

King's Meads

King's Meads, between Hertford and Ware, was previously referred to as The Meads.

The rivers and ditches which criss-cross the site traditionally flooded the flat land; because of falling water levels this now happens less often than in the past. This combination of ditches, floodwater and regular grazing has created a rich wetland habitat that is becoming very rare in Britain.

In winter the flooded areas at the base of the chalk bank attract ducks, gulls and waders including good numbers of Teal, wigeon, shoveler, gadwall and snipe. King's Meads is also a key site for wintering stonechats and up to four pairs can be present. In the summer, seven species of warbler breed in addition to good populations of reed bunting, meadow pipit and sky lark, which are all becoming scarce as breeding species elsewhere in the county. In the autumn, the site attracts migrant species such as garganey, ruff, wood sandpiper, whinchat, wheatear, yellow wagtail and spotted flycatcher. In recent years, a total of 119 species of bird have been recorded at the site.



During a recent survey, a total of 265 species of wild flower were recorded, including uncommon Hertfordshire species such as reflexed salt-marsh grass, lesser sea spurrey, water violet, pepper saxifrage, adder's tongue fern and meadow saxifrage. The chalk bank also hosts a good selection of chalk heathland species such as autumn gentian, harebell, bulbous buttercup, salad burnet, common rockrose, small scabious and kidney vetch.

Of the 19 species of dragonfly that breed in Hertfordshire, 18 are present at King's Mead including the scarce hairy dragonfly. As a result, King's Mead is the best dragonfly site, with public access, in the county.

The site is also host to the largest population of short-winged conehead in the county and, as an inland site, is probably significant for this species at national level.

The Wildlife Trust manage King's Meads on behalf of the landowners GlaxoSmithKline, Thames Water, East Herts District Council, the Environment Agency and private individuals.

King's Meads work parties

Make a difference to wildlife by taking part in one of our monthly work parties. Work parties take place at King's Mead on the second Sunday of the month throughout the year at 10:00am-1:00pm. For more information contact Ron McMurray 07960 717 446.

For other volunteering opportunities within the Trust, [click here](#).

- [Get driving directions](#)
- [Find nearby public transport](#)

How to Get Here

Location

Ware

Directions

There are several entrances to King's Meads. The main entrance is from the A119 Ware Road opposite Chadwell Springs Golf Club. It is also easily accessed from car parks in Priory Street and Broadmeads (Ware) or Rowleys Road or Mead Lane from Hertford.

Public Transport Links

The reserve is 5 minutes walk from Ware Station or 10 minutes walk from Hertford East Station.

Walking Links

Map Reference

TL 345137

Visitor Guide

Size

96 Hectares

Access to site

Open every day from dawn to dusk

Access around site

The towpath, next to the River Lea and some paths are suitable for people with mobility problems.

Walking time

Advice on what to wear/bring

Wellingtons are recommended in wet weather.

Map of site (if available)