



Circular Walks in the Parish of Nuthurst

Welcome to our Parish Walks

Please take a few moments to read these notes before setting out on one of our walks

Why has the Parish Council produced these walks?

- To allow you to enjoy and find out more about our lovely Parish and its countryside;
- To help you keep fit, healthy and relaxed and get away from the stresses of life; and
- To let you explore our myriad of ancient public footpaths and bridleways.

What about accidents?

- **All walkers are responsible for their own safety.**
- Remember that paths cross fields, roads, lanes, streams and ditches, go through woods with overhanging branches and alongside ponds - so inevitably there are hazards.
- Particular care must be taken when crossing roads/lanes or walking on a pavement alongside a road, especially the very busy and fast A281.
- Children, in particular, should be carefully supervised and dogs should be kept on leads so that they do not disturb wildlife or farmers' animals.
- **The Parish Council cannot accept any liability for any injury however caused.**

What if it is difficult to use a footpath/bridleway or directions are not clear?

- If you find a path seriously overgrown, stiles broken or gates locked or any other problem, please note the location of the problem and, if possible, take a photo.
 - Report the problem to West Sussex County Council, who are responsible for making sure landowners keep paths open and passable. The Rights of Way team can be contacted on 01243 777620 or there is a report form on their website at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/...rights-of-way/report-a-problem-with-a-right-of-way>.
 - Notify the Parish Council Clerk by e-mail at nuthurstparishclk@btinternet.com – the Clerk can follow up to check whether the problem has been rectified.
- Whilst the Parish Council has taken every care to ensure that the descriptions of these walks are accurate, things can change. They were all walked during summer 2017. If you find something that is incorrect, please let the Clerk know by e-mail.
- Although an OS map is not necessary, some people like to read one and to teach their children to use one. All our walks are on **OS Explorer Map OL34, Crawley and Horsham**.

What should you wear?

- First check the weather forecast for Horsham area on the BBC or other website.

- Stout shoes should be fine after a period of dry weather.
- After recent heavy rain, walking boots or wellies are advised as paths, particularly bridleways, can get very muddy.
- Old clothes are best as they could get muddy or torn on hedges and brambles etc.
- If it has rained recently or rain is forecast, waterproofs are advised.

Should you take anything else?

- You might like to take **binoculars** to observe birds, butterflies etc and a **camera** to provide a record of interesting things seen on the walk and to provide evidence of any problems.
- A bottle of **water**, particularly in warm weather.
- A **mobile phone** in case of an accident or emergency.
- Adults and older children might like to take a **notebook** to record species of birds, animals, wild flowers, trees, butterflies etc seen. They could take bark rubbings using paper and the side of a wax crayon and try to identify the trees from these distinctive bark patterns
- If you are taking younger children, each might like to take a **small empty box** to fill with say 10 tiny things found on the walk – for example bird’s feather (try to identify, if necessary later from a book or the internet), empty hazel nut shell (if broken look on internet to see if it has been eaten by a squirrel or a dormouse) etc. Please don’t collect anything that is growing.

Some things to look out for in our Parish

Trees

The Parish has plenty of woodland, mainly deciduous. Oaks are the dominant tree and they support more birds and insects than any other trees. There are also plenty of ash, sycamore and beech trees.



Oak Trees



Acorns

Coppiced hazel is another feature of our Parish. Hazel trees were cut to encourage many separate stems to grow (coppicing). These stems were then cut and used for fencing, firewood etc.



Coppiced hazel

Wild flowers

In the spring, before the trees leaf up, many of our deciduous woodlands are awash with bluebells and wood anemones. You may also see and smell wild garlic.

Primroses, ladies’ smock and other flowers abound in our hedgerows and banks.

You can see orchids on the triangle by the millennium sign in Maplehurst and you may be lucky enough to see them in other places.

Scrubland can have a profusion of wild flowers and bushes which provide an important habitat and homes and food for a wide variety of wildlife.



Bluebell woods



Orchid

Birds

A wide variety of birds can be seen on our walks. Of particular note are birds of prey. Buzzards are most common. Listen for the “mew” and look high in the sky to see them soaring. Sometimes see them perched in trees and on telephone poles.

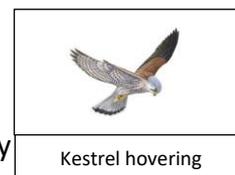


Buzzard

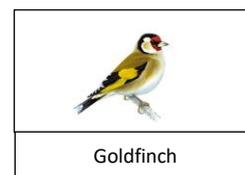
Kestrels are also common. They are smaller than buzzards. Often called “windhoovers” because they stay almost still in the sky, hovering over a particular spot looking for prey.

You may be very lucky and see a red kite with a forked tail – they have only spread to the South of England in recent years.

In the woods, look for great spotted woodpeckers. And on the scrubland, where thistles and other plants with seed heads are plentiful, you can see a variety of finches in flocks. Particularly look for a “charm” of goldfinches. You may see linnets and see and hear yellowhammers.



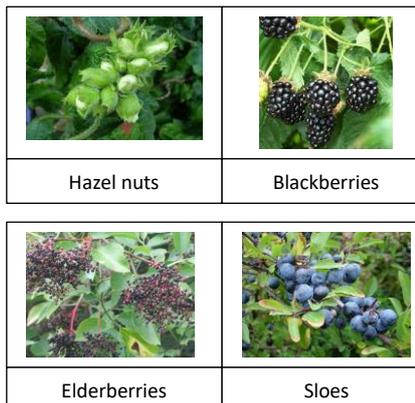
Kestrel hovering



Goldfinch

Fruit and berries

In the autumn many trees and bushes produce fruits which are a source of food for many species of birds and animals. Hazel nuts (often call cobnuts) are a favourite for grey squirrels and dormice. If you look at the teeth marks in the broken shells you can tell who has eaten the nut. Squirrels break nuts in half, but dormice leave a smooth, round hole. Other mice, woodpeckers and nuthatches also eat cobnuts. Blackberries, elderberries, rosehips, sloes (blackthorn bush) and haws (hawthorn bush/tree) are common.



Animals

Fallow deer (“bambis”) roam our woodlands and fields. They have no natural predators, only man, hence the build up of numbers in the Parish. You may occasionally see roe deer and the smaller muntjac. Grey squirrels are common. At dusk you may be lucky and see a badger. Smaller animals such as field mice and water voles are around but very difficult to see.



Fallow deer

Finally please respect the countryside and help our farmers

- Do not drop litter – please take it home with you.
- Do not pick wild flowers or other growing things.
- Shut all gates after you.
- Keep dogs on a lead and **pick up your dog poo.**

If you have any comments on these walks, please contact

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