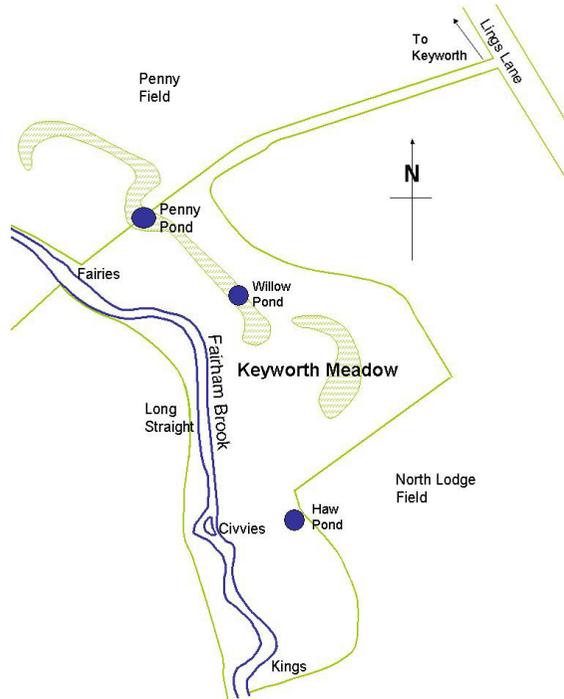


Keyworth Meadow Nature Reserve

Owned by the Parish Council and managed for local people to enjoy and to study nature, the Meadow is about a mile & a half from the village centre, along Main Street and Lings Lane.

Entrance is over a stile; please keep to the mown path to avoid disturbance to the plants and wildlife. There is no public access over neighbouring land.



Please contact the Reserve Manager:
C/o The Clerk to the Parish Council, The
Village Hall, Elm Avenue, Keyworth.

HISTORY

Keyworth Meadow was used for rough grazing for many years and was a favoured spot for village children to while away the summer days, fishing and playing by the brook. It was acquired by the Parish Council in 1985 and has been managed since then to conserve and enhance its biodiversity, but also to continue its attractiveness to local people.

GEOLOGY

The Meadow is underlain by alluvial gravel and is on the fringe of the Keuper Marl bank that forms the bulk of the Keyworth Wolds.

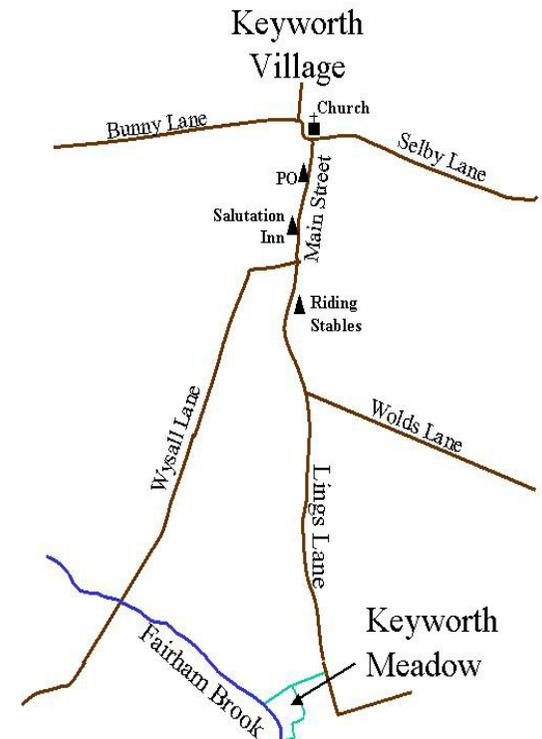
NATURAL HISTORY

A key feature of the meadow is Fairham Brook which flows along its western edge. The brook and its uncultivated margins, and also the hedgerows, act as a corridor for wildlife to colonise pockets of suitable habitat amongst the large tracts of unsuitable arable fields which form much of the neighbouring land. Without these corridors, the Meadow would be like an island of diverse marsh, scrub and rough meadow in a sea of nearly lifeless monoculture. Although sometimes secretive, the birds, insects, mammals, reptiles and amphibians are diverse and some are important for conservation nationally. The plants of course are easier to study for the casual visitor and form the fabric of this little nature reserve.

All photos © Neil Pinder



KEYWORTH MEADOW Nature Reserve



PLANTS

More than 160 species of plant have been identified. The meadow is largely dominated by grasses with Meadow Foxtail being the main species, whilst Buttercups, Meadow Cranesbill, Hogweed and Hemlock are common amongst the grasses. The marshy areas are colonised by Greater Pond Sedge with Creeping Jenny, Water Forget-me-not and Water Mint in the open



Creeping Jenny

areas. Meadowsweet dominates the drier marsh whilst along the brook itself, patches of Brooklime, Water Figwort, and Watercress can be readily found.

The margins are mainly mature Hawthorns with Brambles providing shelter for mammals and nesting sites for birds. There are a few mature Ash and Oak trees and a specimen Buckthorn. There are several very old White Willows which are pollarded cyclically to maintain their vigour and these also provide binders for any hedge-laying that is undertaken.

If you would like to lend a hand with wardening or with our winter Sunday working groups you would be most welcome: Please contact the Parish Council.

BIRDS & ANIMALS

On some days birds can be very elusive and may only be detected by their song. At other times they can be very active and show themselves really well. All of the common garden bird species are represented in the meadow but there are a few special species. Reed Buntings occasionally nest and can be spotted singing their weak song from the



Harvest Mouse nest

marsh in spring. Turtle Doves “purr” from amongst the hawthorn thickets, Willow Warblers and Whitethroats both sing from the tops of the bushes in the early summer and Tree Sparrows accompany the Chaffinches and Yellowhammers in the winter. Only with extreme luck or patience are mammals seen but their existence is evident from the signs they leave. Molehills are perhaps the most obvious whilst raked ground where badgers have dug for earthworms is frequent. Searching during winter usually results in the used breeding nests of Harvest Mice being found. Lucky sightings include Foxes, Bank Voles, Weasels and Moles. The only reptile recorded is the Grass Snake but its prey, the Common Frog is more frequent.

INSECTS & OTHERS

On many sunny summer days, the insects are impossible to miss - whether you would want to or not! Who though, would wish to avoid the first bright Brimstone, fresh from hibernation or the late autumn Commas lapping at the last of the blackberries? In mid-summer, Large Skippers are at home in the rank grassland while around the margins, a myriad of tiny pyralid moths are



Chimney Sweeper

disturbed by the brush of a stick. At night the true beauty and diversity of the moths has been revealed by light trapping specifically for them. A special species is the day-flying Chimney Sweeper whose larvae feed on the Pignut that grows in the meadow. There are other insect orders represented in abundance here, where there is plenty of structure and no chemical sprays have been used. These include Click Beetles, Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, 16 & 22-spot Ladybirds and Hornet. Investigation of the brook shows it to be in good, clean condition with lots of Gammarus water fleas, mayfly and caddis fly larvae and water beetles. The Common Darter dragonfly lays eggs in the brook during September.