

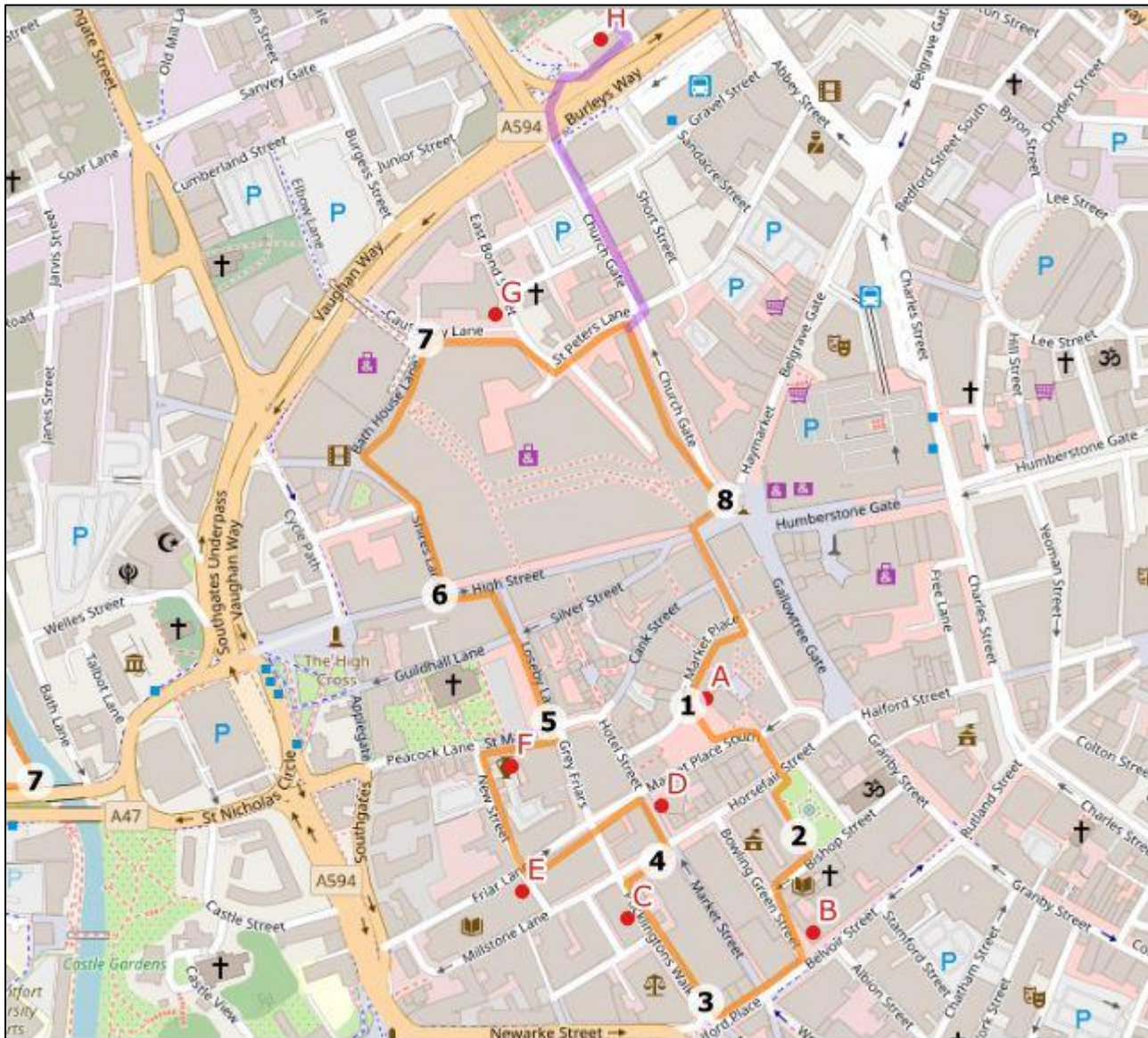
# Leicester's Suffragettes

**Start location:** Green Dragon Square (formerly New Market Sq.), Market Place, Leicester, LE1 5HQ

**Time taken:** 40 minutes (approximately)\*      **Distance:** 1.3 miles 2.1 km      **Circular route**  
 Add 15 minutes (0.4 miles/ 0.6 km) for extended route. Allow extra time for information stops.

## Description:

This route visits locations associated with some of Leicester's notable women who campaigned for women's suffrage and/or whose work improved the lives of women and children in Leicester.



- Main route
- Alternative route
- 1 Stage / waypoint
- A Point of interest

\*Time is calculated at a steady pace of 2mph, if walked without stopping. Allow extra time to look at points of interest and read the information.

This route was developed by staff and volunteers for Leicester City Council:

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## Walk starts:

From Green Dragon Square (formerly New Market Sq.), Market Place, Leicester, LE1 5HQ

## Safety tips:

Take care crossing roads, use pedestrian crossings where present. Take particular care at the junction of St Peter's Lane and Church Gate.

There are some uneven sections on city streets, take care.

Watch for cyclists throughout the city centre, including pedestrianised spaces, pavements and cycle lanes. Remember to observe the guidance on social distancing.

## Introduction:

Women's suffrage was a movement to fight for women's right to vote in public elections. In the UK it became a national movement during the Victorian era with the formation of the National Society for Women's Suffrage and later the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU, 1903) an organisation of women activists who drew attention to their campaign by direct action and civil disobedience. In 1906 a newspaper journalist coined the term 'suffragette' intending to belittle these women campaigners. However, the term was embraced and adopted by the organisation. On 6<sup>th</sup> February 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed which gave the first women the right to vote. In 2018, the UK and Ireland marked 100 years of women's suffrage with events and exhibitions and the unveiling of statues in tribute to the key women of this movement and all those who supported the campaign. This walk looks at some of Leicester's notable women of that time.

## Route directions:

Note - detailed information about the places of interest you pass can be found at the end, after the directions.

1. On Green Dragon Square (formerly New Market Square), look at the statue of Alice Hawkins (A) beside Market Place and the food hall.

### (A) Alice Hawkins' statue

Alice Hawkins (1863 - 1946) was an active trade unionist and worker in the shoe trade of Leicester. She was a member of the Women's Social and Political Union and campaigned tirelessly for women's right to vote.

Then leave Green Dragon Square via the pedestrian cut-through on the other side of the square, near the old fish market. Turn right on Horsefair Street towards the Town Hall. Cross Horsefair Street where the street narrows (traffic is slower here), enter Town Hall Square and pass the Town Hall.

2. Turn right on Bishop Street. At the end cross over Bowling Green Street with care and turn left. Continue to the corner of Bowling Green Street and Belvoir Street and pause here by the information board (B).

### (B) Women's Social & Political Union Offices and shop

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The WSPU shop opened in 1910. It sold merchandise and propaganda materials to raise funds for the Suffragette cause and was also the base for the local branch of the WSPU.

Turn right on Belvoir Street and continue ahead, past Market Street.

3. Turn right into Pocklington's Walk and continue ahead. Just before the junction, pause to look at the large red brick building on the opposite side of Pocklington's Walk and note the blue plaque (C). It was built around 1883 as the Poor Law Offices.

**(C) Blue Plaque - Fanny Fullagar, Pocklington's Walk**

Leicester's first woman Poor Law Guardian and also a women's suffrage campaigner.

Turn right on Millstone Lane and continue.

4. Cross over Millstone Lane at the pedestrian crossing. Turn left into pedestrianised Hotel Street. Pause by the statue in front of the City Rooms (D).

**(D) Seamstress Statue (1990), Hotel Street.**

Symbolises the importance of Leicester's hosiery industry and women's contribution to it.

Turn left on Friar Lane. Cross ahead over Berridge Street and continue. Pause at the junction with Wycliffe Street (E).

**(E) Postbox at corner of Friar Lane and Wycliffe Street.**

Alice Hawkins was once arrested for pouring ink in a postbox which stood where the current box now stands.

Cross Friar Lane to turn right into New Street (caution, narrow pavements here). At the junction, turn right onto St Martins and pause by no.6 (opposite the Richard III statue) where there is a blue plaque (F).

**(F) Blue Plaque - Agnes Archer Evans, no.6 St Martins**

Pioneering teacher of girls' education. Founding member of Leicester and Leicestershire Women's Suffrage Society in 1887.

5. Continue on St Martins then turn left into Looseby Lane. Continue ahead to the High Street. Turn left here. Soon turn right onto Shires Lane.
6. Continue ahead to St Peter's Square, with restaurants and shops. Turn right on Bath House Lane (passing John Lewis).
7. At the end cross Causeway Lane at the pedestrian crossing then turn right. Continue to the corner of East Bond Street and pause here. On your left, Saxon House bears a blue plaque (G).

**(G) Blue Plaque - site of Leicester & Leicestershire Maternity Hospital, East Bond Street**

It was Leicester's first maternity hospital, known locally as Bond Street Hospital.

Cross Causeway Lane at the dropped kerb (caution: watch for buses and other traffic). Continue ahead on East Bond Street, crossing the service entrance to the Highcross shopping centre with care, then follow the road as it bears left and becomes St Peter's Lane. Continue to the junction with Church Gate. Here you have two options - extend the route to (H) or return to the start. To return directly to the start, continue from 8.

### **Extended route (optional)**

At the junction of St Peter's Lane and Church Gate, cross St Peter's Lane carefully (difficult junction, traffic from multiple directions). Continue onto Church Gate, heading away from the city centre in the direction of St Margaret's bus station. Cross to the right hand side when safe to do so. Cross the side road leading to the bus station and continue ahead to reach the busy ring road, Burleys Way. Use the multiple pedestrian crossings and traffic islands to cross towards St Margaret's Church on the far side of Burleys Way (or use the underpass if you prefer). On the far side turn right a short distance along Burleys Way. Pass an office block then turn left into Lichfield Street and continue ahead. Before you on Crane Street is the Royce Institute, bearing a blue plaque (H).

### **(H) Blue Plaque - Mary Royce, Leicester's first woman doctor**

Mary founded the Royce Institute, a religious and educational organisation.

Now retrace your steps and continue from 8.

8. Follow Church Gate to the Clock Tower.
9. At the Clock Tower turn right on High Street then left on Cheapside and right on Market Place to return to Alice Hawkins' statue in Green Dragon Square, where this walk finishes.

We hope that you have enjoyed this short walk. You may also be interested in some of our other routes available to download from the Choose How You Move website:

[www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk)

### **Additional information - places of interest passed on route:**

#### **(A) Alice Hawkins Statue, Green Dragon Square (formerly New Market Square).**

Born in 1863 Alice came from a working class family, leaving school at 13 to become a machinist in Leicester's boot and shoe trade. In her 20s she was taken on by the Equity\* shoe factory and became an active trade unionist. She helped to organise the 1905 Unemployed March to London and was a member of the Independent Labour Party and Women's Social and Political Union, campaigning tirelessly for women's right to vote. Alice was imprisoned five times for her militant actions which included chaining herself to railings, throwing stones through a Home Office window and pouring ink into letter boxes. Alice's finest moment came in 1908 when she was a keynote speaker at a women's rally in Hyde Park, addressing 250,000 supporters. She supported the trade union and Labour movements until her death in 1946.

\*Equity was created in 1886 as the 'Leicester Manufacturing Boot and Shoe Society', but it became known as 'Equity'. It specialised in women's footwear and was well-known for the distinctive emblem above the door of their factory on Western Road (which can still be seen). The factory closed in 2009, the last shoe manufacturer to close in the city. The building (now student accommodation) bears a blue plaque for Alice Hawkins and posters inside the entrance are a tribute to the women's suffrage movement.



### **(B) Women's Social & Political Union Offices, Bowling Green Street**

The WSPU shop at 14 Bowling Green Street opened in 1910. It sold postcards, pamphlets, badges and other "Votes for Women" merchandise as part of their propaganda campaign and to raise funds for the cause. It also provided a base for the local branch organisation – and a place for women to spend the night of the 1911 Census, refusing to be counted in protest at their continuing lack of a parliamentary vote. They had to wait for this until 1918 when the vote was extended to women over 30 who owned property.

### **(C) Blue Plaque Pocklington's Walk - Fanny Fullagar**

Leicester's first woman Poor Law Guardian. Elected to serve Newton Ward from 1889 to 1904. She was devoted to charitable causes, including the NSPCC (the local branch which she had helped to found) and was committed to the women's suffrage campaign and held post in the Leicester and Leicestershire Women's Suffrage Society.

### **(D) Seamstress statue, Hotel Street**

The Seamstress is not meant to be a particular person but represents the importance to Leicester of the hosiery industry and women's contribution to this. Socks and stockings have been made in abundance in Leicester. Many hosiery workers were women, working in small workshops or at home. The Seamstress is shown putting a seam into a stocking. The statue (1990) was sculpted by James Butler who created two other statues in Leicester.

### **(E) Postbox at corner of Friar Lane and Wycliffe Street.**

Alice Hawkins was once arrested for pouring ink in a postbox which stood where the current box now stands.

### **(F) Blue Plaque - Agnes Archer Evans, no.6 St Martins**

Pioneering teacher of girls' education, along with Anna Chrysogon Beale, at Belmont House School 1882 -1893 (the school was on New Walk. It is now the Belmont Hotel. There is an information panel opposite it, on New Walk). Founding member and treasurer of the Leicester and Leicestershire Women's Suffrage Society in 1887. Agnes Archer Evans played an active role in local life. She was a member of the Council of Vaughan College and served on the Leicester School Board. In 1913 she became the first female President of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society.

### **(G) Blue Plaque - site of Leicester & Leicestershire Maternity Hospital, East Bond Street**

The Leicester & Leicestershire Maternity Hospital occupied the site from 1905 to 1971. Known locally as Bond Street Hospital, it was Leicester's first maternity hospital and the inspiration of the local branch of the National Union of Women Workers.

### **(H) Blue Plaque - Mary Royce, Crane Street (extended route only)**

Mary Royce (1845 - 1892) founded the Royce Institute, a religious and educational organisation which is still in existence today. After 13 years of study in London towards a medical degree, Mary Royce became Leicester's first woman doctor at the age of 44. Mary died in 1892 after contracting a disease from a patient in the workhouse.

### **Some facts and dates**

- 1918 - The Representation of the People Act is passed on 6 February giving women the vote provided they are aged over 30 and either they, or their husband, meet a property qualification
- 1918 - The Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act is passed on 21 November allowing women to stand for Parliament
- 1918 - Women vote in a general election for the first time on 14 December with 8.5 million women eligible
- 1928 - The Equal Franchise Act is passed giving women equal voting rights with men. All women aged over 21 can now vote in elections. Fifteen million women are eligible.
- 1929 - On 30 May women aged between 21 and 29 vote for the first time. This general election is sometimes referred to as the Flapper Election

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## **Acknowledgements**

With thanks to Linda Goddard for researching this route.

## **References:**

The Suffragettes:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffragette>

Key facts and dates:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-marks-centenary-of-womens-suffrage>

The Womens Social and Political Union Shop:

<https://www.storyofleicester.info/civic-affairs/womens-social-and-political-union-shop/>

Alice Hawkins:

<http://www.alicesuffragette.co.uk/aliceslife.php>

Agnes Archer Evans:

<http://www.leicesterlitandphil.org.uk/1913-agnes-archer-evans-mrs-william-evans-nee-kilgour-1913-14/>

<http://www.blueplaqueplaces.co.uk/agnes-archer-evans-blue-plaque-in-leicester-1503#.XKUjSy2ZPfY>

Fanny Fullagar and Mary Royce:

<http://www.recordoffice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Forward-Sisters-Lady-Guardians.pdf>