

Circular walks

# Rushmere Country Park

**Walk:** 4 miles/5.6km, **Time:** 1 hour 30 mins**Shortcut distance:** 1.6km/1 mile and **Time:** 30mins

This walk takes in the attractive heaths, ancient woodland, meadows, lakes and streams around Rushmere Country Park. It follows footpaths and bridleways in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and offers an undulating scenic stroll.

- 1 From the Herons View Visitors Centre, walk across the meadow following the edge of the car park. Turn left and continue to follow the edge of the car park until you reach the T-Junction with the Greensand Ridge Walk. Turn right and follow the Greensand Ridge Walk. (Photo of the Heron Sculpture / Herons View).
- 2 Follow the Public Footpath, down the hill, past the pond and over the bridge. Continue on the main path bearing initially to the left, until you reach a crossroads.
- 3 Turn right on the bridleway and walk up the hill through the conifers. You will pass a number of paths but continue to follow the bridleway straight-on.
- 4 As you leave the wood, you pass a row of sandstone cottages to the left and paddocks overlooked by the old water-tower of Stockgrove House, to the right. (Photo)
- 5 The bridleway brings you out onto Brickhill Road. Turn right onto the road taking care when crossing the road. On the next bend, at a small parking area, turn left onto the bridleway.

- 6 Follow the sandy path to the bottom of the hill and look out for a footpath turning off on the right.
- 7 Take the footpath, cross the track and continue into the woodland, keeping the fence on the left. (Do not take the track that continues to the right. This is a private access track; the track that bears left is a permissive route into Rammamere Heath). Follow the way marked route, to a kissing gate and continue through the meadow to the kissing gate opposite the Rushmere Country Park – Stockgrove (Brickhill Road) entrance. Take care when crossing the Road.

At the Stockgrove entrance there are additional toilets and refreshments.

- 8 20m to the left of the car park entrance, there is a pedestrian access point – go through the kissing gate into Rushmere Country Park.

(At this point you have an option to take a shorter route, which returns to the Herons View Visitors Centre. For the short cut follow the path straight on, pink-topped posts mark the Woodpecker Trail).

To continue along the Circular walk follow the path on the left up the hill, keeping the fence to your left. Follow this path through a second kissing gate and continue to bear left until you reach the British Legion clubhouse, which is at the edge of the woods.

- 9 Go around to the front of the clubhouse and immediately turn right down another footpath. Keep straight on along this path go through a kissing gate and re-enter Rushmere Country Park. After approx. 40m take the next path to the left.
- 10 Follow the path across Lords Hill – ‘Heathland Creation Area’. At the crossroads continue straight on to walk down and along Nightjar Valley. As you reach Lower Meadow, continue straight on and follow the line of Beech Trees across the top of the meadow.
- 11 Cross the main access road (please take care) and follow the path straight on and up the hill, joining the Greensand Ridge Walk once again.
- 12 Take the signed path off to the right and follow this back to the Herons View Visitors Centre.

Walk **7**

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**Key**

- The walk
- - - - - Woodpecker Trail/  
Circular walk shortcut
- ⚠ Take care when crossing  
or following the road
- ♣ Picnic area

Golf Course

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### Countryside code

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Consider other people.

### Rushmere Country Park

Rushmere Country Park is a true gateway to the Greensand Ridge. There are over 400 acres of woodland, heathland, meadows and parkland for you to explore with tranquillity, wonderful wildlife and magnificent views. There are visitor centres and cafes at both entrances to the Park. Heron’s View Visitor Centre and Tree Tops Café (no.1 on map) provide a variety of information to help you plan your visit and a range of refreshments. Rich in flora and fauna, there’s something to be seen whatever the season, including buzzards, nuthatches and treecreepers – plus the spectacular heronry which is at its most active in early spring. With woodland sculptures, natural play, plus trails for horse riding and mountain biking there is something for everyone.

Rushmere Country Park is managed by The Greensand Trust on a not for profit basis for the benefit of people and wildlife. Contact the Trust on 01525 234260 or see [www.greensandtrust.org](http://www.greensandtrust.org)

### Stockgrove House

Ferdinand Michael Kroyer-Kielberg KBE purchased the estate in 1928, and proceeded to have a new house built on the site of a previous property. The Stockgrove mansion and estate houses were built in a mock Georgian style and the house was one of the largest

country houses built between the two World Wars. Along with the current house and gardens (which are in private ownership), Rushmere Country Park forms the rest of the original Estate.

### Baker’s Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest

This oak woodland, along with King’s Wood is the largest area of deciduous woodland in Bedfordshire. Baker’s Wood has been woodland for at least 800 years and probably since the end of the last ice age, about 10,000 years ago. There are many multi-stemmed oaks in Baker’s Wood the result of coppicing which was carried out in the wood until the early 20th century. Coppicing is a traditional method of harvesting timber and firewood without killing the tree and benefits wildlife by opening up areas to sunlight, enabling woodland flowers to flourish.

### Shire Oak Heath and Lords Hill

Unlike Baker’s Wood, our Neolithic ancestors cleared Shire Oak Heath of trees completely. Heathers, gorse and bracken would have dominated this area for thousands of years and were cut for fuel and building materials as well as providing food for grazing livestock. The Heath has now grown over with birch scrub. The Greensands Trust is restoring this area to heathland.

### Oak Wood

Despite the name, this wood consists mostly of planted conifers with some scattered oak trees. As with Rushmere’s plantations, these conifers were planted on a heathland, known as The Warren. The Greensand Trust is working to restore areas to heathland and conserve important marshy areas, such as around Charcoal Pond.

### Rammamere Heath

Rammamere Heath is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Privately owned, it is being restored to heathland through a programme of pine and birch removal and grazing. Lowland heath habitat is one of the rarest habitats in the world and this heath is particularly important for invertebrates and reptiles.

### The Greensand Ridge Walk

Part of the circular route follows the Greensand Ridge Walk, Bedfordshire’s premier long distance footpath which crosses the county on the Greensand Ridge from Leighton Buzzard in the south west to Gamlingay just across the Cambridgeshire border in the north east. The route is 42 miles in total and passes through some of the most dramatic countryside and picturesque villages in Bedfordshire.



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**Please follow these tips to keep you and your dog safe:**

- 🐾 Always keep you dog in sight and train it to come back when called.
- 🐾 Never let your dog chase wildlife or grazing animals – it could get injured too.
- 🐾 Unless you're already friends, keep you dog away from other people and either dogs – not everyone loves your dog as much as you do!
- 🐾 Always clean up after your dog.
- 🐾 Look out for horses, cyclists and runners – for everybody's safety its best to put your dog on a lead as they come by.
- 🐾 Follow all local signs about grazing animals.

### Healthy walking

Why not get out and get healthy? There is no better way to start than by taking a walk. Just 30 minutes a day can improve health and well-being, reduce the risk of heart disease, help to prevent diabetes, improve muscle strength even reduce anxiety and depression. So make today the day you start to enjoy Bedfordshire and enjoy good health. For information on healthy walking log on to [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)

### Planning your walk

Rushmere Country Park visitor centre 'Herons View' is the suggested starting point for the walk, which is described in a clockwise direction. However, you can walk in either direction and shorten the walk by taking the short cut; details shown on map.

### Refreshments, parking and toilets

You can park at Rushmere Country Park throughout the year. There is a café serving hot and cold drinks and snacks, and there are toilet facilities (a small parking charge is applied on this site). There are shops and public houses in Heath and Reach village.

### Public transport

For information contact Traveline – 0871 200 22 33. The closest train station is 2.7 miles away at Leighton Buzzard

### Ordnance Survey maps

The route is covered on Ordnance Survey Landranger Series map 165. It is also shown on Explorer map 192. Both are available from local bookshops and some petrol stations.

### Did you enjoy the walk?

If you have any comments about this walk or encounter any problems, please contact [rightsofway@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### Tips for enjoying your walk

Parts of the walk can become muddy especially after heavy rain, so strong waterproof footwear is recommended. Take care where conditions are rough and do let someone know where you are going. Please be aware that much of the walk is unsuitable for wheelchairs and difficult for pushchairs.

### Other walks

To discover more walks in Central Bedfordshire visit [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside) or [www.lets-go.org.uk](http://www.lets-go.org.uk)

Or why not explore the Greensand Ridge by following the fabulous Greensand Ridge Walk. A walk that passes through this park and many of the area's most valuable landscapes and historic towns.

Rushmere Country Park is managed by the Greensand Trust, an independent environmental charity, on a not for profit basis. For information please contact 01525 234260 or see [www.greensandtrust.org](http://www.greensandtrust.org)



- Walk**
- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Sandy and Everton    | 7 Rushmere Country Park    |
| 2 Old Warden           | 8 Cranfield                |
| 3 Silsoe - Shillington | 9 Totternhoe               |
| 4 Ampthill - Maulden   | 10 Dunstable Downs         |
| 5 Ampthill - Millbrook | 11 Whipsnade               |
| 6 Woburn - Eversholt   | ■ ■ ■ Greensand Ridge walk |