

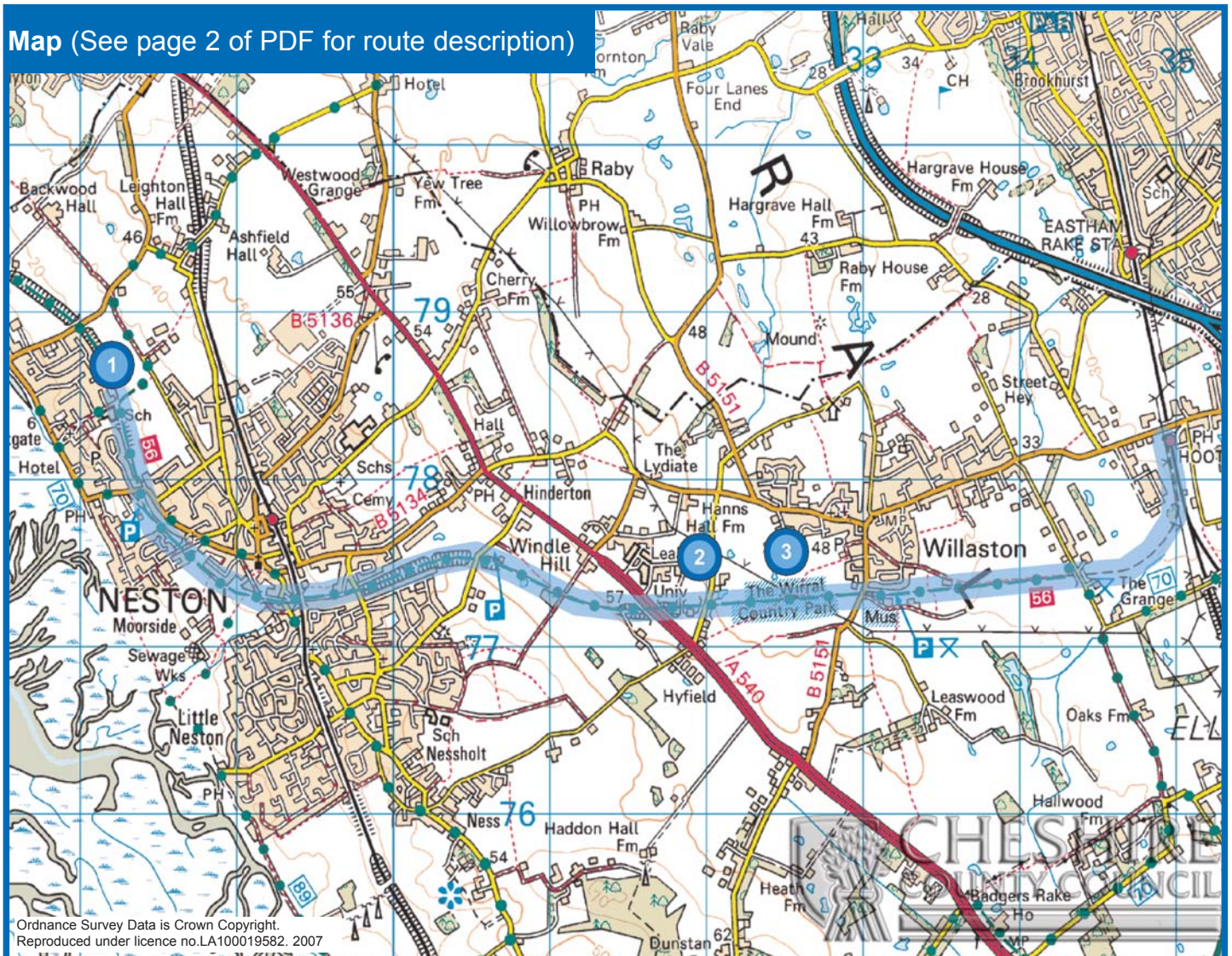
## The Wirral Way

### Route Summary - Cycle Ride

The Wirral Way is based on the former Hooton to West Kirby Branch Line Railway and forms part of NCN 56, 70 & 71.

<b>Grade</b>	Traffic Free
<b>Distance</b>	19km / 12miles
<b>Accessibility</b>	Level terrain, surface of crushed limestone, with a parallel track of sand for horse riders
<b>Allow</b>	1-2 hours (end to end)
<b>Start</b>	Parking available at Lees Lane picnic site, Hadlow Road Station and Parkgate Old Baths site
<b>Map</b>	OS Explorer 266

Map (See page 2 of PDF for route description)



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### Route Details

Step back in time at Hadlow Road Station, where the waiting room and ticket office have been restored. From here you can cycle up to Parkgate, with several picnic stops along the Wirral Way. Enjoy an ice cream while you admire the view over the Dee Estuary at Parkgate.

October 1st 1866 saw the opening of the single line railway from Hooton to Parkgate. The line was extended to West Kirby in 1886. Prior to 1948, the line was run jointly by the Great Western Railway (GWR) and the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS). The line was used to carry freight such as coal from Neston colliery and milk from the local farms. Day-trippers travelled to get to the seaside at Parkgate, while children journeyed to school and businessmen commuted to Liverpool.

After ninety years of operation, the passenger service closed on 15th September 1956, although the Royal Train, carrying the Queen, passed along the line on 11th July 1957. Finally, the last freight train, headed by LMS 2-6-4 Tank Engine No. 42229 left West Kirby for Hooton on 7th May 1962.

Wirral Country Park was the first country park in Britain, established by Cheshire County Council in 1969. The footpath, horse ride and cycle path are known as the Wirral Way.

### Route Directions

The way is part of NCN 56, 70 & 71 It is linear and cyclists can access it at either end, parking is available at the Old Baths (1) site (just north of Parkgate), Lees Lane car park (2), or Hadlow Road Station (3).

The way is divided into two parallel tracks in places; a crushed stone track for walkers and cyclists, and a sand track for riders.

You can explore the surrounding area by using local roads and bridleways. You could try following the route for Signals and Saltmarsh