

# Nature Reserve Facts

## Wilford Claypits Nature Reserve (SSSI)



Nottinghamshire



### History

The reserve owes its existence to more than half a century of clay extraction by the Wilford Brick Company (1895 – 1967) for the excavation of brick-making clay. Whilst part of the area has been built on to form the Wilford Industrial Estate, the remainder has become a nature reserve which is now owned by Rushcliffe Borough Council and managed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. .

### Habitats

This 4.3 hectare site has a variety of habitats including marshland, pools, calcareous grassland and areas of scrub and woodland. Of particular significance are the marshland areas which have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The site provides a glimpse of our local geological strata of red, green and grey marl as well as deposits of shale, skerry and gypsum. These were deposited millions of years ago but are now visible on the slopes and low cliffs formed during excavation. These waterlogged clays ensure that the marsh is maintained by lime-rich springs, which feed the unpolluted pools and streams that so far have maintained open water areas under the severest drought conditions, which support important open water and marsh habitats.

Open water and its margins support a specialist plant community, including bulrush, common

spike-rush, grey club-rush, purple loosestrife, fennel pondweed and water plantain.

Naturally there is also a range of specialist aquatic invertebrates on the site, with a healthy population of dragonflies and damselflies, including the impressive blue and green emperor dragonfly, brown hawker, broad bodied chaser, four spotted chasers and the noticeable banded demoiselle. Other invertebrates include water scorpion, great diving beetle, freshwater shrimps and a variety of caddis flies. Also found are various snails such as the whirlpool ramshorn and beetles such as the great diving beetle, plus several types of mussels. And of course common frog and smooth newts breed on the site, along with three and nine spined sticklebacks.

The marsh areas support a population of southern marsh-orchids as well as yellow sedge, false fox-sedge, common fleabane, and field horsetail. Some of the marsh areas have now developed into scrub woodland, with species such as goat willow, sallow and alder. It is also a good site for bryophytes (mosses) with some 37 species recorded in 2014 including pointed spear-moss, common feather-moss and sphagnum.



The dry grassland areas on the slopes and in the centre of the site support interesting plant species such as bee orchid, common spotted orchid as well as a southern marsh/common spotted hybrid. Other flowers include fairy flax, rough hawkbit, yellow-wort, yellow rattle and the diminutive fern-grass.

Sites such as these are not static and in the last 20 years we have seen fragrant orchids establish a flourishing colony and recent management work has seen the return of field scabious. Twayblade and fly orchid have also been recorded on site. Butterflies inhabit the glades so for example holly blue, speckled wood and brimstone can all be found at various times of the year.

The site also supports varied bird life including green woodpecker, chiffchaff, great tit, blue tit, sedge warbler, blackbird, and goldfinch.

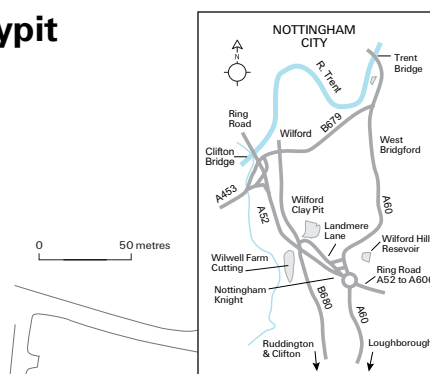
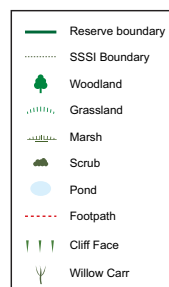
### Site Management

This includes control of encroaching scrub and woodland in order to maintain a diverse mixture of open habitats, in both the dry and wet areas. In addition occasional dredging and reedbed clearance is required to counteract silting up of the open water. Being surrounded by housing the control of vandalism and illegal tipping of rubbish is also necessary.

The site is wardened by volunteers and has a regular work party. If you are interested in getting involved in the management of the site

## Wilford Claypit

SK 568356



or want more information about it, please call the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Office on 0115 958 8242.

### Visiting the Site

There are entrances via Compton Acres, West Bridgford (SK571355) and Landmere Lane (SK569354) NG2 7NZ either side of the Apple Tree pub and a circular path round the reserve, although it involves some steep steps up (or down) embankments.

### Why not explore this nearby reserve? Wilwell Farm Cutting.



# Join Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust today

We are Nottinghamshire's largest environmental charity. We care for more than 70 nature reserves around the county, working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. Alongside 47 other UK Wildlife Trusts, we Stand up to protect local wildlife and habitats. For further information please visit our website: [www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org](http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org)

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