

- Route length:** 47 miles (75.6km) 56% on-road, 44% off-road
- Start point:** ME1 1LD (Rochester) or ME143JX (Detling), TN248QQ (Ashford), CT1 2DA(Canterbury)
- Points of interest:** Rochester Cathedral, Rochester Castle, Thurnham Castle, Lenham Cross, Canterbury Cathedral
- OS Maps:** Landranger 178, 189 & 179, Explorer 163, 148, 137, 149, 138, 150

This wonderful cycle route follows much of the historic Pilgrims Way. It has been created to provide fantastic cycling for everyone from the mountain bike enthusiast to a family wishing to enjoy a sunny day cycling leisurely through the heart of Kent.

This longer route can be quite challenging to cycle in one go. Fortunately, it's relatively simple to divide into satisfying and varied sections using many access points along the way, such as Ashford and Maidstone where there are good public transport links and plenty of parking.

Cycling west to east, your journey begins at the historic walls of Rochester's cathedral and castle. Rochester Cathedral is England's second oldest founded in 604AD with its 12th century Norman keep, has played an important part in England's military history standing guard over the River Medway.



Leaving the Medway Towns, you join a relatively quiet road network leading towards the county town of Maidstone before cutting through off-road tracks alongside the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Keep pedalling on and up through shady woodlands to Blue Bell Hill passing the Robin Hood at the top. The charming Robin Hood pub is said to be one of the oldest in England and was regularly frequented by pilgrims on their long walk to Canterbury.

Enjoy the quiet lanes and dedicated cycle track before joining the safe route over Detling Hill on Jade's Crossing. The ride can be easily started at this point from nearby Maidstone. There have been several archaeological discoveries in this area including Anglo-Saxon graves, the remains of a Roman house and the flint walls of Thurnham Castle, also known as Godard's Castle.

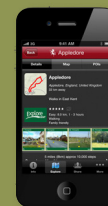
An interesting mix of quiet lanes, off-road bridleways and byways will then lead you through the villages of Charing and Westwell before reaching the outskirts of Ashford. Charing is a picturesque village dating from 799AD and is situated on the route of the Pilgrim's Way. Four great mills have dominated this landscape at one time or another - two watermills taking advantage of the Upper Great Stour and two large windmills. One watermill and one windmill remain in the village today.

Coming into Ashford, follow the dedicated cycle route meets the River Stour and National Cycle route 18. Here you can choose to leave the ride and catch the train from Ashford train station or carry on cycling to Canterbury.

The final 17-mile stretch takes you through the valley of the Great Stour into the City of Canterbury. The first section follows peaceful lanes through the village of Wye and up the steep hills to Crundale before heading down the other side to Chartham. Here the route re-joins the Great Stour taking you along a newly created off-road path running adjacent to the river and on into Canterbury's centre with its stunning cathedral – the oldest in England.

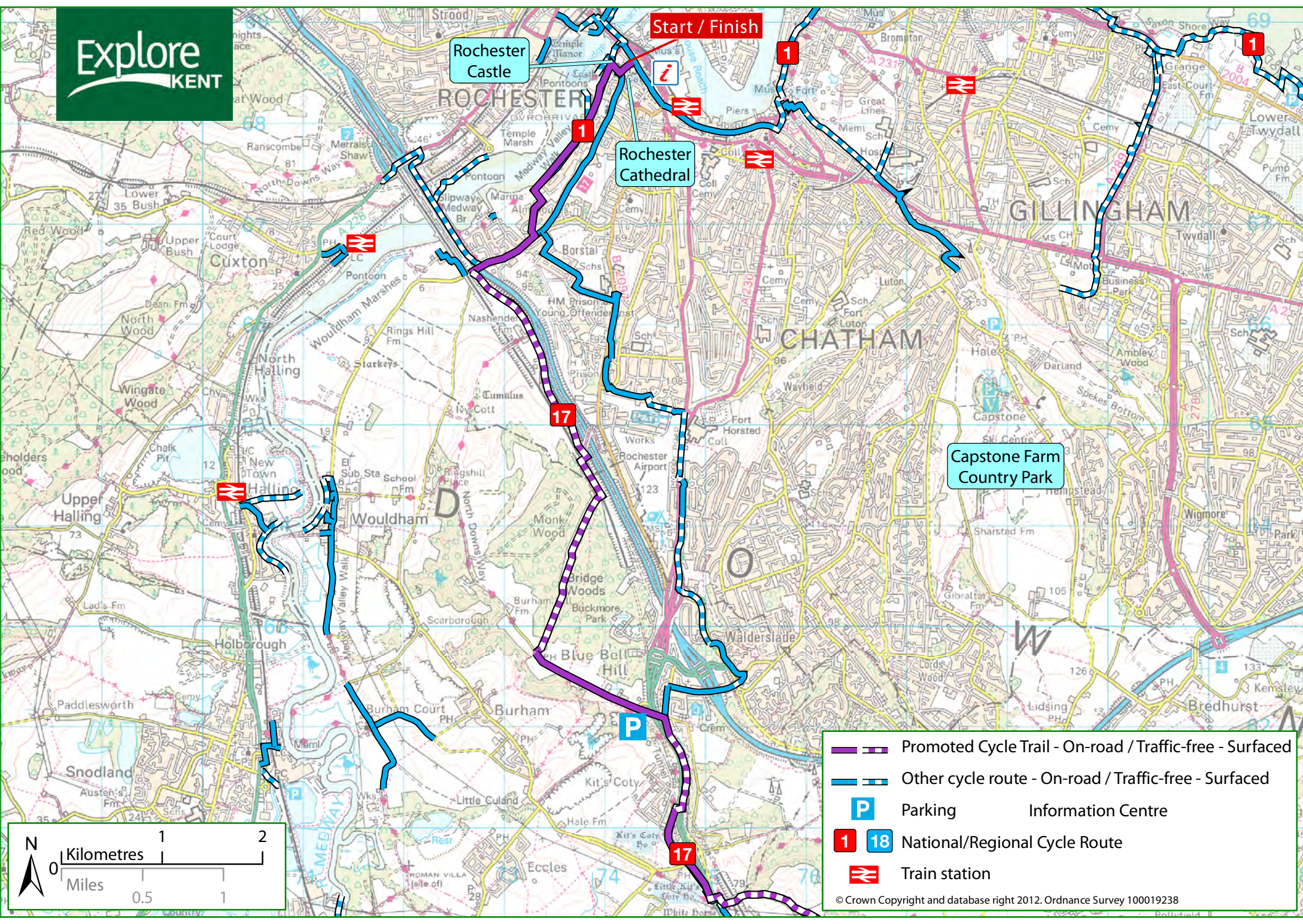
Parking: Pay and Display car parks in Rochester, Maidstone, Ashford and Canterbury, along with park and rides.

By Train: Rochester Station, Ashford International and Canterbury stations are all a short distance from the route.



This route and others are available to download for free on the Explore Kent iPhone and Android app.







With maps, points of interest and route directions, it is really easy to enjoy this route. Download it from the app store now.

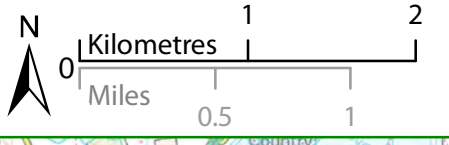


Rochester Castle

Rochester Cathedral








Capstone Farm Country Park

-  Promoted Cycle Trail - On-road / Traffic-free - Surfaced
-  Other cycle route - On-road / Traffic-free - Surfaced
-  Parking
-   National/Regional Cycle Route
-  Train station

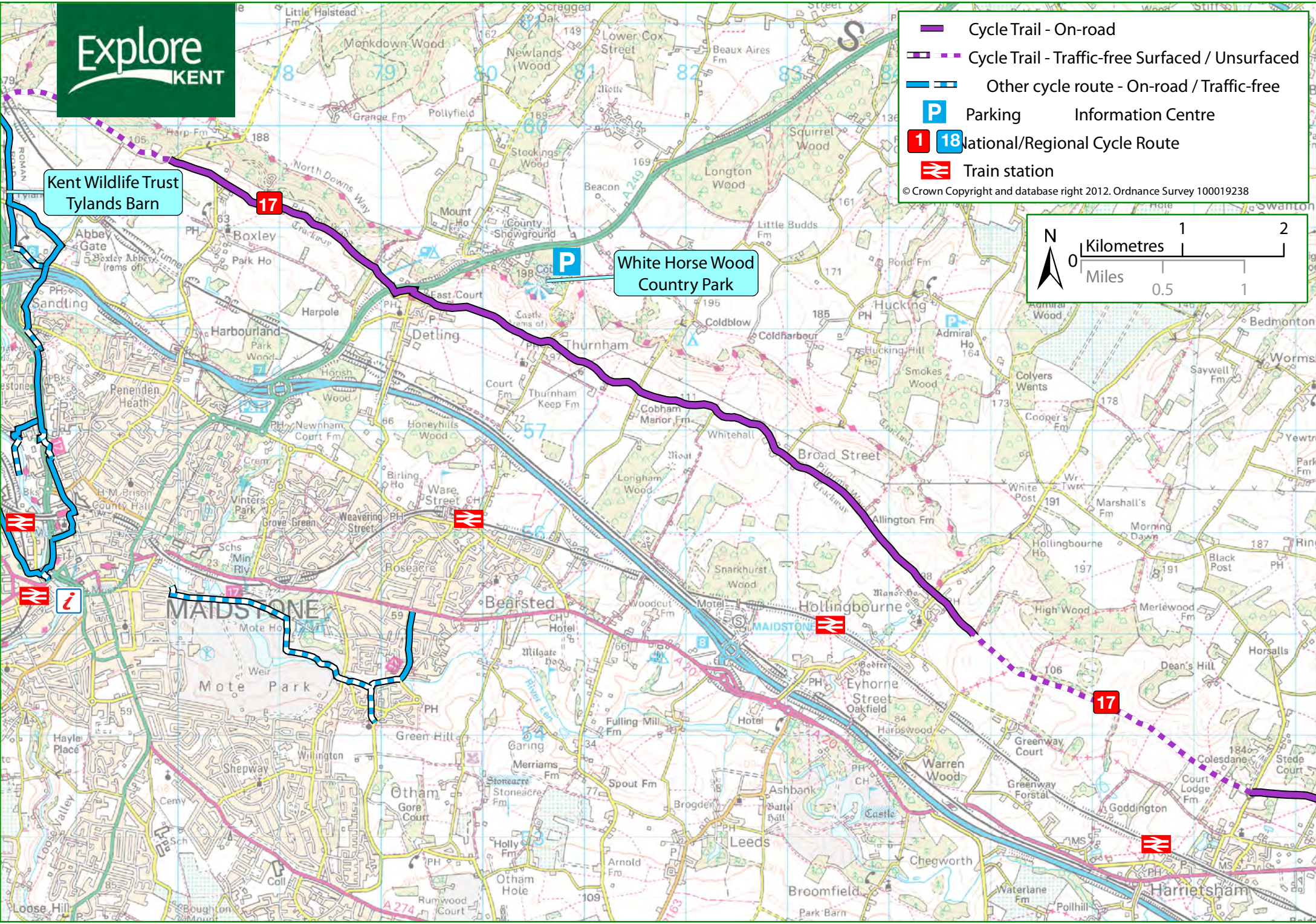
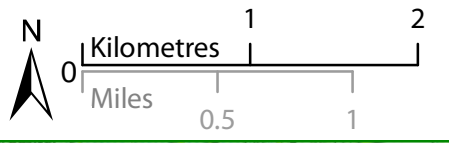


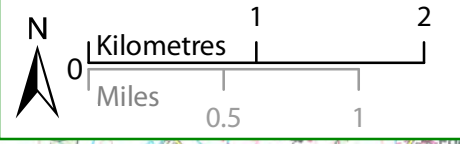
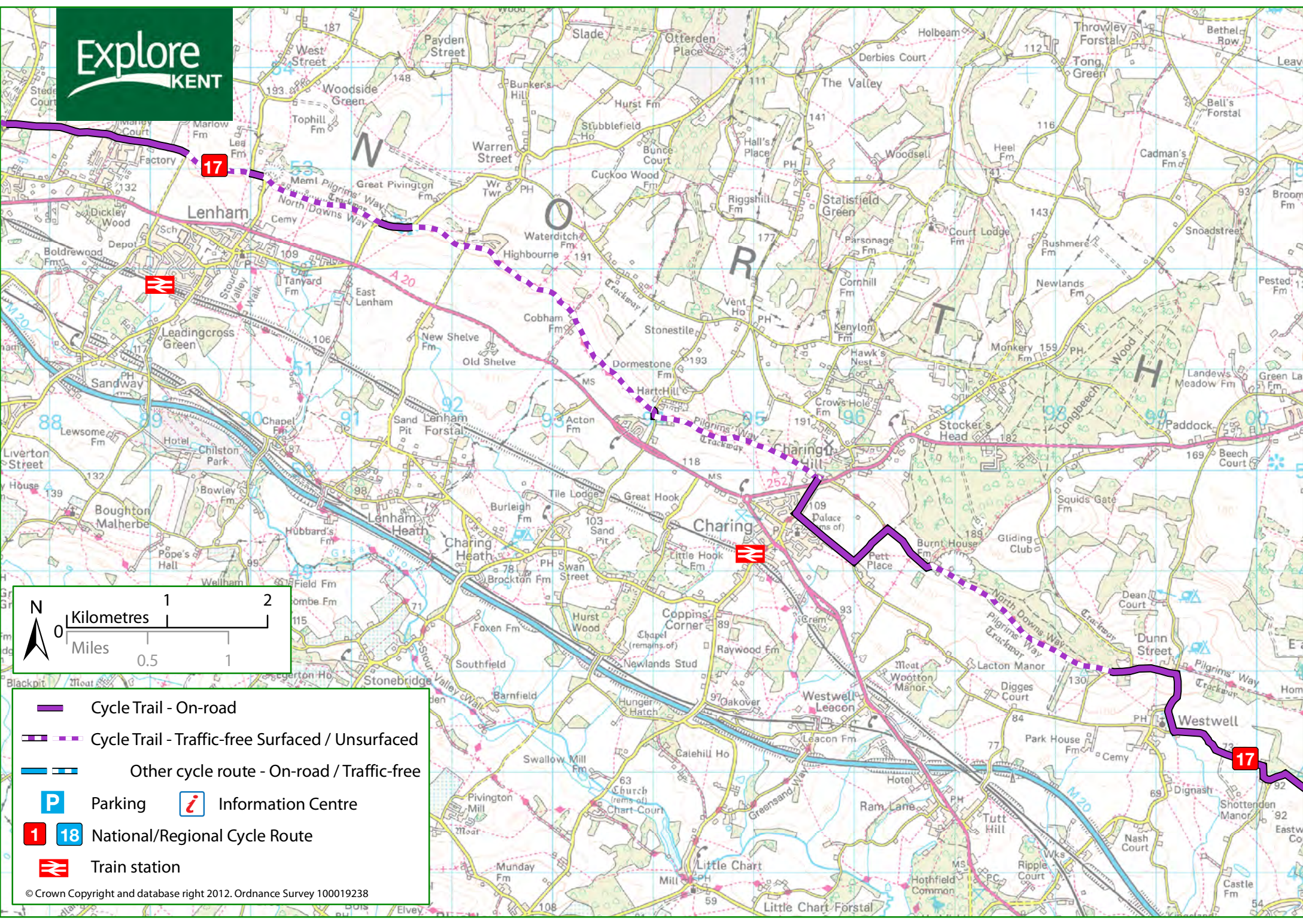
Kent Wildlife Trust
Tylands Barn








White Horse Wood
Country Park

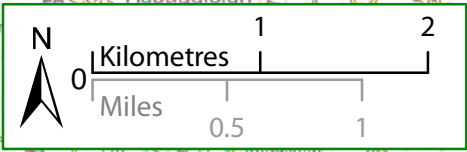
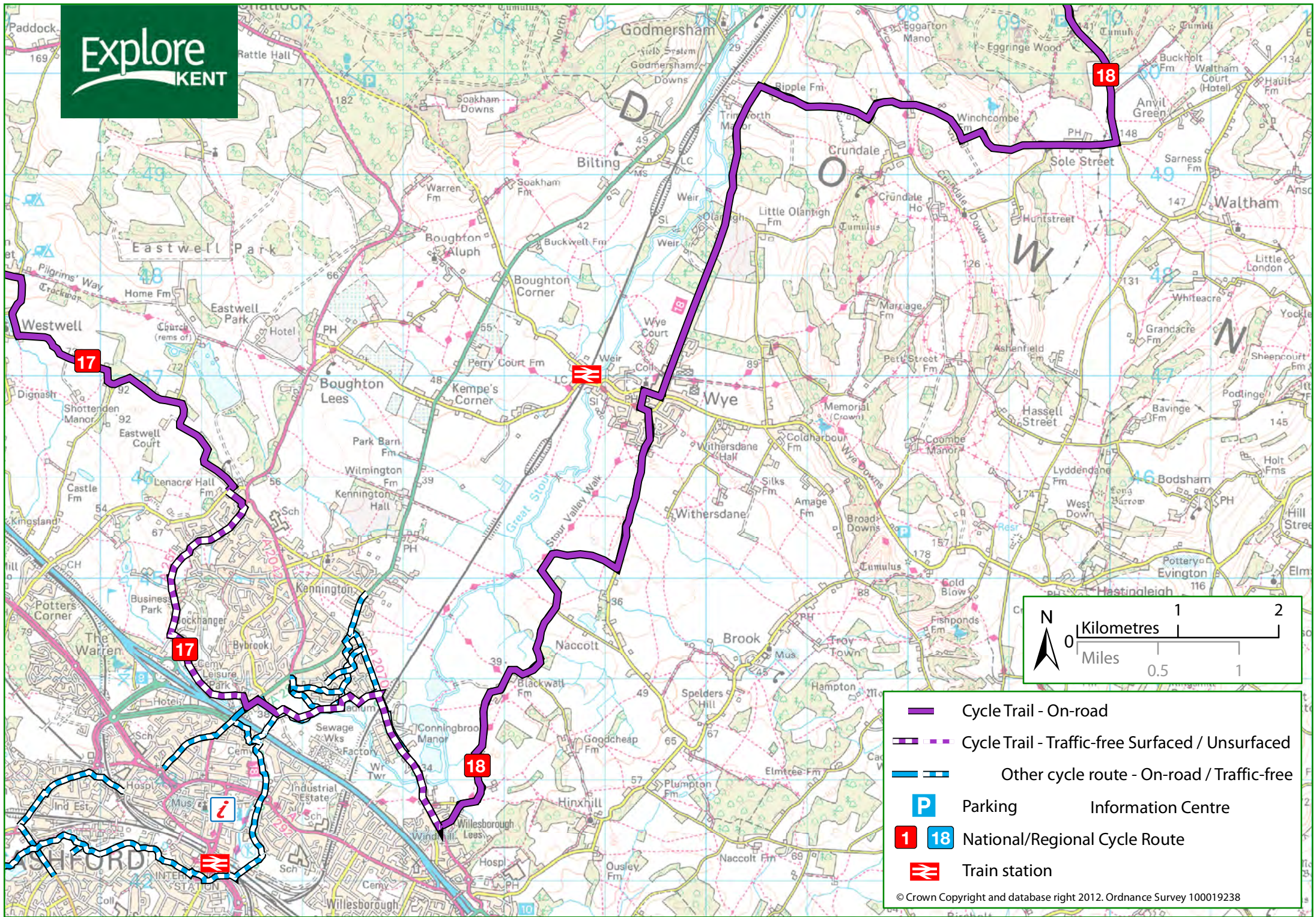
-  Cycle Trail - On-road
-  Cycle Trail - Traffic-free Surfaced / Unsurfaced
-  Other cycle route - On-road / Traffic-free
-  Parking
-   National/Regional Cycle Route
-  Train station








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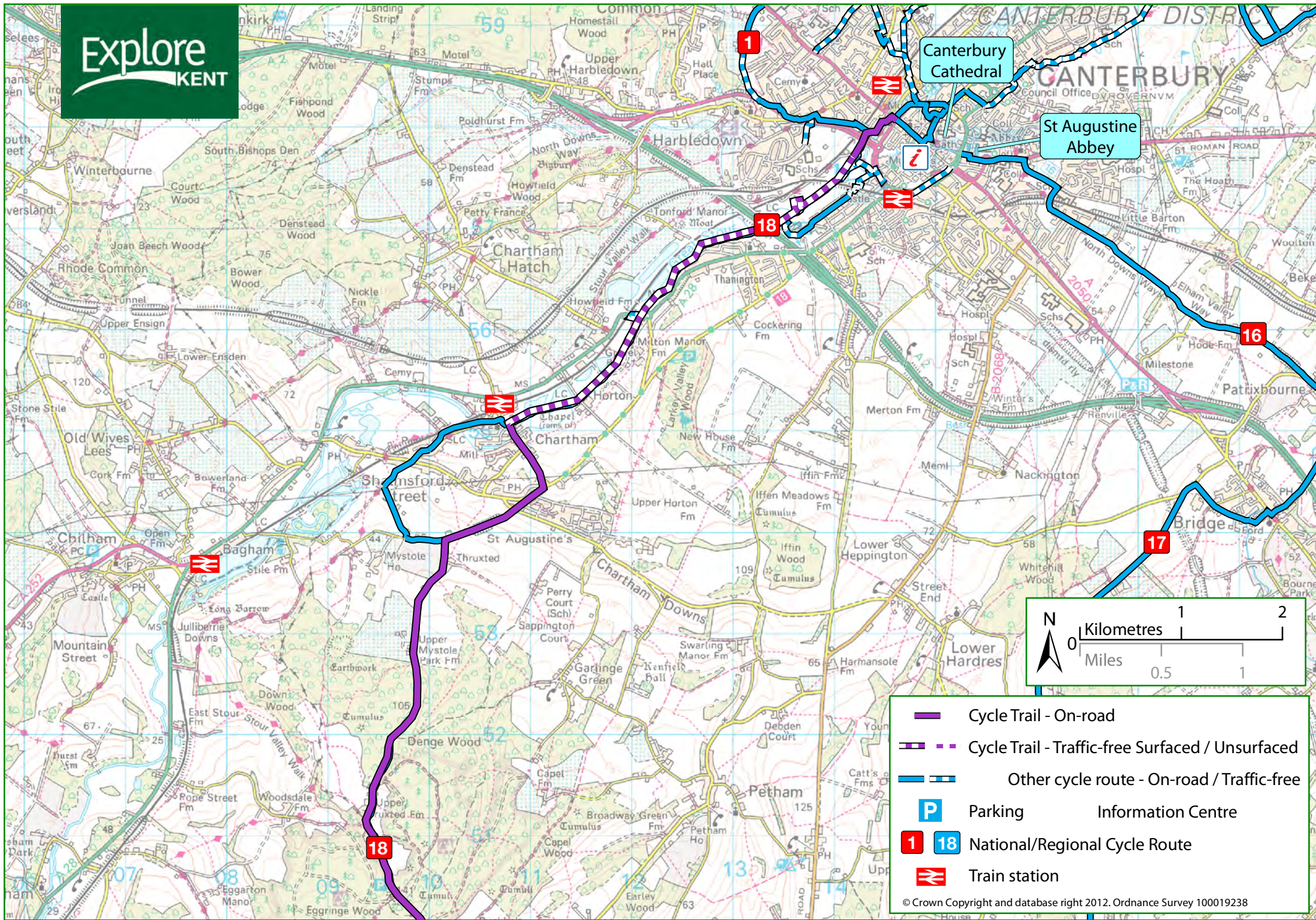




-  Cycle Trail - On-road
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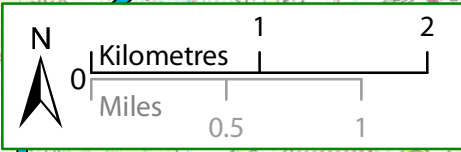









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Canterbury Cathedral

St Augustine Abbey



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