

Welcome to Little Chalfont Nature Park

Created for the community, by the community

The land here has been associated with a brick works, cherry orchard, farm land and an occasional sculpture park. Now through community fund raising, it is a Nature Park for everyone.

The effort continues and we are still trying to raise £50,000+ to lay hard paths so the Park can be enjoyed by people of all ages and ability. We also want to build a play area and a Sensory Area.

This small piece of land is a hidden gem, and we hope this brief tour helps show you why.

Beware of uneven ground and nature's tricks with roots and ridges, tussocks and tendrils - placed there to trip you up.

Remember - you are not a muntjac!

Please keep to the paths in the Summer months

This guide is also available at

<http://naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk/park-tour.html>

1 Start

Your starting point is the main notice board at the entrance to the Park where you can read about the background and the rarity of the meadow.

2 Root Ball

The woodland had not been managed for at least 50 years and this root ball shows how beech trees can become over-mature and unable to support themselves. This tree came down in the big winds in Autumn 2013 and you can see it has rotted on the inside. Three others came down in Winter 2014. This is why tree work was one of the largest cost elements of the public appeal.

All the tree work is now complete apart from routine inspections and the woodland looks very different now to how it used to. It was very dense with holly (as it still is to the left of the Park entrance), but much of this has been taken out, the trunks used to line woodland paths and the chippings used to fill them underfoot.

3 Metasequoia & Red Kite

This is the most unusual tree in the Park and was probably introduced by a plant collector. We took out a huge spruce tree to give the Metasequoia more room to grow and now our magnificent red kite is stooping down to her nest on top of the stump. If you're lucky, you'll see a real red kite as well.

4 Story-Telling Circle

We think the slight dip in the ground, now the Story Telling Circle, was an old pond as the vegetation is different from the rest of the meadow. A ring of mushrooms forms a semi-circle in front of the Story Teller's Throne and makes an ideal spot for tall tales about the meadows and the woods.



5 Woodpecker and Toad Benches

This is marked as the Sensory Area on the map, and we intend to plant it with bright colours, interesting shapes, scents and textures for the very young, very old and the visually or hearing impaired. In the meantime, we have our two new benches which will remain when the Sensory Area is complete.

6 Strawberry

Don't miss our giant strawberry carved out of Sweet Chestnut.

7 Hazel, Cherry Orchard and Owl Bench

Originally, the hazel whips would be grown and coppiced for use around the farm. The local Scouts harvested some hazel from here and whittled it to use as pegs to hold the

holly poles in place, forming the edges of the woodland paths.

8 Picnic & Play Area

The vegetation here is not so interesting, so we plan to build a natural play area made from oak tree trunks to encourage old fashioned climbing, balancing and jumping; ROSPA approved of course.

The ridges are ancient hedge boundaries that can be seen on 200 year old maps; there are more in the woods.

9 The Owl Family and Sensory Board

See if you can spot the family of owls nesting in a nearby tree stump. Then test your nature knowledge and try to identify the different animals from their pictures or tracks.

10 Badger Bench and Meadow Information Board

You may once have known this land as the Sculpture Park. The base of concrete was a plinth for one of the exhibits. The owner of that time was a supporter of young outside sculptors from all over the world. Here we also have our badger bench and the meadow information board.

11 New Planting

Traditionally this wood was planted with beech. High Wycombe was famed for its furniture making. This replanting scheme includes lime, oak, wild cherry, hazel, hornbeam and wild field maple. The plastic around the saplings is to protect the young trees from squirrels, glis glis and muntjac.



From here the paths lead back to the meadow or main entrance.

12 Log Piles, Pits and Fallen Trees

You may think these log piles are untidy; actually they have been left deliberately as refuges for insects.

The pits are former clay pits and were quarried for use in the brick works which stood where Snells Wood Court is now. Surprisingly most of them are dry, even in winter. All the clay has been taken out as far down as the chalk layer which is porous and allows rain water to drain away.

However, two of the pits contain water and can be over 1m deep in winter. These have been retained as they support local wildlife but have been 'fenced off' by piles of holly branches for human safety.

This area of woodland is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and in fact some of the fallen trunks are also covered by this. We are required and happy to conserve them as habitats for insects as part of the natural woodland life cycle.

The Parish Council has taken on responsibility for the park, supported by a group called 'Friends of the Nature Park'. We hope that 'Friends' will conduct bird counts and help in maintenance working parties or any future fundraising efforts. It is the 'Friends' who have cleared much of the old woodland.

This is the end of your brief tour of Little Chalfont Nature Park. Thank you for your interest and please enjoy the Park at your leisure. Do come back again soon as it changes on a daily basis.

A project that started off as creating a public park has become part-conservation project too. We hope you agree that it is indeed a hidden gem.

For more information on how to donate and sponsorship opportunities, email: naturepark@littlechalfont.org.uk or go to our website: naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk

To become a 'Friend of the Park', please email parkfriends@littlechalfont.org.uk or join online at naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk/join-the-friends.html

To report a problem, please phone: 01494 766655

The Nature Park Code

Open to people all year round during daylight hours. Wildlife welcome anytime.

"Leave only footprints and take away only memories"

No Dogs (except assistance dogs) – even on leads dogs will scare away wildlife, especially birds. Sorry pooches, but there are lots of great places for you to have fun near here.

No Smoking, Barbeques or Camping

No fires please – 'we like our ashes with leaves on'

No Ball Games – The meadow needs a chance to flourish. Proper pitches are at Westwood Park. Avoid being sent off by keeping ball games out of the wildflower meadow.

No Cycling or Skateboarding

Little wheels for little legs please (except for mobility vehicles)

No Horses

No Public Right of Way – This is a permissive path for pedestrians. It is not a dedicated public right of way and will be closed at certain times of the years for essential forestry and maintenance work. Otherwise, feel free to walk, wheelchair, stroller-ride, jog and skip to your heart's delight.

Thank You

Little Chalfont Nature Park Management Group, in conjunction with Little Chalfont Parish Council.

Little Chalfont Charitable Trust is a company limited by Guarantee, Registered No: 7591978. We are registered as a charity in England and Wales under registration number 1141148.



Little Chalfont Nature Park

A hidden gem in the Chilterns



- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Start | 7 Owl Bench |
| 2 Root Ball | 8 Picnic Tables |
| 3 Metasequoia & Red Kite | 9 Owl Family & Sensory Board |
| 4 Story-Telling Circle | 10 Badger Bench |
| 5 Woodpecker & Toad Benches | 11 New Planting |
| 6 Strawberry | 12 Log Piles & Pits |

Welcome to the Self-Guided Tour