

# Your guide to Watermead Country Park



## History

The area that is now Watermead was once a sand and gravel pit. In the 1980s the area was reclaimed and transformed into the country park it is today.

## What to See and Do

At the centre of Watermead is the park's main hub and car park. Here there are many picnic benches, nearby toilets and a level grass area, which is fantastic for recreational activities such as ball games and family picnics.

The Reedbed Nature Reserve sits just north of the hub and provides peaceful nature walks for wildlife lovers.



Triathlon Club and Newfoundland Dog Rescue Training clubs all use the lakes for monthly or weekly sessions.

Activities such as fishing are popular on John Merrick's Lake and the Lily Pond, both of which are just a short walk from the park's hub.

Local organisations such as King Lear's Model Boat Club, Leicester Sail Boarding Club, Leicester



## Getting Around

The park has been featured as part of the Connect2 project which is part funded by the National Lottery Fund grant. From this grant, existing paths and cycle ways have been improved, and bridges at Thurmaston and Birstall locks replaced.

A network of flat, well-surfaced paths provide accessible routes for the whole family on foot or bicycles. These paths guide you around the park's many lakes and ponds, as well as the Grand Union Canal flowing alongside the park's eastern edge.

This access continues outside Watermead's boundary and can take you straight into the heart of Leicester city via Watermead South, or northwards into Syston and Cossington.

## Country Park Volunteers

A wide range of country parks, woodlands and other open spaces throughout the county are managed by Leicestershire County Council. However, with over 400 hectares of land to look after, we need your help!

Country Park volunteers are a diverse group of people who get together on a regular basis to carry out conservation tasks.

A number of volunteer groups work throughout the county undertaking a wide variety of practical tasks. These include hedge laying, surveying, working on heathlands, woodlands and grasslands, and general estate management.

### Get Involved!

If you would like to get fit, help local wildlife, learn new skills and maybe make some new friends, why not come along to our volunteer days?

**Get in touch**  
to find out how!

## Visitor Information

Watermead Country Park covers an area of 100 hectares and comprises wetlands, grassland, meadows and marshland. Lying on the outskirts of Leicester city, the park is a green oasis and haven for wildlife.

The main entrance uses an automated pay on entry access system. The machine only accepts coins and doesn't give change or issue tickets.

Alternatively, annual car parking season tickets, which give you free parking at all Leicestershire County Council Country Parks can be purchased.

### Why walking is good for you

Walking is a great way to help beat stress, improve your health, boost your immune system and burns calories, so try to keep active 5 times a week for 30 minutes.



## How to Contact Us

For more information about this or any other Country Park, including car park charges, opening times, season tickets, events and group visits, please contact us.

### Get in Touch!

**T:** 0116 305 5000

**E:** [countryparks@leics.gov.uk](mailto:countryparks@leics.gov.uk)

**W:** [www.leics.gov.uk/countryparks](http://www.leics.gov.uk/countryparks)



[www.facebook.com/watermead](http://www.facebook.com/watermead)

## How to Find Us



We are located five miles north of Leicester, near the villages of Syston and Birstall.

The entrance, off Wanlip Road (LE7 1PD, grid ref SK 60721 11408), gives vehicular access to King Lear's Lake and car park, John Merrick's Lake and car park and the Reedbed Nature Reserve and car park.



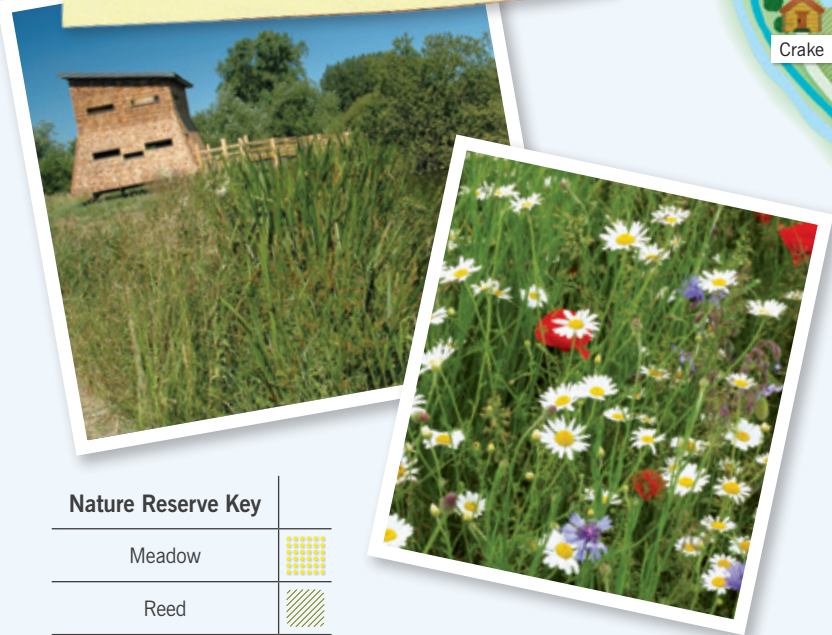
# Watermead Country Park

## Reedbed Nature Reserve

The Reedbed Nature Reserve, which covers 17 hectares (of which approximately 3 hectares is Norfolk Reed), is of natural history importance due to its abundant array of wildlife and is an excellent location for bird watching. There are 4 bird hides within the reserve which have wonderful views over habitats such as reedbed, woodland, marshland, meadows and open water, as well as a sand martin nesting wall. The reserve is open daily - for opening times please check the website.

Dogs and cycling are not permitted within the reserve's boundaries.

— Nature Reserve Boundary



Nature Reserve Key	
Meadow	
Reed	

## Our Visitor Code

Help us to keep the Country Park safe and enjoyable for all visitors by respecting our Visitor Code. Please:

- Keep dogs under strict control at all times
- Clean up after your dog and use the bins provided
- Take your litter home, and recycle where possible
- Do not swim, or allow your dog to swim, in the lakes or ponds
- Only use the designated BBQ areas
- Do not light open fires
- Do not pick flowers

## Watermead Country Park South

Follow the river southwards to reach Watermead Country Park (South), which is managed by Leicester City Council. The park links to walking and cycling routes that lead south connecting scenic and historic parks and places of interest along Leicester City's riverside. Overlooking the park's two lakes is the life-size woolly mammoth sculpture. If you have any enquiries please contact the Leicester City Council Parks Services help line on 0116 252 7003 or [parks@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:parks@leicester.gov.uk)



## Jurassic Play Trail

The trail, located around King Lear's Lake, includes a rib cage climbing frame, a mini 'henge' and a plesiosaur play mound. The structures were designed with the help of local school children and reflect Watermead's prehistoric past – mammoth remains were found at the site when the area was being quarried. The trail was launched in 2010 and won the Children's Play category in the Local Government News (LGN) 2011 Street Design Awards.

★ Play Trail locations



## Routes for walkers and cyclists

Explore the great network of paths within the Country Park, taking in a wealth of landscapes, wildlife habitats and spectacular viewpoints. Try out one of the two, coloured, waymarked routes. For a longer route combine the two.

Route	Distance	Walking Time	Surface
<b>Red Route</b> 	1 mile (1.5 km)	30 mins	Hard surface path, suitable for pushchairs/wheelchairs
<b>Purple Route</b> 	2 miles (3 km)	1 hour	Hard surface path, suitable for pushchairs/wheelchairs

## Portrait Bench

This bench, installed in 2011, depicts two Bronze Age people and an Aurochs (an extinct wild ox); remains of which were excavated at Watermead during the reclamation. The bench is part of a national art initiative from Sustrans to boost a series of new walking and cycling routes across the UK, and is funded through a lottery grant.

