

Farnham Park (Short Route)

An amazing, huge town deer park full of natural habitats and beautiful walks.

Enter the Park via the Golf Club entrance at GU9 0AU. There is free parking here and behind the cricket pitch and a café at the Golf Clubhouse. From the car park next to the Rangers building take the path exit at the top to the right of the track to the Golf Clubhouse (where tea, coffee and toilets are available).

This leads to a tarmac path along the edge of the sports field. After the toilet block (closed in September 2020) the hedgerow contains English and Turkey Oaks. In the field are many Horse Chestnuts. The path reaches a T junction where you turn left through a gap in the traditionally laid hedgerow. This tarmac path now crosses the park with ups and downs all the way. You will see a magnificent Cedar tree on the right in the woodland as you approach the first hill. The undergrowth is quite dense and hedgerow birds like dunnocks, robins, wrens and blackcaps and chiffchaffs will be singing all the way. Listen for the soft calls and song of bullfinch, usually seen as a pair, the male having a red breast and both with a white rump.

At the top of the first hill the land opens up and meadows are on both sides with blocks of hedgerow and meadow flowers to the sides. In the distance to the left you can see a veteran oak tree, one of many, this one has been trimmed, probably in the name of health and safety. The straight path continues downhill and under the power lines through another densely wooded area with a small stream at the bottom where grey wagtails may be seen. Roe Deer may be seen anywhere in the park, most likely in the woodland areas where you hear sounds away from the many paths.

On the next uphill stretch a new bench is conveniently located if you want to sit a while and listen and look. The path has many runners and walkers at busy times but is pleasant to use. At the top of the hill turn right just before the exit gate onto the surfaced path that skirts a meadow and follow this path around the park edge ignoring any exits. The route soon turns downhill on a good surface and as the woodland gets denser and deeper into the valley you cross a bridge over the small stream. Go a few yards up the slope and look for a path to the right with a large wooden kiss gate. Take this path into the wide, long meadow. Many butterflies like orange-tips should be seen here in the springtime.

The paths across the meadow are short smooth grass. This meadow has grazing animals, probably cattle at times, so watch out for cow pats! The route on the right-hand edge runs close to the woodland and should be easily passable most of the year. It may be prone to some flooding when the ground is really wet so the path through the middle of the field may be the best bet if you don't want wet feet! Either way there is plenty of space to get around obstacles.

If you took the lower path you will exit the field at the gate close to the woodland and meet the tarmac path turning uphill to the left. If you took the middle path it rises gently towards

the end of the field and you can exit via the gate to join the tarmac path. From either joining point, at the top of the hill, pass the laid hedgerow you saw before and take the path to the right leading back to the café, toilets and the car park.