

## Things to See

**Cow Lane.** Cow Lane is an ancient right of way, reflected in its diverse range of species. Ivy covered trees make perfect nesting sites for small birds and a late season source of nectar for bees. Hedge plants attract a wide range of specialist insects and butterflies.



**Railway Embankment** The Victorian railway embankment provides a mature woodland with scrub habitat for a diverse range of fauna. The mature trees provide food and shade, whilst the scrub underneath provides shelter and homes. This habitat stretches the length of the farm and includes a walnut and a whitebeam.

**Water Meadows** The water meadows have provided rich farmland for centuries, and will have been traditionally grazed by a cycle of sheep, then cows, then harvested for hay. This succession made good use of the lush grass, aided by annual, deliberate, controlled flooding. If you look carefully you can see the ditches and banks that were used to control this process. Look out for abundant butterflies and bees as well as the spectacular yellow flag iris.

**Damp Woodland** Whitebridge Spinney is a mature damp woodland running along the River Bourne. Look out for dragonflies, water voles and, if you are very lucky, kingfishers.



**The River** The diversity of plants, insects and fish in the River Bourne is typical of a chalk stream. Water birds regularly sighted include ducks, moorhens, swans, little egrets and herons.

There is plenty more to see, natural and man-made, so keep your eyes open and enjoy!

## River Bourne Community Farm

Cow Lane, Laverstock, Salisbury, SP1 2SR  
01722 330667

[www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk](http://www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk)  
Contact us to become a friend or volunteer  
and for more information.

### Meadow & Down Trails Project

The TRAILS PROJECT was a community initiative delivered by River Bourne Community Farm Community Interest Company with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and was supported by Wiltshire Council, the Salisbury International Arts Festival & the Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. The project set up four easy-to-access Trails across Laverstock and Ford Parish to enjoy Meadow & Down wildlife and the traditional farming practices that sustain it. The Trails feature new wildlife habitats, benches and way-markers. The Old Sarum Trail was not finalised, due to problems with the housing estate developer. The Hampton Park Trail will be incorporated into the Castle Hill Country Park, but can still be followed around Bishopdown Farm Estate.

The Trails have been developed and maintained by volunteers and community groups. Benches have been installed around the trails and you can look out for bat boxes, bird nesting boxes and insect dwellings. Wild flowers and native trees have been planted to enhance these areas for all to enjoy.

For further information please visit the trails section of our website. [www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk](http://www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk)

**Parking** You can park at the farm when it is open – check the website for current opening times. At other times please ask, even if the gates are open, to avoid being locked in. Please do not block access for farm vehicles, and be considerate to our neighbours.

**Dogs** Dogs are permitted but must be kept on a lead in the vicinity of livestock and poultry. Pick up and remove poo, especially near farm buildings, houses, gates and footpaths.

This leaflet has been printed with funding from the Laverstock & Ford Parish Council.



River Bourne  
Community Farm  
Meadows & Down Trails

Farm & Spinney  
Trail



This trail explores the community farm, the water meadows and the River Bourne, revealing the huge diversity of habitats, flora and fauna that can be found in Laverstock

**The Walk** The full trail is 3 Km and can take about 1 ½ hours. There are shortcuts, and parts of it can be omitted if time is limited. The trail is mostly flat with a few short and very gentle slopes.

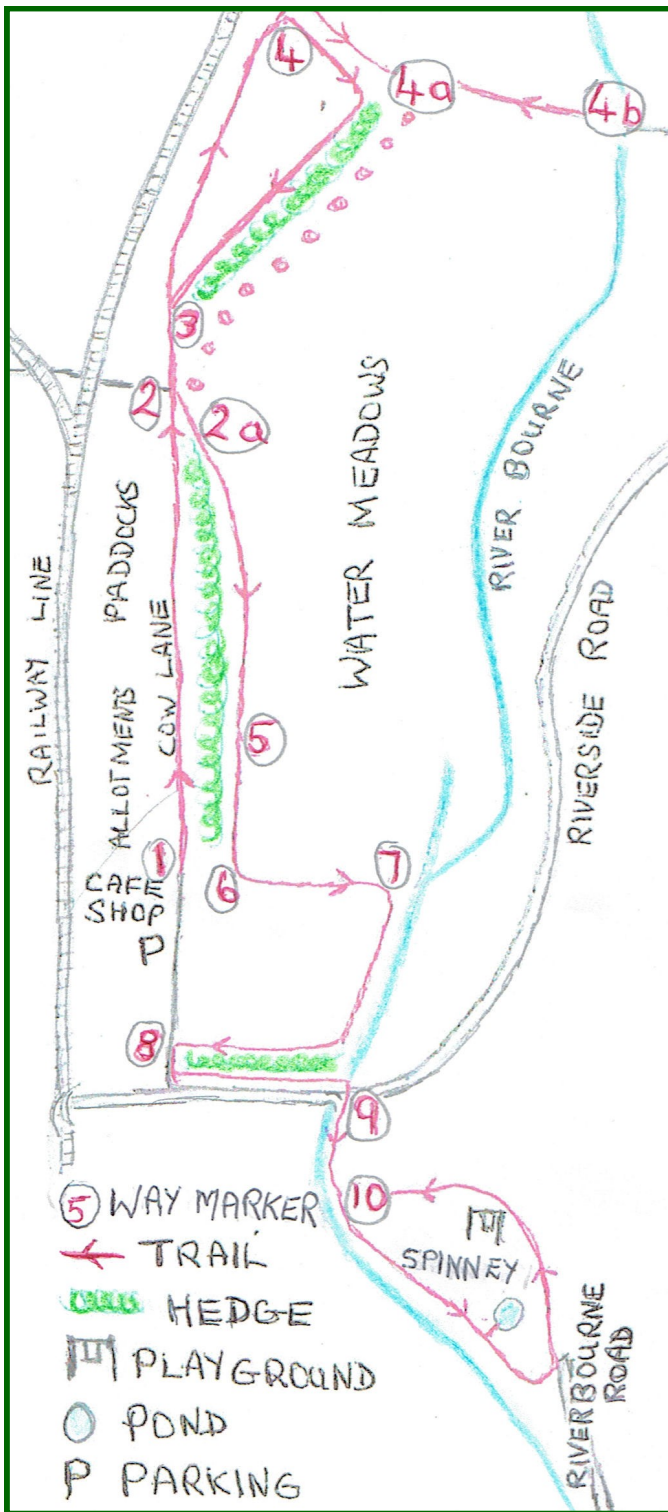
A substantial part of the trail is on good paths and tracks with one rough section (2-6 on the map), but this is easily bypassed. Similarly, most of the trail is well drained.

**Things to See** The trail has a wide variety of habitats and a rich variety of flora and fauna reflects the landscape's diverse nature. You can scan this QR-code to find out more.



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund





## FARM and SPINNEY TRAIL

**Start** - this trail starts at the farm cafe on Cow Lane (SP1 2SR), although you can start at a number of other points on the map.

All the paths on the farm are permissive except Cow Lane, and can occasionally be closed for movement of livestock and grazing of paths. Please beware of electric fences.

1. Coming from the cafe turn left along Cow Lane and past the allotments. Note the ancient hedge, a haven for insects and birds. The trail will take you past two paddocks on the left where some animals may be grazing.
2. When Cow Lane bends to the left under the railway arch, go through the gate. A vista of the water meadows, backed by the distinctive copse on Cockey Down, opens up. Here you can choose to double back to gate 2a and return along the water meadows to the farm cafe, or continue along the embankment, bearing left after 70 metres to climb slightly into a refuge field.
3. This triangular field is a metre or so higher than the meadows and can be used to graze stock when the meadows flood. The path then continues along by the railway embankment. Watch out for butterflies, and note the trees, including a walnut and a whitebeam.
4. Here you have a choice. The main trail continues round the field (back to marker 3) with wild flowers, butterflies and other insects to look out for, or you can exit through the gate, continue and turn right on to the tarmac path. Follow it down to the bridge across the River Bourne, 4b. This is a beautiful spot to watch fish, moorhens, ducks and occasionally swans. The river is full of life. From here you can carry on to the Downs Trail (path up by St Andrew's Primary School) or return to 4 to rejoin the trail. At 4a you can take a short-cut to 3 along the water meadows - this path (dotted line on the map) can be water-logged after heavy or prolonged rain especially in winter. From 3 follow the path along the water meadow fence through the lower gate 2a back towards the farm buildings.

Continued ...

**4. continued...** You may see cattle or sheep grazing in these fields. In this area there are crack willows, so called because at a certain size they crack from the crown and the collapsed branches re-grow. They make wonderful nest sites for birds.

**5.** At this point there is a seat from which you can admire the view. Continue along the fence line to the end of the water meadows.

**6.** Go through the gate to the higher field and turn left to the river.

**7.** Near the dipping platform there are two carved benches. From the platform you can look for minnows, trout and, if you are very lucky, water vole. Also in season yellow flag iris, purple loosestrife and watercress can be seen. Continue along the river and around the field to the gate.

**8.** Here you can continue on the trail around Whitebridge Spinney or return to the cafe. At the farm cafe and shop, refreshments are available and you can buy the farm's fresh eggs and other tasty food. For opening times see the noticeboard or the farm website. To continue the trail follow Cow Lane to the main road, turn left and carefully cross over at the Whitebridge.

**9.** Follow the path near the river by mixed woodland until the path opens up into grassed amenity land.

**10.** Here there are seats and steps where the adventurous can paddle in the river. Follow the board walk along the river through woods dominated by alder and willow. There are wild flowers (lots of snowdrops in February), and if you are lucky you may spot a water vole or kingfisher. Near the end of the board walk there is an ephemeral pond that usually dries out in summer. Frogs lay copious spawn here in early spring. Continue along the board walk until you arrive on River Bourne Road. Turn left here and then bear left onto the amenity land, pass a children's playground and return to the trail at 10. Follow the path back to the farm.

**We hope you enjoyed your walk.**