

# Walks



If you are driving to a walk start point, please ensure that you park respectfully, especially in village locations.

## Walks Key

- TL** Turn Left
- TR** Turn Right
- FL** Fork Left
- FR** Fork Right
- BL** Bear Left
- BR** Bear Right

## Gill Mill Circular Walk

**Length: Approx 5 miles / 8 km**  
**Time: 1 hour 45 minutes**  
**Start and end point: Rushy Common Car Park**

1. Go through the gate opposite the entrance of the Rushy Common car park. You are now on the Down Valley Way bridleway. **TL** and follow the path.
2. When you reach a gate at the end of the Down Valley Way, **TL** and you will join the Northern Cross Valley Way. Follow this path and cross the East Arm of the River Windrush.
3. As you near Ducklington you will reach a crossroads. **TL** and walk down the Windrush Path along the River Windrush.
4. As you approach Hardwick, there is a kissing gate. Go through the gate and take the footpath across the field. Follow the footpath around Founders Lake and then Brasenose Two Lake. The path then crosses the East Arm of the River Windrush and takes you towards Tar Lakes.  
Catch a glimpse of Rushy Common through the viewing gaps along the footpath back to the car park.



**LOOK OUT FOR: Water voles**  
Water vole numbers continue to increase on the Lower Windrush after re-introductions in 2005.

## Windrush Path, Standlake to Newbridge

**Length: Approx 1.7 miles / 2.8 km**  
**Time: 40 minutes**  
**Start point: Standlake**  
**End Point: Newbridge**

1. From Black Horse Pub in Standlake cross the main road to Shifford Lane. Follow Shifford Lane past the Maybush School until you reach a crossroads.
2. **TL** and follow the path until you reach a T junction. **TR** and follow the track until you reach a gate.
3. **TL** through a kissing gate and you will find the Picnic Area. Carry on along the path until you reach a small bridge which you cross, **TL** and then almost immediately **TR** on to a narrow path, part of which is a wooden boardwalk.
4. At the end of the boardwalk you will come to a private drive. Follow this until you reach the main road. Here you **TR** through a kissing gate and follow the well-trodden path through the fields and across a bridge until you reach the Rose Revived Pub at Newbridge.



**LOOK OUT FOR: Art Underfoot Mosaic Trail.** Along the footpath look out for the series of striking mosaic sculptures created by the community of Standlake during the summer of 2004.

## Sites of interest

**Dix Pit** lake is a Local Wildlife Site and is important because of the lack of disturbance, the presence of shallow areas and islands and is particularly good for terns, ducks, grebes and gulls.



Witney Lake

Archeological digs here between 1990 and 1999 resulted in approximately 1500 bones and teeth from large animals being excavated. The remains belonged to a range of species including mammoth, elephant, horse, bear and lion.

**Devil's Quoits**  
4000 to 5000 years ago, this would have been one of the most important standing stone circle sites in Britain but by the end of the 19th century only three of the stones were standing. The henge earthwork was rebuilt in 2002, and in 2005 some of the original stones were moved back into position and new stones were erected to replace lost ones.

**Ducklington** sits on the bank of the River Windrush. The village is renowned for the Snake's Head Fritillary, a rare wildflower that grows locally. In April, the village celebrates Fritillary Sunday, when the fritillary field is open to the public.

**Witney Lake and Country Park** offers a gateway to the Lower Windrush Valley. There are surfaced paths round the lake and rougher paths through fields providing a rich variety of walking experiences on the doorstep of the historic market town of Witney.



Devil's Quoits

**Stanton Harcourt**  
Stanton Harcourt is a small, pretty village dating from the Bronze Age. Rich in history, the village has been a focus for archaeologists for many years including the Channel 4 programme 'Time Team'. Stanton Harcourt Manor House is well-known for its 14th century medieval kitchens - the most complete surviving medieval kitchens in the country. In the grounds of the manor house is the 15th century Pope's Tower in which the poet Alexander Pope worked on his translation of Homer's Iliad.

**Gill Mill Quarry**, near Ducklington, is one of Oxfordshire's largest quarries. Gravel extraction will be continuing for many years and will extend to the A40 at Witney. Once extraction is completed new sites for nature conservation and recreation will be created. There will be extensive areas of new habitats, including reedbed and lowland meadow, and a network of new paths and bridleways for people to enjoy.

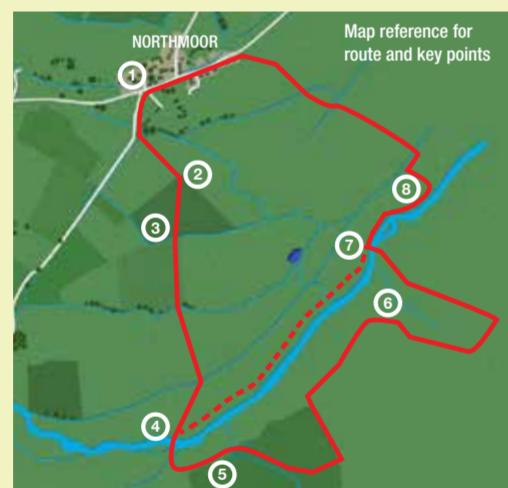
**Tar Lakes**  
Tar Lakes consists of multiple lakes and ponds created as part of the restoration work that occurred after gravel extraction. The wildlife interest includes swans and great crested grebes on the water all year round, dragon and damselflies in the summer, and flocks of fieldfare in the winter.

The paths around Tar Lakes are open to everyone for walking and quiet recreation. About 800 metres of path is suitable for disabled access and pushchairs. The car park across the road at Rushy Common has space for approximately 20 cars and is open at all times. Cycle racks are available in the car park for those arriving by bicycle.

## Northmoor Circular Walk

**Length: Approx 5.5 miles / 8.8 km**  
**Time: 2 hours**  
**Start and end point: Red Lion Pub in Northmoor**

1. From Red Lion, **TL** west along road for around 150 yards. **TL** into Moreton Lane for 250 yards. **TL** onto farm road towards Church Farm for about 350 yards.
2. Pass farm buildings on right & go through metal gate on right before road straightens. Footpath goes straight across the field from the gate, under powerlines to a metal kissing gate under tall trees opposite.
3. Go through gate & into next field. Follow hedgerow on left for 3 fields. You will reach open ground down to the Thames. The path goes across the open ground at 45 degrees to right, to a footbridge.
4. For longer route through Appleton, cross bridge & follow path through trees. As trees end, **FL** through bushes. Reaching wide green track, **BL** following track to Appleton Common woods, past electricity pylon on your left.
5. As you enter woods **FL**, staying just inside woods for around 275 yards to another fork. **FR** gently uphill for around 700 yards. **TL** onto a dirt road for just over ¼ mile. At the bottom, **TR** in front of a house. Track soon becomes grassy.
6. At the end, **TR** steadily uphill for just over ½ mile. Reaching Appleton, pass playground & tennis courts on left. **TL** onto private road/permissive footpath to Northmoor Lock downhill for about ½ mile.
7. Cross river and **TR** in front of lock buildings. This is where longer & shorter routes rejoin. Walk east along river for about ⅓ mile.
8. Just after powerlines, by the river in open land is a gate with no fence. **TL** along broken line of trees and bushes. Approaching far side of open land, slightly to the right is a metal gate. Go through gate and follow farm road for just over ½ mile. **TL** onto road around ⅓ mile to Red Lion.



**LOOK OUT FOR: Barn owls**



## Windrush Path, Witney to Hardwick

**Length: 3 miles / 5 km**  
**Time: 1 hour 15 minutes**  
**Start point: Witan Way, Witney**  
**End point: Hardwick**

1. From Witan Way, take the path right of Bishop's Farm Mill across a bridge and **BR**. After an Information Board follow the arm of the Windrush to the left.
2. At the far side of the field, go through a gate following the path under the A40, then **BL**. At the end of the trees go through a gate, **TR** and follow the field edge towards Witney Lake.
3. At the far side of the field the path goes right of some trees near a bridge over the Windrush to the lake. Don't take the bridge, **BL** a short distance to a metal kissing gate. The path goes straight through the gate, away from the Windrush and across the field to another metal kissing gate by a hedgerow. Go through the gate and follow the track.
4. You soon reach a crossroads, continue straight and after about ¼ mile take a metal kissing gate on the right. Continue in the same direction and follow the path alongside the River Windrush.
5. Approaching Hardwick, at a metal kissing gate, take the wooden footbridge on the right, then a path towards the village across a grassy area with a door in the middle. Go straight through (or past) the door to a gate by a house, through the gate and along the side of the house into Hardwick.



**LOOK OUT FOR: Snake's Head Fritillary and Kingfishers**



### Bird Hides

The Lower Windrush Valley is a nationally important area for wintering wildfowl. There are some fantastic spots for birdwatching, including Rushy Common and Standlake Common Nature Reserves. Bird hides at both sites can be accessed by key, which is available to purchase from the Lower Windrush Valley Project.

### Rushy Common Nature Reserve

Restoration of this site after mineral extraction was carefully planned to create a diverse range of habitats including standing open water, ponds, ditches, islands, and gravelly shorelines. Winter numbers of waterfowl such as wigeon and teal can be in the hundreds and in the summer breeding common tern swoop across the water and great crested grebe carry their striped chicks on their backs. The bird hide on the southern shore and the bird viewing screen to the west offer good views across the site. The hide is accessible to wheelchair users from the car park.

Please note that both Rushy Common and Standlake Common Nature Reserves are intended as wildlife havens and public access is not permitted, except by key holders visiting the hides.

### Standlake Common Nature Reserve

Standlake Common is a well-established nature reserve. Over one hundred and fifty bird species have been recorded so far as well as toads, grass snakes, roe and muntjac deer plus bees, butterflies and other insects. Surveys of the aquatic life in the lake show that the water quality is good, and supports many plants, fish and invertebrates. In order to avoid disturbing the resident wildlife, the reserve has been carefully designed to allow visitors to view the whole site from two hides. The Langley's Lane hide is accessible to wheelchair users, with limited parking for blue badge holders directly next to the hide.



# Discover the Lower Windrush Valley Walks & Leisure



The Lower Windrush Valley covers 28km<sup>2</sup> of West Oxfordshire incorporating the floodplain of the River Windrush from Witney to the River Thames at Newbridge. Over the last 60 years the landscape of the valley has been extensively modified by mineral extraction with large areas of the riverside pasture transformed into a mosaic of open water.

The Lower Windrush Valley Project works closely with mineral operators, landowners and the community to co-ordinate, implement and help manage a wide range of landscape, biodiversity and public access initiatives throughout the valley.

Much of the valley is in private ownership but a network of footpaths and bridleways gives access to walks beside rivers, lakes and lowland meadows.

**If you would like to find out more about the Lower Windrush Valley Project, please visit our website: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lowerwindrushvalleyproject> Email: [lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk)**

Please respect the wishes of local landowners by keeping to waymarked paths, clearing up after your dog and keeping dogs under close control. When walking through fields with livestock, dogs should be kept on a lead at all times.





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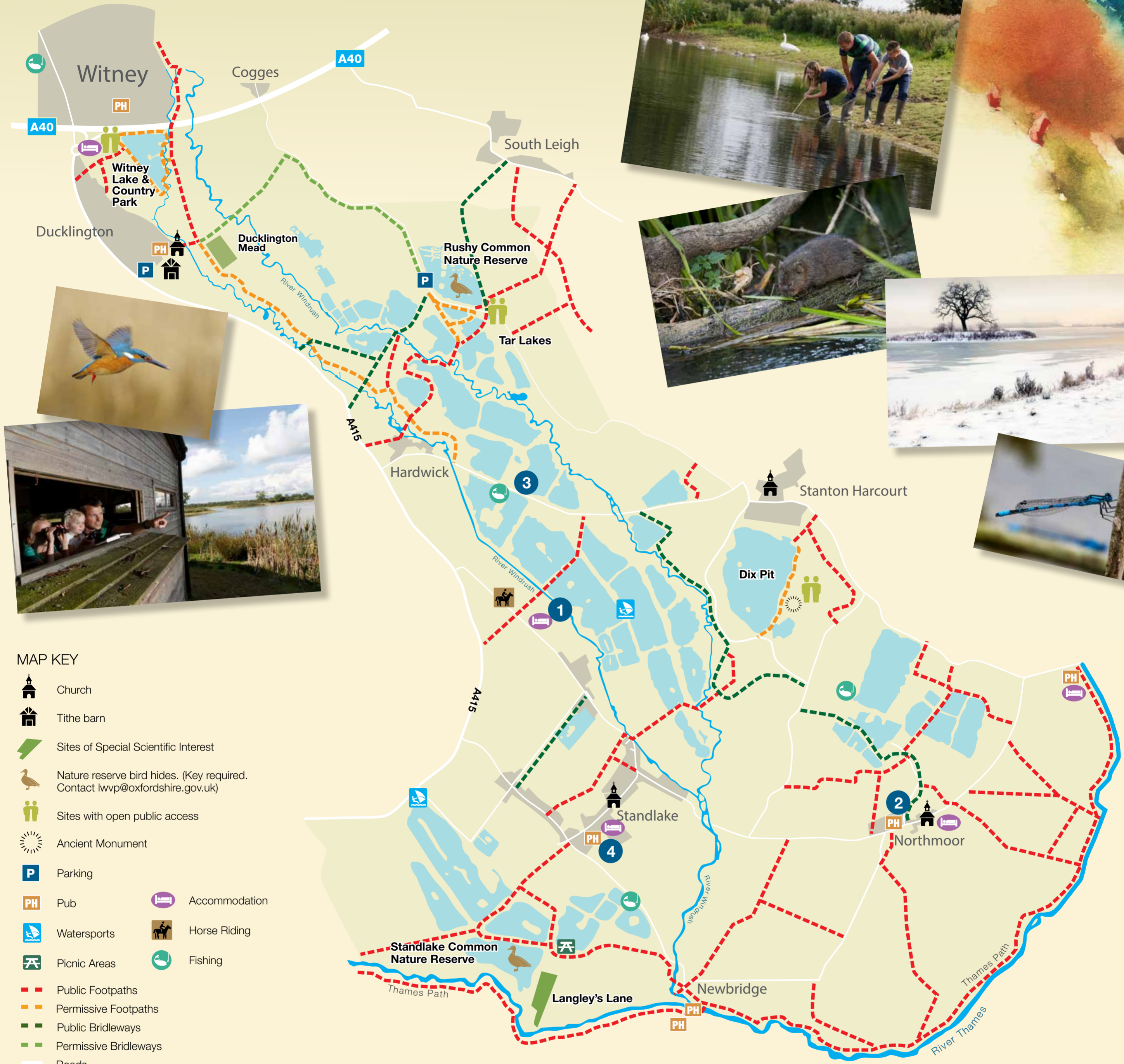
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Oxfordshire OX28 5DG

Find us on  

# The Lower Windrush Valley



## MAP KEY

- Church
- Tithe barn
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Nature reserve bird hides. (Key required. Contact [lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk))
- Sites with open public access
- Ancient Monument
- Parking
- Pub
- Accommodation
- Watersports
- Horse Riding
- Picnic Areas
- Fishing
- Public Footpaths
- Permissive Footpaths
- Public Bridleways
- Permissive Bridleways
- Roads

Footpaths and bridleways on this map are indicative only and do not represent the definitive routes.



## 1 Hardwick Parks Holiday & Watersports Park

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**Tel: 01865 300501**  
**[www.hardwickparks.co.uk](http://www.hardwickparks.co.uk)**



## 3 Linear Fisheries Oxford Ltd

Linear Fisheries Oxford Ltd operate a large complex of sports fishing lakes based just outside of Witney, in Oxfordshire, right in the heart of the Lower Windrush Valley. Linear, who are owned by local family run gravel company, Smiths Bletchington, have been running fishing lakes in this beautiful part of Oxfordshire for over 25 years. As well as helping with nature conservation and maintenance of the local landscape, this award winning fishery offers some great sport and is home to many species of spectacular, freshwater fish.

For further info please visit us at **[www.linear-fisheries.co.uk](http://www.linear-fisheries.co.uk)**



## 2 The Red Lion at Northmoor

The Red Lion is a Community pub run as a Free House by tenants Ian and Lisa Neale in the picturesque village of Northmoor. Serving a selection of homemade A La Carte and Pub Classic dishes using fresh, seasonal and home grown produce and local Real Ales.

**[www.theredlionnorthmoor.com](http://www.theredlionnorthmoor.com)**  
**Tel: 01865 300301**  
**f The Red Lion at Northmoor**  
**@theredlionoxon**



## 4 Lincoln Farm Park

Lincoln Farm Park, Standlake holds many awards including an AA Platinum award. In addition to offering touring pitches we also have our own leisure facilities with private membership available.

**[www.lincolnfarmpark.co.uk](http://www.lincolnfarmpark.co.uk)**  
**[info@lincolnfarmpark.co.uk](mailto:info@lincolnfarmpark.co.uk)**  
**Tel: 01865 300239**