Railway Path

Map 1



KEY

- Picnic Area
- Seat
- Gate
- Parking
- Hard Unsealed Surface
- Direction of Travel

Park Head Picnic Area

What is special?

Park Head, previously known as Blanchland Station, forms part of the Waskerley Way Railway Path. There is a privately run Tearoom which has lots of railway memorabilia inside, the ideal place to finish a walk or cycle ride. It is also a very popular resting place for people on the C2C cycle route.

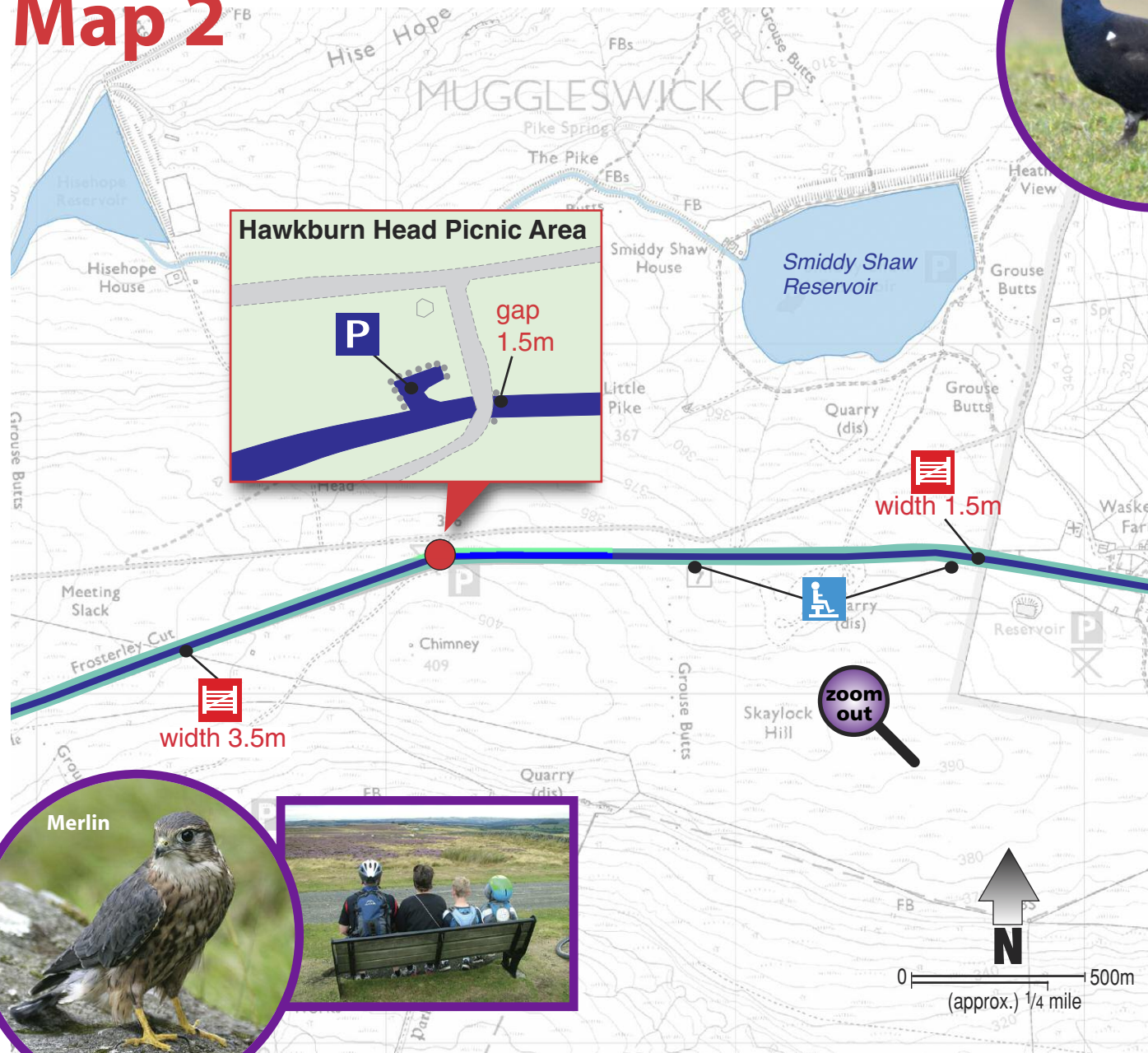
Between here and Hawkburn Head there are dramatic views of Waskerley Reservoir and the striking heather moorland. Look out for typical moorland birds such as red grouse, golden plover and lapwing.

Accessibility statement

The car park is a hard unsealed surface with some large stones and occasional pot holes. The site is fairly flat and there are a number of seats. The privately owned café has no steps and an accessible toilet (for customers only). The Railway Path extends a further 336m to Weatherhill but there is no parking or seats.

Waskerley Way Railway Path

Map 2



KEY

- Seat
- Gate
- Parking
- Boulder
- Hard Unsealed Surface

Hawkburn Head Picnic Area

What is special?

Horses and gravity originally worked the line between here and Waskerley village. A 40 horse-power standing engine would have once stood where the car park is, hauling trains up from the village by rope.

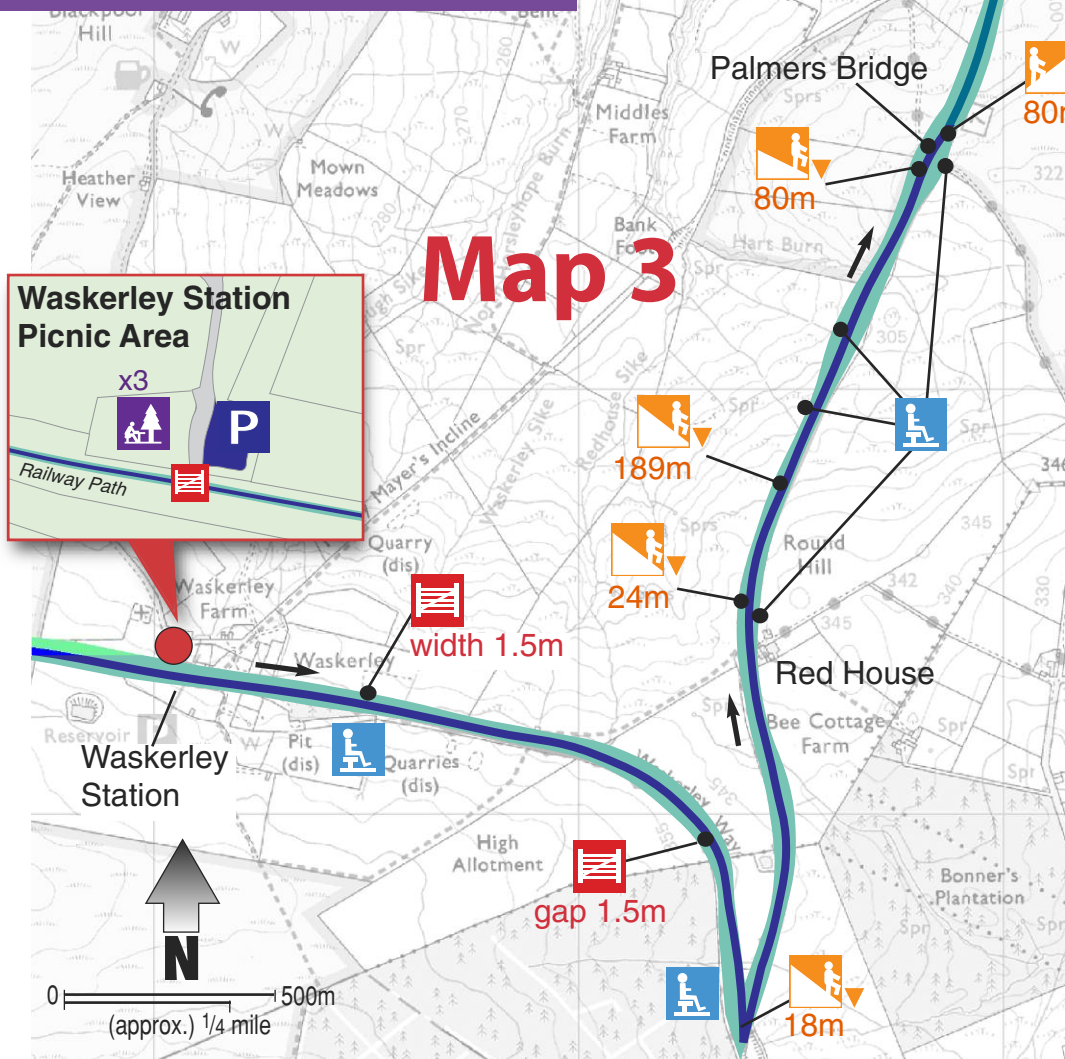
Hawkburn Head is set in heather moorland which is at its most stunning when the purple flowers carpet the ground between August and September. There are also wonderful views of Waskerley and Smiddy Shaw Reservoirs, Upland reservoirs which are visited by large numbers of wading birds. These include curlew, sandpiper and golden plover which can be seen probing for insects and worms on the exposed mud. The occasional glimpse of a merlin or a black grouse may also be seen. Osprey can sometimes be spotted on their spring passage.

Accessibility statement

The car park is a hard unsealed surface with some large stones and occasional pot holes. The site is flat but the heather can be rough to walk on. There are no picnic tables or formal seats but the boulders may be used as seats.

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Waskerley Way Railway Path



Whitehall Picnic Area



Waskerley Station Picnic Area

What is special?

A thriving railway community once stood here. It included a goods station, sidings, a shed for six engines, wagon repair shops, church and school. The closure of the lead mines led to a slow decline and when the line closed in 1969 Waskerley became a ghost village. Now there stands a picnic site and is an ideal place to begin a walk or cycle ride.

Near this picnic area are damp grassy meadows filled with beautiful orchids. Look around you for sightings of short-eared owl, hen harrier and black grouse on the surrounding moorland.

Accessibility statement

There are occasional pot holes on the access road. The car park is a hard, unsealed surface with some large stones. The picnic site is flat. There are three picnic tables which can be accessed over mown grass.

KEY

-  Picnic Area
-  Seat
-  Gate
-  Steep Slope Up 1:10-1:10
-  Steep Slope Down 1:10-1:10
-  Medium Slope Down 1:20-1:10
-  Parking
-  Hard Unsealed Surface
-  Road Crossing
-  Direction of Travel

Whitehall Picnic Area

What is special?

This picnic area is surrounded by trees and comes alive with birds singing and insects humming. During the summer you will see many butterflies including common blue and meadow brown. You will probably see the striking Five Spot burnet moth.

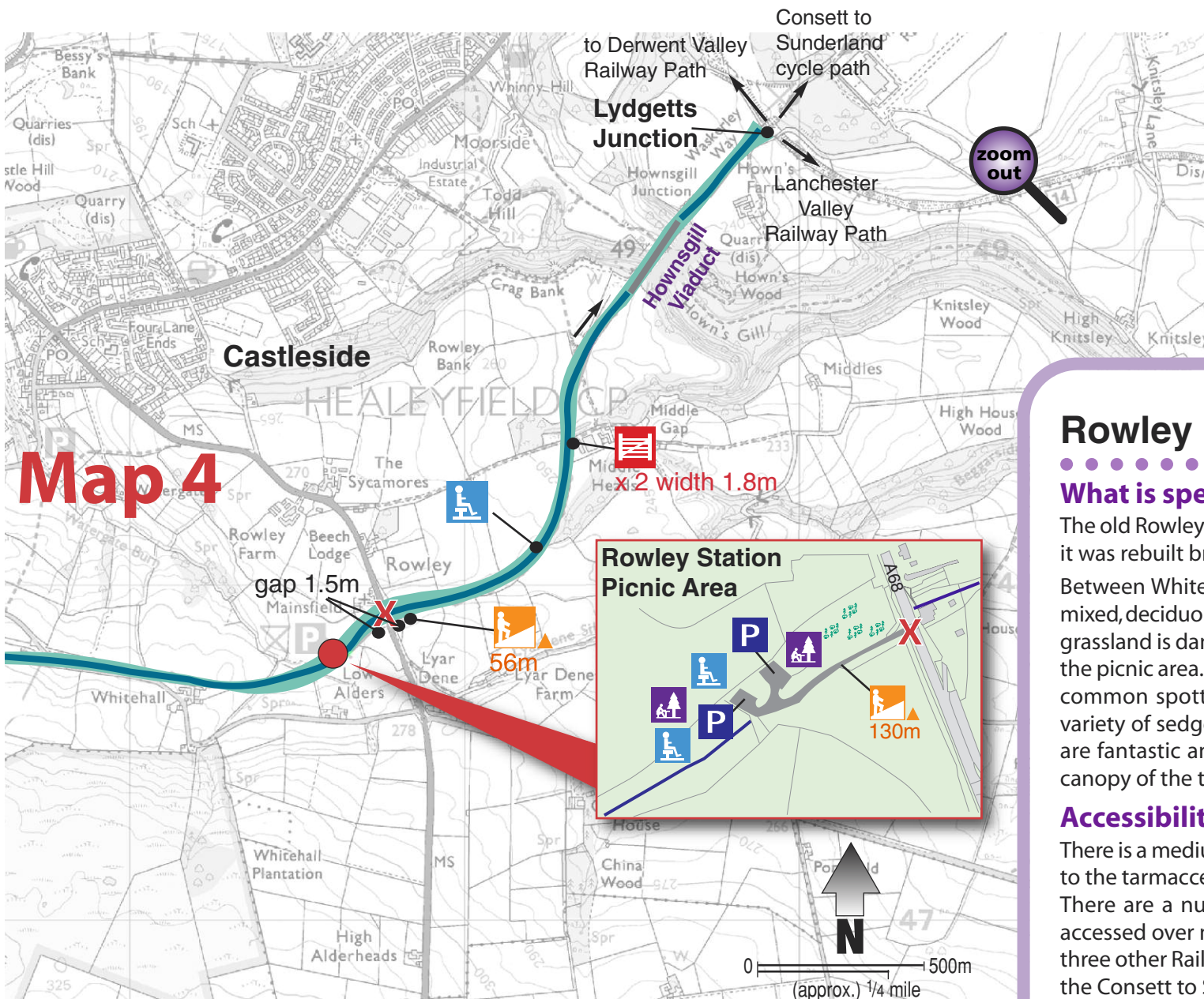
Between Palmers Bridge and Whitehall there are a series of cuttings and embankments lined with birch woodland and surrounded by livestock farmland.

Accessibility statement

The picnic site is flat but there is a steep slope leading back onto the Railway Path. There is one picnic table which can be accessed over mown grass.

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Waskerley Way Railway Path



KEY

- Picnic Area
- Seat
- Gate
- Medium Slope Up 1:20-1:10
- Parking
- Hard Unsealed Surface
- Road Crossing
- Tarmac
- Direction of Travel

Rowley Station Picnic Area

What is special?

The old Rowley Station once stood here. After being dismantled it was rebuilt brick by brick at Beamish Museum.

Between Whitehall and Rowley Station the path cuts through mixed, deciduous woodland and livestock farmland. Much of the grassland is damp pasture, such as Rowley meadow just west of the picnic area. Plants typically found here include great burnet, common spotted orchid, meadowsweet, ragged robin and a variety of sedges. The views from the top of Hownsgill Viaduct are fantastic and you get the rare opportunity to see the top canopy of the trees far below.

Accessibility statement

There is a medium steep slope leading down from the main road to the tarmaced car park. This path is an average of 2.5m wide. There are a number of picnic tables and benches which are accessed over mown grass. At Lydgetts Junction the path joins three other Railway Paths, Lanchester Valley, Derwent Valley and the Consett to Sunderland cycle path.

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