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All the clay has been taken out as far down as the chalk layer, which is porous and allows rainwater 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 your safety.

A Tree Preservation Order covers this area of woodland and, in fact, also covers some of the fallen trunks. We are required and happy to conserve them as habitats for insects as part of the natural woodland life cycle.

The parish council has responsibility for the park, supported by a group called 'Friends of the nature park'. We hope that the 'Friends' will conduct bird counts, undertake other surveys and help in maintenance working parties or any future fundraising efforts.

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 to create 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@littlitchalfont.org.uk or go to our website: <http://naturepark.littlitchalfont.org.uk>

To become a 'Friend of the park' please email: parkfriends@littlitchalfont.org.uk or join online at <http://naturepark.littlitchalfont.org.uk/join-the-friends.html>

To report a problem, please phone: 01494 766555

What's new?

For an update and the latest news about what's happening with the nature park, please refer to the website.

The Nature Park Code

Open all year round during daylight hours. It is a quiet place for you to come and enjoy nature and the wildlife that thrives in the park. Wildlife is welcome any time.

"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 litter

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 year 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.

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Little Chalfont Nature Park

A hidden gem in the Chilterns



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

Welcome to the self-guided tour

Self-guided tour to the Little Chalfont Nature Park *Created for the community, by the community*

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

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

This guide, including any updates, is also available at <http://naturepark.littlechalfont.org.uk/park-tour.html>

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 help to protect our special grassland, with its wild flowers, by keeping to the paths in the summer months

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 from how it used to look.

It was very dense with holly – as it still is to the left of the park entrance – but much of this has been removed with the trunks used to line the woodland paths and the chippings used to fill them underfoot.

3 Metasequoia & red kite

This deciduous conifer 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 spruce 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 storyteller'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 visually or hearing impaired.

In the meantime, we have our two new benches, which will remain when the sensory area is complete.

6 Giant 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 and play area

Here there are picnic tables for you to enjoy an al fresco picnic.

We plan to build a

natural play area near the picnic tables, made from oak tree trunks, to encourage old fashioned climbing, balancing and jumping; RoSPA approved of course.

The ridges between the meadow and the picnic

area 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 on the sensory board.

10 Badger bench and meadow information board

The nature parkland was once known as the sculpture park. The owner at 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 to supply the furniture making business of nearby High Wycombe.

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.

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 that stood where Snells Wood Court is now. Surprisingly, most of them are dry, even in winter.

Continued overleaf ➡

