

Castle Acre

‘The Past is All Around Us’

In 2021, the Parish Council was awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a one-year project to discover more about the history and wildlife of Castle Acre.

The Castle and the Priory, the Church and the Bailey Gate draw visitors and are well-documented so the project’s volunteers concentrated on researching and exploring the other areas of the village and the surrounding landscape.

This map shows what they discovered.

1 The buildings on the north side of Stocks Green are older than those on the south side because the boundary bank of the Norman town still existed on the south side until the need for more housing meant it was levelled sometime after 1600.

2 The Ostrich Inn was named from the crest for the Holkham Estate, landowner in the parish. It has a horseshoe in its mouth because an ostrich was supposed to be able to digest almost anything, especially metal.

3 The School was built in 1839 and enlarged in 1874 to accommodate 300 children.

4 Abbey Cottage dates from the 15th century when it was a chapel where the Priory’s Almoner gave out alms (money) to the poor.

5 South Acre Road, a medieval hollow way, was the main route to the manor at South Acre, crossing the River Nar by a bridge or ford or both.

6 One of the three medieval manorial sites in Castle Acre. The manors were named Arundels, Foxes and Priors.

7 Little Lane and Drury Lane originated as tracks leading to the medieval fields.

8 West Field, Middle Field and East Field were the medieval cultivated areas whose boundaries can still be traced in the landscape.

9 The Bailey Gate is the northern entrance to the Norman planned town.

10 The site of the South Gate, demolished in the 1780s.

11 This boundary bank enclosed the Norman planned town.

12 Cuckstool Lane was probably part of the terrace walk overlooking the water.

13 Known as ‘The Earl’s Pond’, the medieval lake was a fashionable feature, designed to show off the castle by reflecting it in its waters. The lake was also a fishpond, very necessary as meat could not be eaten on fast days or during Lent, the forty days before Easter.

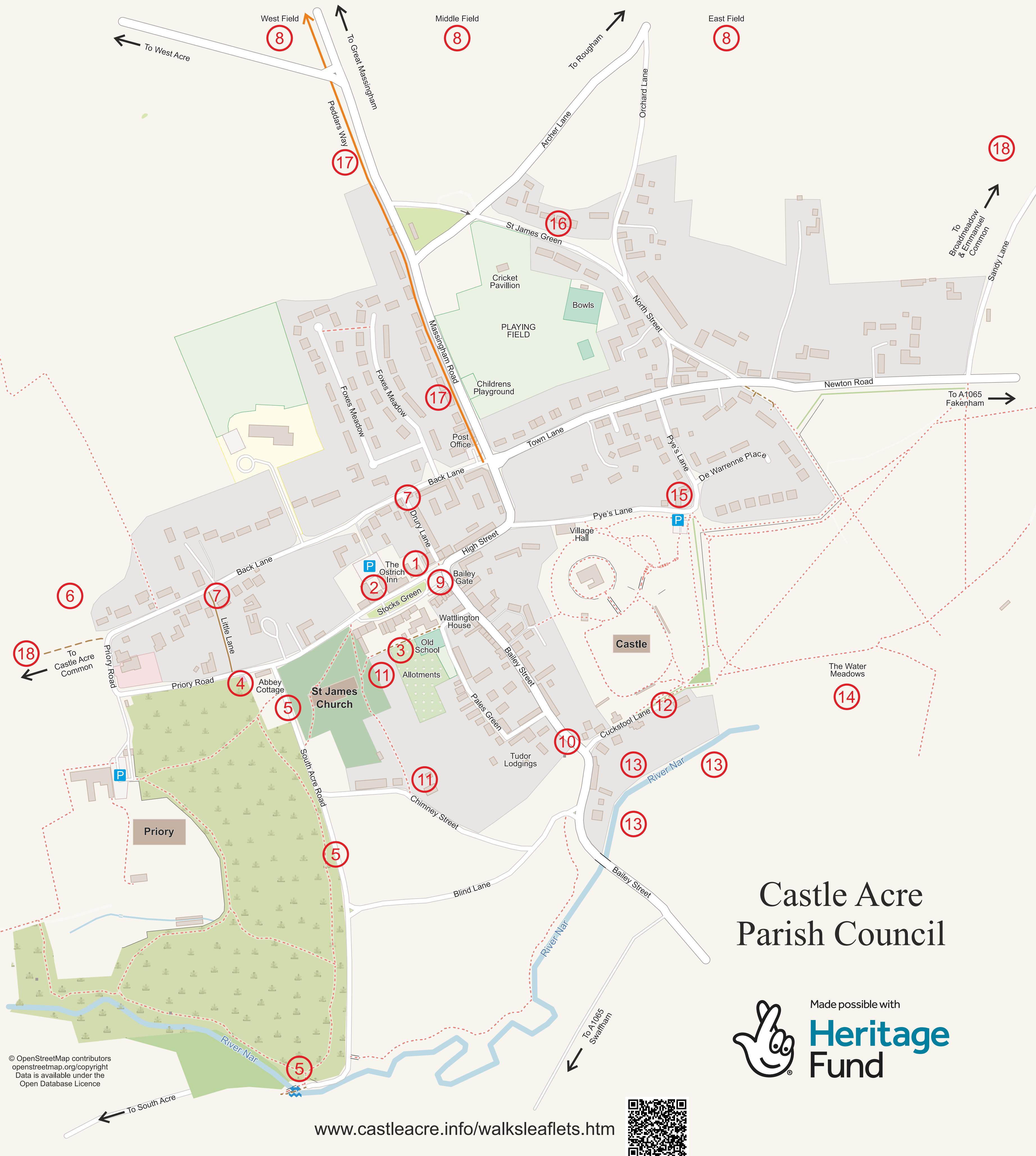
14 The watermeadows, an area of earthwork channels and streams created in 1808-1810 by Thomas Purdy, tenant farmer and in use until 1900. By artificially inundating the riverside meadows with continuously flowing water from the River Nar, the ground temperature was raised and stimulated the early growth of grass for livestock and then a hay crop.

15 The Nonconformist Burial Ground is where families who did not conform to the rules and beliefs of the Church of England are buried. It was in use from the 1840s to the 1940s.

16 St James’ Green, the site of two medieval fairs dating back to 1275. One of the fairs was held on 25 July, the day of St James, the patron saint of the Parish Church.

17 The Roman Peddars Way ran from Great Palgrave to Castle Acre in a straight line. The Normans diverted its route to give the best views of the Priory, Church and Castle, showcasing these high status buildings to approaching visitors.

18 Three medieval commons still survive, too wet and marshy to have been enclosed and ploughed.



Castle Acre
Parish Council



www.castleacre.info/walksleaflet.htm



© OpenStreetMap contributors
openstreetmap.org/copyright
Data is available under the
Open Database Licence