

The Lodge reserve and gardens

Finding your way around

Sandy Ridge trail

This lovely, varied walk is a little less than two miles in length, crossing some steeper sections of the reserve. Look for butterflies and buzzing insects in summer; in winter enjoy large flocks of thrushes.

Follow the path onto Sandy Ridge, then wander along the edge of the acid grassland and take in high views to the south. Carry on through the woodland, listening for the distinctive "laugh" of green woodpeckers as you go – you might see one foraging on the ground for ants. When you reach the heathland, turn left and a sandy path will lead you around an open expanse of heather and gorse. Join the bridleway to return to the reserve entrance through the cool, shady wood. In spring, bluebells spread across the woodland floor.

Galley Hill trail

This route is just over a mile and a half long and takes about an hour and a half to walk and enjoy. Discover the banks and ditches of an ancient Iron Age hill fort and try to imagine this heathland 2,000 years ago.

The path that runs parallel to the road from the reserve shop to the hill fort is even and level; keep a look out for ravens, kestrels and buzzards as you walk. In summer enjoy the purple flowering heather on the heath and watch hobbies dashing in pursuit of dragonflies. After the hill fort, the path drops through a valley and becomes steep and uneven. Look out for the ponds we have created for our breeding population of scarce natterjack toads.

Old Quarry trail

This one and a half mile trail gives a taste of all The Lodge has to offer. It's steep in places with lots of steps, up and down. Give yourself about an hour and a half to walk it, returning to the car park via the bridleway.

Check what wildlife has been seen today at our visitor information building, then head through the old wood towards the Meadow hide. Stop to watch birds feeding and, just past the hide, enjoy a great view of The Lodge house. Take a short detour to admire the gardens, then return to the trail and carry on to the quarry. In spring, enjoy a chorus of birdsong as you walk. Look for nuthatches and spotted flycatchers in summer, flocks of finches in autumn, and feeding siskins and redpolls in winter.

