A Circular Walk around the Mill Brook Wildlife Corridor

Start location: The Mill Pond Length: 3 miles Duration: approximately 2 hours

This circular route takes you along the important Mill Brook Wildlife Corridor as it passes through Tattenhall. Learn about local wildlife, what can be seen and what is being done to encourage nature into the heart of the local community. The route can be accessed from any point shown on the map.

The Mill Pond 1 was created to drive the water wheel of the local mill. The pond was relined and restored in the 1990s and once again provides a large water body in the heart of the village - an excellent place for dragonflies, bats and birds. It is also an

important breeding site for the Common Toad and during the summer months House Martins and Swallows can be seen catching insects over the water. Freshwater fish species, including Tench, Rudd, Carp and Eels, are found in the pond.

Walk into Mill Field. 2 The Mill Brook runs in a channel on the left hand side of the field with a spectacular Weeping Willow adjacent to the High Street. The Mill Field is in the process of being restored as a wildflower meadow. On the right hand side is the Barbour Institute, where House Martins build their nests under the eaves during the summer, using mud from the edges of the Mill Pond. Note the village war memorial before turning left into the High Street and cross the culverted Mill Brook, which flows in another direction towards the Spinney.

Following the low sandstone wall, pass Tattenhall Hall which was built in the early 17th century and greatly altered in the late 19th century.

The front garden of this impressive building is now managed as a wildflower meadow.

At its best during the early summer months,
Yellow Rattle,
Ox-eye Daisy,
Knapweed and other once common meadow species grow in profusion. The route passes Tattenhall Centre on your left and Mitchell's Wine Bar on the right. At this point note the classical style

buildings opposite on Rose Corner which were built in 1927 and designed by Clough William-Ellis the architect responsible for Portmeirion village in North Wales and for remodeling parts of Bolesworth Castle.

Turn right into Rosemary Row and follow the footpath past Spinney End to the Spinney 3. This small patch of woodland was originally planted as a Willow coppice in the early 20th century but having never been managed, the mature trees now provide a significant habitat for a variety of woodland birds including Tawny Owl, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Nuthatch. During the nesting season the air is full with the sound of arguing Rooks

sound of arguing Rooks
and Jackdaws whilst the
woodland floor is a carpet of
Celandine, Bluebells and Wood
Anemones. Opposite the Spinney,
the mature Alders in the patch of open
space provide good habitat for Siskins
and Redpolls during the winter
months.

Stop on the bridge over the Mill Brook 4. In the past this has been a good site to observe Kingfishers. During the summer months this is an attractive place to look and listen for a while. Turn immediately left and walk up towards Glebe Meadow 5.

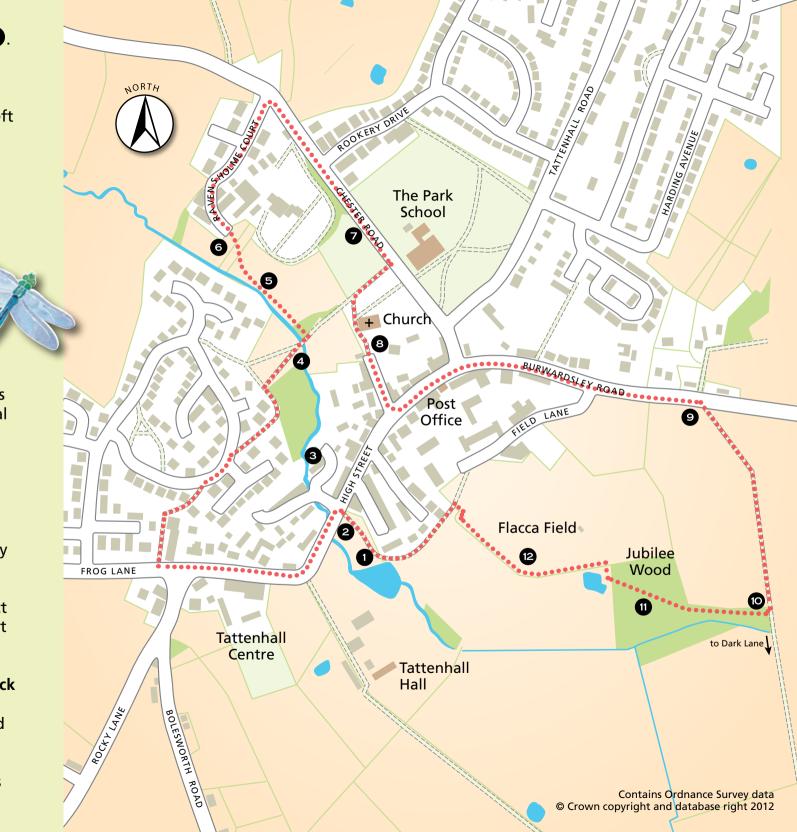
Mill Brook is now on your left and on the bank to the right wildflowers such as **Red Campion** and **Knapweed** provide a valuable nectar source for butterflies and bees during the summer. Note the young **Ash** saplings on the bank. Dragonflies such as the **Southern Hawker** and the smaller **Common Darter** are often seen along this part of the route hunting for small insects within the vicinity of the Mill Brook.

At Glebe Meadow take time to look across this beautiful Cheshire meadow – a natural jewel in the centre of the village. It is an important area of unimproved grassland; increasingly rare in Cheshire and a has been noted as a Local Wildlife Site due to the presence of over 23 grass species. Managed by Tattenhall Wildlife Group for the Parish Council the Meadow is regularly grazed by rare breed cattle owned by

Cheshire Wildlife Trust. These animals

- usually Dexters – provide a perfect
solution to keeping the grass short
and in so doing provide space for
traditional meadow species including
Buttercups, Tufted Vetch, Lady's Smock
and Celandine. Some plants such as
Thistles are managed and controlled
as is Common Ragwort which is
removed at the end of the summer.
This vivid yellow flowering species attracts

many bees and hoverflies and provides a







To find out more about Tattenhall Wildlife Group visit

www.tattenhallwildlifegroup.org.uk

Guidelines for Walkers



any signs

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals and take your litter

Keep dogs under close control

Consider other people

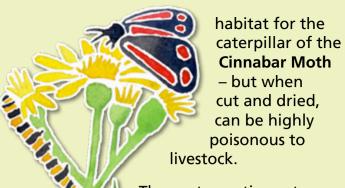
This walk has been produced by Tattenhall Wildlife Group

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Cinnabar Moth – but when cut and dried. can be highly poisonous to livestock.

habitat for the

The route continues to Barn Field 6. This small field, sloping down to the Mill Brook, is being restored as another wildflower

meadow and already attracts butterflies such as **Peacocks**, **Small Skippers** and Tortoiseshells.

The route leaves the Corridor through Ravensholme Court and up to Chester Road. Turn right at the junction and walk towards the village past Glebe Meadow on your right and The Park on your left. Opposite the Park Primary School and immediately after Glebe Meadow, take the footpath on the right towards Mill Brook.

In about 50 metres turn left into the **Churchyard** 7. Note the traditional **Yew** hedge and mature **Yew** trees which are so typical of churchyards, and during the late spring capture the strong smell of 'garlic' coming from the white flowered Ramsons. The Churchyard itself provides an important wildlife habitat and in recent years Spotted Flycatchers have nested. Churches have stood on this site since the beginning of the 12th century with the present building – the Parish Church of St Alban's - dating from a reconstruction in 1869, although the tower is of 16th century origin.

Leaving the churchyard the route enters the centre of the village via Church Bank.

You are now in the heart of the village and during the early summer listen out for the noise of screaming Swifts as they perform their speeding aerobatics above the High Street. From Church Bank, turn left into the High Street and walk uphill past the Post Office and the Nine Houses. Pass the Sportsman's Arms public house and continue up Burwardsley Road.

Follow this road for 350 metres out of the village before turning right onto the public footpath which takes walkers across farmland to Dark Lane. At this point the route passes into open countryside where spectacular views across to Raw Head (227 metres) and the Sandstone Ridge are dominant.

You are now entering **Buzzard** country. Walking across the intensively grazed field 8, rare breed sheep (Welsh Badger Face) can often be seen. During the winter the fields are popular with 'winter thrushes', the Fieldfare and Redwing, and small flocks of **Lapwings** are often seen on the wing or

sometimes motionless in the surrounding fields. Follow the nine in-field trees (seven Oaks and two **Ash**) marking the remnants of an old hedgerow and notice the dips and undulations between the trees which were once the site of four ponds. The croaking call of Ravens can often be heard in

the surrounding fields as they fly laboriously between the mature trees which dot the landscape.

Approaching the kissing gate, the land falls away quite steeply into the shallow valley of the Mill Brook.

Passing through the kissing gate 9 turn right on the footpath which follows the Mill Brook along its valley, which is liable to flood during the winter months.

Although the Brook is not very wide, Sticklebacks can be found and Water Voles are likely to be present along its course. Reeds are developing which, together with the water loving Willow provide a useful habitat for Sedge Warblers and Reed Buntings. Nettles and thistles along this part of the route form important nectar sources for butterflies and autumnal seed heads for **Goldfinches** and **Greenfinches**. This area is a potential Site of **Biological Importance and** 20 species of butterfly, including **Common** Blue, Orange Tip and **Purple Hairstreak** have now been recorded. A series of shallow scrapes have been excavated here to retain flood water to provide new habitat for amphibians and wetland bird species such as Snipe and Water Rail.

The mature woodland on the other side of the Mill Brook now forms part of Jubilee Wood 10. More than 1000 trees, comprising native Cheshire species, have been planted by the community as part of the Parish celebrations of the Oueen's Diamond Jubilee 2012. Jubilee Wood is an important element of the Corridor and as the trees mature, they will provide habitat for small bird species such as tits, finches and warblers.

Before entering the Flacca Field through the kissing gate, have a look at the two ponds which are gradually being restored.

Originally marl pits, they are two of over 100 ponds which can still be found in the Parish. The larger of the two is a favourite breeding site for the Common Frog

and during late February early March, massive clumps of frogspawn can be seen. **Smooth Newts** and **Great Crested Newts** are also found in this pond and there has also been a record of a **Grass Snake.**

Pass through the kissing gate, turn left and walk along the new hedgerow which borders the Flacca Field 11. Take time to stop and look left towards Bolesworth Castle. Look out for **Buzzards** circling overhead or resting in the trees and, at dusk, Foxes and the occasional **Badger** can be seen hunting or marking out their territories. At the end of the Flacca Field, by the Cricket Club scoreboard, turn left onto the Millennium

Mile and walk back to the Mill Pond.



