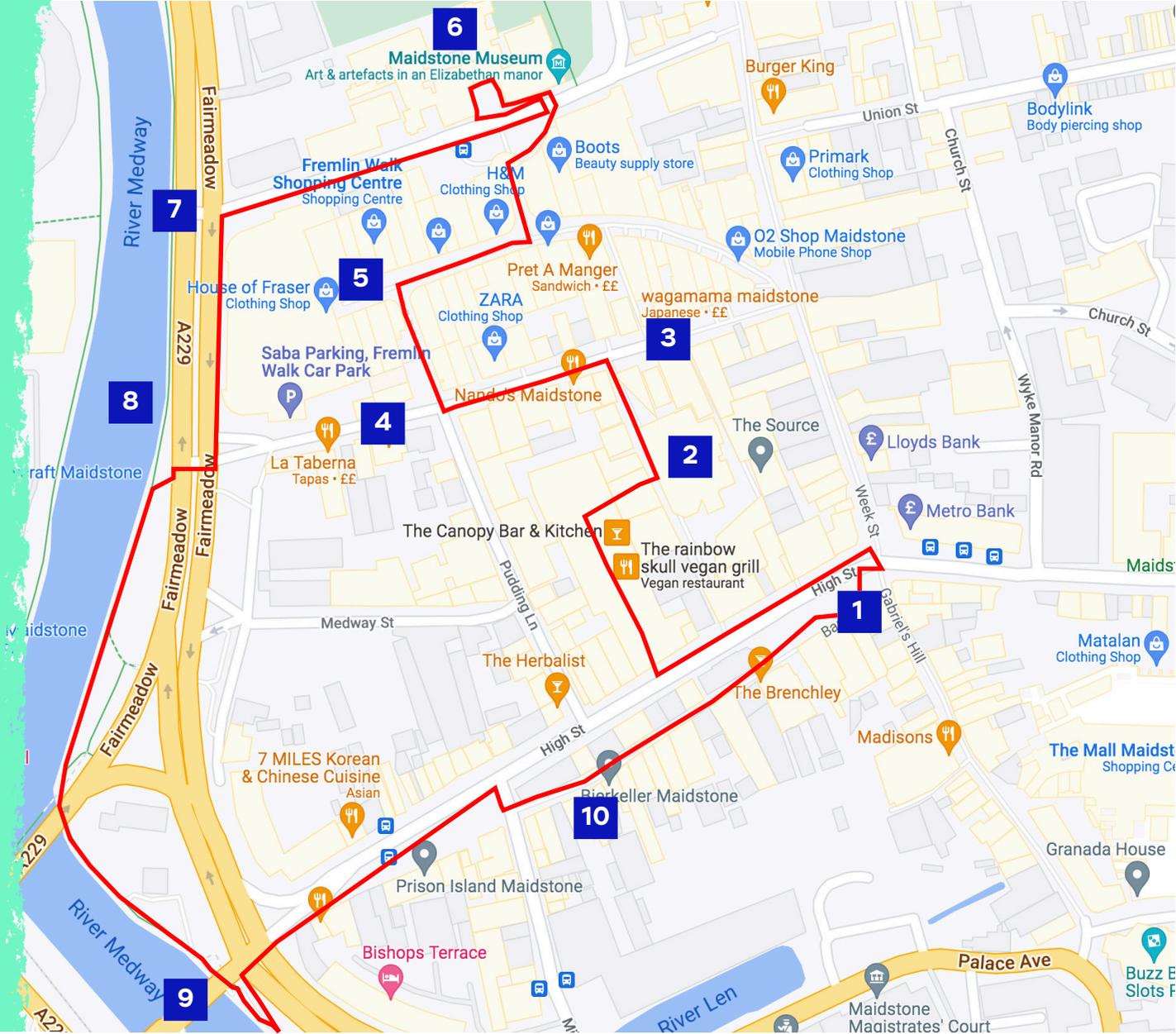


The Maidstone Mindful Route

The Young Lives Foundation and Mid Kent Mind have partnered to create 'The Maidstone Mindful Route' - a walk around Maidstone encouraging you to connect with the local area during Mental Health Awareness Week. Use this map to get involved - and share your pics with

#MaidstoneMindfulRoute

Also tag @ylfcharity and @midkentmind across socials.



The Route

It's time for the walk to begin!
We hope you enjoy your adventure.



1. Our route starts at the Queen Victoria statue in Jubilee Square! Did you know this was a gift from High Sheriff Alexander Randall to Maidstone in 1862? Carefully cross the road using the crossing opposite the bank, heading down past the Muggleton Inn and into the Royal Star Arcade. Did you know that this used to be a coaching inn that Queen Victoria once visited? Walk through to the other side and be sure to take your time - there is a balloon to spot on the wall!



2. Upon leaving the Royal Star Arcade, you will come out to the Maidstone Distillery. Did you know that Maidstone has a rich history with Gin, thanks to Mayor George Bishop, and that the town used to be renowned for producing one of the finest Gins in Europe? Once done, head down the street to your next marker!



3. On your right you should see the Hazlitt Theatre - one of the centrepieces of Maidstone's cultural heart. Did you know that this was named after famous essayist William Hazlitt who was born in Maidstone in 1778? There are many other historic buildings in this area you may notice. When you are ready, head down the road to the crossing point opposite the archway into Fremlin Walk.

Did you know? Maidstone's name is derived from the Saxon Maeidesstana - taken to mean 'the maidens' stone'.

Source: brittanica.com

4. Fremlin Walk shopping centre was built on the old Fremlin's Brewery. The archway and clock on Earl street are part of the original structure from the Brewery! If you head up the stairs you will find a small display cabinet in the wall, displaying some of the original artefacts from the brewery as well as the brand new 'Buddy Bench' launched for Mental Health Awareness Week. Why not take a minute to sit on the bench? When you are ready walk down to H&M, turn left and walk through into the bandstand.



5. Did you know this bandstand area is called Havoc square, named after the havoc caused in the Battle of Maidstone in 1648! Take 3 minutes to sit on a bench and practise some deep breathing. When you are ready, cross the road at the traffic lights and head into the museum's courtyard.



Don't Forget! Share your photos and videos using #MaidstoneMindfulRoute so we can see what you discover!

6. Maidstone Museum opened in 1858, originally called the Charles museum after Maidstone's Dr Thomas Charles and boasts a variety of amazing artefacts! Whilst in the courtyard why not try some grounding techniques? Think about 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear and 1 thing you can touch! When you're ready, cross back over the road at the lights and head down to the bottom of the road.

7. Walk down the road, parallel with the main road until you come to a set of traffic lights leading down to the riverfront. Cross carefully and head down the stairs to the riverfront. (Ramp access further along the pathway if needed.)

8. Did you know that this river was used for transport and to carry much of Maidstone's trade, which led to much commercial success! As you walk through the river park, there are several areas where you can stop and enjoy nature. Why not take a minute to practice some deep breathing or enjoy a slow walk, enjoying the fresh air!

9. Continue all the way along the riverfront to where the Kentish Lady is moored. Why not see if you can spot some swans on the river or the information board about the bridge? When you're ready, proceed up the ramp to the crossing which will bring you back to the high street.

10. Continue up until you cross the road and head up Bank street, the smaller pathway running parallel to the town hall and Bierkeller. Many shops here date from the 15th to 17th centuries and can still be recognised by their overhanging upper floors, a feature known as jettied. Try to look up and spot the crossed Golden Rifles - these signify a 19th century sign for trade! Be sure to look out for the town hall plaque too as well as any other old architectural points! Did you know the town hall has its own cells where prisoners used to be held? Head back to the Queen Victoria statue and snap a selfie - you have completed the route!



Congratulations!

We hope you've enjoyed having the opportunity to take part in this Mindful walk - marking Mental Health Awareness Week.

This walk aimed to highlight that small things - like appreciating nature or feeling a sense of belonging for where we live - can lead to huge benefits for our mental health and our wellbeing.

Don't forget to use the #MaidstoneMindfulRoute to share your walk with others - and also download your free certificate to show you took part in the walk.

Facts About Your Walk

- Did you know that Maidstone Museum's Great Hall was built during Queen Elizabeth's reign - with the side wings added to the building and built upon over 400 years? A vast majority of the museum is also structured with accessibility in mind.

- Maidstone is the only borough in England where the swans belong to the Mayor - not The Queen. Back in 1619, King James I granted this privilege to the Mayor along the stretch of the River Medway that flows through the town. You can learn more about the River Park Nature trail at: <https://www.maidstoneriverpark.co.uk/nature-trail/>

- During the Anglo Saxon period, the river not only provided a means of transport and trade, but represented a physical and symbolic boundary. It has been suggested that the social division of Men of Kent and Kentish Men could go as far back as that time.

For more facts about the places you have seen today head to www.visitmaidstone.com

Want to learn more about the work the Young Lives Foundation and Mid Kent Mind do?

Visit www.ylf.org.uk or www.midkentmind.org.uk