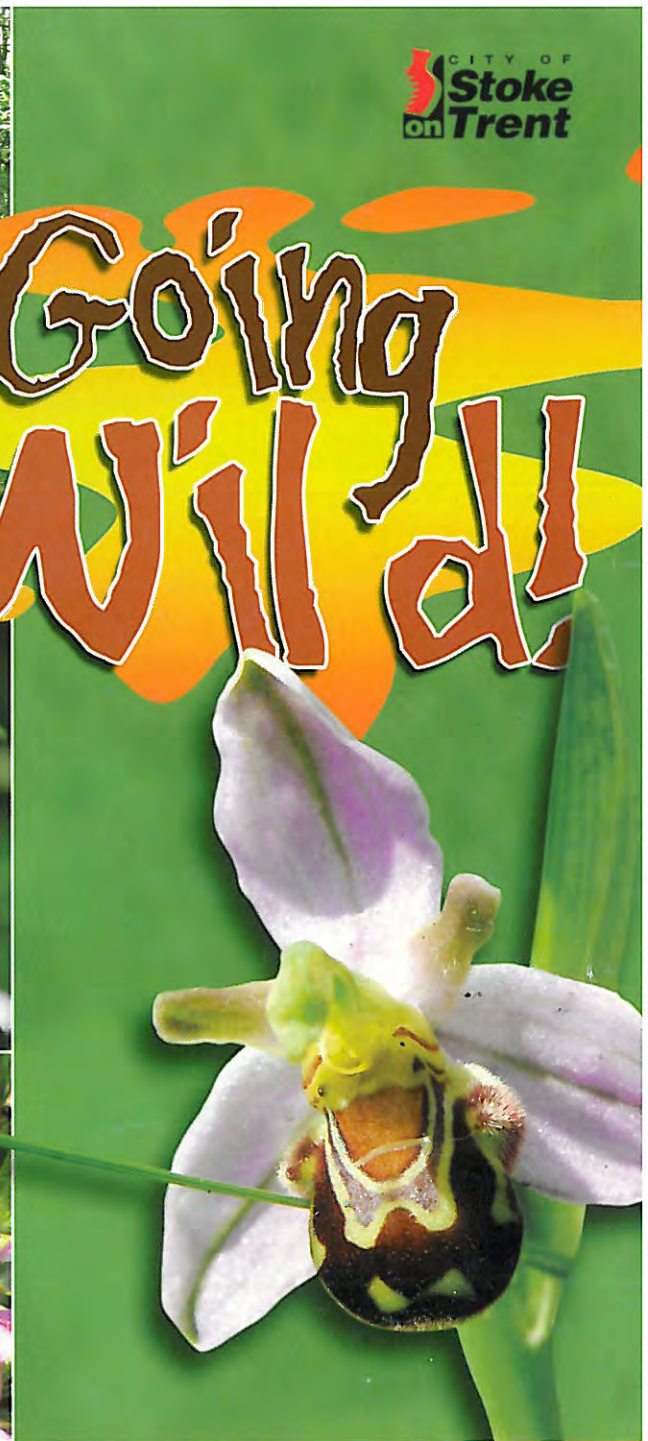


# Going Wild!



A Guide to Nature Reserves in Stoke-on-Trent

## City of Stoke-on-Trent National and Local Nature Reserves



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Stoke-on-Trent has ten Nature Reserves spread across the city. Park Hall Country Park is our first National Nature Reserve and is a site of Special Scientific Interest. Our Local Nature Reserves are home to a wide variety of wildlife and provide important green spaces for people to enjoy near their homes.

This brochure describes the wonderful wildlife to be seen on nature reserves across the city, along with details of how to get there and the condition and accessibility of paths. Why not go out and explore your local area?

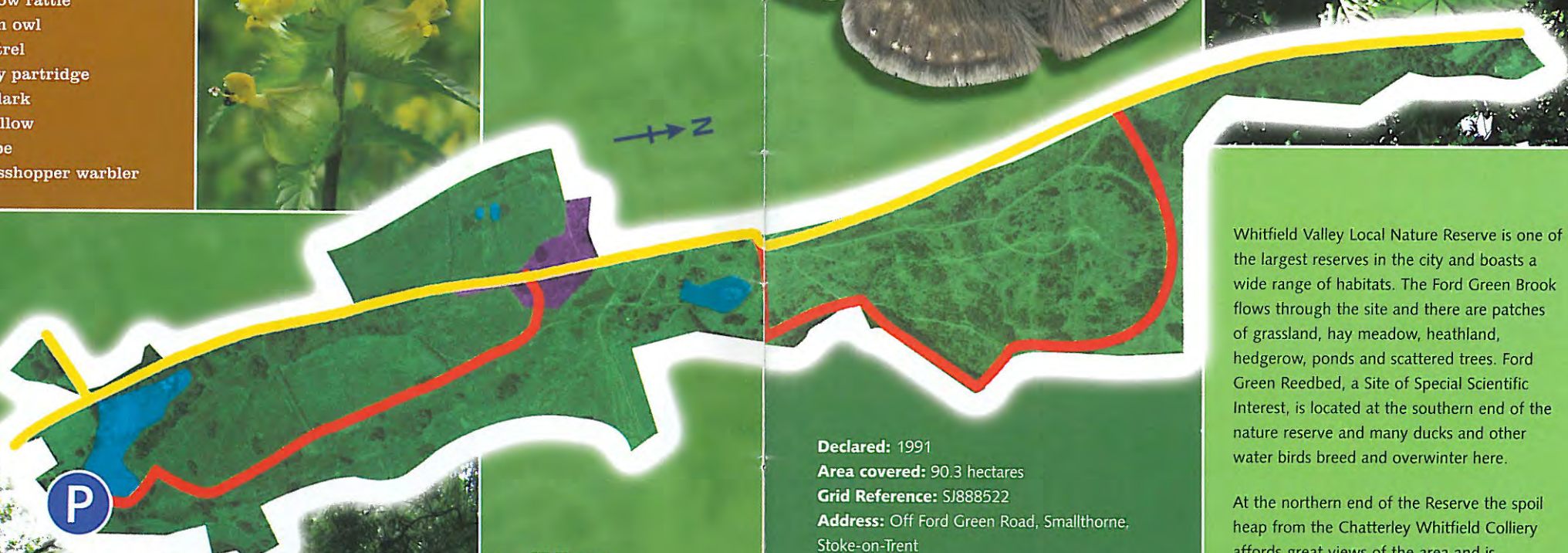
For more information about nature reserves, parks and green spaces in the city, please contact Stoke-on-Trent City Council on 01782 234567.



# Whitfield Valley Local Nature Reserve

## Notable species

Water vole  
Dingy skipper butterfly  
Common knapweed  
Yellow rattle  
Barn owl  
Kestrel  
Grey partridge  
Skylark  
Swallow  
Snipe  
Grasshopper warbler



-  Walkways
-  Cycle Paths
-  Wetland areas
-  Heathland areas

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**Declared:** 1991  
**Area covered:** 90.3 hectares  
**Grid Reference:** SJ888522  
**Address:** Off Ford Green Road, Smallthorne, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Buses 8, 8A, 62, 62A and 98 run past the site along Ford Green Road  
**Greenways:** Whitfield Valley greenway and Monks Neil Park greenway run through and near to the site. Brindley Ford greenway lies to the north.  
**Car Park:** There is a small car park next to Ford Green Hall off Ford Green Road  
**Access:** Whitfield Valley greenway is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Other paths are not surfaced and can be muddy in wet weather.

Whitfield Valley Local Nature Reserve is one of the largest reserves in the city and boasts a wide range of habitats. The Ford Green Brook flows through the site and there are patches of grassland, hay meadow, heathland, hedgerow, ponds and scattered trees. Ford Green Reedbed, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is located at the southern end of the nature reserve and many ducks and other water birds breed and overwinter here.

At the northern end of the Reserve the spoil heap from the Chatterley Whitfield Colliery affords great views of the area and is colonised by birds-foot trefoil which supports the largest known colony of dingy skipper butterflies in the West Midlands. Skylark and grey partridge are often seen in the grassland and barn owls and kestrels hunt across the valley.

The Whitfield Valley Wildlife Volunteers assist the City Council in guiding schools and organised groups around the site.

# Westport Lake

## Local Nature Reserve

**Declared:** 2004

**Area covered:** 29 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ855503

**Address:** Off Davenport Street, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Buses 99 and 99A run along Davenport Street

**Greenways:** The Westport greenway and Trent and Mersey canal path connect to Westport Lake. Burslem to Cobridge greenway runs to the south and Tunstall to Scotia Valley greenway runs to the north.

**Car Park:** Resurfaced car park off Westport Lake Road  
**Access:** Flat, resurfaced paths (suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs) run around the lake. Some paths in the conservation area have been resurfaced but others can be muddy. There is a children's play area on the site.



Westport Lake Local Nature Reserve contains two lakes surrounded by grassland and a wooded conservation area with a series of small ponds. The lakes are well known for their birds with large numbers of ducks and swans arriving in the winter.

The Fowlea Brook and Trent and Mersey Canal run through the site and act as important wildlife corridors. Pipistrelle and daubentons bats feed over the main lake and kingfishers are a regular sight in the conservation area.

Uncommon plants like greater knapweed and pale toadflax flourish alongside the railway and recent work has introduced more marginal vegetation to the lakeside.

The Friends of Westport Lake work with the City Council to manage the site for wildlife and people.




### Notable species

- Yellow flag iris
- Greater knapweed
- Pale toadflax
- Kingfisher
- Winter migrants – water birds



 Walkways

 Wetland areas

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# Holden Lane Pools Local Nature Reserve

## Notable species

- Grass snake
- Water vole
- Great crested grebe
- Little grebe



**Declared:** 2004

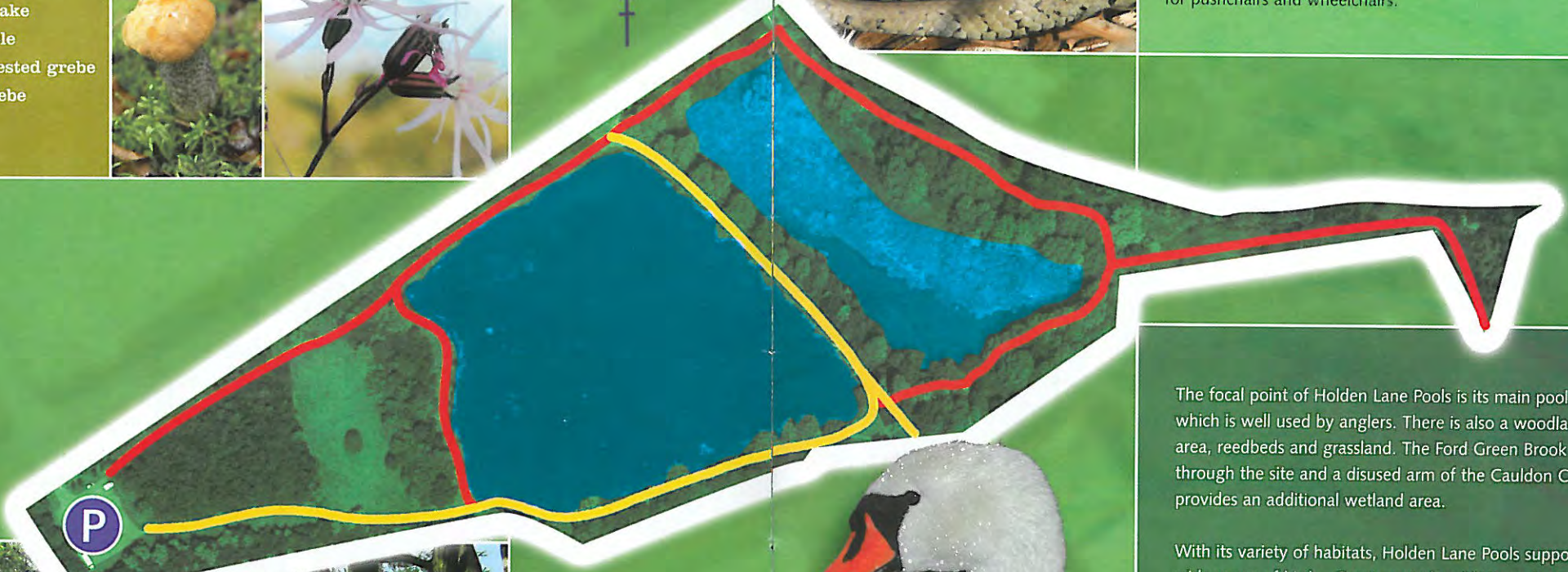
**Area covered:** 8.4 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ888522

**Address:** Off Leek New Road (A53), Norton, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Bus 18 runs along Leek New Road  
**Greenways:** National Cycle Network Route 55 runs through the site

**Car Park:** Small car park off Leek New Road adjacent to the Holden Bridge pub

**Access:** Some paths have been resurfaced and are suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.



-  Walkways
-  Cycle Paths
-  Wetland areas

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The focal point of Holden Lane Pools is its main pool, which is well used by anglers. There is also a woodland area, reedbeds and grassland. The Ford Green Brook runs through the site and a disused arm of the Cauldon Canal provides an additional wetland area.

With its variety of habitats, Holden Lane Pools supports a wide range of birds. Great crested and little grebes, swans, coots and moorhens can be found around the main pool, with long tailed and great tits and other small birds nesting in the woodland and reedbed areas. Other wildlife include grass snakes (a Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan species), which shelter and hunt for frogs in the grassland and marshy areas, water voles (recorded along the Ford Green Brook), brown hawkers and red darter dragonflies and a variety of butterflies.

The Friends of Holden Lane Pools work with the City Council to improve the site and run events.

# Bagnall Road Wood Local Nature Reserve



Bagnall Road Wood is the site of a Victorian tree nursery. This beautiful woodland is dominated by deciduous trees such as beech, hornbeam and oak and in spring bluebells and wood sorrel adorn the woodland floor.

Unusual trees such as black poplar are present and the site offers a wonderful woodland experience. Brown long-eared bats have been recorded at the site.

The Friends of Bagnall Road Wood are working with the City Council to improve the site for wildlife and people.

**Declared:** 2004

**Area covered:** 6.1 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ913502

**Address:** Off Bagnall Road, Milton, Stoke-on-Trent

**Public Transport:** Buses 44, 3, 62 and 62A runs through Milton  
**Greenways:** There are no greenways close to Bagnall Road Wood

**Car Park:** There is no designated car park for Bagnall Road Wood

**Access:** The main path through the wood has been resurfaced but other paths can be muddy. The wood is situated on a slope and there are steps throughout.

## Notable species

Black poplar

Hornbeam

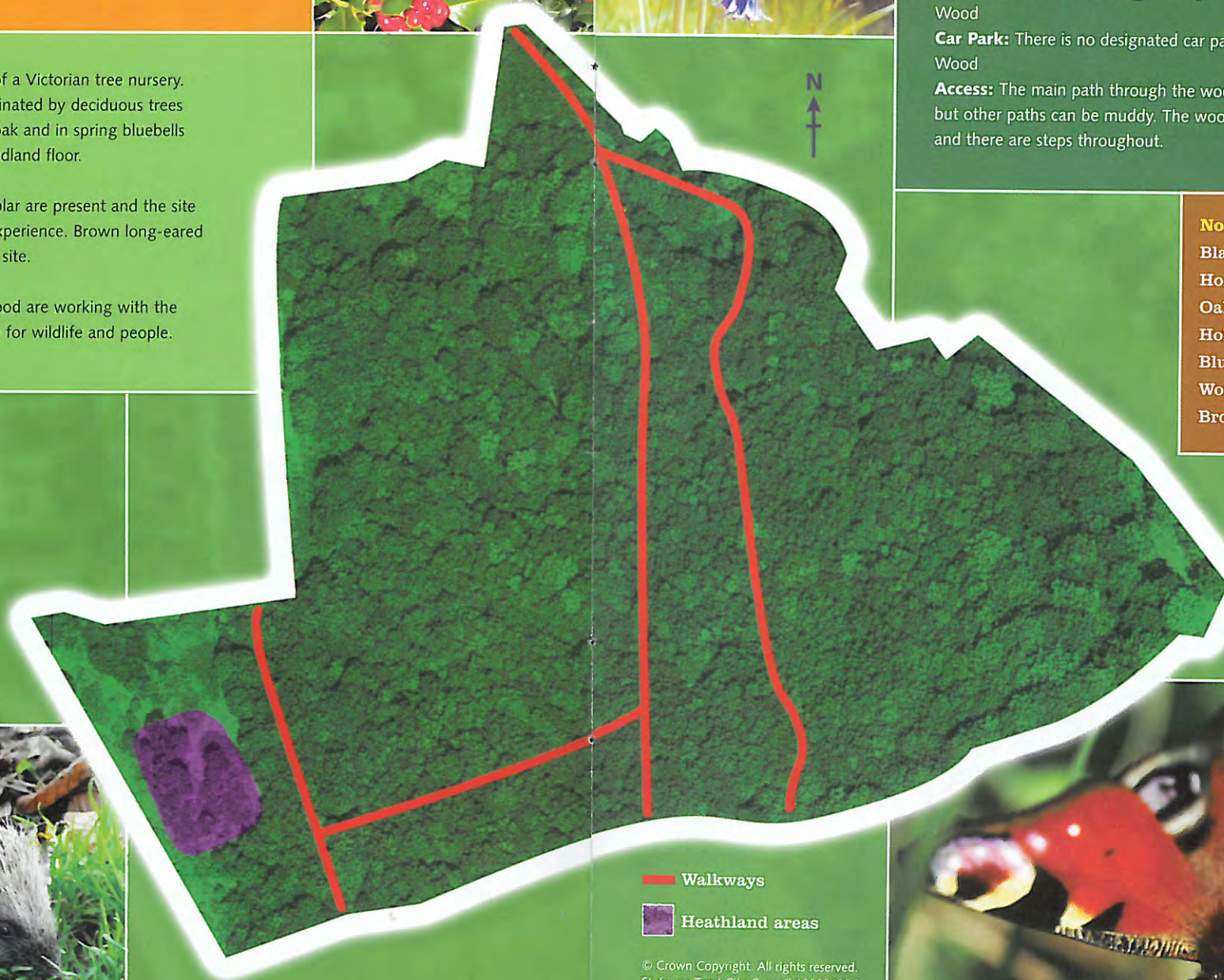
Oak

Holly

Bluebell

Wood sorrel

Brown long-eared bat



— Walkways

■ Heathland areas

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# Hartshill Park

## Local Nature Reserve

**Declared:** 2003

**Area covered:** 13.5 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ867459

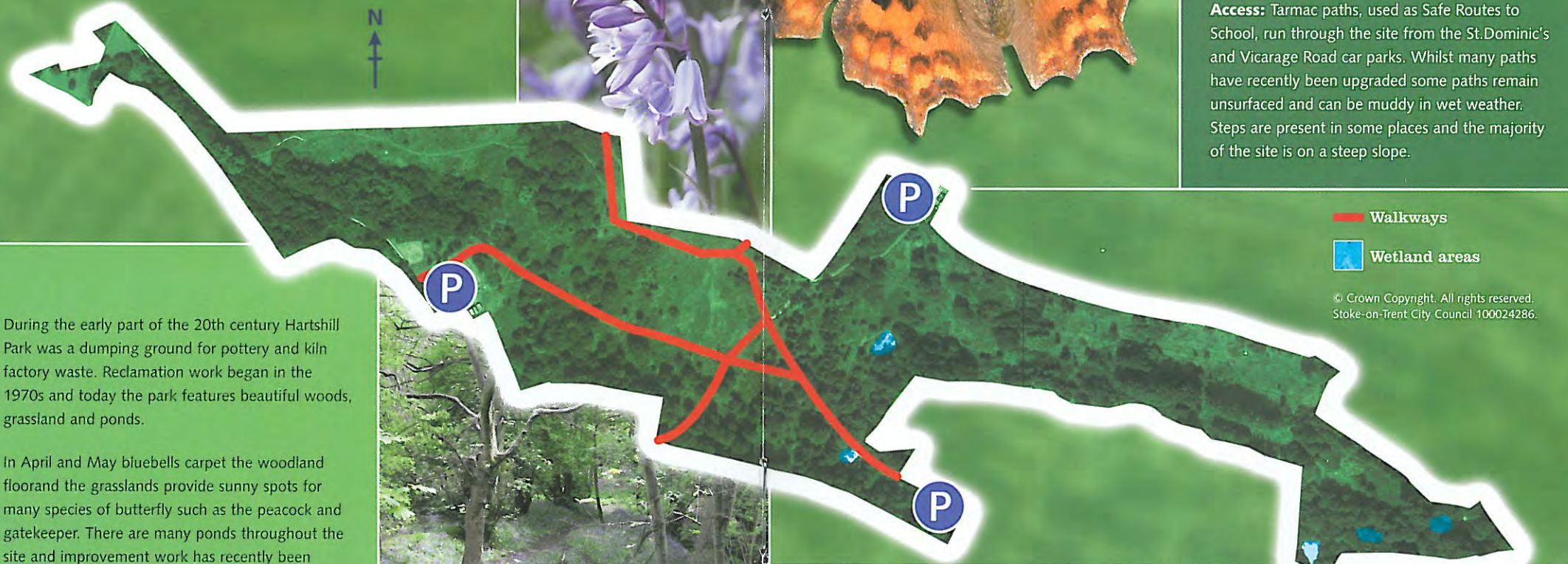
**Address:** Off Hartshill Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent

**Public Transport:** Buses 24, 25, 26 and 27 run past the site along Hartshill Road

**Greenways:** There are no greenways close to Hartshill Park.

**Car Park:** There are small car parks on Vicarage Road, next to St.Dominic's School off Hartshill Road and on North Street

**Access:** Tarmac paths, used as Safe Routes to School, run through the site from the St.Dominic's and Vicarage Road car parks. Whilst many paths have recently been upgraded some paths remain unsurfaced and can be muddy in wet weather. Steps are present in some places and the majority of the site is on a steep slope.



During the early part of the 20th century Hartshill Park was a dumping ground for pottery and kiln factory waste. Reclamation work began in the 1970s and today the park features beautiful woods, grassland and ponds.

In April and May bluebells carpet the woodland floor and the grasslands provide sunny spots for many species of butterfly such as the peacock and gatekeeper. There are many ponds throughout the site and improvement work has recently been undertaken on three of them. The ponds are now home to a range of aquatic species including frogs and newts. Bats are common visitors at night.

The Friends of Hartshill Park were formed in 1999 and work with the City Council to improve the site for wildlife and people.

 Walkways

 Wetland areas

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### Notable species

Great crested newt  
Horse chestnut and  
sweet chestnut  
Kestrel  
Pipistrelle bat  
Bluebell

# Berryhill Fields

## Local Nature Reserve



**Declared:** 2003  
**Area covered:** 68 hectares  
**Grid Reference:** SJ907458  
**Address:** Off Arbourfield Drive, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Bus 26 runs past the site along Dividy Road  
**Greenways:** Berryhill greenway runs through the site and Normacot greenway runs to the south east  
**Car Park:** There is no designated car park for Berryhill Fields  
**Access:** Many of the paths are well surfaced and suitable for pushchairs / wheelchairs. Parts of the site have a gentle slope.



Berryhill has a long history of mining and agriculture. During the first half of the 20th century two coal mines operated on the site and small scale farming continued. In the 1950s the land was acquired for housing, which was never built, and in the 1980s the area faced the prospect of becoming an open cast mine. A long battle saw the application for mining refused in 1994 and the site was declared as a national Millennium Project in 1995.

Berryhill Fields contain Lawn Farm, a 13th century moated manor house and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Archaeological investigations are regularly carried out and community archaeology days are held. Today, much of the site is covered by grassland and unusual plants and animals are present. The site affords fine views of the city and gives a real feeling of being in the countryside. Lucky visitors could see bee orchids, brown hare or short eared owls.

The Friends of Berryhill Fields work closely with the City Council and run a programme of events on the site.

- Notable species**
- Bee orchid
  - Common spotted orchid
  - Southern marsh orchid
  - Brown hare
  - Great crested newt
  - Grey partridge
  - Short eared owl
  - Water vole
  - Grey mining bee
  - Dyers greenweed

-  Walkways
-  Wetland areas

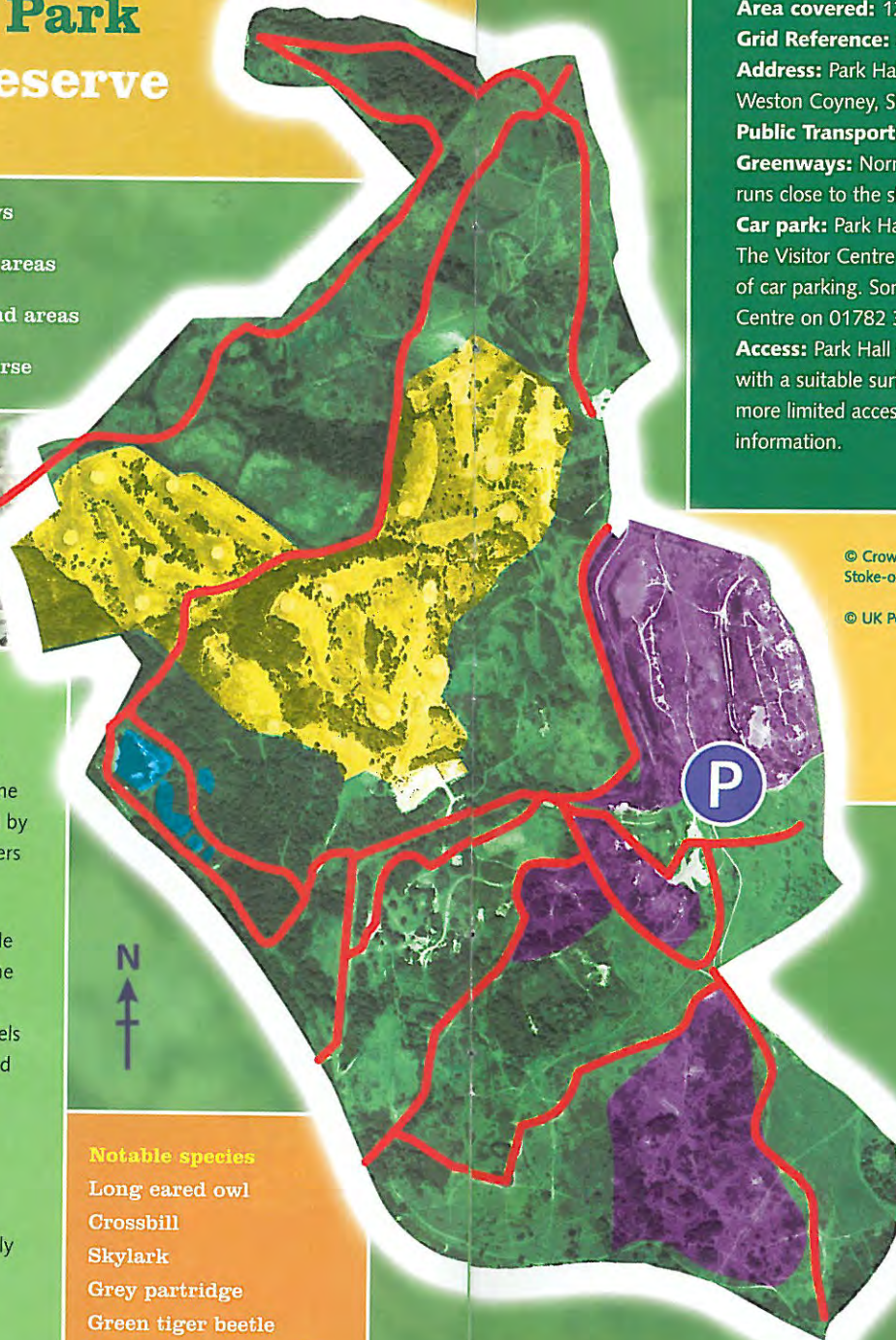
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# Park Hall Country Park National Nature Reserve



-  Walkways
-  Wetland areas
-  Heathland areas
-  Golf Course



**Declared:** 2002

**Area covered:** 125.68 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ930447

**Address:** Park Hall Country Park Visitor Centre, off Hulme Road, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent

**Public Transport:** Buses 1A, 27 and 27A goes through Park Hall

**Greenways:** Normacot greenway runs behind Park Hall lake and Berryhill greenway runs close to the site.

**Car park:** Park Hall has several car parks giving access to various parts of the site. The Visitor Centre lies off Hulme Road and can provide maps of the park and details of car parking. Some car parks have height restrictions: please contact the Visitor Centre on 01782 331889 if you need access for a tall vehicle.

**Access:** Park Hall Country Park has a wide variety of paths, from those that are level with a suitable surface for pushchairs and wheelchairs to those that are steep with more limited access. Please contact the Visitor Centre (01782 331889) for more information.

Park Hall Country Park was created as a result of sand and gravel extraction throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following the end of quarrying in 1970 the site came under the ownership of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and has become one of the most popular parks in the city. It is regularly used by walkers, fishermen, nature enthusiasts, horse riders, dog lovers and families.

Park Hall Country Park is notable for its sandstone and pebble beds. The sandstone was deposited in desert conditions in the Triassic period, about 230 million years ago. The sandstone canyons and heathlands are important nesting sites for kestrels and little owls, and sand martins breed nearby. The heathland and woods provide a habitat for long-eared owls, skylarks, meadow pipits and partridge and the gorse is valuable for linnet.

The four pools on the west side of the park are home to a great range of birds. Insects include the black darter dragonfly which is uncommon in Staffordshire. A number of unusual beetles, including the green tiger beetle, inhabit the damp, sandy areas.

### Notable species

- Long eared owl
- Crossbill
- Skylark
- Grey partridge
- Green tiger beetle
- Black darter dragonfly

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# Bridgett's Pool

## Local Nature Reserve

Bridgett's Pool consists of two pools, reedbeds and damp woodland. The Lyme Brook runs along the western edge of the site. Parts of the pool are available for fishing whilst others are kept as conservation areas.

Grass snakes are regularly seen swimming across the main pool, and evidence of water vole activity has been recorded along Lyme Brook and in parts of the pool and wetland habitat. Frogs and toads breed in the wetland area and in the summer there are lots of tadpoles in the ditches.

The City Council works with Embrey's Angling Club to manage the pool for wildlife, fishermen and visitors.

 Walkways  
 Wetland areas

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### Notable species

Grass snake  
Water vole  
Water forget-me-not  
Yellow water lily

**Declared:** 2006

**Area:** 2.1 hectares

**Grid Reference:** SJ 858439

**Address:** Off Brookfield Road, Trent Vale, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Bus 101 run along Newcastle Road (A34)

**Greenways:** Lyme Valley greenway runs close to the site  
**Car Park:** There is no designated car park for Bridgett's Pool

**Access:** The main path around the pool has a gravel surface and is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

# Smith's Pool

## Local Nature Reserve



Smith's Pool was dug in around 1870 to serve the North Staffordshire Railway workshops with water. The main pool is the focal feature, supported by a smaller pool, wet woodland and swamp. Mount Pleasant Park joins the Local Nature Reserve.

The pools are considered by Staffordshire Bat Group to be one of the most important foraging habitats in the City for noctule bats. Dragonflies are common around the pool fringes and in the swamp areas and there is a healthy fish population in the main pool.

The Lido for All group support the City Council in looking after Smith's Pool and Mount Pleasant Park.



 Walkways  
 Wetland areas

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**Notable species**  
 Noctule bat  
 Water stick insect  
 Smooth newt  
 Wild garlic



**Declared:** 2006  
**Area covered:** 9.3 hectares  
**Grid Reference:** SJ888443  
**Address:** Off Smithpool Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent  
**Public Transport:** Buses 40, 23, 26 and 27 run near or through Fenton  
**Greenways:** There are no greenways near to Smith's Pool  
**Car Park:** There is no designated car park for Smiths Pool, although there is a small off-road parking area for the adjacent Mount Pleasant Park.  
**Access:** Some of the paths around the pool are suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs but can be narrow. Some paths can be uneven and those through the woodland and wetland are unsurfaced and damp for most of the year.

# Coyney Woods

## Local Nature Reserve

Coyney Woods is shown on maps from as early as the mid 1800s, although it is obviously much older. It is likely that all three woodlands are fragments of a more extensive woodland that was reduced by agricultural development. The boundaries of the woods appear to have been largely unaffected by the housing development which now surrounds them.

Weston Sprink is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland in the city. A variety of classic woodland species are present including oak, blackthorn, ivy and bluebells. The grassland areas feature sneezewort, devil's-bit scabious and marsh marigold.

Birch Wood is a very good example of mature broad-leaved woodland dominated by silver birch, rowan, oak, holly and bluebells. A stream runs along the western boundary of the wood and has created a number of small ponds which provide ideal homes for amphibians. Owls, woodpeckers and bats have been seen in the wood.

Ransome Place is a birch and oak woodland carpeted by bluebells in the spring.



**Ransome Place Wood**



**Birch Wood**

**Walkways**

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**Weston Sprink**



**Declared:** 2006

**Area:** 30 hectares

**Grid Reference:** Weston Sprink - SJ 929 343

Birch Wood - SJ 928 436

Ransome Place - SJ 925 438

**Address:** Weston Sprink is off Coyney Grove, Birch Wood is off Brookview Drive and Ransome Place Wood is off Ransom Place. All are in Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent

**Public Transport:** Buses 1A, 26 and 27 runs through Weston Coyney

**Greenways:** Normacot greenway runs near the site

**Car Park:** There is no designated car park for Coyney Woods

**Access:** Birch Wood has a recently surfaced path which is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Both Weston Sprink and Ransome Place have informal paths which can be muddy in damp weather.

### Notable species

Pipistrelle bat

Bluebell

Lesser-spotted woodpecker

