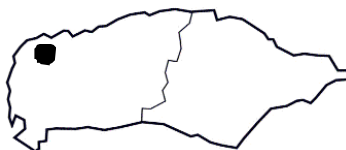


# Cooksbridge Meadow



A quiet, peaceful pasture and a small woodland backing onto a stream

At first sight, Cooksbridge Meadow appears to be little more than a large field with a few scattered oak trees. In fact 'parkland' oaks like these can live to a great age, able to spread their limbs in all directions free from competition with other trees. They become extremely valuable for lichens that live on their bark, and for hosts of many insects, particularly as older limbs begin to die back and the wood softens.

However, Cooksbridge's real value lies in the strip of woodland bordering the small stream. The land slopes towards the stream underneath a widely

## Highlights

Spring woodland flowers, woodland birds, peace and quiet.

spaced canopy of tall oak and ash, with coppiced hazel filling in the gaps. In

spring, plenty of light reaches down to the woodland floor which is carpeted by the flowers so typical of a southern English

woodland – bluebell, wood anemone, stitchwort and dog's mercury. While the sandy banks of the stream are clothed in the deep green velvet of liverworts.

Cooksbridge is one of those many places that prove that it is not always necessary to be a site of scientific importance – or to be home to a rare species – to be somewhere that is special for its own value and to be worth saving. The song of the blackcap, the breeze in the trees, and the soft babble of water in the brook are reason enough.

## Access

There is a footpath through the 8 hectare reserve (over a stile from the main road), but feel free to wander throughout. However, there are likely to be cattle grazing during the summer, so please take extra care if you are walking with a dog.