

Tameside Countryside Service



discover

Tameside's Countryside

Welcome to . . .

Tameside's **Countryside**

From the meadows and woods of the valleys in the south, to the high open moorland in the east, it is a countryside rich in heritage and wildlife.

Lying between the heart of Greater Manchester and the Peak District, Tameside's countryside is special because of the variety of places there are to discover and enjoy.

Three rivers, the Tame, Etherow and Medlock, meander their way through the borough, their riverside tracks and pathways take you through ancient woodland and wildflower meadows.

A network of local and national trails, such as the Trans-Pennine Trail, Tameside Trail and Tame Valley Way, link wide open countryside to the lesser known urban sites, many providing a green oasis on the edge of towns.

"I never knew there was such lovely countryside right on my doorstep."

Kate, Hyde





Eight Local Nature Reserves provide important habitats for wildlife and an opportunity to see and enjoy wild plants, animals and natural features close to home.

Our three Country Parks at Stalybridge, Werneth Low and Park Bridge are great places for a leisurely stroll or picnic with accessible paths and trails.

Heritage sites such as Broad Mills and Park Bridge give us a glimpse into the borough's fascinating history and an opportunity to see how the landscape has changed.

"Isn't it great that there's such a variety of habitats and they are so easily accessible."

Anne. Mossley

Did you know?

- There is an extensive network of over 126 miles of rights of way and consessionary paths in Tameside's countryside.
- Each year over 450,000 people visit Tameside's Countryside.
- Every year The Countryside Rangers host around 200 events and conservation days for the public to enjoy.



Discover...



Things to do, **places to go**

With such a variety of accessible countryside you will never be short of something to do and somewhere to discover.

Whether it's for a short stroll around your Local Nature Reserve, or a day long ramble through woodland and over moorland, a network of footpaths and trails take walkers through spectacular countryside. For cyclists or horse riders, there are plenty of quiet bridleways and cycle trails to explore.

For a relaxing day, take a heritage or nature trail from one of our visitor centres, or picnic with the family by the river.

For those who want to be more 'hands on', why not learn a new countryside craft, or join the Rangers on a conservation day.

The countryside Rangers organise a programme of guided walks and activities throughout the year, from day long rambles to fun, family activities and there is something for everyone, regardless of age or ability.

Pick up an events or conservation day programme from your local library or visit on line at

www.tameside.gov.uk/countryside



Our Visitor Centres are the perfect base for walks and activities.

Each has car parking and toilets, and have seasonal displays and exhibitions on countryside topics. Here you can pick up maps and trail guides and information on wildlife and activities.

Park Bridge Heritage Centre

Nestling in the beautiful countryside of the Medlock Valley, here you can discover the fascinating past of this once busy ironworks.

Lymefield Visitor Centre

Lymefield is home to the Broad Mills Heritage Site, once a huge mill complex. Now that the mills have been demolished, nature has reclaimed the site. Much of the area is wheelchair and buggy friendly and ideal for children's adventurous play.

Lower Higham Visitor Centre

Take a short walk from the visitor centre here at Werneth Low Country Park and you will be rewarded with spectacular views over five counties. A great place for feeling 'on top of the world'.

Natures Playground

There are wild places to explore and fun and freedom to be had all year round in the great outdoors—and it's **FREE!**

Discover the new natural play area at Lymefield, or come along to one of the 'Wild Play' events run by the countryside Rangers, throughout the year.



All of our visitor centres and associated sites have been awarded and retained the Green

Flag Award, an annually judged certificate for the management, maintenance and upkeep of sites and the involvement of users and the community in their management. Our visitor centres have also attained VAQAS status year on year, a quality recognition from the Tourist Board for the facilities, staff and information provided for visitors.

Visit...

Local Nature Reserves are for both people and wildlife

Everyday contact with nature is important for well being and quality of life and everyone should be able to enjoy this contact in safety, without having to make a special journey to do so.

Local Nature Reserves are a great place to do this.



Local Nature Reserves

They are places that are special locally for their wildlife or natural features and have been legally designated by the Council as Local Nature Reserves under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

In these areas we can protect and conserve the wildlife habitats and natural features and so provide an ideal place for everyone to learn about and study nature or to simply just enjoy the countryside.

There are 8 local Nature Reserves in Tameside...so why not take a walk to your 'local'!

Castle Clough and Cowbury Dale
(Stalybridge)

This is part of the northern most valley leading down from the moors above Stalybridge. Heather moor mingles with developing oak and there's wet willow woodland either side of the brook. The ponds in the valley are now all that remains of the once industrial Carrbrook.

Great Wood (Broadbottom)

One of the few remaining ancient woodland sites in Tameside. It was once part of the Longdendale forest over 500 years ago. Oak and birch are the dominant trees and on the woodland floor, bluebell and other woodland plants flourish. Just as



important are dead and rotting trees, providing homes and food for many of the animals and fungi found here.

Haughton Dale (Denton/Hyde)

Our largest LNR is a mixture of woodland (ancient and modern), grassland and wetlands in the Tame Valley between Denton and Hyde. Here the River Tame and Peak Forest Canal wend their way through the reserve. It is home to a wide variety of wildlife, now hiding an industrial past, including one of the first wireworks, and a nationally important site for 17th century glassmaking.

Hollinwood Branch Canal (Droylsden)

The canal was last used in 1932, and since being disconnected from the rest of the canal network, has become a wildlife haven for wetland wildlife including some rare and protected species, like newts and water vole. It is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest, one of only three in Tameside.

Hulmes/Hardy Wood and Lower Haughton Meadows (Denton)

Here, down river from Haughton Dale, Ancient bluebell woodland and meadows cover much of the valley slopes above the River Tame. Newer habitats develop on the sites of old mines and quarries.

Hurst Clough (Hattersley/Mottram)

Hurst Clough leads down from Hattersley and Mottram to Great Wood, with ancient woodland in the steep valley and a mixture of grassland, scrub and recent woodland on the broader slopes elsewhere. At the northern end, this oasis, you may be surprised to know, hides an old tip.

Knott Hill (Ashton)

Based around the decommissioned reservoir, with the water level lowered, wildlife has flourished on its banks, with a rich mixture of open water, marsh, woodland and grassland. It is an excellent place to spend some time watching wildlife. The woodlands support a large number of birds, the grasslands and marshes are attractive to butterflies while damselflies and dragonflies hunt by the reservoir.

Rocher Vale (Ashton Park Bridge)

Now it is a wildlife haven of acid grassland, heath and woodland with the River Medlock running through it. But this was part of the industrial hub of Park Bridge Iron Works, with mines, railways, factories and workers cottages, alongside the river. Some of this still remains but it is now natural heritage that holds sway here.

4 more Local Nature Reserves have been identified for designation,

- Daisy Nook (Ashton/Droylsden)
- Brushes Valley (Stalybridge)
- Silver Springs (Ashton)
- Back Wood (Hattersley)

Key...

-  Canals
-  Rivers
-  Tameside Trail
-  Tame Valley Way
-  Roads

Countryside Visitors Centres

-  **1** Lower Higham Visitors Centre
Higham Lane, Hyde
SK14 5LR
-  **2** Lyme field Visitors Centre
Lower Market Street,
Broadbottom,
SK14 6AG
-  **3** Park Bridge Heritage Centre
The Stables, Park Bridge,
Ashton-under-Lyne,
OL6 8AQ

Local Nature Reserves

-  1. Great Wood
-  2. Hulmes / Hardy Woods
-  3. Haughton Dale
-  4. Hollinwood Branch Canal
-  5. Knott Hill
-  6. Hurst Clough
-  7. Castle Clough and Cowbury Dale
-  8. Rocher Vale



Discover...

Biodiversity -what is it?

In a nutshell it is 'The variety of life'.

It includes plants, animals and the complex eco-systems they are part of, rather like a world wide web of life.



Biodiversity in Tameside

Our survival depends on biodiversity. Not only do plants, animals and habitats enrich our everyday lives, they produce the necessary ingredients for all life to exist.

We are lucky that 80% of Tameside is considered as greenspace, almost half of this is countryside, providing important habitats for wildlife. This rich and varied countryside includes many habitats and wildlife species that are of particular importance either locally or nationally. Some occur in areas providing some protection. Tameside has 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 55 Sites of Biological Importance, 8 Local Natures Reserves (4 more planned), and 3 other Nature Reserves. But we all have our part to play in helping to protect and conserve these species and habitats.

In order to give local communities a focus for getting to grips with biodiversity we have picked the most abundant and distinctive habitats for each of the nine towns in Tameside and have selected a species associated with that habitat that highlights certain biodiversity conservation issues.



Do you live in one of these towns?

See what makes your local greenspace special.

Ashton

Broadleaved Woodland
Speckled Wood



Audenshaw

Ponds and Lodges
Dragonflies



Denton

Broadleaved Woodland
Bluebell



Dukinfield

Urban Managed
Greenspace Fox



Droylsden

Canals
Water Vole



Hyde

Lowland Meadows
Hay Rattle



Stalybridge

Moorland
Hare



Mossley

Acid Grassland
Skylark



Longdendale

Broadleaved Woodland
Oak



Enjoy...

Tameside's Countryside is a great place for exercise and as well as being good for the body, it's good for the soul!



The countryside for health!

Research has shown time and time again that it is not just physical health benefits that are associated with visiting the countryside. It also provides opportunities to relax, find peace, inspiration and contemplation, thereby improving the sense of well-being.

A great way to enjoy the countryside and start to improve your fitness is to join Tameside Countryside Service on one of the many activities offered as part of the countryside events programme. There is something for everyone, from bird box building and hedgelaying, to short woodland strolls and all day rambles over the moors. As well as the obvious health benefits the events are a great way to meet people and make new friends and above all else they are fun!

We work closely with other agencies promoting and organising countryside walks and activities to encourage people to improve their health. There are also a variety of self led short walks and trail guides to help get you out and about and enjoy the 'feel good' factor that the countryside has to offer.



or why not try volunteering?

One way of enjoying getting out in the fresh air and countryside and helping to conserve it is by volunteering with the Countryside Rangers.

Our volunteers are people of all ages and ability and from all social backgrounds and provide an important link with local communities.

What do Voluntary Rangers do?

Every year hundreds of hours are spent by volunteers undertaking a wide variety of tasks, both at weekends and midweek. Many different types of projects are tackled, not all physical - and there is something for everyone!

Taster days

Throughout the year there are opportunities for the public to participate in one day conservation tasks. If you really enjoy yourself you might like to join our team of dedicated volunteers.

Visit the website or ring 0161 330 9613 for a Conservation Day Programme.



Managing the countryside...

for **everyone**

Our countryside needs careful management if it is to be enjoyed by everyone and by future generations.

Tameside's Countryside Service is responsible for managing much of the boroughs countryside. The service comprises of rangers, outreach officers, administrative support and an estate team,

The work of the countryside service is varied and includes improving access and paths, repairing and replacing fences and walls, removing litter and fly-tipped material. Preparing countryside management plans, conservation, hedgelaying and tree planting.

Tameside's Countryside Service has been recognised for its work to conserve and improve wildlife habitats, accessibility, standards of site maintenance and inclusion of users and the wider community, by attaining a variety of awards and recognition.

17 of our Woodland sites have been accredited by the Forestry Commission for their management through UKWAS UK Woodland Assurance Standard, and we are working to improve them for both biodiversity and their recreation value.





The Countryside Service also manages three visitor centres, provides a range of information to the public, runs an extensive and varied countryside events and conservation programme and a children's environmental group which gives a varied education service to schools.

Through our outreach, we aim to help groups, local communities, leaders of ethnic communities and disability groups to break down the barriers to visiting the countryside, helping them gain more confidence and encouraging them to discover, learn about and enjoy their local countryside.

We have also established or participate in a number of consultative groups throughout the Borough, with local residents, users of the countryside, landowners and others, so that we can use their knowledge, experience and views to improve the service we provide.

Our aim is to make sure Tameside's Countryside is there for everyone to enjoy, no matter what their age, ability, ethnic background or religion.

"Working with the Countryside Rangers promotes confidence, self esteem and gives us the opportunity to get involved in the community as well as promoting independence."

the Green Group, West Villas.

A priority for the Countryside Service is to give people the confidence and ability to enjoy their local countryside.





If you would like any further information about Tameside's Countryside or have any comments about this document then please contact us at:

Tameside Countryside Service

Park Bridge Heritage Centre
The Stables, Park Bridge
Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 8AQ

Tel: 0161 330 9613 Email: parkbridge@tameside.gov.uk
www.tameside.gov.uk/countryside