



How to get there

The Watermeadows lie behind Bury Mount and St Lawrence Church off Chantry Lane. They are a short walk from Watling Street and can be accessed via a bridge next to Bury Mount or from Northampton Road.

the watermeadows

Moat Lane, Towcester

Countryside Code

As the Watermeadows are part of the natural environment please respect the Countryside Code which will help all to protect and enjoy the countryside. The code says:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

This leaflet is a guide to the area of land in the centre of Towcester known as the Watermeadows. It provides practical information such as how to get to the Watermeadows, safety information and detailed information on the ecology and history of the site. It has been compiled by South Northamptonshire Council and partners in conjunction with The Towcester Wildlife Trust as part of the Moat Lane project. The Watermeadows represent an important and welcome addition to public green space in Towcester for future generations to enjoy. The new park provides space for a wide variety of events and uses.

Further information

Further information on the project can be found on the Moat Lane website www.moatlane.org

Flora and fauna

Flora

Several groups, including the Towcester Wildlife Trust have undertaken surveys of the Watermeadows and have found over 50 plant species.

The area is mainly grass water meadow, with a couple of copses and mature boundary trees. The presence of large anthills and tussocky grasses indicate that the grassland has not been managed by modern agricultural machinery for a number of years.

The watercourses surrounding the site are home to species such as water mint, meadowsweet, purple loosestrife, water forget-me-not, yellow flag iris, angelica, canary grass and sedges. The grassland areas include species such as red fescue and yorkshire fog. The site is also home to many mature trees such as oak, scots pine and horse chesnut.



The site is surrounded by three watercourses, please take care when close to the waters edge.



Please do not swim in the watercourses.



In places the banks are steep and the water can move rapidly.



Fauna

The Watermeadow forms part of the flood plain of the River Tove and is bounded by the River Tove, the Mill Stream and Silverstone Brook, providing various habitats which support a large number of wildlife species.

Towcester Wildlife Trust members, experts and local residents have already found evidence of the following local wildlife:

- walkers on guided tours of the site found 2 White Tailed Bumble Bee nests which had been dug up, probably by badgers. This bee often nests in old vole nests, so this could be an indication that there are field voles
- three different species of bat have been identified by the Northamptonshire bat group using equipment to monitor their 'chirps'
- some 70 different bird species have been identified, including Kingfishers, Little Egrets, and Barn Owls (which hunt voles)
- there are several varieties of Dragonfly and Demoiselle fly

Health and safety

The Watermeadows are part of the natural environment. South Northamptonshire Council takes reasonable measures to minimise risks associated with the rural nature of the site, however all risks are not eliminated. Therefore please take care when visiting the site, you are responsible for your own health and safety and for others within your care.

You visit at your own risk and South Northamptonshire Council accepts no liability for any injury, loss or damage suffered by visitors to the Watermeadows.

Please be aware of the following when using the Watermeadows:

- the site is rural in nature
- children must be supervised at all times
- observe all notices and signs during your visit
- wear appropriate clothing and footwear
- animals are used to graze the site during which times, dogs must be kept on a lead
- take care when close to the animals and leave gates closed when they are on site
- the area is liable to flood, at which times access may be restricted.

Emergencies

In case of emergency please dial **999** and state the following location:

The Watermeadows/Marlowes Meadows, Northampton Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire

Welcome to the Watermeadows

In 2009, as part of the Moat Lane project, South Northamptonshire Council and its partners acquired the Watermeadows. The Watermeadows are situated to the east of Towcester town centre and were part of the original Easton Neston Estate, covering over 13 hectares (33 acres) of Grade II* Registered parkland.

The restoration

The Watermeadows have undergone a restoration and management project to ensure that this special environment is accessible to everyone and protected for the future. The project team have worked with English Heritage, Natural England, The Wildlife Trust, The Towcester Wildlife Trust, landscape architects, rural surveyors and ecologists to ensure that the Watermeadows are managed and restored appropriately. The restoration project will improve habitats, protect the historic parkland and provide a link to Bury Mount and Towcester town centre.

The work to the Watermeadows has been 'light touch' in approach and includes:

- a new pedestrian bridge linking the site with Bury Mount
- an access from the Northampton Road and a pathway leading to the bridge
- mown paths to improve access for walkers
- fencing for stock, tree and grassland management
- installation of bat boxes

- mowing of nettles and scrub clearance to improve habitat diversity
- cleaning of the Mill Stream to benefit species such as watervoles and
- installation of seating.

The Watermeadows will be managed in a traditional way, using stock to graze during periods throughout the year. This will encourage flowering grasses and wildflowers, providing nectar and pollen for butterflies, bees and other insects. A management plan for the site has been developed, to ensure that the site is managed in an appropriate manner.



Bat boxes installed, 2009

Silverstone Brook, 2009

