

Blagrove Common

One of the finest areas of marshy grassland in Hertfordshire. It is at its best in late spring when it is carpeted with orchids.

Blagrove Common is one of the few remaining areas of unimproved marshy grassland on poorly drained boulder clay. It is bisected by a stream and varies in wetness from marshy grassland to dry neutral grassland.

The marshy areas are dominated by rushes and tufted hairs grass. Amongst these large numbers of early marsh, southern marsh and common spotted orchids and a variety of their hybrids can be found.

The grasslands have been maintained for several centuries by grazing. This form of management ensures that some species, such as orchids, survive instead of allowing the more vigorous grasses to out compete all other species. Traditional grazing on wet areas also produces muddy, trampled areas which are an important micro-habitat for some plants and invertebrates.

The drier areas of the common support meadow fox tail grasses, common cat's ear and common sorrel among many other species.

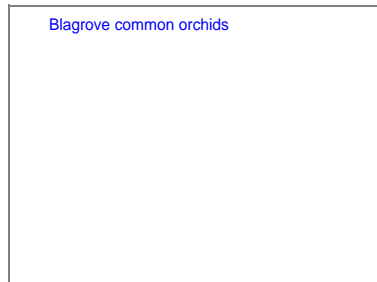
Autumn/Winter

There have been a number of management tasks held at Blagrove throughout the summer months and into the autumn, cutting and raking rushes and thistles. This aims to reduce the dominance of the rushes and allow other flowers and grasses to grow. Due to the dry weather improving access more rush have been cut than in previous years.

A new boardwalk has been installed at the entrance to the common to improve access for visitors and the small footbridge over the drainage ditch has been replaced, again allowing visitors safe access across the common.

The common is also being grazed by 5 longhorn cattle. Grazing helps reduce the vigour of some plant species and creates a varied sward, again helping to improve the floristic diversity of the reserve. When visiting with dogs please be aware of the cattle and keep them under control at all times.

Blagrove is a very good reserve for orchids, which can be seen flowering from late spring into early summer. It is hoped that with the combination of grazing and cutting rushes that these and other species typical of wet grassland can spread.



Butterflies such as meadow brown, small copper, red admiral and comma can all be seen over the next few months, try searching the large bramble patches which border the common.

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

How to Get Here

Location

Green End, near Therfield and Sandon

Directions

Head north on the A10; at Buckland turn left (Whiteley Lane) to Therfield. The road bears sharp right and follows the River Rib. Turn left at next junction to Sandon; then left at next junction towards Mill End. Park on edge of green or in layby on Beckfield Lane. Enter the reserve from a small driveway leading past a large house (public footpath).

Public Transport Links

Sandon (23, 24, 25) 20 minute walk to reserve.

Walking Links

Three public footpaths cross the site. Hertfordshire Way.

Map Reference

TL 328337

Visitor Guide

Size

3.9 hectares (9.6 acres).

Access to site

Along a public footpath.

Access around site

Gently sloping hillside. Steeper walk into the meadow. Very wet in winter.

Walking time

1/2-1 hour.

Advice on what to wear/bring

Wellington boots

Map of site (if available)