



When you have walked through the Nature Reserve do not forget to check the wildlife pond at the Environment Centre. In spring it is especially heaving with newts, frogs and other wildlife.

### Pond Life

At St Nicks spring seems to start in September when the first buds start to appear, but the reserve visibly comes to life from March. New flowers open week by week. Butterflies and bees emerge from hibernation. Resident birds are already nesting, and summer migrants are starting to arrive and set up territories. Summer and autumn do not follow in an orderly fashion but in overlapping waves. By the time the whitethroats return, the first fledgling blackbirds and long-tailed tits are out and about demanding food from their harassed parents. Tiny autumn fruits are forming on trees and bushes long before the grasses start to flower. And of course, no two years follow an identical pattern.

# Go explore!

## Spring - Summer at St Nicks Nature Reserve and Environment Centre



[www.stnicks.org.uk/events](http://www.stnicks.org.uk/events)

This leaflet gives you a rough idea of what wildlife to look for and suggests a route through the Nature Reserve. For more detailed, up-to-date information check our monthly blog or come on a wildlife walk. See the website or call 01904 411821 for dates.

### Want to know more?

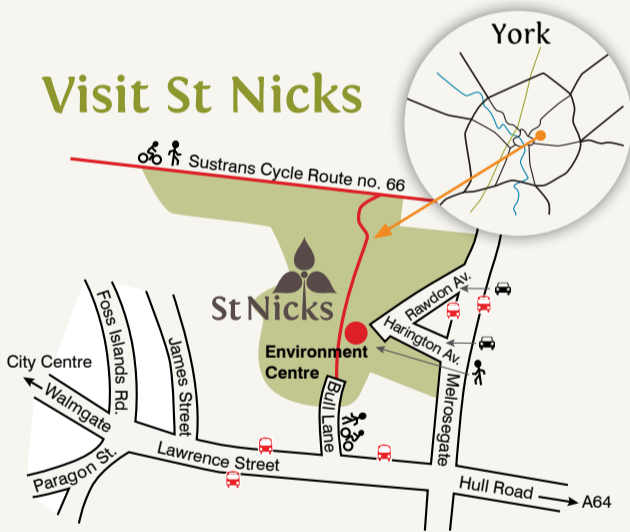
- Green Flag Awards since 2010
- 2004 Local Nature Reserve status
- 2000 Environment Centre opens followed by intensive replanting
- 1994 landfill capped with clay, pits filled with York's rubbish until 1974
- 19th-20th century leaving huge pits and bits of woodland
- 12th-18th century St Nicholas Hospital and church set in meadows, fields

### A bit of history

While walking around, think of the history of St Nicks and marvel at what nature can do with a bit of time and help:

Keep a watch on St Nicks  
Join our Wildwatch Group or read:  
[www.stnicks.org.uk/blog](http://www.stnicks.org.uk/blog)

### Visit St Nicks



St Nicks is just one mile east of York's city centre, easily accessible by public transport and bicycle. There is a small car park, accessible toilet and drinks available at the Environment Centre. The Nature Reserve and car park are open all year round so you can enjoy St Nicks any time you like. For detailed directions please call us or see our website.

St Nicks Environment Centre is open  
Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm & during events  
Please contact us for weekend openings

### Contact us

01904 411821 | [info@stnicks.org.uk](mailto:info@stnicks.org.uk)

St Nicks Environment Centre,  
Rawdon Avenue, York YO10 3ST

[www.stnicks.org.uk](http://www.stnicks.org.uk)



Find St Nicks on Twitter, Facebook and Flickr

Charity registered as 'Friends of St Nicholas Fields' no. 1153739

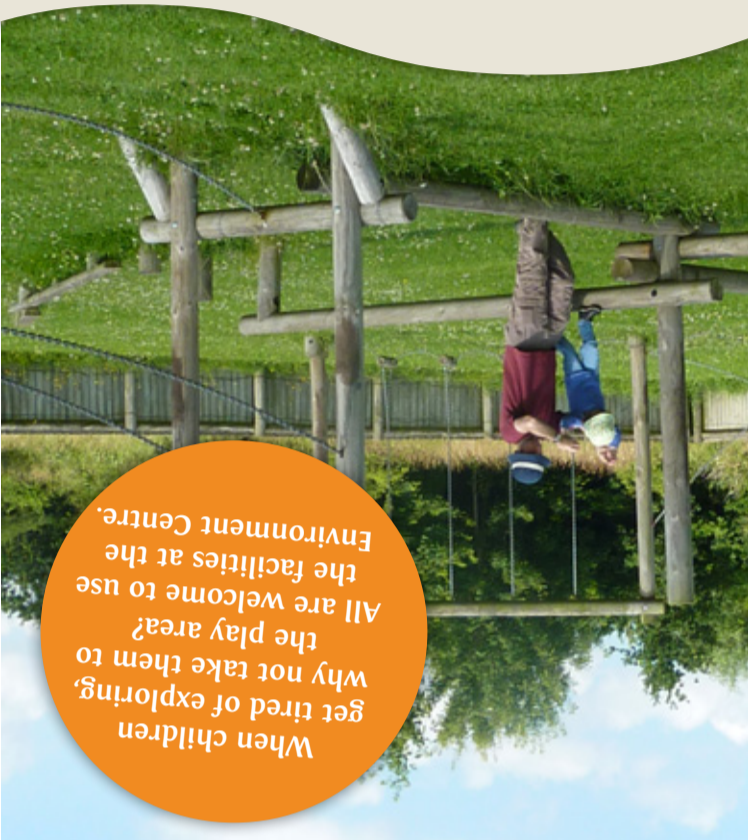
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We hope you enjoy your visit and come back soon!

Please help to look after the Nature Reserve by taking your litter home. Camping, fires or the use of motor vehicles and motorbikes are not permitted.

Dog walkers are welcome but please keep your dog under control and clean up after your friend.

### Visitors' code



When children get tired of exploring, why not take them to the play area? All are welcome to use the facilities at the Environment Centre.

# Join St Nicks

Help grow the green heart of York. Your support will help St Nicks to:

- Continue improving St Nicks Nature Reserve for both wildlife and people.
- Develop the Environment Centre as a hub of green inspiration in York.
- Run projects and services, which help make a greener, better city.

Just pick up a membership form from the Environment Centre or join at [www.stnicks.org.uk/join](http://www.stnicks.org.uk/join) to enjoy the full membership benefits.

- Free admission to seasonal walks
- Discount on training events
- 20% off room hire
- Half-yearly newsletter as well as monthly emails
- Families also get an exploration pack for children



Would you like to help look after St Nicks? Have a go at volunteering! It is fun and rewarding.

There is always something to see at St Nicks.

We recommend that you start by exploring these areas –

tell us what you find!

## 1 Osbaldwick Beck

Osobaldwick Beck offers a short, circular walk through a rich habitat. Listen for singing blackcaps and the distinctive call of the chiffchaff, as well as the more familiar blackbird and robin. This is a good place to see and hear the increasingly scarce song thrush, and see family parties of young long-tailed tits. There's also a chance of seeing a water vole swimming across the beck.

On the south side, wild plum and cherry plum flower, but you'll need to wait until autumn to work out which is which. Along the path edge, look for yellow wood avens, white dead-nettle and, later in the season, enchanter's nightshade. Returning on the opposite path, red and white campions should be out from mid-May, along with ox-eye daisies and possibly common poppy. The blossoming trees along the fence nearer the Centre are bird cherries, and the nettles beneath them are a good place to look for ladybirds and snails. ●

Water vole can be mistaken for rat but has a much rounder, blunter face and furry tail. It is a protected species.



## 2 Meadow

From the meadow paths you can see cowslips, lesser celandines and a spectacular display of gorse flowers, then later in the season cuckoo-flower, knapweed, meadow cranesbill, selfheal and ladies' bed-straw. Follow the path round into the Butterfly Walk.

In spring, early bumblebees visit apple and blackthorn blossom. As summer advances, look for field scabious, blue sow-thistle and a range of small speedwells and geraniums. When the buddleias start to come out, scan them for butterflies, particularly peacock and small tortoiseshell, and see how many different kinds of hoverfly you can see. We have recorded and identified 15 species, and we are still counting! ●

Would you like to help butterflies and bees? Ask us for advice on planting wildflowers.



thorax and white tail. There are usually chiffchaffs calling, but once the leaves have opened it takes a lot of patience to see birds in the woodland areas.

Along the steps leading down from the bund, look for ramsons (wild garlic) in May and June. At the bottom of the steps there are primroses in spring, and later in the year it is a good place to look closely at the impressive wild teasels. Further on, dog roses are beautiful in June, and forget-me-nots grow under the trees. One of the highlights of this area is the speckled wood butterfly – look for a medium-sized brown butterfly with yellow wing markings, dancing where the sun shines through the trees. ●

## 4 Tang Hall Beck

The path alongside Tang Hall Beck is another good spot to find blackcap, though as the summer advances they are easier to hear than see. For a short time, usually in May, you cannot miss the flowers of the enormous laburnum, but it is worth looking for the less showy but equally beautiful dark red flowers of our native ash.

From midsummer, see if you can find at least three different kinds of thistle. Look carefully at the stems as well as the flowers to spot the differences. Sow-thistles and willowherbs also grow here, and near the industrial estate gate you'll find a spectacular patch of great mullein, most likely an escaped garden variety.

This area is another good place to look for different kinds of ladybird, and if you look carefully, you might spot one or two of our nine kinds of shieldbug. ●

## 5 Bund path

Making your way back to the Environment Centre along the bund path, watch for bumblebees collecting pollen when the willow catkins are in flower. The tree bumblebee, a relatively new variety in the North of England, is very easy to identify – look for its reddish

Unsure about names of plants or birds? Pop into the Centre to pick up a wildlife bingo card or borrow a field guide. Our seasonal walks are a good opportunity to learn more.



Photos of water vole, speckled wood and bullfinch by Ian Traynor.

