

A Circular Walk around the Mill Brook Wildlife Corridor

Start location: The Mill Pond

Length: 3 miles

Duration: approximately 2 hours

This circular route takes you along the important Mill Brook Wildlife Corridor as it passes through Tattenhall. Learn about local wildlife, what can be seen and what is being done to encourage nature into the heart of the local community. The route can be accessed from any point shown on the map.

The **Mill Pond** ① was created to drive the water wheel of the local mill. The pond was relined and restored in the 1990s and once again provides a large water body in the heart of the village - an excellent place for **dragonflies**, **bats** and **birds**. It is also an

important breeding site for the **Common Toad** and during the summer months **House Martins** and **Swallows** can be seen catching insects over the water. Freshwater fish species, including **Tench**, **Rudd**, **Carp** and **Eels**, are found in the pond.

Walk into **Mill Field**. ② The Mill Brook runs in a channel on the left hand side of the field with a spectacular **Weeping Willow** adjacent to the High Street. The Mill Field is in the process of being restored as a wildflower meadow. On the right hand side is the Barbour Institute, where **House Martins** build their nests under the eaves during the summer, using mud from the edges of the Mill Pond. Note the village war memorial before turning left into the High Street and cross the culverted Mill Brook, which flows in another direction towards the Spinney.

Following the low sandstone wall, pass Tattenhall Hall which was built in the early 17th century and greatly altered in the late 19th century.

The front garden of this impressive building is now managed as a wildflower meadow.



At its best during the early summer months, **Yellow Rattle**, **Ox-eye Daisy**, **Knapweed** and other once common meadow species grow in profusion. The route passes Tattenhall Centre on your left and Mitchell's Wine Bar on the right. At this point note the classical style buildings opposite on Rose Corner which were built in 1927 and designed by Clough William-Ellis the architect responsible for Portmeirion village in North Wales and for remodeling parts of Bolesworth Castle.

Turn right into Rosemary Row and follow the footpath past Spinney End to the **Spinney** ③. This small patch of woodland was originally planted as a **Willow** coppice in the early 20th century but having never been managed, the mature trees now provide a significant habitat for a variety of woodland birds including **Tawny Owl**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and **Nuthatch**. During the nesting season the air is full with the sound of arguing **Rooks** and **Jackdaws** whilst the woodland floor is a carpet of **Celandine**, **Bluebells** and **Wood Anemones**. Opposite the Spinney, the mature **Alders** in the patch of open space provide good habitat for **Siskins** and **Redpolls** during the winter months.



Stop on the bridge over the **Mill Brook** ④. In the past this has been a good site to observe **Kingfishers**. During the summer months this is an attractive place to look and listen for a while. Turn immediately left and walk up towards **Glebe Meadow** ⑤.

Mill Brook is now on your left and on the bank to the right wildflowers such as **Red Campion** and **Knapweed** provide a valuable nectar source for butterflies and bees during the summer. Note the young **Ash** saplings on the bank. Dragonflies such as the **Southern Hawker** and the smaller **Common Darter** are often seen along this part of the route hunting for small insects within the vicinity of the Mill Brook.



At **Glebe Meadow** take time to look across this beautiful Cheshire meadow - a natural jewel in the centre of the village. It is an important area of unimproved grassland; increasingly rare in Cheshire and has been noted as a Local Wildlife Site due to the presence of over 23 grass species. Managed by Tattenhall Wildlife Group for the Parish Council the Meadow is regularly grazed by rare breed cattle owned by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. These animals - usually Dexters - provide a perfect solution to keeping the grass short and in so doing provide space for traditional meadow species including **Buttercups**, **Tufted Vetch**, **Lady's Smock** and **Celandine**. Some plants such as **Thistles** are managed and controlled as is **Common Ragwort** which is removed at the end of the summer. This vivid yellow flowering species attracts many bees and hoverflies and provides a





Tattenhall
Wildlife
Group



To find out more about
Tattenhall Wildlife Group visit

www.tattenhallwildlifegroup.org.uk

Guidelines for Walkers

Be safe, plan ahead and follow
any signs

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals and take your litter
home

Keep dogs under close control

Consider other people

This walk has been produced by Tattenhall
Wildlife Group



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habitat for the
caterpillar of the
Cinnabar Moth
– but when
cut and dried,
can be highly
poisonous to
livestock.

The route continues to
Barn Field ⑥. This small
field, sloping down to the
Mill Brook, is being restored
as another wildflower

meadow and already attracts butterflies
such as **Peacocks**, **Small Skippers** and
Tortoiseshells.

The route leaves the Corridor through
Ravensholme Court and up to Chester Road.
Turn right at the junction and walk towards
the village past Glebe Meadow on your
right and The Park on your left. Opposite
the Park Primary School and immediately
after Glebe Meadow, take the footpath on
the right towards Mill Brook.

In about 50 metres turn left into the
Churchyard ⑦. Note the traditional **Yew**
hedge and mature **Yew** trees which are so
typical of churchyards, and during the late
spring capture the strong smell of 'garlic'
coming from the white flowered **Ramsons**.
The Churchyard itself provides an important
wildlife habitat and in recent years **Spotted
Flycatchers** have nested. Churches have
stood on this site since the beginning
of the 12th century with the present
building – the Parish Church of St Alban's
– dating from a reconstruction in 1869,
although the tower is of 16th century origin.



of **Ravens** can often be heard in

Leaving the churchyard
the route enters the centre
of the village via Church
Bank.



You are now in the heart of the
village and during the early summer
listen out for the noise of screaming **Swifts**
as they perform their speeding aerobatics
above the High Street. From Church Bank,
turn left into the High Street and walk
uphill past the Post Office and the Nine
Houses. Pass the Sportsman's Arms public
house and continue up Burwardsley Road.

Follow this road for 350 metres out of
the village before turning right onto the
public footpath which takes walkers across
farmland to Dark Lane. At this point the
route passes into open countryside where
spectacular views across to Raw Head
(227 metres) and the Sandstone Ridge are
dominant.

You are now entering **Buzzard** country.
Walking across the **intensively grazed field**
⑧, rare breed sheep (Welsh Badger Face)
can often be seen. During the winter the
fields are popular with 'winter thrushes',
the **Fieldfare** and **Redwing**, and small flocks
of **Lapwings** are often seen on the wing or
sometimes motionless in

the surrounding fields.
Follow the nine in-field
trees (seven **Oaks** and two
Ash) marking the remnants
of an old hedgerow
and notice the dips and
undulations between the
trees which were once the site
of four ponds. The croaking call

the surrounding fields as they fly laboriously
between the mature trees which dot the
landscape.

Approaching the kissing gate, the land
falls away quite steeply into the shallow
valley of the Mill Brook.

Passing through the kissing gate ⑨ turn
right on the footpath which follows the
Mill Brook along its valley, which is liable to
flood during the winter months.

Although the Brook is not very
wide, **Sticklebacks** can be
found and **Water Voles**
are likely to be present
along its course. Reeds are developing
which, together with the water loving
Willow provide a useful habitat for
Sedge Warblers and **Reed Buntings**.
Nettles and **thistles** along this part of the
route form important nectar sources for
butterflies and autumnal seed heads for
Goldfinches and **Greenfinches**. This
area is a potential Site of
Biological Importance and
20 species of butterfly,
including **Common
Blue**, **Orange Tip** and
Purple Hairstreak have
now been recorded. A
series of shallow scrapes
have been excavated
here to retain flood water
to provide new habitat for
amphibians and wetland bird species
such as **Snipe** and **Water Rail**.

The mature woodland on the other side
of the Mill Brook now forms part of
Jubilee Wood ⑩. More than 1000 trees,



Before entering the Flacca Field through
the kissing gate, have a look at the two
ponds which are gradually being restored.

Originally marl pits, they are two of over
100 ponds which can still
be found in the Parish.
The larger of the two
is a favourite breeding
site for the **Common Frog**
and during late February
early March, massive clumps of
frogspawn can be seen. **Smooth
Newts** and **Great Crested Newts**
are also found in this pond and
there has also been a record of a
Grass Snake.

Pass through the kissing
gate, turn left and walk
along the new hedgerow
which borders the **Flacca
Field** ⑪. Take time
to stop and look left
towards Bolesworth
Castle. Look out for
Buzzards circling overhead or
resting in the trees and, at dusk, **Foxes** and
the occasional **Badger** can be seen hunting
or marking out their territories. At the
end of the Flacca Field, by the Cricket Club
scoreboard, turn left onto the Millennium
Mile and walk back to the Mill Pond.



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