

## **CLOtC accredited forests for self-led learning visits**

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom ([CLOtC](#)) is the national voice for learning outside the classroom. The Forestry Commission is proud to be working with the CLOtC to create and improve opportunities for self-led learning on the public forest estate.

We are working towards [CLOtC Site Provider Awards](#) for Forestry Commission sites across England. This award recognises organisations which actively welcome schools onto their site/s for self-led visits and ensure that the sites and any other services provided meet the needs of schools.

## **CLOtC accredited site: Chambers Farm Wood, Lincolnshire**

Chambers Farm Nature Reserve is located on the site of a medieval woodland and is well known for its ancient lime trees and wide range of butterflies. This beauty spot, near Wragby, Lincolnshire, has been rated one of the best Forestry Commission sites in the UK for its insect life. The woodland is part of Lincolnshire Limewoods NNR, which is made up of several SSSIs, and it is a very special place – quiet and peaceful, and ideal for investigating habitats and wildlife.

Chambers Farm Wood is part of the public forest estate, which is made up of more than 1500 woods and forests in England that are cared for by the Forestry Commission. We practise multi-purpose sustainable forestry: multi-purpose means that our forests are managed, not just to supply timber, but also as valuable wildlife habitats and places for visitors to enjoy; sustainable means that we follow long term forest design plans, so that the public forest estate continues to provide timber, and benefits for people and wildlife into the future.

Chambers Farm Wood is popular with local dog-walkers and wildlife enthusiasts, but don't worry – it really doesn't get too busy! The appeal of this site is the peace and tranquillity, and the opportunity to explore a beautiful and accessible woodland, without the crowds.

### Example school visits

- **EYFS** – Understanding the world – exploring different habitats to look for insects and other minibeasts, discussing where they live and why
- **Primary school** – Science – Living things and their habitats – different micro-habitats within the woodland are suitable for different animals and birds; investigate what lives where, what it eats and how it lives
- **Secondary school** – Year 7 settling in, getting to know each other – working in teams to follow a map of one of the trails, with some challenges to complete along the way eg things to collect or things to spot; be inspired by the diversity of butterflies and create some natural butterfly artwork and sculptures
- **GCSE / A-level** – Geography / science fieldwork – investigate the different management plans and techniques in use at Chambers Farm – forestry for timber and recreation, alongside management of the nature reserve and wildflower meadow for biodiversity; what conflicts arise and how are they resolved?

### Site [webpage](#)

- has information about trails, site facilities, directions, events etc

### On-site facilities

- The site is open all the time with free parking for cars and coaches
- The disabled toilet is open all the time; the other toilets can be opened by prior arrangement (so if you are planning a visit, please request this well in advance)
- The 'Wood Centre' may be booked to be used as a classroom or meeting space
- There are picnic tables at the car park, and a log circle seating area within a couple of minutes walk
- Mobile phone signal is variable

### Surrounding woodland

- The car park and Wood Centre are situated in the centre of the woodland – within a few minutes walk in one direction is the butterfly garden, and in the other, miles of trails through beautiful mixed woodland; further into the wood is the wildflower meadow, which is stunning in the summer months, and a wide variety of mature trees
- There are three waymarked trails – the short trail of around a mile is surfaced to make it as accessible as possible; the other two – red and green – are not surfaced and may get muddy at times

### Self-led learning opportunities

- Woodland activities – trees, minibeasts, habitats, shelterbuilding (see FC [downloads](#) and [lesson plans](#))
- Active / sporting – walking, mapreading
- Hire a 'Ranger in a Bag' at Chambers Farm
  - Ranger in a Bag (RIAB) is the Forestry Commission's bookable self-led activity pack for school groups
  - RIAB contains all the equipment and instructions needed to lead learning activities in the forest (no experience necessary!), as well as introductory and plenary activities
  - RIAB is suitable for a group of up to 35 children aged 4-11
  - RIAB topics available at Chambers Farm include shelterbuilding, pond dipping, minibeasts, natural art, sensory explorers and animal detectives
  - For more information, contact the FC learning team

### Learning opportunities from partner organisations

- Contact the FC learning team for details of a new partner learning provider who will be offering led activities and sessions for school groups at Chambers Farm in 2015

### Local Forestry Commission contacts

- The local Forestry Commission learning team is based at Sherwood Pines Forest Park – [email](#) or phone 01623 822447
- There is a more local Forestry Commission office (at Market Rasen), but as the staff are usually out on site, this office is staffed inconsistently

### Planning your visit

- **Contact the FC learning team** – we'd like to know you are coming and, depending on your plans, there may be a booking form to complete
- **Pre-visit** – we strongly recommend that you make a pre-visit to the site before bringing your group – you'll need to know where to park, where the toilets are, where and how you will carry out your activities; you'll need to be able to write your risk assessment and will also be able to look at site maps: leaflets are available from outside the Wood Centre, and there is a map panel in the car park
- **Health and safety** – we carry out regular safety checks of the area around Chambers Farm Wood Centre and car park, and of the waymarked trails; we do not however, check every path and every part of the forest; if you are bringing a group to the forest, it is your responsibility to carry out a pre-visit and write your own risk assessment; we cannot provide you with a site risk assessment because the forest is a variable environment, which changes as a result of weather conditions, time of year, forest operations etc; we do offer a [sample risk assessment](#), which may be of use, when you are writing your own, and a [guide to group leader responsibilities](#); if a member of your group has an accident while visiting Chambers Farm Wood, please let the learning team know as soon as possible

### Accessibility

- Waymarked trails are all flat, but only the white trail is surfaced
- There is no dedicated disabled parking, but the car park is flat, and rarely too busy to find a suitable space
- There is an accessible toilet
- The Wood Centre (if you are planning to hire it) has no steps and is easily accessible
- With prior notice and for genuine access for less physically able learners, barriers to trails may be unlocked by local FC staff to allow vehicular access

### After your visit

- **Feedback** – we'd like to know how you get on with your self-led visit to Chambers Farm Wood and have provided a short [online survey](#)
- **Further opportunities** – if you would like to find out more about learning opportunities on the public forestry estate, please [email](#) and ask to be put onto our mailing list