

This leaflet encourages prayer, reflection and action in both our care of the natural world, and our care of ourselves. The two go together, for as the song says, 'Let there be peace on earth... and let it begin with me.' We cannot ask for, or expect, change in the world around us, if we are not prepared for change in ourselves.

In this final part of the walk, we will be considering what changes we are prepared to make in our life, as part of our commitment to building a better world. For words and prayers without action, are ultimately meaningless.



When you leave [5], follow the path back through the trees to the main path and then turn right to approach the final checkpoint [6].

Check your watch. You are about 15 minutes from the start point [1] via [7], but if you have the time and the energy you can extend your eco prayer walk in one of two ways, each of which will add a further 15 minutes, or so, walking time!



At [J2] you can turn left to return to within sight of [6], before making your way back to the start/finish via [7]. Alternatively, you can choose The White Swan Loop by going straight on at [J2] and with the River Loddon on your right and the White Swan Lake on your left returning to the start via [J3]

The sign at [J2] describes just two of the many birds that can be found in these woods. Whichever way you have chosen to complete your walk listen once again to the sounds around you and also pay attention to the feelings that are currently within you. As you get ever closer to the finish point, the 'unwelcome' sounds of the nearby roads are a reminder, if you needed it, of the real world, with all its issues, that is still there.

What one thing are you going to try to do differently as a result of this walk, both in terms of your own wellbeing and that of the planet? Ask God for the help and support you will need to turn your hopes into real and lasting change.

If you have enjoyed this Eco Prayer Walk then you may be interested in the **South Lake Eco Trail** that starts from St James Church, Woodley, where the parking is FREE! Download this **QR code** for further details:



The Bird Hide [BH] Loop – Turn right at [6] and continue along the edge of Black Swan lake, looking to your left for [J1] and a path that heads down a slight slope. Then look for a path to a wooden hut, on your right, with viewing portals that allow you to quietly observe the wildlife on Sandford Lake.



When leaving the Bird Hide, turn right and then follow the path around Herons Water.

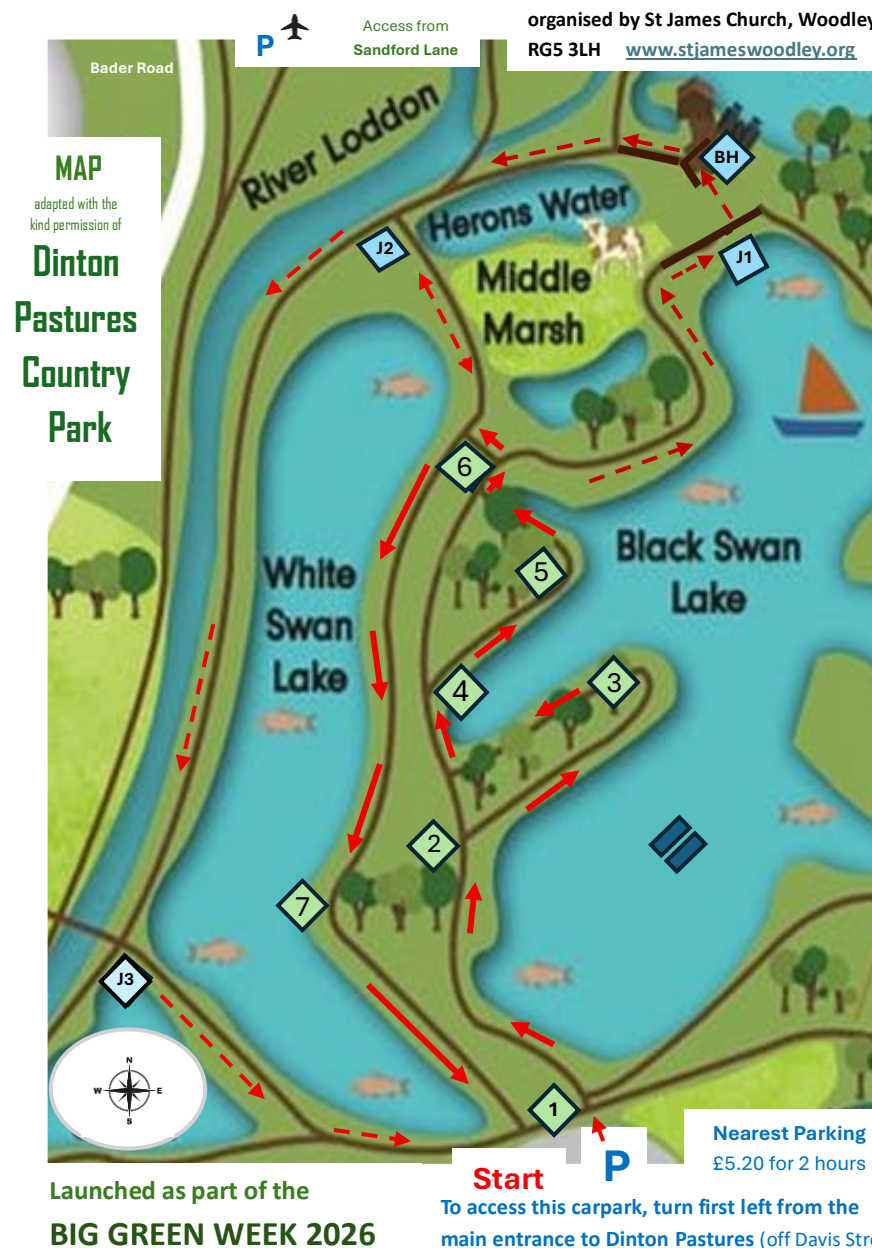


A FREE leaflet
for individual
or group use

An **Eco Prayer Walk**



organised by St James Church, Woodley
RG5 3LH www.stjameswoodley.org



Welcome to this Eco Prayer Walk

Before you set off, check that you have paid for sufficient parking so that you can enjoy your walk without needing to rush. You should allow at least 45 minutes for the basic loop **(1-7)** and up to 2 hours if you are doing any of the other loops shown.

Along with the map, directions are given below in **green**.

As you make your way to each of the numbered stopping points consider some of the questions that are printed in **red**. At each checkpoint, pause for a while and reflect further on what you have seen, heard and thought... so far. The offering of your thoughts, and feelings is the starting point of **a life of prayer**... listening with your spirit to what God is thinking and feeling, is the other key element in this relationship!

From [1] turn left and walk along the main path with the Black Swan Lake on your right.

What's the weather like today? Too hot or too cold.... too wet or too dry.... or 'just right'? Increasingly the weather is 'going wrong' with more examples of extreme weather than ever before. How is this affecting you or other groups?

Notice the solar panels on a raft in the middle of the lake and consider this:



**Are you becoming greener in your attitudes and lifestyle?
How do you feel about the growing use of solar panels, wind turbines, electric cars etc, in response to climate change?**

**Look out for this grassed area with some carved tree trunks.
What might they represent?
Just beyond is the next checkpoint [2].**



Here we deliberately leave the main path, which at times can be very busy, and head to the right along a quieter, less well travelled, path.

This prayer walk is not only good exercise, but a real opportunity to pause and think, as we give ourselves quality time to reflect on some of the important things that are often overlooked when we rush through life.



Continue to the end of this 'peninsular' and as you then round the corner look out on your left for a broken triangular structure [3]

Dinton Pastures describes itself as 'an oasis of woodland, meadow, and lakes'. An oasis is 'a place of refreshment and new life in the midst of an otherwise dry and barren place'.

How could your life be refreshed and renewed?



Return to the main path, turn right and then at [4], turn right again up an even narrower path.

As you walk around Dinton Pastures you will see many benches that have been donated in memory of loved ones.

As you read the words inscribed on them, pray for those who today are mourning the loss of loved ones.



After a while the path opens out and bends to the left. You are now at [5]. Sit on the bench and take time to admire and give thanks for the natural world.



Here beside this beautiful lake, we are 'at the heart' or centre of the country park.

What people lie at the heart or centre of your life?

In a time of quiet, name them one by one and give thanks for them.

The heart of the Christian faith is summed up by Jesus in his command to love God with 'all our being' and as part of that worship, to love and care for others in the same way as we love and care for ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-39)

How could you better love and care for yourself and others?

Jesus also said to follow his example as he loved and cared for others without any conditions or limits. That very special kind of love has a special name. It's called GRACE and it doesn't come easily or naturally. (John 13:34)

Who loves you... or whom do you love..... unconditionally?

But it doesn't just involve God's unconditional love for us, for the bible says that in Jesus, God showed his love for the whole created world. God not only wants to heal us and our relationships with one another, God also wants to heal our relationship with the natural world. The world is losing its necessary biodiversity and being torn apart by climate change... and the unconditional and self-giving love of Jesus, is the key to its restoration and renewal. (John 3:16)

So pray now for the healing of our broken world and ask God to show you one thing that you can do, to play your part, and to begin to make the world around you a better place.

