

What lives here?



Hugh Clark FOSCP

hazel dormouse

Resident and visiting animals include:

- foxes
- bats
- voles & shrews
- hares & rabbits

Amongst our mammal community we have the hazel dormouse, a rare and protected species



red kite

The Common is used by over 50 species of birds, including:

- skylarks
- kestrels
- buzzards
- woodpeckers

Look out for red kites, here since 2006, following their reintroduction to the Chilterns



small copper

In the meadows, look out for these butterflies:

- small tortoiseshell
- common blue
- marbled white
- meadow brown

Our diverse insect community includes 26 species of butterfly



bee orchid

There are over 200 plant species here, including:

- wild orchids
- rosebay willow-herb
- oxeye daisy
- bluebells
- gorse
- blackthorn

Thanks to careful conservation, orchids and other native flowers are making a comeback

Studham Common is a place to have fun! Why not:

- play hide and seek
- try geocaching
- pick blackberries
- enjoy a picnic
- have a wildlife spotting competition

Come and see for yourself



outstanding natural beauty

Whether you want to join FOSC and help us in any way you can, or if you want to just come and enjoy this amazing natural environment, we'd love to see you on Studham Common soon.

How to get here

Studham lies 10km (6 miles) west of the M1 (Junction 9 or 10) and the A5. It is 6km (4 miles) due south of Dunstable on the B4541 and 12km (7 miles) north of Hemel Hempstead, just off the A4146. For satnavs use post code LU6 2QA or grid reference TL 02317 15781.

Parking: There are small car parks on East and Middle Commons (see map inside)

For more information

Visit us online at www.foscomm.org

Email us at mail@foscomm.org

Telephone: See website for contact details



To report a problem, contact Central Bedfordshire Council's Ranger service on **01525 237760**

Studham Common

In an area of outstanding natural beauty



Common in name,
amazing in nature



Central Bedfordshire Council

Supported by



With thanks to the Chilterns Conservation Board for help in funding this leaflet and to écoutez creative for donating their design services

www.foscomm.org

Discover Studham Common

Studham Common, in south Bedfordshire, has been used as common land for centuries and is now a designated County Wildlife Site. Covering approximately 30 hectares (74 acres), it is a beautiful, rich and diverse natural habitat featuring grassland, woodland, scrub thickets and hedgerows, some of which date from medieval times.

As well as being important for wildlife, Studham Common plays a vital part in enhancing the quality of life for local people. Winding paths can be explored through the woodland, the open land offers plenty of space to relax and escape into nature, and there is a small playing field in the western section.



To find out more about the history, habitats and wildlife here visit www.foscomm.org

Friends of Studham Common



The land that makes up Studham Common is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council. However, the much-needed conservation work that keeps this wildlife haven really special is primarily undertaken by the Friends of Studham Common (FOSC), with support and guidance from the Council and the Greensand Trust.

Since 1997, we have been:

- protecting and enhancing wildlife diversity
- raising local awareness of the importance and value of the Common
- improving public access and encouraging wider use

Our efforts, all completely voluntary, have been rewarded with more wildlife, native plants being encouraged to return and seeing more and more people enjoying the Common. In the last few years, we have also been delighted to receive an annual Green Flag Award for an outstanding contribution to the care of this green space, for visitors and wildlife alike.

Our work includes restoring hedgerows, clearing invasive plants to encourage more diverse habitats and ensuring that paths remain passable for visitors to explore the Common. Without our ongoing efforts, Studham Common would not be as beautiful, rich or accessible as it is today.

To find out more, visit our website at www.foscomm.org

We need your help



A little help from you will go a long way to keeping Studham Common beautiful for everyone. We are always keen to hear from people who would like to join our once-a-month conservation activity days.

You could get involved in:

- setting up nesting boxes for bats, birds or dormice
- clearing footpaths
- restoring hedgerows
- wildlife surveys

Learn new skills

We work together with a number of local organisations through which we offer a variety of training sessions from first aid to brush cutter safety.

Discover local wildlife

From time to time we offer talks and guided walks around the Common to discover more about the plants and wildlife living here.

Make new friends

We work hard on the Common, but we also have fun. We enjoy a number of social events throughout the year and we reward volunteers attending our conservation activity days with a fine picnic lunch.



Around Studham Common

Circular walk 2.4km (about 1.5 miles)

Points of Interest

1 The walk starts and ends at the War Memorial on West Common, close to the Red Lion pub. Enjoy the open grass area, where popular events like Studham's May Fair take place.

2 With the Red Lion to your right, head across the Common and take the bridleway westwards, towards the Old School House. In spring, you can see the white flowers of pignut in the rough grass; badgers enjoy eating its tubers. In summer, see the vibrant purple flowers of rosebay willow-herb and knapweed.

3 On your left is a small wood, flanked by blackthorn scrub. Wild hop vines climb through the bushes on the right. The gorse here was once an important source of fuel for the commoners and now provides valuable protection for nesting birds. Bracken grows alongside the bridleway and elsewhere on the Common. In spring its unfurling "crosier" tips look very attractive. Every year FOSC volunteers cut back bracken and bramble to keep paths open and create glades amongst the trees.

Optional detour/Blue Walk: About 20 minutes

This route takes you past the school and up Valley Road to Studham's beautiful 13th Century Church, returning to West Common along pleasant footpaths. One route passes the traditional Bell PH dating back to the middle ages. (See routes on the map.) For the more energetic, footpaths beyond the church take you to Whipsnade and Dunstable Downs, with magnificent views across the Vale of Aylesbury.

Access Information

This walk has no gates, stiles or steps. It is likely to be suitable for all terrain pushchairs during drier months. Some parts of this route are on roads with no pavement.

General Access Information

The route around the Commons has no gates, stiles or steps. Pushchair and wheelchair users may encounter some steep slopes, rough ground and sections with adverse camber. Details are at www.foscomm.org

10 Cross over Byslips Road to Middle Common. Continue along the bottom path to return to the War Memorial, or take a detour up to Jubilee Copse. Look out for rooks and green woodpeckers foraging for insects in the grass.

9 Turn left to return to Middle Common. Dead trees like the one on your left provide a vital source of insect food for woodpeckers and other birds. The trees and thick scrub to the right cover pits once used to excavate for red gravel. The verges here are some of the best in the area for wild flowers and butterflies. The yellow bird's-foot trefoil is food for the caterpillars of the Common blue butterfly. The caterpillars of the marbled white and various "brown" butterflies feed on the grasses, and drink the nectar of the bramble, knapweed and thistle flowers. In some years you may spot wild orchids. FOSC volunteers periodically clear areas of scrub and thick grasses to create a variety of 'microclimates', essential for encouraging a wide diversity of wild flowers and insects.

8 Follow the path to the left, along the hedge that forms the boundary between Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. This mature hedgerow is a haven for wildlife. It is one of the few sites in the county where the hazel dormouse, a protected species, is found. Hazel in the hedge is an important food for them. Blackthorn is abundant here and provides beautiful white blossoms in spring and sloes in autumn. Bluebells grow in the shade of the large beech trees. Follow the path down the slope to the concrete track that runs along the bottom of the Common.

Optional detour/Green walk: About 30 minutes
Turn right into the neighbouring field and follow the path which leads towards the sports field on Clements End Road. Here you can watch cricket in summer, before returning via Common Road and the Old School House (see route marked in green on the map)

Access Information
The Green Walk has three narrow kissing gates. Some parts of this route are uneven and can be water-logged or muddy after rain.

7 Cross Byslips Road to join the path on East Common. Continue beside the southern boundary hedgerow. Here, too, hedgerow restoration work is underway and the traditional craft of hedgelaying was begun in 2013.

6 Sit and enjoy the fine views over the Common from the bench along this path. An ideal place to spot kestrels, sparrow-hawks, buzzards, red kites and the occasional hare. The Common is at its best in early summer, with a succession of grasses and wild flowers, such as buttercups, sorrel, oxeye daisy and clovers. Mowing for hay is left until late in the season to ensure that seeds have set and skylarks have finished ground-nesting.

4 70 metres before the Old School House, take the path on the left running up into the wood. At the top of the incline, follow the path along the edge of the wood. Most of the woodland here dates from after World War II. Near the path there are cherry, oak, hawthorn and holly trees plus some recently planted hazels. On the left are some deep pits, possibly where people dug out chalk to improve heavy clay soils. Speckled wood butterflies often fly in the patches of sunlight.

5 The path now crosses the road to Middle Common. Continue straight ahead, along the southern boundary path, the highest point of the Common. Looking to your left, you will see three beech copses planted in 1973 and further over, the Jubilee Copse, planted by villagers in 1977 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. On your right you will see a young hedgerow planted by FOSC volunteers to fill gaps in the old hedge.

