

This 35 hectare (86.5 acre) former gravel extraction site consists of extensive woodland, grassland and several lakes located in a narrow valley just outside Aldermaston.

Young Estates Ltd (formerly Young (Aldermaston) Developments Ltd) have owned the land since 1961, when it was bought from Turner & Hunter, a timber company. At this time gravel was extracted from where the industrial estate now stands and other areas of the site. The avenue of lakes was created in order to supply water to the processing plant at the top of the valley, where the gravel was washed. The process of gravel washing leaves sediment that is then left to settle in a series of silt ponds. At Paices Wood these were filled in and transformed into the car park.

After gravel extraction finished in the early 1980s, the industrial estate was created and it was decided to develop the woodland and lakes into country parkland for the enjoyment of local communities. To this end, the Pang, Kennet & Lambourn Valleys Countryside Project (FWAG) and West Berkshire Council with funding from the Youngs and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, have created a footpath network through the woodland so that the site can be enjoyed and implemented a conservation programme to further enhance the park.

The site's interesting background has created a diverse range of habitats: Coppice woodland, wet woodland, the avenue of lakes, wildlife pond, ridge and furrow landscape and lapwing area. Interpretation signs can be found around the park, which explain these important features and the wildlife you are likely to see.

Two waymarked walks have been created to help you explore the park, as indicated on the map. The orange walk guides you around different features such as the lakes, woodland and amphibian area. The blue walk concentrates on woodland, ranging from alder coppice in the wet bottom of the valley

to sweet chestnut and cherry trees further up the valley.



Enjoy a quiet walk around Paices Wood and see how much wildlife you can see...

Opening Times

The park gates open and close at different times during the year. Please check the signs on entering the park for the closing times or check out the website www.paiceswood.net



Fishing

The lakes are stocked with carp, pike and other species. Tickets per rod, valid for one day's fishing, can be obtained from the bailiff. www.sevenlakesangling.net



Practical Tasks & Events

Practical conservation tasks and events are run in the parkland by the Kennet Valley Community Project. For further details, please contact the Pang, Kennet & Lambourn Valleys Countryside Project (FWAG) office on 0118 930 5336.

Directions

Paices Wood Country Parkland is accessed off the A340 south of Aldermaston. Follow the brown Country Park signs.



Pang, Kennet & Lambourn Valleys Countryside Project (FWAG)

The Old Estate Offices, Englefield Road, Theale, Berkshire RG7 5DZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 930 5336 Email: pang.kennet@fwag.org.uk
www.pangandkennetvalleys.org.uk

Paices Wood Country Parkland is supported by:



www.paiceswood.net





© Richard Ford, Digitalwildlife.co.uk

Amphibian Area

This whole area is very important because amphibians spend most of their lives away from water, usually only returning during the breeding season. They require grassland areas to feed, cover to protect them from predators and hibernation sites. Frogs typically hibernate underwater whilst toads hibernate on land under leaf litter and logs or in burrows.

Lakes

Gravel was extracted from where the industrial estate now stands and the avenue of lakes was created in order to supply water to the processing plant at the top of the valley.

Closes

Closes were small private enclosed fields used by medieval farmers to house livestock. Their arable land was in open fields shared with other farmers. These closes have been turned into alder copses.

Seven Acre Copse

Copses are woods, usually ash and hazel, which have been managed by coppicing. This involves cutting the trees at ground level and then allowing them to re-grow producing multiple stems. Coppiced woodland is harvested in sections, on a rotation, and this has the side-effect of providing a rich variety of habitats. The increase in light causes a surge of growth from plants and dormant seeds.

Lapwing Area

This area is popular with lapwings and it has been fenced to avoid disturbing the birds which make their nests on the ground. Lapwings require nesting sites with bare ground or short vegetation so they can spot predators. Soon after hatching the adult lapwing lead their chicks to feeding areas (usually wetland), where they are reared with a plentiful supply of invertebrates.



© Chris Grady



www.paiceswood.net



Medieval Road

This tree-lined long narrow double bank is the old road from Aldermaston to Brimpton Common. It went out of use when the common was enclosed and today it creates a natural boundary between Paices Wood and the neighbouring Wasing Estate.

Chicken of the woods

Fungi can be seen growing on decaying logs and stumps of wood.



Upper Wet Pightle

Pightle is the medieval name for a small enclosure, created by clearing woodland.



© Keith Toney, West Berkshire Council



Bluebells

A visit to the Parkland in late April and early May will offer a carpet of bluebells in the woodlands.

Common Blue Butterfly

Butterflies can often be seen in sunny and sheltered places such as woodland clearings.

