



1 Hazel Close, Grewelthorpe, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 3BL

Fountains Ways – Ancient Paths for Modern Pilgrims



Formal launch: Saturday 21st March, 2026

St Andrew's Church, Kirkby Malzeard, HG4 3RT

You are invited to attend the formal launch of three new pilgrimage routes. Crossing the Diocese of Leeds' *Fountains Benefice*, situated west of Ripon, they are located in a particularly beautiful part of North Yorkshire. Inspired by a similar project a few miles from here, we set out, as a planning team, to create a series of local pilgrimage routes, including visits to the historic churches of these parishes and offering a means of exploring and appreciating the glorious variety of countryside around us.

The first pilgrimage route, *Abbots' Way*, was launched, informally and successfully, on 13th September last year, coinciding with *Yorkshire Churches Day*. As such, it was one of the designated walking routes of *Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust* – whose chairman, Tom Ramsden, is part of our planning team. Some 19 individuals joined in the 9-mile route, which included visits to our churches at Sawley, Aldfield and Winksley, along with the renowned *St Mary's Church, Studley*, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site managed by The National Trust.

The other two *Fountains Ways* pilgrimage routes being launched formally on March 21st, and, importantly to be walked on the day, are the *Curlew Way* and the *Fishers' Way*. The *Curlew Way* includes the early 20th Century *Arts and Crafts* Church of St Cuthbert and St Oswald, Winksley, and the ancient medieval Church of St Andrew, Kirkby Malzeard. This fairly gentle route takes in some beautiful, undulating scenery, passes through the villages of Laverton and Galphay, and crosses the River Laver – which eventually meanders its way to Ripon. The *Fishers' Way* includes the Churches of St Andrew, Kirkby Malzeard, St James and the Methodist, Grewelthorpe, and St John the Evangelist, Mickley. This slightly more exacting route, whose churches are named after three of Jesus' closest disciples – all of whom were fishermen – includes the wonderful Hackfall Woods, with its 18th century Aislabie Family follies, and for a while runs alongside the River Ure, a fly-fishing river of some significance.

For those wishing to take part in walking the pilgrimage routes on March 21st, there will be a brief gathering, prayer and briefing at 10am in St Andrew's, Kirkby Malzeard. Two groups will then set out at about 10.30am, either walking north on the *Fishers' Way* or south on the *Curlew Way*. Both walks are in the region of 7 miles and will take just over 4 hours, including reflective stops in the churches, where there will be displays and family-style activities to engage in. If you are planning on walking, please bring a day pack, with packed lunch, a drink, waterproof clothing, etc, and wear stout walking shoes or boots. Please be aware that there are uneven sections on both walks, with various styles to climb over, and with significantly steeper elements on the *Fishers' Way*.

We will reconvene at St Andrew's at about 3.30pm, for a short act of Thanksgiving, for which we hope to have a small brass ensemble, and +Anna, Bishop of Ripon, saying a few words of encouragement to us all. Those not wishing to walk, but simply to join us to celebrate the inauguration of *Fountains Ways*, will join us at this point. This will then be followed by a reception, with refreshments, celebratory cake, tray-bakes, parkin, etc. Along with yourselves, we are inviting the press and our various benefactors to attend, as well as representatives of the Church, the National Trust and local businesses.

If you would like to attend, please let us know, for catering purposes; explaining whether you intend to walk before the afternoon celebration (and which pilgrimage route you would prefer to walk), or simply to come for the latter at 3.30pm. Please contact Karen Pickles regarding attendance: 07498491191 or karenpickles@btinternet.com stating whether you have particular dietary issues. For those with nut allergies, please note that we cannot guarantee that everything served is completely nut-free.

We very much hope that you will be able to join us to celebrate the launch of this exciting new venture. We hope and trust that in the months and years to come these pilgrimage routes will prove both life-giving and spiritually uplifting for those who choose to engage in them, and also transformational in building up our local communities and in supporting local businesses. We are very grateful for significant support from North Yorkshire County Council, Visit North Yorkshire and various other donors, and also for the prayers and encouragement of local friends in helping us to get this far.

With kindest regards,

Revd Andrew Cromarty, Project Lead, on behalf of the *Fountains Ways* Planning Team