



giving
nature
a home

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

Access Statement for RSPB Middleton Lakes nature reserve

Introduction

Nestled in the beautiful Lower Tame Valley, the RSPB has transformed 400 acres of old gravel quarry workings into a place rich in wildlife and natural character. Leave the hustle and bustle of life behind as you slowly discover a mosaic of habitats around the reserve.

A network of four distinct trails give access to different areas of the reserve and a range of experiences, including tranquil views, picnic spots and a meadow for 'wild play'.

At this stage of development there are no indoor facilities on the reserve however, we are allowed to use the facilities of Middleton Hall which is next door to the reserve.

Further details regarding the reserve and what you can see and do here can be found on our website: www.rspb.org.uk/middletonlakes

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance then please contact our office on 01827 259454 or email us on middletonlakes@rspb.org.uk

Pre-Arrival

- For a map and directions of how to reach us please refer to the 'How to get here' section of our website. There is also a link for sat navs. Alternatively, you can plan your journey by public transport or car using www.transportdirect.info; simply enter your postcode and ours, B78 2AE, to get directions.
- Our main entrance, which is clearly signposted, is off Bodymoor Heath Lane which is itself off the A4091, just 9½ km from the

M6 and 6½ km from the M42, northeast of Birmingham. The entrance road takes you straight along the former quarry track for 1.6 km. Follow our signs until you reach the reserve. The surface of the track is rough gravel and occasionally does feature potholes. Our car park is clearly indicated at the end of the track.

- The reserve is not currently served by public buses.
- The nearest railway station is Wilnecote which is 4 km away. There are several taxi companies operating in the Tamworth area. Alternatively, to reach the reserve from Wilnecote on foot, follow the signs towards Fazeley until you reach the Birmingham/Fazeley canal. Walk southwards along the towpath, reaching the middle of the reserve after approximately 3 km.
- We welcome registered assistance dogs. Other dogs on a lead are welcome except on areas of the reserve where this might significantly disturb the wildlife. Please see details of trails below, or the signposts on the reserve, for more information.



Swing gate at pedestrian entrance to reserve

Car Parking Facilities and Arrival

- There is a car park with 30 spaces, including 3 signposted spaces for Blue Badge holders.
- The car park surface is rough gravel. The path alongside the car park, leading to the information board and start of the trails, is fine gravel.
- There is a small charge for the use of our facilities, please deposit your donation in the cairn.
- The car park height barriers are generally left closed, restricting access for vehicles over 2.1 m in height. Kindly contact the office for assistance.
- There are 4 bicycle racks in the car park.
- An information board, including reserve map, is located within the car park.
- There is no lighting in the car park and no formal drop off point.



Illustration of rough gravel/fine gravel surfacing

Nature Trails

- All of our four distinct trails are colour coded and are clearly way marked by wooden finger posts.
- Free standard print trail guides are available to pick up from the leaflet dispenser attached to the information board, or can be downloaded from the reserve website:
www.rspb.org.uk/middletonlakes
- At weekends, in good weather, staff or volunteers may be on hand to help with information from a mobile display trailer in the car park.



Example of signposting used throughout reserve

There are four trails:

Play meadow trail

- This is 500 m circular trail around a meadow starting from the car park.
- This area is devoted to stimulating wild play. It includes mini-beast log piles, den-building area, stepping stones, and a small copse among other features.
- There are a number of colourful boards located around the meadow with suggestions of fun things to do. These have large print and illustrations and are low to the ground.
- The ground underfoot is rough and uneven. Areas of the meadow can become very boggy during wet weather.
- A path of approximately 1 m width is mown when the grass gets long, but the area is intended to encourage exploration – you are welcome to explore without keeping to the path!
- The meadow features several ponds with thick mud at the bottom. One of these is fenced off.
- There is a 3m section of anti-slip boardwalk over one pool with no railings. This area is only supervised when pond dipping is taking place.
- There is one bench along the trail but this meadow includes the reserve's main picnic area.



Example of play meadow terrain in dry weather

Woodland trail

- This is a linear walk of 700m each way, starting from the car park. The trail takes you as far as the canal bridge, with beautiful views over the wetland area.
- This trail ranges from 1-2 m wide, incorporating several changes of path surface.
- As you leave the play meadow to access the heronry boardwalk there is a kissing gate and swing gate which is 1m wide.
- Near the beginning, there is short section (approximately 20m) of anti-slip boardwalk giving views of a heronry and bird feeders.
- Beyond the boardwalk, the path surface is largely compact earth. In wet weather, particularly over winter, this path can become very muddy and slippery.
- There a few separate sections of rough gravel.
- The path is largely flat, with a gently undulating section when it cuts through the woodland for 200m
- There are several benches along this section of the trail. One is located on a small circular anti-slip viewing platform with views across a pool.
- The canal bridge is curved at an approximate 1:10 gradient.
- Dogs are welcome on the trail. As this is a section of public bridleway it is at your discretion whether you use a lead or not. We encourage use of a lead in order to minimize disturbance to wildlife in this area (including otters, which are sensitive even to the smell of dogs) and to avoid issues with the dogs of other users along this popular stretch of path.

Wetland trail

- This is a circular 3 km trail around the northern quarter of the reserve, with views of the River Tame, starting from the canal bridge, reached via the Woodland Trail.
- The grassy trail is rough underfoot with undefined edges. In wet weather, particularly over winter, it becomes extremely muddy

and slippery. Areas close to the river are also prone to flooding during very wet spells.

- There are several benches located around this trail, providing views across the lakes. There is one picnic bench about half way round with views of the river.
- There are docile English longhorn cattle in the centre on the other side of the electrified fence.
- Dogs on a lead are welcome only along part of this trail – please observe the signposts indicating which section is suitable.

Meadow trail

- This is a circular 2.25 km trail around an area of fenced meadow, incorporating a section of surfaced path on top of a high level bank. It starts from the canal bridge and is reached via the Woodland Trail.
- Apart from the high level path, the trail is grassy and rough underfoot with undefined edges. In wet weather, particularly over winter, it becomes extremely muddy and slippery. Areas close to the river are also prone to flooding during very wet spells.

Viewing Facilities

- Currently we have three purpose-built viewing platforms and three viewing screens on the Wetlands Trail. There is no roof and no seating.
- We have also recently opened our new Lookout hide overlooking the northern scrapes.



The Lookout entrance

Lookout details:

- Access path – leveled type 1 surfacing topped with wood chippings. Leads onto concrete base outside of the Lookout door. Slight door lip (7mm)
- The door opens fully and held in position by cabin hook (1400mm from floor). Width through door 1085mm.
- Outer door - Punch code and twist handle (1m from floor).
- Inner door - lever handle (1m from floor)
- The Lookout is level throughout.



Inside the Lookout

- All seats moveable to allow wheelchair access, including 12 height adjustable stools (without castors, arms or backs) and 8 moveable chairs with backs
- 4 large fixed tinted glass windows (1130mm wide : 760mm from floor)
- 8 glazed tinted glass window slots (1030mm from floor) each with 2 grip handles, catch opening (1850mm from floor).
- There are: 2 large images on the rear walls. 2 signs (A5) on outer door (black ink on white paper, Arial font, 40pt and 33pt).
- The information boards are not non-reflective.

Public Toilets

- There are indoor toilet facilities available in the Middleton Hall Courtyard. The Courtyard is approximately 250m from the reserve car park, along a path which varies from fine gravel at a gradient of approximately 1:20 to rough gravel/grass.
- There is a swing gate as you leave the reserve.
- The Courtyard is sign posted 'Cafe' on the reserve signposts.
- The nearest accessible toilet is approximately another 100 m from the Courtyard located in a separate Middleton Hall building. This route involves walking along a road. Use of the facility requires a Radar key.



Entrance to the Middleton Hall Courtyard

Catering

- There are no catering facilities on the reserve, but the Middleton Hall Courtyard includes a cafe which serves hot and cold snacks, breakfasts and lunches. It is open every day from 10 am-5 pm. The Courtyard is accessed as described above.
- There is a step into the cafe but there is a ramp available to use.

Picnic Area

- There is a picnic area located next to the car park, on the edge of a meadow area with pleasant views.
- There are 2 picnic benches designed to be wheelchair accessible situated on fine gravel.
- There are 4 more picnic benches located at various points around the meadow, on rough, grassy, uneven surfaces.
- There is also a picnic bench located on the Wetland Trail and one on the Meadow Trail, both on rough, grassy, uneven surfaces. Neither of these are designed to be wheelchair accessible.
- Visitors are more than welcome to bring their own picnics to enjoy on the reserve.

Future Plans

- Over the next few years, we will add facilities such as accessible toilets and an indoor space as and when we secure funding.
- We will also improve the path surface after the Woodland Trail.
- It is envisaged that within 10 years we will have a large, fully accessible visitor centre.

Contact Information

Address: RSPB Middleton Lakes, Middleton, Tamworth,
Staffordshire, B78 2AE

Telephone: 01827 259 454

Email: middletonlakes@rspb.org.uk

Website: www.rspb.org.uk/middletonlakes

Grid Reference: SP192967

Hours Of Operation: Office staffed approximately 9 am-5 pm
Monday to Friday, although there are
occasionally weekdays when no one is present

Local Accessible
Taxi: Tamworth Taxis (01827 55595)

Local Public
Transport: Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or
www.transportdirect.info