



ACCESS GUIDE – AFTON MARSH LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Address

Afton Road, Freshwater, Isle of Wight

Postcode for Sat Nav:

For North Marsh: PO40 9UH

For South Marsh: PO40 9RA

what3 words for North Marsh north entrance

///promising.fights.explain

what3 words for North Marsh south entrance

///begun.delusions.boost

what3 words for South Marsh north entrance

///sponge.workshops.shred

what3 words for South Marsh south entrance (not parking) ///yappy.toenail.disbanded

How to get there:

The North Marsh north entrance is on Afton Road next to Tesco. Access to the South Marsh is from Coastguard Lane, which is accessed from Gate Lane; or both marshes can be accessed from Blackbridge Road.

By Car

For North Marsh park on Afton Road near Freshwater Tesco (Sat Nav PO40 9UH).

For South Marsh park at Freshwater Bay and walk up Coastguard Lane (Sat Nav PO40 9RA).

There is no safe parking inbetween the marshes on Blackbridge Road.

By Public Transport

For the North Marsh, routes 7 or 12, the nearest bus stop is Stroud Recreation Ground, or FYT Bus stops outside Tesco and is two minutes from entrance to reserve.

For the South Marsh, route 12 stops at Freshwater Bay. Use this stop for the seasonal Needles Breezer or Island Coaster services, too.

By Foot and Bike

The site is at the end of the Yarmouth to Freshwater Bay cycle track following the old railway. The cycle racks are at the Blackbridge Road entrance to the South Marsh.

Access to the North Marsh is from Afton Road, close to Tesco.

Access to the South Marsh is from Coastguard Lane, or both marshes can be accessed from Blackbridge Road.

Nearest Public Toilets

There are no toilets on site. The nearest public toilets are in Freshwater Village or Freshwater Bay.

Car and Bike Parking

There is no site car park.

For the North Marsh there is unrestricted parking on Afton Road near the site entrance. There is a curb to the pavement.

For the South Marsh use Isle of Wight Council Pay and Display car park at Freshwater Bay. There are designated disabled bays within the car park. This has a tarmacked surface.

Blackbridge Road is inbetween the two marshes but it is narrow with poor visibility so we would not recommend parking there.

There is a cycle rack at the Blackbridge Road entrance to the South Marsh.

Site entrances for the North Marsh

There is an Information Pillar at the Afton Road entrance. The site information pillar has a QR code that links to an audible description creating a mind's eye view of the area to allow a visually impaired person to enter with confidence. The information pillar also has a QR code that links to a map and activities. There is also a site map on the Information Pillar. There is a dog bin at the entrance. You enter between 2 wooden posts.

Getting around the North Marsh

There are no gates or stiles.

The main path through the North Marsh is suitable for all users, including those with wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It is approximately 3m wide. A fork to the left, takes an alternative route but this path is unmade and is liable to flooding throughout the year.

There are standing pools and running water adjacent to the paths so care should be taken.

There is one bench alongside the main path.

Both paths converge at a wooden bridge 1.2 metres wide with handrails on either side at 1.5 metres. The surfaced path continues to Blackbridge Road, at which point it passes between 2 wooden posts. On the opposite side of the road, there are two benches and a bike rack.

Site entrances for the South Marsh

The path from Coastguard Lane in Freshwater Bay skirts the west of the South Marsh and there is no formal site entrance. This path is Footpath F36 and is approximately 1 metre wide.

The north entrance from Blackbridge Road is via a grass verge. There is no pavement. There are two benches and a dog bin on this grass verge. From the verge there is a 1 metre wide earth path into the reserve.

Getting around the South Marsh

There are no gates or stiles. There are 6 wooden steps 1.1 metre wide.

There is a linear path through Afton South Marsh. From the end of Coastguard Lane to Blackbridge Road the path is 0.3 miles. The path is minimum 1 metre but can be overhung by vegetation. For the most part it is earth or compacted chips but there are wooden boardwalk sections.

The path can be boggy at the Blackbridge Road end in wet weather.

What you can see

- The still pools attract lots of insects,
- Dragonflies and damselflies love the pools and river,
- Spot the duckweed, it is an invasive plant,
- If you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of a kingfisher
- At twilight, barn owls hunt for their prey

What you can hear

- In the North Marsh listen to the wind in the trees; in the South Marsh it makes different noises in the willows and the reeds,
- Listen for ducks hiding in the water plants on the Western Yar.
- The bees buzzing as they pollinate the flowers
- Sedge warblers and reed warblers breed in the Marsh,
- Early in the morning you may hear the boom of a bittern in the reeds

What you can smell

- The sea air in Afton South Marsh,
- The water mint,

What you can touch

- Do you know your grasses from sedges? Just remember that sedges have edges.

We look after Afton Marsh Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of the plants and animals that live here and for you as visitors...we hope you enjoy your visit.

