





FLITWICK NATURE PARK

A BRIEFING TO INFORM, INSPIRE & RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Flitwick Town Council

Why this park matters



- **~27.7 ha** - Town Council-owned Nature Park
- **38,738** trees & shrubs planted
- **1,500** m+ new hedgerow created
- **4.5** km grass rides / access created

A place for nature: woodland, wood pasture, hedgerows, grassland and future wetland features create a mosaic of habitats.

A place for people: walking, running and dog walking are already established uses; the plan is to make access safer, clearer and more inclusive.
A place for community: the management plan explicitly calls for a volunteer team to help maintain, monitor and care for the park.

Flitwick Town Council

The site's story

1910 - Earlier landscape:
Historic mapping records three fields, wetland and ponds - features the new park can reconnect with!

2014 - Town Council acquires land:
After decades of active farming, the land passes to Flitwick Town Council and becomes unmanaged grassland.

2019 - Country Park planning:
Planning permission envisages a Country Park delivering ecological, leisure and a new cemetery

2021 – Country Park not suitable:
The Town Council approach the FoMV to help deliver the Tree for Climate scheme – protecting the site for future generations

2022 - Master plan adopted:
The Town Council formally adopts the Nature Park master plan.

2023–24 — Major transformation:
Trees and shrubs are planted through the Trees for Climate programme; community planting follows.

2024 – Formalise the Nature Park
Planning application submitted to formalise the Nature Park

2025–30 — Manage & mature:
A five-year management plan sets the direction for habitats, access, monitoring and volunteering.

Flitwick Town Council

What has changed?

The park is being built as a habitat mosaic rather than a conventional ornamental park.

WOODLAND — Native trees and shrubs establish new habitat and structure.

HAZEL COPPICE — A working coppice can supply materials for hedge laying, hurdles, baskets and garden products.

WOOD PASTURE — Grassland with scattered trees supports a more open, wildlife-rich landscape.



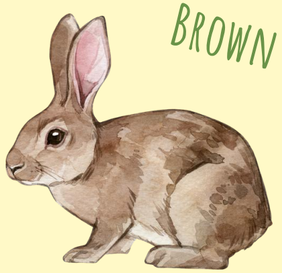
GROUND-NESTING BIRD GRASSLAND — Around 7 ha left unplanted and protected from disturbance.

Volunteers are part of the management system — not an add-on.

Flitwick Town Council

Wildlife: what we are protecting and discovering


Skylark


Brown hare


Sparrowhawk


Lapwing

The park is young, but the site already supports — or can support — a wide range of species.

- **Skylark**, **lapwing**, **brown hare** and **sparrowhawk** have been recorded on or associated with the site.
- Common **lizards** have been found; the site is suitable for ground-nesting **birds** and **hedgehogs**.
- **Mature oaks** along Maulden Road provide important existing habitat, including potential bat value.
- Historic **wetland** and **pond features** provide a blueprint for future habitat restoration.
- Habitat mosaic includes birds, insects, mammals and reptiles.
- Volunteers can help turn observations into evidence.

Flitwick Town Council

Hazel Coppicing



The 2030 vision

A thriving nature park where woodland and grassland habitats flourish and people feel responsible for the place.

"A sanctuary for wildlife and a place for people to connect with nature"

WELCOME — Safe, clean, legible and accessible.
BIODIVERSITY — Manage grassland, woodland, wetland and hedges for wildlife.
COMMUNITY — Build a supported volunteer team and meaningful activities.
SUSTAINABILITY — Use resources responsibly and reduce waste.
UNDERSTANDING — Interpret the site and tell its story.
LEARNING — Monitor, review and adapt management.

Flitwick Town Council

Management moving forward

The next phase is about establishment, access, active habitat management and learning.

ACCESS — Deliver the new surfaced perimeter route, waymarking, map boards, benches and improved parking.
GRASSLAND — Work with grazing to improve the sward and plant diversity; manage ungrazed areas as hay/rough grassland.
WOODLAND & HAZEL — Replace losses, control competition, monitor browsing, and manage hazel coppice on a planned rotation.
WETLAND — Explore pond restoration and seasonal wetland features linked to historic drainage and pond locations.
MONITORING — Track wildlife, habitat condition, visitor use and feedback — then adapt management.
PARTNERSHIPS — Work with schools, businesses, community groups and funders to strengthen delivery.

Key message: the park will become better through regular, informed care — not one-off projects.

Flitwick Town Council

The volunteer team we want to build

The next phase is about establishment, access, active habitat management and learning.

VOLUNTEER RANGERS

Regular site walks • spot issues • welcome visitors • report maintenance or antisocial behaviour

COMMUNITY & EVENTS

Guided walks • discovery days • schools • local groups • volunteer recruitment

PRACTICAL CONSERVATION

Hazel coppice • hedge work • litter picks • ragwort control • habitat piles • seasonal tasks

STORYTELLERS

Photos • social posts • interpretation ideas • share the park's history and progress

WILDLIFE RECORDERS

Birds • insects • mammals • reptiles • simple repeatable surveys and observations

SKILLS & LEARNING

Tool skills • coppicing • hedge laying • ecological monitoring • first aid / safety

Flitwick Town Council

How volunteering will work

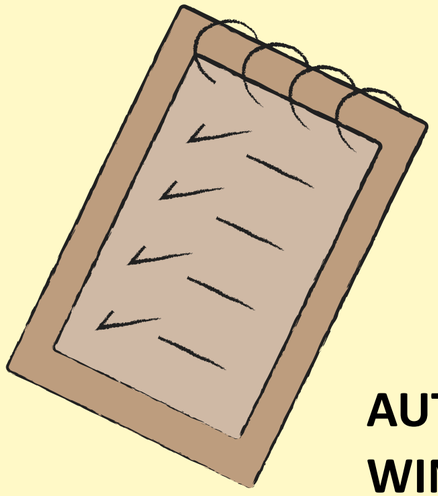
Support, training and safe systems are built into the management plan.

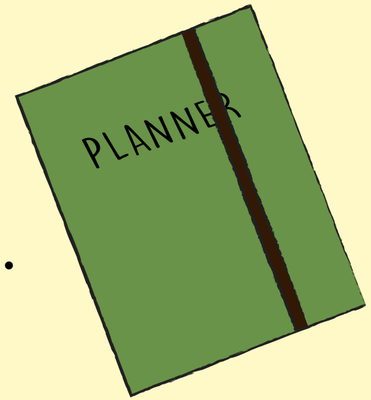
INDUCTION — Site orientation, purpose, boundaries and basic safety.
TOOLBOX TALK — Task-specific briefing and risk assessment before practical work.
DO THE JOB — Work in small groups with an appropriate lead / competent person.
RECORD & REPORT — Note wildlife observations, completed work and issues found.
LEARN & IMPROVE — Regular feedback helps shape the next task programme.
SAFETY FIRST — Every volunteer gets a site induction and task safety briefing.

- **Risk assessments are available and reviewed.**
- **A qualified first aider is present at group sessions.**
- **Specialist tools and higher-risk activities require appropriate training.**
- **Volunteers work to agreed task boundaries — you do not need to be an expert.**

Flitwick Town Council

A PRACTICAL FIRST-YEAR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME





Start small, build confidence, then expand as the park matures.

AUTUMN — Habitat tidy & litter • Ragwort follow-up • Visitor observations.
WINTER — Hazel coppice • Hedge work • Tree protection checks.
SPRING — Wildlife recording • Tree aftercare • Guided discovery walks.
SUMMER — Grassland monitoring • Visitor engagement • Family / school events.

- Proposed volunteer programme aligned to the FTC Management Plan — dates/tasks to be confirmed by the Council.

Flitwick Town Council

Why volunteer?

The return is bigger than the task.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE — Help a new landscape become a functioning ecosystem.
LEARN SKILLS — Coppicing, habitat management, wildlife recording, practical conservation.
MEET PEOPLE — Work alongside neighbors, community groups, and local partners.
GET OUTDOORS — Regular, purposeful time in a growing green space.
SEE THE CHANGE — Watch trees, hedges, grassland, and wildlife develop year by year.
SHAPE THE PARK — Volunteer feedback and observations can influence management.
You do not need prior experience — Curiosity, reliability, and a willingness to learn are enough!



Flitwick Town Council



Join the next chapter



Help turn a new park into a cared-for community landscape.

WE ARE BUILDING A TEAM

1. Register your interest — Contact Flitwick Town Council and say you would like to join the Nature Park volunteer team.

2. Tell us your strengths — Practical work? Wildlife? Events? Photography? Community engagement? We need a mix of skills.

3. Come & learn — Training, inductions, and task briefings will help you build confidence safely.

Flitwick Town Council • 01525 631900 • info@flitwick.gov.uk

The Nature Park page on the Council website will provide current events and updates.

Flitwick Town Council