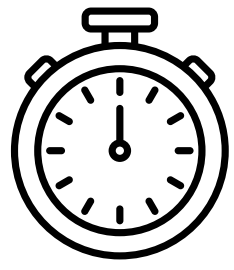


TOTTINGTON WOODLANDERS ACCESSIBLE WALK



20-30
MINUTES



1.3KM
CIRCULAR ROUTE



LARGELY ACCESSIBLE
ROUTE

This short walk through a small 13 acre deciduous wood is a delight featuring a variety of woodland flora and fauna, and an ever-changing feel thanks to the coppicing of Hazel. It's a popular dog-walking area for locals, and it makes for a perfect Sunday morning stroll followed by lunch and a pint in the Fox pub over the road. Why not combine it with a gentle stroll around Woods Mill Nature Reserve (Lost Woods walking routes for the reserve are available) as it's less than a mile from here! This route follows the recently (July 2025) extended Margaret Mackley Walk Disabled Access Path. An extended version of this walk is available which unfortunately is not mobility-aid accessible.



THIS WALK WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY LOST WOODS VOLUNTEER PETER DENNETT WHAT I LOVED ABOUT THIS WALK

“This is a special wood and we're lucky enough to access it thanks to the Mackley family. They have opened their woods up to the public, investing money in making accessible paths, generously donating towards the Tottington Woodlanders volunteer conservation group, and funding an arboriculturalist to walk the woods regularly and undertake any public safety work. It's a delight to walk through.”

Project partners



START AND END POINT (CIRCULAR WALK)



what3words location: ///credited.massaging.rural
Tottington Woods car park

GETTING THERE



By bus - Compass travel 100 bus on the Burgess Hill to Pulborough route has roughly hourly services with the nearest bus stop being Small Dole Post Office. The car park is 200m away visible from the Fox pub. The 106 bus also passes through Small Dole but only has one service each way with 5 hours between and only on Tuesday Wednesday and Friday.

Car park - Tottington Woods car park is a small car park on the A2037 just south of Small Dole village centre. The Fox pub is indicated by a brown Tottington Woods signpost.

FACILITIES

- Car park
- Toilets available to patrons of The Fox pub

MAP



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ACCESSIBILITY

This route follows the recently (July 2025) extended Margaret Mackley Walk Disabled Access Path. The route is step free with a wide access swing gate and the path itself is selfbinding gravel which makes it suitable for wheelchairs and prams as well as year round walking in trainers.

There are some optional loops which are on woodland paths which have tree roots and slopes and can get muddy and are unsuitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

1. The route starts from the small car park.

The route goes through the wooden swing gate and turns right along the side of the recreation ground



2. 100 metres after the gate the path enters Tottington Woods where you'll see an information panel on the right of the path.



Follow the gravel path as it curves to the left and past the pond.

Originally dug out as an overflow for The Industrial Estate's rainwater it is now an important wildlife habitat. Pause at the bench and watch for Moorhens, and Dragonflies in the Summer months.



3. The route carries on over the boardwalk



4. After 50 metres the path comes to a fork, take the right hand path keeping the recently (2025) coppiced area to your left.



WOODLAND NOTES

Coppicing in Tottington is done by the Tottington Woodlanders a local group of volunteers who meet every Sunday morning in the coppice season. The hazel is coppiced using hand tools and afterwards the stools are protected from Browsing deer by temporary fencing. Waste material is used to create 'dead hedges' which also help protect coppice from deer and themselves form valuable wildlife habitats.

See the glossary at the end for more information on coppicing.



Recently coppiced area

5. The route continues, you will walk underneath Hawthorn trees. With older hazel coppice on your left which has had the temporary deer fencing removed.



The path curves right then left to pass steps leading up to the Mound, ignore these steps unless you want to explore the Mound and carry on along the gravel path.

WOODLAND NOTES

The Mound was created when soil was dug out for the pond and now provides a different habitat for wild flowers

Drainage in a working woodland is important so it doesn't get too muddy for vehicles or too waterlogged for trees to grow successfully so you'll see that the wood is crossed by ditches and small streams.

6. Continue on for about 50 metres after crossing a small bridge, you'll come to another area of Hazel coppiced in 2025.



7. You'll walk through an area of Ash showing the effects of Chalara Ash Dieback. See glossary at end for more information about Ash Dieback.



8. The path winds on through the woods until you reach a pair of iron gates through which you can see the Totington Woodlanders lean-to.



Carry on past the gates taking the left fork along a straight track.



9. 75 metres after the gates the charcoal burning area is on your right. Take a peek! Leaving the charcoal burning area to your right continue along the main track for a couple of metres.



WOODLAND NOTES

For years the Tottington Woodlanders produced charcoal using a kiln, where excess wood from coppice was put in a large metal container and lit with air excluded. Whilst this usually produced good charcoal it required a lot of effort and time with someone having to keep watch over it, often through the night. With generous help from the Mackley family, in 2025 a retort was bought. This works by filling a cleaned oil barrel with wood which is then put in an 'oven' with a small fire lit underneath. Once the fire has heated the barrel sufficiently the wood in the barrel then gives off volatile gases which are then used to continue the charcoal burning process. A barrel of wood can give 5 bags of charcoal with the whole process taking 4 hours.

10. To continue on the Accessible path take the left turn. (The path straight on leads into Tottington Woods to join a public footpath.) The left turn path wanders through an area of oak standards with hazel understory with fields visible through the trees on your right.



11. After 80 metres from the main path, the way on is a sharp left turn following the gravel path.



Which after a further 15metres leads to a T junction.

Take a right turn here which leads you back to the iron gates and lean-to.

You're now back on the path you came in on, so retrace your steps through the woods, staying on the gravel path over the boardwalk past the pond and back to your starting point.



GLOSSARY

Coppicing

Coppicing is a traditional woodland management technique that dates back to the Stone Age. It involves felling trees at their base to create a 'stool' where new shoots will grow. You can recognise a coppiced tree by the many thin trunks or 'poles' at its base.

Most tree species can be coppiced but the best suited of our native trees in Sussex are Hazel and Sweet Chestnut, Hazel is used for bean poles, wattle fencing, fencing binders, pea boughs and charcoal. Hazel coppicing is seen as a good woodland management technique as cutting is done on a regular cycle 8- 10 yrs leading to a variety of habitats in a woodland.

As such it is often undertaken by woodland conservation groups. Tottington Woodlanders sell their products to the public to help with running costs (see their website www.tottingtonwoodlanders.org.uk) or see their notices in the woods.



Ash Dieback

Chalara Ash Dieback is a fungal disease that affects all ash species. It originated in Asia where ash tree species have developed a tolerance for it. The Woodland Trust estimate it will end up costing the UK £15billion, including the loss of timber, management costs etc.

The estimate is that the UK will lose at least 80% of its Ash. The fungus damages the ability of the tree to transport food and water round the tree and therefore weakens the tree. This leaves them susceptible to other tree disease and pests which may be the cause of their deaths.

The disease is spread by fungal spores on the wind so can travel large distances to infect other Ash trees. The advice in general is to leave the trees alone unless there is a risk to public safety. In Tottington there is a monthly inspection and any tree deemed to be a risk to be an imminent risk to public safety will be appropriately dealt with by a tree surgeon. You may see the results of their work around the woods.



The Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, the project is bringing local people together to learn about, explore and care for woods across the Low Weald and Downs. Together, we can reconnect with our ancient woodlands and revive, restore, and protect them for future generations.

Find out more and get involved www.lostwoods.org.uk