



# Workhouse Walk – Aylsham

Workhouses provided care for people who were poor and needed help. They were set up by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Every town and village in the country was supposed to send their poor to a workhouse.

There were 22 workhouses in Norfolk. Each workhouse served a group of 40 to 50 parishes known as a Union.

Life in the workhouse was supposed to be tough. Workhouse food was boring, families were split up and adults had to work to help pay for their keep. It was hoped that people would only come in to the workhouse if they were desperate.



The Aylsham Poor Law Union was formed on the 9th April 1836.

The Union continued to use the existing Aylsham parish workhouse until 1848-9, when a new workhouse was built.

The new workhouse could house up to 600 inmates.

It was designed by William J Donthorn who was the architect of other Norfolk workhouses including Downham, Erpingham, Freebridge Lynn, and Swaffham.

Like many workhouses it became a Public Assistance Institution after 1930. It housed the elderly, chronic sick and single mothers.

It has now been converted to residential use.

This walk was developed as part of the *Voices from the Workhouse* redisplay project at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. For more information visit [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Gressenhall](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Gressenhall)



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**Start point – Car park at the playground at Mileham Drive**

**Grid Reference - TG188262**

**Distance – 2 miles**

Start at the car park on Mileham Drive.

Join the Marriott's Way and continue along the trail for 0.75 miles over Cawston Road near St Michael's Hospital and into open countryside.

Upon reaching a quiet country lane (there is a metal gate just before this), leave Marriott's Way and turn right into this lane, then immediately right again onto a grass track, Green Lane.

Follow the track to the junction with a tarmac road and turn right into the housing estate centred around the old St. Michael's Hospital Workhouse.

Continue through the estate for 650m along St. Michael's Avenue to return to the Marriott's up the steps to the bridge over Cawston Road.