



# Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common

Registered Charity



Guide and  
events diary  
2021

This is one of  
14 green spaces  
managed by the  
City of London at  
little cost to the  
general public.



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# Welcome to Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

The City of London Corporation welcomes you to two wonderful open spaces in South Buckinghamshire. Covering hundreds of acres of beautiful countryside, both are nature reserves and home to rare and interesting wildlife. Whatever the time of year, and whether you explore on your own or join one of our walks or events, there's always something to see and do.

The two sites are a registered charitable trust and most funding comes from private sources. Please see page 24 to find out how you can help look after these fantastic sites

## Opening hours

In normal circumstances, both sites are open to pedestrians at all times. Gates to the car parks at Burnham Beeches are opened from 8am and are closed at dusk (varies from 4.30pm in the winter to 9pm at the latest in summer). Height restrictors are in place at Burnham Beeches – parking is limited for vehicles over 2.1m. Access for coaches and minibuses can be pre-arranged. There are no formal parking areas at Stoke Common.





The Beeches Café, toilets and Information Point are open every day (except Christmas Day) from approximately 10am to 5pm (seasonal variations apply). The café offers outdoor seating, including a dog free area, and serves hot and cold food and drinks.

## Ranger service

Rangers are on site every day of the year. Their work includes looking after the woods, wildlife and livestock, providing visitor services and making sure the sites are safe. Please talk to a Ranger if you have any questions or problems - they are here to help!

## Further information

Leaflets and fact sheets about the Beeches are available in the Information Point and from our website.

Tel: **01753 647358**

**[burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk)**

**[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)**



## How to get here

Why not come on foot or by bike? It's green and it's free! If you live further away, try these alternatives:

### **By train to either site**

The nearest stations on London lines are at Gerrards Cross and Slough.

Full public transport bus and train timetables can be obtained from [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) telephone: **0871 200 22 33**.

### **By bus to Burnham Beeches**

Buses stop in Farnham Common. From the bus stop it is a 10 minute walk north past the shops, turning left into Beeches Road. You will see the entrance to the reserve at the end of Beeches Road.

## By car to Burnham Beeches

Follow the A355 north from the M4 (junction 6) or south from the M40 (junction 2). At Farnham Common, turn into Beeches Road and drive to the crossroads at the end. Straight ahead from this crossroads is Lord Mayors Drive. Parking is available in several large bays on your left.

There is no postcode for the main common/visitor facilities but SL2 3PS will get you to the end of Beeches Road.

Parking conditions apply to all areas of Burnham Beeches (see website for current daily charge). Disabled drivers displaying a valid blue badge, and registering their vehicles as shown on parking signs, can park for free. Burnham Beeches has a People's Parking Award for the quality of its disabled parking provision.

## By bus to Stoke Common

Buses stop at Vine Road and Windmill Road for access to Stoke Common.

## By car to Stoke Common

Limited parking (3 -4 cars) is available in the lay-by on Stoke Common Road.



# Enjoying Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

## Access for all at Burnham Beeches

The Easy Access Path, Sensory Trail and many of the closed internal roads are ideally suited to wheelchairs or buggies.

Monday – Friday 10am to 4pm: Car Free Zone access and mobility scooter available; prior booking is required for both. Call 01753 647358.

## Cycling and horse riding

Cyclists and horse riders may use the tarmac roads at Burnham Beeches but, to prevent damage to the site and protect other visitors, off-road use is not permitted.

Cyclists and horse riders are able to enjoy the network of bridleways at Stoke Common.





## Barbeques and fires

**No BBQs or fires are allowed at either site.**

To prevent damage to the sites and minimise litter on the reserves, BBQs are not permitted at Stoke Common and are no longer permitted at Burnham Beeches.



## Enjoying the ponds

The ponds at both sites are important for wildlife and are easily disturbed. Bodies of water can also be dangerous. Take a moment to stand or sit and watch the toads and frogs spawning in spring, dragonflies hunting in the summer and early autumn or ducks paddling all year round. Please remember:

- Bread is bad for the health of ducks and encourages rats.
- Frozen ponds can be very dangerous; don't walk on the ice or throw sticks/stones onto it.
- Please don't take/add frogspawn, frogs, fish, plants or any organism from/to any pond. This can spread disease and damage the ecosystem. It is illegal to release non-native species into the wild.



## Photography and filming

The Beeches is a wonderful place for taking a snapshot of a memorable family day out and is especially stunning in the autumn. If you've taken a great picture and you'd like to share it with us, please email it to the office - we would love to see it. Any professional photography or filming requires a licence; student and amateur films may be permitted but you must contact the office to seek permission. Call **01753 647358** for details.

## Take your litter with you

Please take your litter and dog waste away wherever possible and dispose of it responsibly or recycle it.



# Dog walking

Responsible dog walkers and their dogs are welcome at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. When visiting either nature reserve, please ensure that your dog is kept under effective control at all times and do not allow it to disturb other visitors, wildlife or livestock. Please ensure that your dog is wearing a collar and a tag and ALWAYS bring a lead with you. During bird nesting season (April - September inclusive) please keep your dog under especially close control, and preferably on footpaths at all times.



## Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) at Burnham Beeches

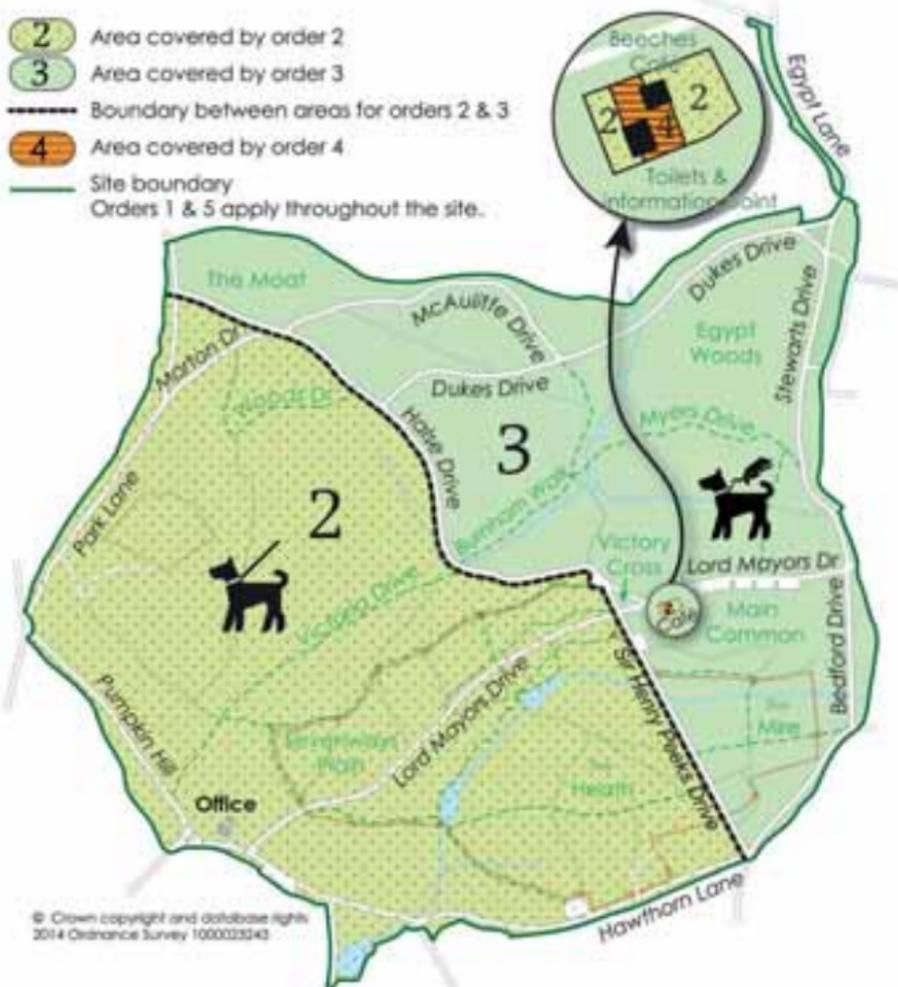
To maintain a balance between the needs of all site users, PSPOs apply at all times at Burnham Beeches. Please take a look at our dog walking leaflet, signs on site and website to familiarise yourself with the details and maps (see p14) of the areas.

You may walk your dog across the whole site (with the exception of the small exclusion area at the café) but in some areas you will need to keep it on a lead. Under the PSPOs the following orders apply:

- Fouling: you must always clear up after your dog and ensure that you dispose of it properly.
- Dogs on leads: if you are in an area marked 2 on the map you must keep your dog on a lead no longer than 5m.
- Dogs on lead by direction: if your dog is off lead in an area marked 3 on the map and an authorised officer judges that it is not under effective control, they will ask you to put it on a lead.
- Dog exclusion area at the Beeches Café: you must not allow your dog to enter the 'no dogs area'. If you use a recognised assistance dog because of a disability you are exempt.
- Maximum number of dogs: each dog walker can bring a maximum of four dogs onto Burnham Beeches at any one time.

Under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, anyone failing to comply with the above will be liable to a fixed penalty notice of £80 or prosecution with a fine of up to £1000. If paid within 10 days the fixed penalty is reduced to £50.

**There is more information about dog walking on our website.**





# Fungi

## Look, photograph, admire

Both nature reserves are home to a great variety of fungi but picking is not allowed.

- Some are very rare and removing them could threaten them further.
- Fungi provide habitats for many creatures, including some rare or threatened species.
- If removed, they cannot produce spores: the next generation is put at risk.
- With around 550,000 visits per year at the Beeches alone, if people were to collect fungi there would soon be none left for future visitors to enjoy.

**There is more information about fungi in our fact sheet.**

# Pollards and deadwood

Much of Burnham Beeches was once 'wood pasture' – grazed, open woodland with pollarded trees. This attractive landscape is very good for wildlife.

## What is a pollard?

Pollards are trees that are cut just above head height, encouraging them to send up multiple new shoots – it also extends the lives of the trees. By cutting the trees at this height, the livestock grazing beneath cannot eat the tender new shoots. The ancient pollards at the Beeches were once cut every 15 years or so, mainly for firewood. Many are over 400 years old.

As lifestyles changed, the practice of pollarding declined and the pollards were left uncut; this left them top heavy and vulnerable to collapse. At the Beeches we are re-establishing the ancient techniques, restoring the old pollards and creating new ones.



## Climbing trees

The pollards are great shapes and may look ideal for climbing, but please don't - their age, rarity and the species they support make them very vulnerable to damage. If climbing is your thing, there are lots of younger trees.



## Dead or alive?

Deadwood is incredibly important at the Beeches for many of our rare species. It provides them with food and shelter and includes fallen branches or trees, log piles and standing dead trees.

Some wood is stacked in specially designed piles to create habitat for invertebrates, reptiles and other creatures. Please do take time to look out for some of the bugs and beasties making use of the dead wood on the site but don't disturb or move it – lots of these creatures are very sensitive to disturbance.

**There is more information about pollards and deadwood and how you can help us to look after them on our website and in our fact sheets.**



## Grazing animals

Livestock such as cows, ponies and pigs are very much part of the history of both sites – William the Conqueror’s Domesday book records the area as having enough woodland to feed 600 swine! When people stopped putting their animals on the land around 100 years ago, scrub and young woodland began to grow and the open areas began to disappear. This meant that the old trees and heathland habitats rich in wildlife started to decline.

### Bringing back the livestock

We have re-introduced grazing animals to help restore and conserve the different habitats on the sites, making them better for people and wildlife.

The way the livestock graze creates habitats that are great for wildlife and much better than those made by machinery. They can also reach areas where machinery is impractical (e.g. uneven ground or near dead wood).

British White cattle and Exmoor ponies are traditional breeds that are suited to conditions at the Beeches. We have also used Berkshire pigs to graze and forage under the trees. At Stoke Common, Sussex cattle graze the heathland. Livestock are put in the grazing areas for six to eight months from around May.

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)

## Fences and ‘invisible fences’

Traditional fences or stock-proof hedges keep the livestock in but require gates to allow access. At the Beeches we use a combination of traditional and ‘invisible’ fences, enabling us to graze about three quarters of the site. The invisible system uses buried cables with collars worn by the animals to keep them within a ‘virtual paddock’ (see website).

## Help us with the grazing project

- Tell the Rangers about damage to fences or gates.
- Keep your dog under effective control.
- Do not approach or feed the livestock.
- Leave any ‘dead hedges’ or barriers in place.

**There is more information about grazing on our website, and in our grazing fact sheet.**



# Burnham Beeches

Use this map to explore this fantastic nature reserve but please leave all natural things - flowers, fungi, wood etc - where you find them, and please take your litter and dog waste away wherever possible and dispose of it responsibly or recycle it.







# Heathland restoration

## What is heathland?

Heathland is one of the rarest habitats in Britain, characterised by plants such as heather, gorse and fine grasses and occurring on low nutrient soils. Lowland heath (found at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common) supports a variety of specialised plants, animals and insects and is an internationally rare and unique habitat.

Agricultural improvements, declining management, road building and development have all contributed to heathland loss: in England, 84% has been lost since 1800 (Natural England 2002). About 80% of Buckinghamshire's remaining lowland heath is at Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches.

## Restoring heathland

Without management, heathland quickly returns to scrub and young woodland, and the habitat value declines. We have been restoring our heathlands by felling young trees and bringing back grazing animals. This helps to keep them open and encourages a greater diversity of species.

**There is more information in our heathland fact sheet and on our website.**



# Help keep the reserves special

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common is a registered charitable trust, funded almost exclusively from private sources. Looking after the ancient trees, habitats, livestock, footpath networks, ponds, providing and emptying litter and dog waste bins all requires considerable financial resources.

## Donate

All the money from parking charges, donations or legacies in wills funds work on the reserves. Donations can be made via our website or through the donations boxes at Burnham Beeches.

## Volunteers

Volunteers help with practical projects, providing information, office work or ecological monitoring as well as acting as 'eyes and ears' on the ground.

Our weekday volunteers carry out practical work every Thursday from 9am – 4pm. Weekend tasks at the Beeches and Stoke Common usually run from 10am – 3pm. For more information about the Friends of Stoke Common contact [friendsofstokecommon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofstokecommon@gmail.com) or visit [www.friendsofstokecommon.org.uk](http://www.friendsofstokecommon.org.uk).

We provide all tools, work gloves and the all-important tea/coffee and biscuits.



See the events programme pages 26-37 for details.

# Events





## Guide to events

The following pages list our walks, events and volunteer tasks for 2021. Bookings will only be taken four weeks before an event; full details of meeting points and times are given when booking.

**Bookings for all events except Simply Walk taken at [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk). For Simply Walk visit <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/simply-walk>.** All events are free but any donations received will directly help support work on the reserve.

**In some circumstances, e.g. poor weather, we may cancel events. This year, events may also be subject to change due to COVID restrictions. We will give as much notice as possible – check the website, Twitter, Facebook or call 01753 647358. We are sorry but if an event is cancelled, we are unable to return any donations made. However we will make every effort to reschedule.**

When booking on one of our children's events please only book for your own child(ren) and note that only adults accompanying children on the event may join the event. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Simply Walk is organised in association with Buckinghamshire County Council and the one-hour walks start from the café; Wednesday walks start at 11am and Sunday walks at 2.30pm. Walkers booked on should arrive 15 minutes beforehand. Contact the Burnham Beeches office or Fiona Broadbent (**01494 475637**).

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)

# January

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

Saturday 9 January, 10am - 3pm

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

Sunday 24 January, 10am - 3pm

# February

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

Saturday 6 February, 10am - 3pm

FAMILY FUN

## Woodlands explorers half term trail

Saturday 13 - Sunday 21 February

Unleash the explorer in you with our popular half term trail and activity booklet. Aimed at explorers up to 12. Download your copy from our website and guide yourself along the route. Suggested donation £2. *Bring a pencil.*

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

Sunday 21 February, 10am - 3pm



# March

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

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Saturday 6 March, 10am - 3pm

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WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 10 March, 11am - 12noon

---

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

---

Sunday 21 March, 10am - 3pm

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WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Sunday 21 March, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

---

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

---

Saturday 27 March, 10am - 3pm

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# April

## Woodland explorers Easter egg hunt

Friday 2 - Monday 5 April

FAMILY FUN

We've been a bit careless and lost our Easter eggs in the woods and need some help to find them. Get your trail leaflet from the Burnham Beeches café and see if you can find the eggs and solve the puzzles on the trail. A small chocolate treat awaits when you return. Cost £3. *Bring a pencil.*

## Simply Walk

WALK

Wednesday 14 April, 11am - 12noon

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

VOLUNTEER

Sunday 18 April, 10am - 3pm

## Meet the Ranger and the reptiles

EVENT

Sunday 18 April, 2pm - 3.30pm

One of the Rangers will be near the café with some of the reptiles and amphibians that can be found on site.

## Simply Walk

WALK

Sunday 18 April, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

# May

## Friends of Stoke Common

VOLUNTEER

Saturday 8 May, 10am - 3pm

EVENT

## Meet the Ranger and the reptiles

---

Sunday 9 May, 2pm - 3.30pm

---

One of the Rangers will be near the café with some of the reptiles and amphibians that can be found on site.

WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 12 May, 11am - 12noon

---

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Sunday 16 May, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

---

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

---

Sunday 23 May, 10am - 3pm

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FAMILY FUN

## Woodland Explorers half term trail

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Saturday 29 May - Sunday 6 June

---

Unleash the explorer in you with our popular half term trail and activity booklet. Aimed at explorers up to 12. Download your copy from our website and guide yourself along the route. Suggested donation £2. *Bring a pencil.*

# June

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

---

Saturday 5 June, 10am - 3pm

---

WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 9 June, 11am - 12noon

---

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

## Life in the leaf litter



EVENT

Sunday 13 June, 12noon - 4pm

Join one of our Eco-volunteers at the Information Point to see close up what lives beneath the leaves on the woodland floor.

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

Sunday 20 June, 10am - 3pm



WALK

## Simply Walk

Sunday 20 June, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

# July

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

Saturday 3 July, 10am - 3pm

WALK

## Plants - Myths and medicines



Sunday 4 July, 10.30am - 12.30pm

The importance of plants in our lives has, over the centuries, led to many and varied uses. Discover some of the myths and suggested medicinal uses of plants found in Burnham Beeches. Suggested donation £3. *Booking required.*

WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 14 July, 11am - 12noon

---

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

---

Sunday 18 July, 10am - 3pm

---



WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Sunday 18 July, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

---

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

FAMILY FUN

## Woodland Explorers summer trail

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Thursday 22 July - Wednesday 1 September

---

Unleash the explorer in you with our trail and activity booklet for the summer holidays. Aimed at explorers up to 12. Download your copy from our website and guide yourself along the route. Suggested donation £2. *Bring a pencil.*

FAMILY FUN

## Woodland Explorers

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July - August

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In addition to our summer trail, we are hoping to run other events for children aged 6-12. This will be subject to COVID restrictions. Keep an eye out for more information closer to the time.

# August

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

Saturday 7 August, 10am - 3pm

## On location



Sunday 8 August, 2pm - 4pm

WALK

Join us on a two-hour guided tour of one of the most popular film locations in the country to see where Harry Potter, Robin Hood and James Bond were filmed. Cost £3. *Booking required.*

WALK

## Simply Walk

Wednesday 11 August, 11am - 12noon

Meet at the café at 10.45pm.

WALK

## Simply Walk

Sunday 15 August, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.



# September

VOLUNTEER

## Friends of Stoke Common

---

Saturday 4 September, 10am - 3pm

---

WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 8 September, 11am - 12noon

---

Meet at the café at 10.45am.



EVENT

## The lost words

---



Saturday 18 September, 2pm - 4pm

---

Join us for an afternoon of poetry and music to celebrate some of the wonderful animals and plants found in the Beeches. Suggested donation £3. *Booking required.*

VOLUNTEER

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

---

Sunday 19 September, 10am - 3pm

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WALK

## Simply Walk

---

Sunday 19 September, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

---

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

## Prehistory at Burnham Beeches

Sunday 26 September, 11am - 4pm

EVENT

Another fabulous opportunity to take a step into the site's past and see ancient skills being re-enacted. Watch skills like creating fire, knapping flints, smelting metal, dyeing and weaving.

## October

### Friends of Stoke Common

Saturday 2 October, 10am - 3pm

VOLUNTEER

### Simply Walk

Wednesday 13 October, 11am - 12noon

WALK

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

### Burnham Beeches volunteers

Sunday 17 October, 10am - 3pm

VOLUNTEER

### Simply Walk

Sunday 17 October, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

WALK

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

## Woodland Explorers autumn trail

Saturday 23 - Sunday 31 October

FAMILY FUN

Unleash the explorer in you with our trail and activity booklet for the summer holidays. Aimed at explorers up to 12. Download your copy from our website and guide yourself along the route. Suggested donation £2. *Bring a pencil.*

## Autumn colours walk



---

Sunday 31 October, 10am - 11.30am

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WALK

Burnham Beeches is fabulous in autumn and we are hoping for another brilliant display of greens, golds and coppers on this 1½ hour walk. Suggested donation £3. *Booking required.*

# November

## Friends of Stoke Common

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Saturday 6 November, 10am - 3pm

---

VOLUNTEER

## Fabulous autumnal photography



---

Sunday 7 November, 10am - 1pm

---

WALK

Join professional photographer Paul Mitchell on this 3 hour stroll to discover some of the secrets of great photography. There will also be the chance to get tips and advice about editing images. Cost £15 (all money raised goes to Burnham Beeches). *Booking is required.*

## Simply Walk

---

Wednesday 10 November, 11am - 12noon

---

WALK

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

## Burnham Beeches volunteers

---

Sunday 21 November, 10am - 3pm

---

VOLUNTEER

## Simply Walk

---

Sunday 21 November, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

---

WALK

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.

# December

## Woodland Explorers festive trail



Saturday 4 December - Friday 31 December

FAMILY FUN

Get yourself in the festive mood by downloading your copy from our website and guiding yourself along our seasonal trail. Fun for all ages! Suggested donation £2. *Bring a pencil.*

## Simply Walk

WALK

Wednesday 8 December, 11am - 12noon

Meet at the café at 10.45am.

## Friends of Stoke Common & Burnham Beeches volunteers

VOLUNTEER

Saturday 11 December, 10am - 3pm

Escape the Christmas shopping mayhem - jopin the volunteers building our Christmas tree at Stoke Common.

## Carols at the Café



Sunday 12 December, 12.30pm - 3pm

EVENT

It wouldn't be Christmas without our annual festive sing-song. There will be carols at 1pm and 2pm and craft activities for children. Merry Christmas!

## Simply Walk

WALK

Sunday 19 December, 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Meet at the café at 2.15pm.



## Contact us

City of London  
Burnham Beeches office  
Hawthorn Lane  
Farnham Common  
Slough  
SL2 3TE

Tel. **01753 647358**

24 hour number: **01372 279488**

[burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)

[www.facebook.com/burnhambeeches](https://www.facebook.com/burnhambeeches)

[www.twitter.com/CoLBBSC](https://www.twitter.com/CoLBBSC)

Police non-emergency line: **101**

In an emergency, ring: **999**

For general enquiries about the City of London's Green Spaces Tel: **020 7332 3505**

The information contained in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print (December 2020). The City of London reserves the right to vary the events, withdraw facilities or change opening times or prices without prior notice.

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)





# Help keep Burnham Beeches special

Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common is a registered charitable trust and most of our funding comes from private sources. The money from parking charges, donations or legacies in wills funds work on the reserves. Donations can be made via our website or through the parking machines and donations boxes at Burnham Beeches.



Tel: 01753 647358

[burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/burnhambeeches)