

Dartmoor Towns & Villages














Dartmoor Towns and Villages

There are a number of historic towns and villages within the National Park with many narrow streets and interesting architectural features. Due to the terrain many of these settlements were built wholly or partly on a slope.

During 1999/2000 a partnership comprising Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon County Council and the Countryside Access Group for Dartmoor (now, Dartmoor For All) carried out an accessibility audit of eight larger villages and towns. The aim was to assess how easy it was for less mobile people to enjoy the facilities these settlements had to offer. A number of issues were addressed and the following maps have been produced as a result of these audits.

We hope these maps will give you an idea of what to expect and make your visit easier and more enjoyable.

Key to Dartmoor Towns & Villages

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | Road with accessible pavement |  | Accessible building |
|  | Road with no accessible pavement |  | Building (accessibility unknown at the time of writing) |
|  | Path |  | Parking (no designated spaces) |
|  | Dropped kerb |  | Disabled Parking |
|  | Flat areas with gradient of less than 1 in 20 |  | Disabled parking space |
|  | Accessible Information Centre |  | Accessible toilets (refer to page 4 for detailed toilet symbols) |
|  | Information Board | | |

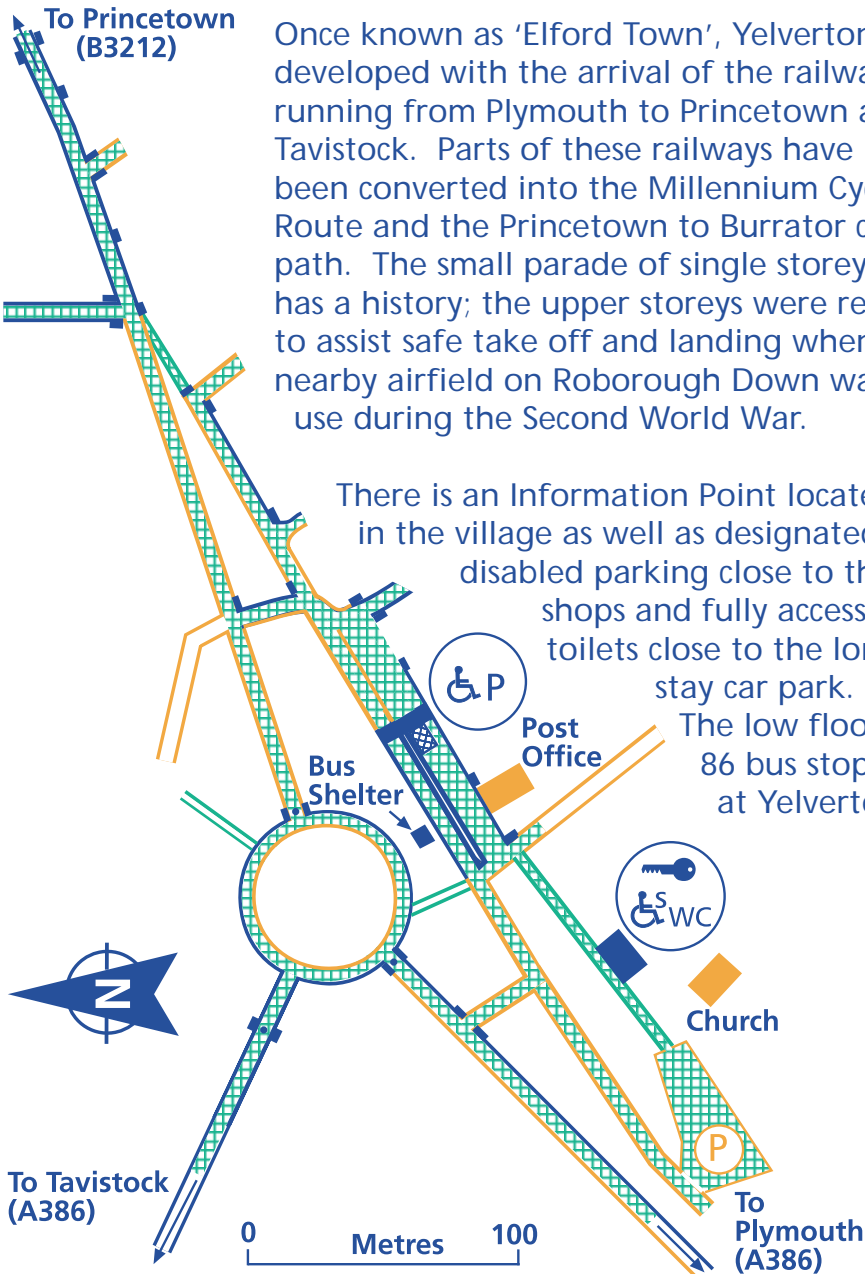
Yelverton

To Princetown
(B3212)

Once known as 'Elford Town', Yelverton developed with the arrival of the railways running from Plymouth to Princetown and Tavistock. Parts of these railways have now been converted into the Millennium Cycle Route and the Princetown to Burrator cycle path. The small parade of single storey shops has a history; the upper storeys were removed to assist safe take off and landing when the nearby airfield on Roborough Down was in use during the Second World War.

There is an Information Point located in the village as well as designated disabled parking close to the shops and fully accessible toilets close to the long stay car park.

The low floored, 86 bus stops at Yelverton.



To Tavistock
(A386)

To Plymouth
(A386)

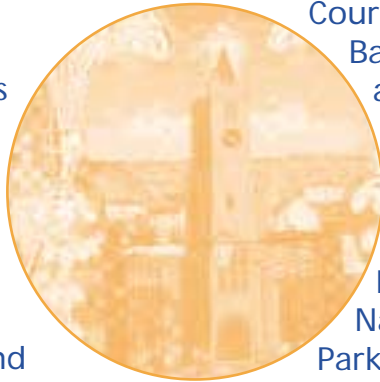
Ashburton

Ashburton, the largest town within the National Park, is nationally renowned for its outstanding architecture. The main reason for the town's growth has been its location on the southern edge of Dartmoor - the interface between moor and lowland.

There is a wide selection of shops and small craft and antique enterprises situated around the level centre of the town. All are easily reached from the conveniently sited car park.

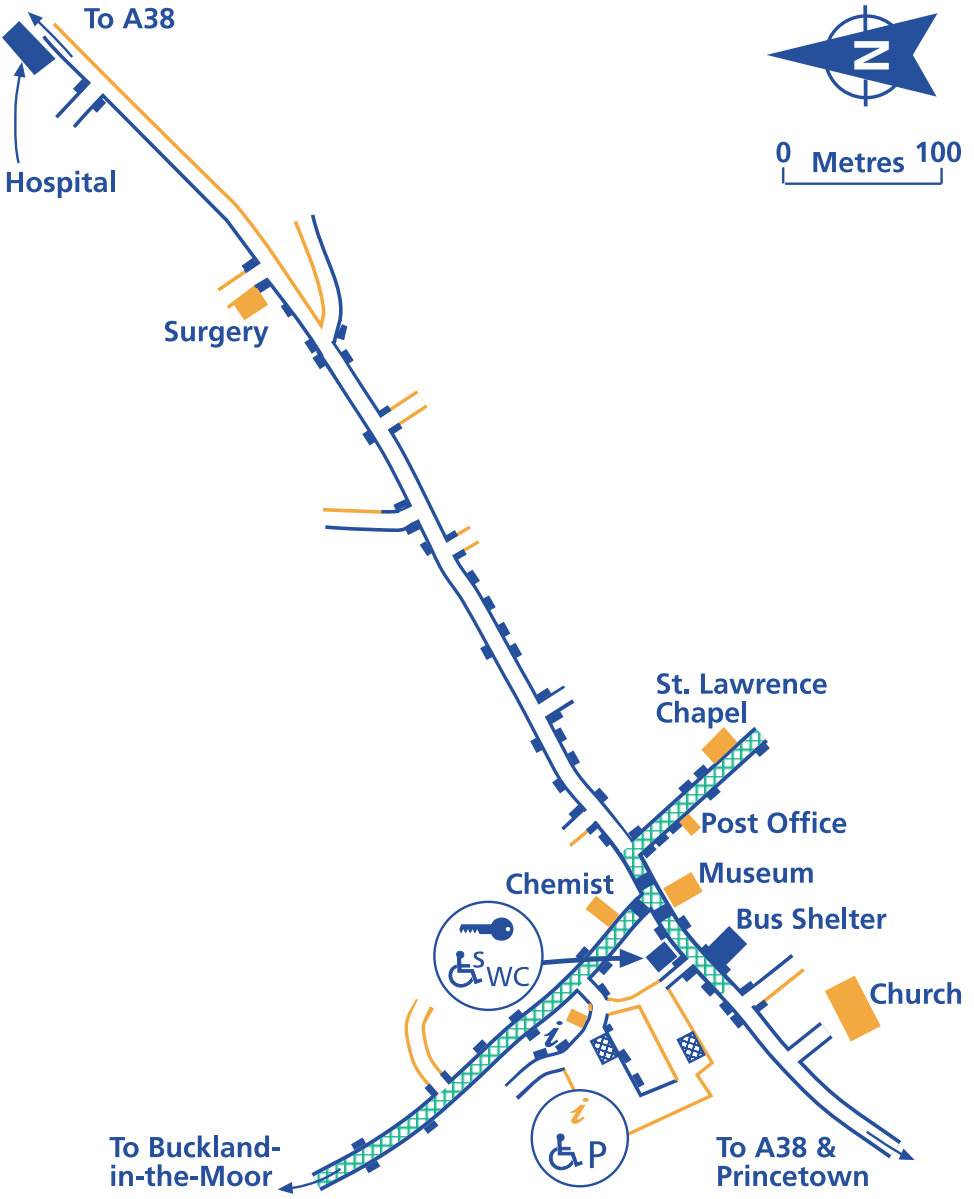
The towers of the Church of St Andrew and Chapel of St Lawrence dominate the Ashburton sky line. The latter building has been a chantry chapel and a

grammar school and, for a long time, the traditional meeting place of the ancient Courts Leet and Baron. With a grant from English Heritage in the 1980s, the Dartmoor National Park Authority oversaw the complete restoration of this historic building.



Chapel of St. Lawrence wall hanging © DNPA

The community-run Information Centre, behind the Town Hall and close to the main car park, can provide a wealth of local knowledge as can the local museum.



Bovey Tracey

Situated on the south eastern foothills of Dartmoor, Bovey Tracey is rich in history and legend. In the centre of the town the River Bovey flows under a bridge which was crossed by Oliver Cromwell on his way to the battle of Bovey Heath in 1646.

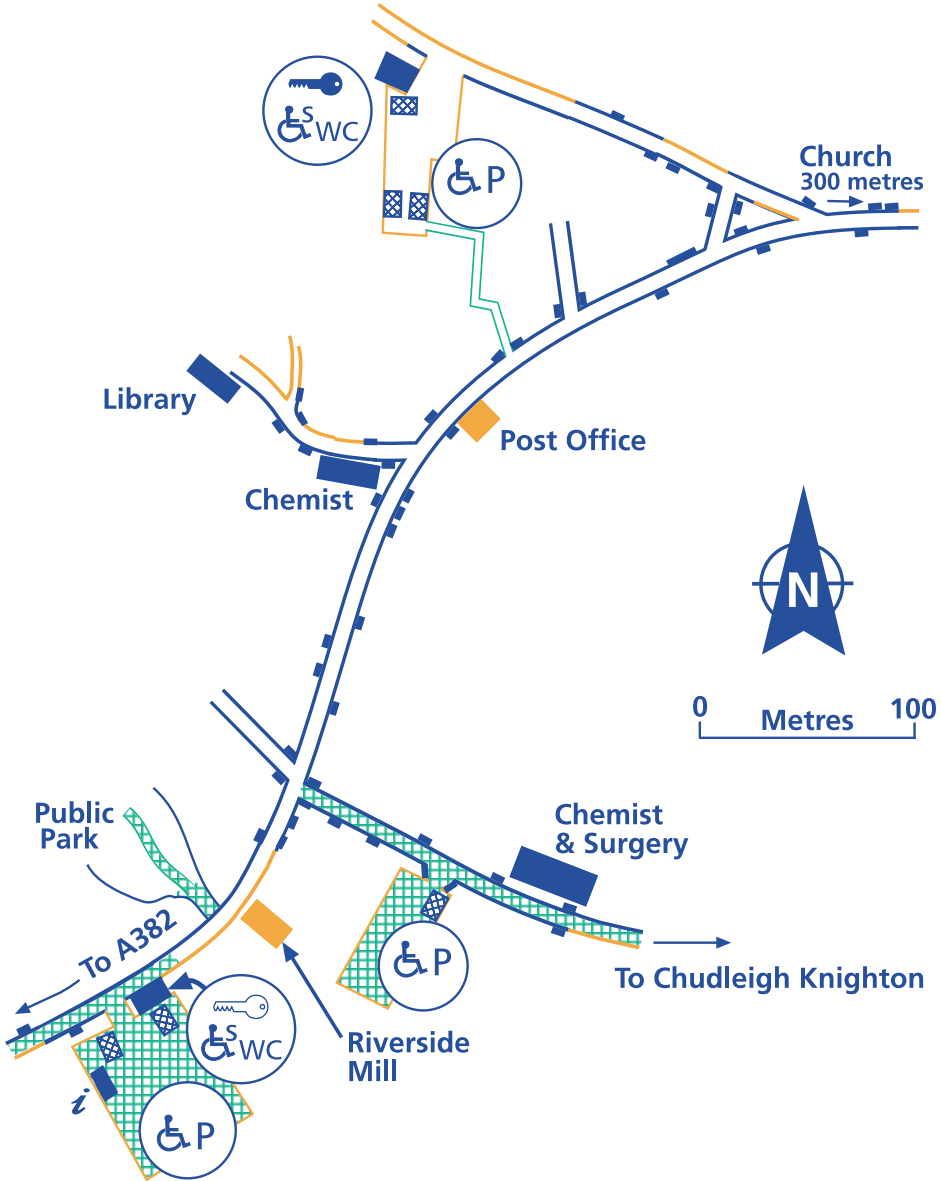


Riverside Mill © DNPA

There is an Information Centre and a good range of small shops including the Riverside Mill where the prestigious Devon Guild of Craftsmen hold exhibitions of locally made arts and crafts. A number of good restaurants, pubs and tea rooms offer menus to suit all tastes. The town has a variety of other fine amenities including a level park, planted with many interesting specimen trees, an outdoor heated swimming pool and two nearby golf courses.



*Bovey Tracey town centre
© DNPA*



Buckfastleigh ●●●●●●

Buckfastleigh is an historic mill town on the southern border of the National Park. The town has a range of interesting shops selling locally produced arts and crafts and a Thursday morning Farmers' Market.

The town's origins are obscure. It may have begun as a key settlement of the Cistercian Abbey of nearby Buckfast. The Cistercians were associated with sheep husbandry and the wool trade. In 1018, a Benedictine Abbey was founded at Buckfast. In 1148, the Abbey became a Cistercian monastery and remained so until its dissolution.

The present Abbey Church was consecrated in 1932. The new church and

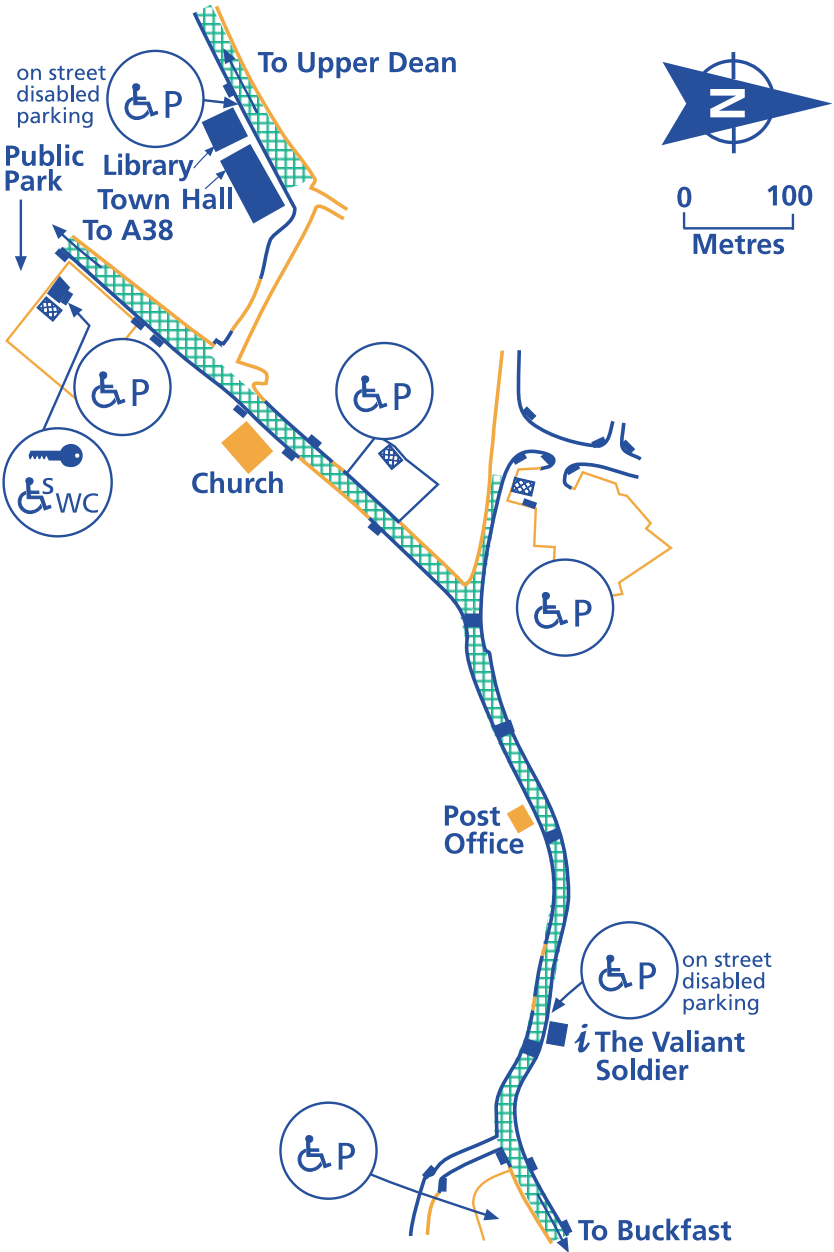
monastery, built by the monks of a community of French Benedictines, are well worth a visit.



The Valiant Soldier © DNPA

The Valiant Soldier was a pub for nearly 200 years. It closed in the 1960s and time stood still. Furniture, pub artefacts and day-to-day

household items were simply left where they stood as the last customer walked out. Now the former inn has been turned into a fascinating place to visit from Easter to the end of October. The atmosphere and sounds of the time have been recreated. A community run Information Centre also operates from here.



Chagford

Chagford is a parish rich in historic remains and it is likely that the area has been continually settled for more than 4,000 years. A charter of 1305 ordained that Chagford should be one of the Stannary Towns of Devon - a place where smelted tin was collected for stamping and taxation. An early record of the tax paid in Chagford showed that more than 40 per cent of Devon's tin production passed through the settlement. Chagford also shared in the prosperity enjoyed by Devon's woollen industry during in the 16th, 18th and 19th centuries.

The church and churchyard of St Michael are well worth a visit. Look out for the finely carved roof bosses, one of which depicts the symbol adopted by the tinnners - three rabbits, each

depicted with two ears. However, only three ears in total are carved on the boss.



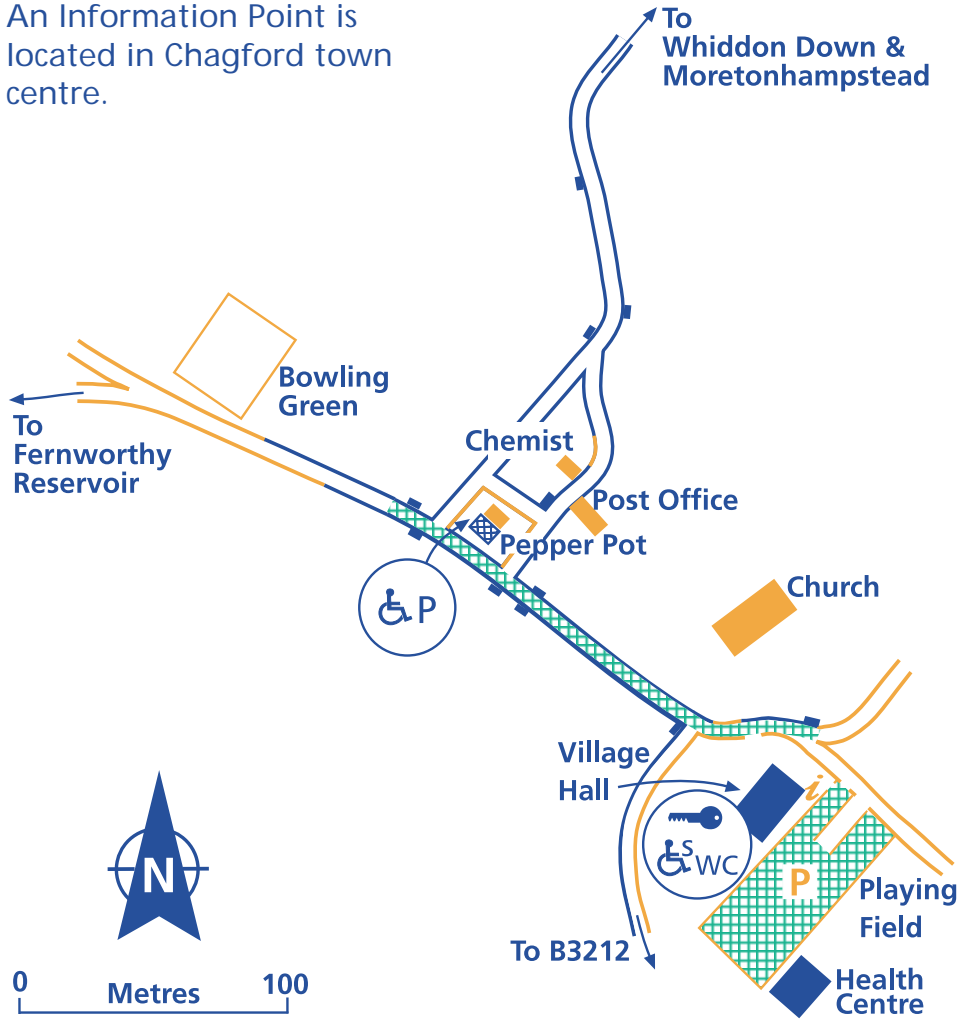
*The Pepper Pot,
Chagford © DNPA*

Also look out for the inscription on the sanctuary floor dedicated to Mary Whiddon, who died on 11 October 1641.

The story is that Mary was shot on the steps of the church immediately after her marriage. Could this have been in R.D.Blackmore's mind when he was writing Lorna Doone?

Today Chagford is a thriving local centre, with many shops and places to eat and stay, situated around the distinctive 'Pepper Pot' markethouse.

An Information Point is located in Chagford town centre.



Moretonhampstead

Moretonhampstead is an old market town, lying on an historic cross roads on the eastern slopes of the National Park, surrounded by some fine countryside. Take time to explore the town. There is a good selection of shops and places to eat and stay, all within easy reach of the car park. From the parish church (circa 1450), situated on the high ground adjoining the Sentry, there are wonderful views of the surrounding countryside. The Sentry is a park-like enclosure providing rest and quiet. Part of it has been used as a children's playground for many years.

To the north east of the Sentry is Mardon House built in 1902 as the rectory, though now a private house. It was a gift of the Hon.

W.F.D. Smith (later Lord Hambledon), son of W.H. Smith, founder of W.H. Smith and Sons. He was Lord of the Manor from 1892 to 1928. In 1907 he built a new house (now the Manor House Hotel) on the Princetown road.



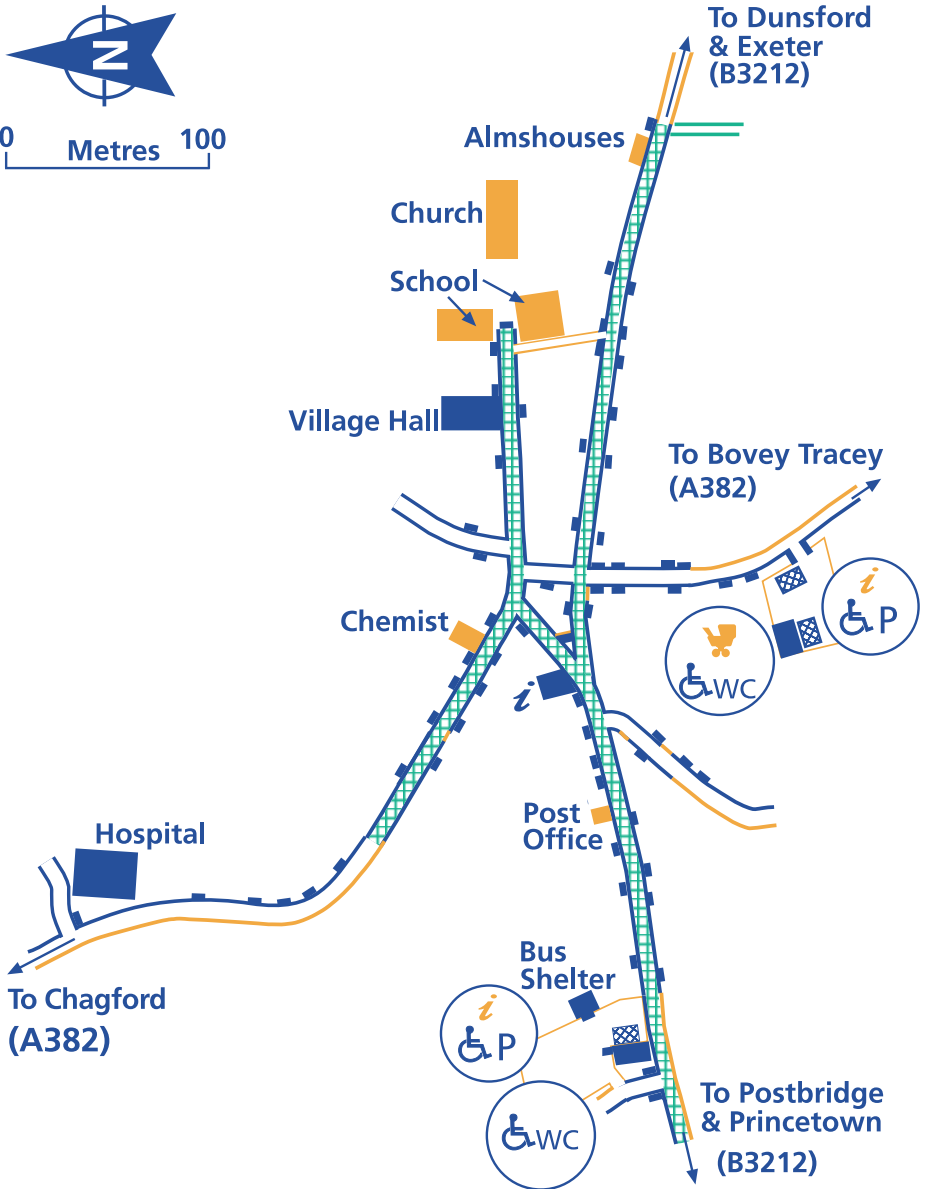
Moretonhampstead Almshouses © DNPA

The Almshouses with their granite arcade date from before 1637 and the 'Cross Tree', now only represented by a cross, minus its shaft, is nearby.

A community run Information Centre is located in the town.



0 Metres 100



Princetown

Situated in the heart of the National Park, Princetown is the highest town in England and is famous for HM Prison Dartmoor, which once housed prisoners from the Napoleonic Wars. Here, too, is the Dartmoor National Park Authority's award-winning High Moorland Visitor Centre, which is open throughout the year. The Centre offers a comprehensive information service, contains induction loops and a number of audio and sensory displays that will appeal to all ages. A wheelchair is available if required.

To the west of the town is the 198m (644ft), North Hessary Tor, BBC transmitter mast. This was built in 1955 to serve Devon and Cornwall.

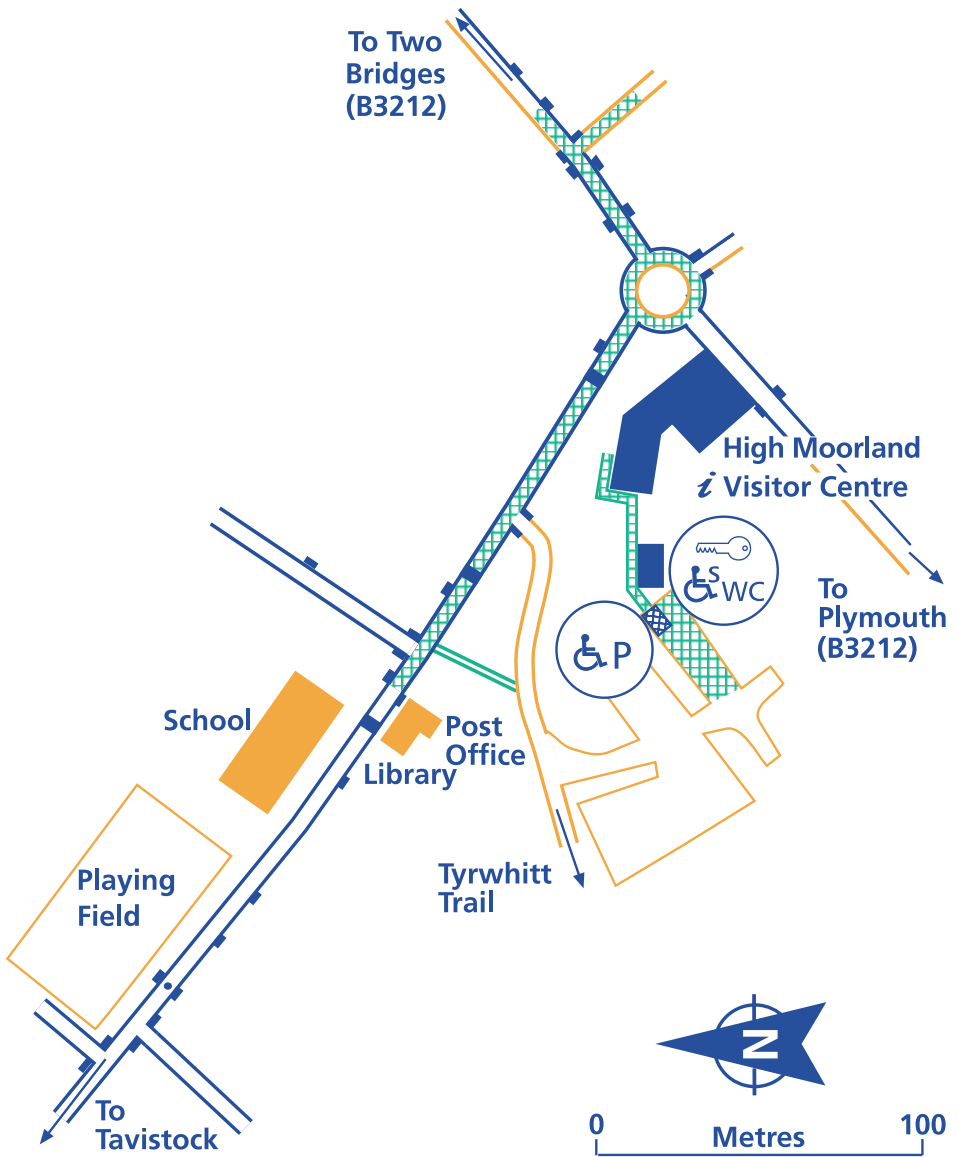
The Tyrwhitt Trails give a good insight into the history of this fascinating settlement and provide opportunities to gain a feel for the high moorland beyond.



High Moorland Visitor Centre © DNPA



Visitor Centre interpretation © DNPA



Widcombe-in-the-

Widcombe-in-the-Moor has become world famous as a result of its annual fair, held on the second Tuesday of September, and the associated song featuring Uncle Tom Cobley and his old grey mare.

Sheltering in its own valley Widcombe-in-the-Moor appears to be situated at a low altitude. It is in fact 244 metres (800ft) above sea level. The parish is one of the largest in the country and the village is dominated by the magnificent church of St Pancras. The church house is now owned by the National Trust and is used as an Information Centre and shop.

The village green, with its ancient sycamore trees, is often peacefully grazed by ponies that have come down from the surrounding

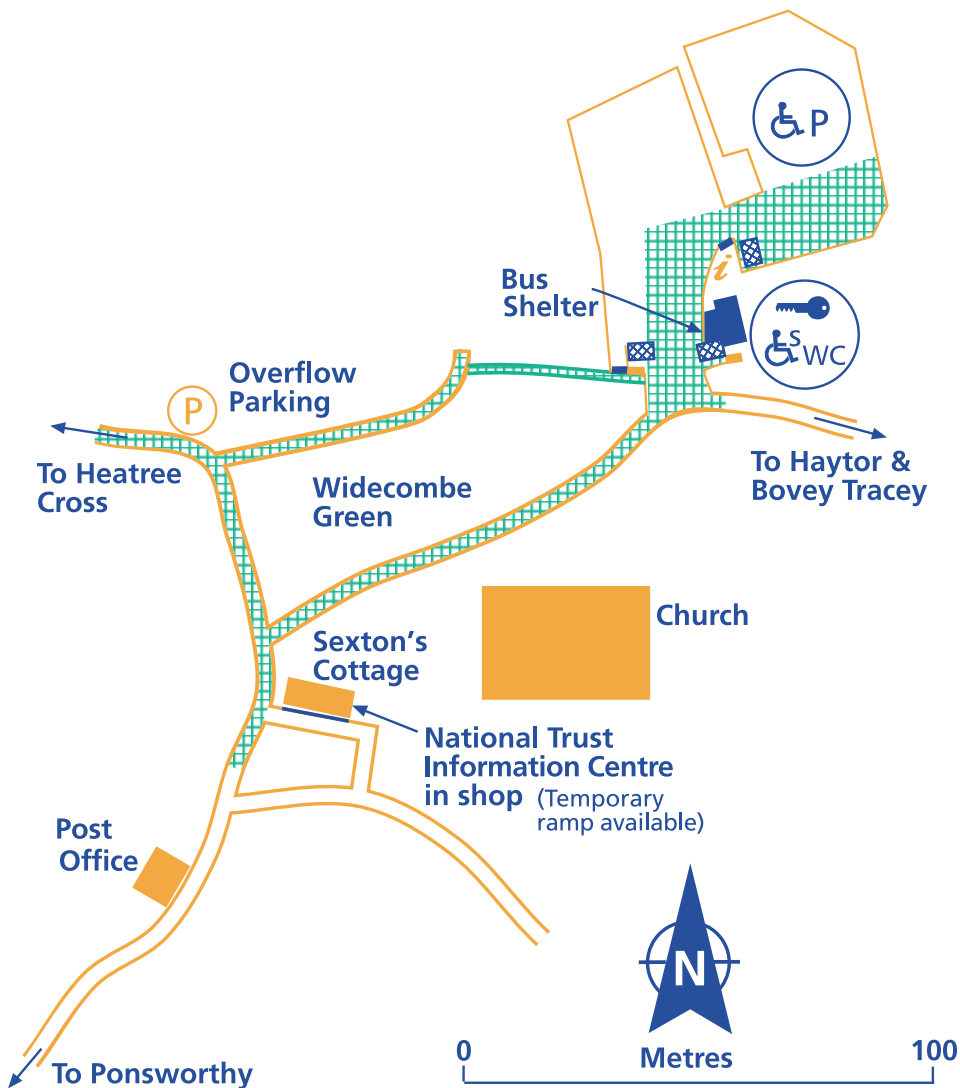
commons. However, during the 15th century it bore witness to a far less relaxing sight. Formerly known as Butt Park it was used by the young men of the parish to practise their archery skills.



*Uncle Tom
Cobley © DNPA*

The village contains several shops and a selection of establishments offering a variety of meals, from pub lunches to cream teas.

Moor



Viewpoints

There are many places to stop and admire the beautiful countryside, and perhaps to have a picnic. The following are suggestions for some of the best views in the National Park and many are included in the Route Guides on pages 31 to 41 – there are many others too, and exploring the Dartmoor area is a joy in itself.

The nearest accessible public toilets to each viewpoint are given. Please check the section on toilets for full information.

Combestone Tor

DNP map ref: A2 **OS grid ref: SX 670 718**

 **WC** - Venford Reservoir

Combestone Tor is on the road between Holne and Hexworthy. The views across high Dartmoor and the Dart valley are tremendous (weather permitting).

Haytor - Top Car Park

DNP map ref: B1 **OS grid ref: SX 759 767**

 **WC** - Haytor Lower Car Park

Here, at the bottom of the famous tor, you will be treated to good views towards the Teign estuary and the south Devon coast.

Leat Car Park above Clearbrook

DNP map ref: A2 **OS grid ref: SX 519 650**

  **WC** - Yelverton Roundabout

A popular car park, situated in an area of heather, splendid in July and August. The views southwards are down the Plym valley, and include Bickleigh Church and Plymouth Sound.

Mardon Down

DNP map ref: B1

OS grid ref: SX 76 87/77 87

 WC - Moretonhampstead

Mardon Down, where a number of small, informal parking bays exist, is situated close to Moretonhampstead. The complete panorama includes Cosdon Beacon to the north and Haytor and Hound Tor to the south.

Moorgate, Shapley Common

DNP map ref: B1

OS grid ref: SX 698 834

 WC - Moretonhampstead

A fine viewpoint, about 3 miles (5km) west of Moretonhampstead, on the B3212. You will see fine views of north Devon.

Pork Hill

DNP map ref: A1

OS grid ref: SX 531 751

  WC - Tavistock

This car park is right on the western edge of the high moor, off the B3357 between Princetown and Tavistock. From here, you will see fine views across west Devon, and Cornwall to Bodmin Moor. A viewing table helps to locate major features.

Roborough Down

DNP map ref: A2

OS grid ref: SX 51 67

  WC - Yelverton Roundabout

Roborough Down is a large area of open moorland on the western edge of the moor. There are many parking areas from which there are good views.

Widcombe Hill

DNP map ref: B1

OS grid ref: SX 734 767

  WC - Widcombe-in-the-Moor

Widcombe Hill is located between Haytor and Widcombe-in-the-Moor. From the small parking area there are excellent views over this fine Dartmoor village.