



Environmental Information Pack

Welcome to your new home! You are privileged to live near some beautiful areas that are fantastic for wildlife.

Childwall Woods, Croxteth, the Mersey Narrows, Acornfield Plantation, Allerton (Eric Hardy), Clinton Wood, Hale Road Woodland, Mersey Estuary, Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore, Mill Brow, Millwood & Alder Wood, New Ferry, and Thatto Heath Meadows are all located within the surrounding area. These sites contain a range of valuable habitats and support populations of protected and notable species that can be sensitive to recreational disturbance.

This information pack outlines the location of these designated sites, explains their ecological importance and provides practical guidance on how you can help protect them. Should you decide to relocate in the future, please endeavour to make a copy of this document available to the subsequent homeowner to help ensure these important wildlife sites continue to be protected.

These sites are protected through a range of international, national and local designations, reflecting their ecological importance. The designations present within the local area are:

- Special Protection Area (SPA) – Mersey Estuary; Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore
- Ramsar Site – Mersey Estuary; Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Mersey Estuary; Mersey Narrows; New Ferry
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – Acornfield Plantation; Allerton (Eric Hardy); Childwall Woods and Fields; Clinton Wood; Croxteth; Hale Road Woodland; Mill Brow; Millwood and Alder Wood; Thatto Heath Meadows

Why are these sites important?

Coastal habitats

The **Mersey Estuary SSSI**, **Mersey Narrows SSSI** and **New Ferry SSSI** support extensive areas of mudflat, saltmarsh and estuarine habitat. These habitats provide important feeding and roosting areas for large numbers of migratory and wintering birds and form part of a wider network of nationally and internationally important wildlife sites.

The **Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar Site** and **Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar Site** are recognised for supporting internationally important populations of waterfowl and wading birds. Thousands of birds rely on these habitats each year for feeding, roosting and migration.

Many birds depend on these habitats to rest and feed during migration or throughout the winter months. Disturbance from recreational activities can reduce the time available for feeding and increase the amount of energy birds must use, affecting their ability to survive and successfully migrate.

Woodland, grassland and wetland habitats

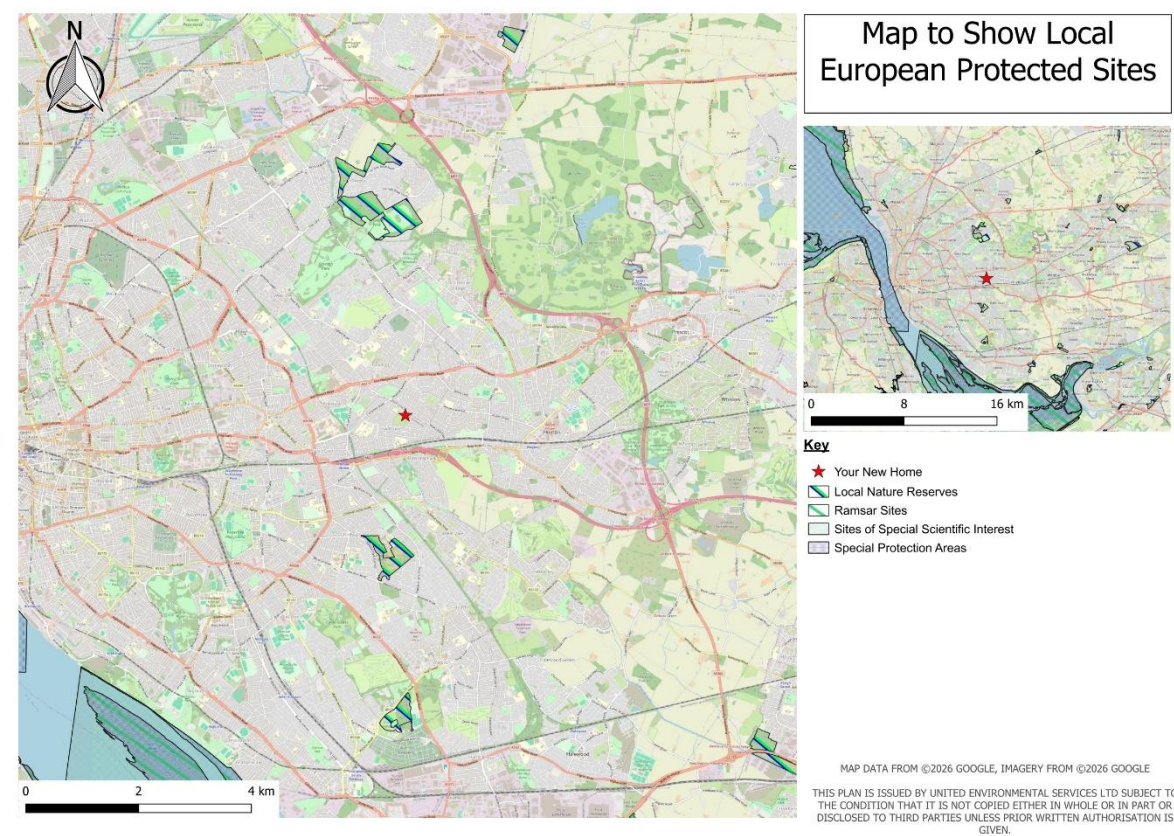
The Local Nature Reserves surrounding your new home support a diverse range of habitats including broadleaved woodland, species-rich grassland, ponds, streams, reedbeds, scrub and wetland habitats.

These habitats provide important homes for a variety of wildlife including birds, bats, butterflies, dragonflies, amphibians, water voles and a wide range of native plants. Many of the sites also provide valuable green spaces that allow people to enjoy and experience nature close to home.

Notable sites include:

- **Acornfield Plantation** – woodland, grassland, ponds and wetland habitats including a rare lowland basin mire.
- **Allerton (Eric Hardy)** – grassland, scrub and woodland habitats supporting a range of wildlife within an urban setting.
- **Childwall Woods and Fields** – woodland and grassland habitats supporting birds, butterflies and wildflowers.
- **Clington Wood** – broadleaved woodland managed to support biodiversity and provide opportunities for recreation and education.
- **Croxteth** – woodland and pond habitats supporting breeding birds, aquatic plants and dragonflies.
- **Hale Road Woodland** – woodland, grassland and reedbed habitats associated with Ditton Brook.
- **Mill Brow** – woodland and wetland habitats supporting birds, bats and water voles.
- **Millwood and Alder Wood** – broadleaved woodland, grassland and ponds supporting bluebells, butterflies and other wildlife.
- **Thatto Heath Meadows** – species-rich grassland, scrub, hedgerows and stream habitats that support a diverse range of plants and animals.

Map of Designated Areas



General principles and responsible user Code of Conduct

Birds on estuaries and on the beach



Birds are particularly vulnerable to disturbance throughout the year, but especially during the winter months when large numbers migrate to the UK to feed and overwinter. These birds must feed regularly to maintain sufficient energy reserves to survive the winter and undertake their return migrations.

One of the main pressures affecting these birds is recreational disturbance. Activities such as dog walking, drone use and other recreational pursuits can repeatedly flush birds from feeding and roosting areas. When birds are disturbed, they are unable to feed and must use valuable energy reserves. Frequent disturbance can therefore reduce their chances of surviving the winter.

Birds using these sites are particularly vulnerable during high tides, when feeding areas become inundated and birds are forced to roost closer to areas used by people.

If you visit the coastline, please:

- Keep dogs under close control and on a lead where appropriate.
- Do not allow dogs to chase birds.
- Avoid flying drones over beaches, mudflats or bird flocks.
- Observe and appreciate wildlife from a distance.
- Follow local signage and seasonal access restrictions.

Saltmarsh



Saltmarsh is an increasingly scarce habitat within the UK and provides important habitat for specialised plants, invertebrates and birds. Saltmarshes also act as a natural coastal defence, helping to reduce erosion and absorb the impacts of storms and high tides.

One of the main threats to saltmarsh habitats is excessive trampling and disturbance from recreational activities, including walking, dog walking, unauthorised vehicle use and fires. These activities can damage vegetation, increase erosion and lead to the gradual loss of habitat.

While enjoying the coast, please:

- Remain on established footpaths.
- Avoid walking through saltmarsh habitats.
- Use designated areas for picnics and barbecues.
- Take litter home and dispose of waste responsibly.

Wetlands, fens, marshes and swamps



Wetland habitats support a diverse range of wildlife, including breeding and wintering birds, amphibians, invertebrates and specialised plant communities. Many wetland species are sensitive to disturbance, whilst wetland vegetation can be easily damaged by trampling.

Recreational activities can disturb wildlife, damage vegetation and reduce the ecological value of these habitats. Dogs entering wetland areas may also disturb nesting birds and other wildlife.

When visiting wetland habitats, please:

- Keep to designated paths and viewing areas.
- Keep dogs under close control and on leads where requested.
- Avoid entering areas of wetland vegetation.
- Do not fly drones over sensitive wildlife habitats.
- Observe wildlife from a respectful distance.

Grassland



Species-rich grasslands are an increasingly rare habitat in the UK and support a wide range of wildflowers, pollinating insects, birds and small mammals. Many grassland plants are sensitive to trampling and can take a long time to recover if damaged.

Recreational activities can lead to the loss of wildflowers, damage to sensitive vegetation and disturbance to wildlife using these habitats for feeding and breeding.

When visiting grassland habitats, please:

- Keep to established paths where possible.
- Avoid trampling areas of wildflowers and long grass.
- Keep dogs under control and remove dog waste responsibly.
- Do not pick wildflowers or remove plants.
- Take litter home and dispose of waste responsibly.
- Observe wildlife from a distance and avoid disturbing nesting birds.



Woodland



The protected sites surrounding your new home contain a variety of woodland habitats that support birds, bats, invertebrates, wildflowers and other wildlife.

Excessive recreational pressure can damage woodland habitats through trampling of ground flora, disturbance to nesting birds and wildlife, erosion of informal paths and damage caused by fires and littering.

While enjoying local woodlands, please:

- Keep to established footpaths wherever possible.
- Keep dogs under control and prevent them from disturbing wildlife.
- Use designated amenity areas for picnics and barbecues.
- Leave wildflowers and other plants undisturbed.
- Do not remove deadwood, which provides valuable habitat for fungi and invertebrates.
- Take litter home and help keep these sites clean for both wildlife and other visitors.

General environmental principles

- Take litter home and dispose of waste responsibly.
- Clean up after your dog.
- Respect wildlife and other visitors.
- Follow local signage and seasonal restrictions.
- Avoid introducing non-native plants or animals into the countryside.
- Report vandalism, fly-tipping or pollution incidents to the relevant authority.

Alternative areas of open space

At certain times of the year, wildlife within designated sites can be particularly vulnerable to disturbance. During these periods, residents are encouraged to make use of alternative areas of open space where possible.

Sensitive periods include:

- **Winter** – when large numbers of migratory birds rely on the estuary for feeding and roosting.
- **High tide periods** – when birds are displaced from feeding areas and are forced to roost closer to areas used by people.

Alternative areas of open space include **Dovecot Park, Thomas Lane Playing Fields, King George V Memorial Field, Roby Field and Jubilee Park**. These sites provide excellent opportunities for recreation whilst helping to reduce disturbance to wildlife at more sensitive locations.

The locations of these sites are shown on the map below.

