

The lagoon at Brook Leys has a number of important functions within Eddington. It attenuates surface water runoff and is a valuable recreational resource for local residents. Coots, moorhens, mallards, tufted ducks, swans and little grebes nest around the edge of the lagoon. Reed warblers and reed buntings nest in the reed beds. Otters occasionally visit on the hunt for food. Water voles have re-colonised Eddington having been lost from the site several years before construction commenced. They are now present in some of the wet swales, in the Washpit Brook and around the margins of the lagoon where they leave small collections of droppings to mark their territory as well as piles of chopped up bits of the vegetation they've been eating. Water voles are one of the most rapidly declining mammals in the UK and getting them back at Eddington was a key target for the project.

Around Brook Leys there are significant areas of tree planting and some extensive areas of wildflowers. The primroses and cowslips of spring give way to yellow rattle and oxeye daisies in summer. The margins of the lagoon are dominated by common reed and reed sweet-grass, dotted with the yellows of marsh

marigold in spring and iris in summer. Between June and August, the land near the pumping station is surrounded by wildflowers, such as the delicate ragged-robin or musk mallow, and the stunning viper's-bugloss. Throughout spring, the incessant and repetitive song of chiffchaffs that nest in Pheasant Plantation can be heard near the lagoon.



Musk mallow



Ragged-robin



Viper's-bugloss

At the western end of the lagoon you can climb the earth bund to get a view over the wet meadow associated with the Washpit Brook as it flows north alongside the M11. This area has been re-modelled to provide flood storage but it is also home to a variety of wildlife. In summer the wetland areas are teeming with dragonflies and damselflies, and lapwings have nested at the northern most tip in recent years.



Water vole  
© Simon Booth  
Photography

Lagoon in summer  
with oxeye daisies

Veteran Oak Tree



The Veteran Oak Tree is thought to be over 400 years old, and is located on the boundary between the City of Cambridge and the district of South Cambridgeshire. The buildings in this part of Eddington have been designed around the tree. An area around it has been protected from development to ensure that the roots of the tree are not damaged. Oak trees are home to more than a thousand different species of invertebrate.

Surveys of this particular tree identified several uncommon or nationally scarce species, including a beetle associated with the decaying wood of veteran trees (*Scaptia testacea*) – the first record of that particular species in Cambridgeshire. In 2022 the tree was chosen as part of a nationwide network of 70 Ancient Trees to be dedicated to The Queen in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee.



Eddington is a sustainable new neighbourhood in Cambridge.

Purposefully designed generous open green spaces alongside intricate details in the built environment make Eddington an environment where both people and nature flourish.

This ecology self-guided walking tour will take you on a journey across the key areas of interest for biodiversity, outlining the fascinating developments in the natural world as well as the species it is attracting.

Developed by the University of Cambridge, Eddington is an ambitious and long-lasting place located just two miles from Cambridge city centre, ready for you to explore!

 [www.eddington-cambridge.co.uk](http://www.eddington-cambridge.co.uk)



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Ecology  
Walking  
Tour Guide





# Ecology Walking Tour Map

Start your journey at Eddington Market Square. Follow the numbers to the areas specified and read about the environment to discover stories from the past and how it supports local wildlife and biodiversity.



Wildflower meadow

Yellow rattle

Red campion



Cowslip



## 1 Seasonal Wildflower Meadows and the SSSI

Walking from Market Square east past Storey's Field Centre, you will first see a designated area of new wildflower meadow. On the left further along the path is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Traveller's Rest Pit is the grassed over remains of an old quarry where the most extensive collection of stone tools in Cambridgeshire were found. The ground hides gravels and fossils deposited more than 400,000 years ago. These are located between the faces of the quarry and the cricket pitch and the school. Eddington was designed around it to ensure its protection. No excavation could take place within a buffer zone around the SSSI. Instead, the land between the school and the edges of the pit, once an intensively managed arable field with very little biodiversity value,

was sown as a wildflower meadow. Between May and August a host of wildflowers bloom in this area, including cowslip, yellow rattle, red campion, field scabious, common knapweed, doves-foot cranes-bill, common yarrow, hedge bedstraw, oxeye daisy, lady's bedstraw and meadow buttercup. The meadow attracts bees, butterflies and a range of other invertebrates and is cut once a year in late summer. June and July is the best time to see it.

Throughout Eddington many smaller green spaces are contributing to wildlife, such as the small patch of grass behind Storey's Field Centre and the swales (normally dry drainage ditches) alongside Eddington Avenue and elsewhere in the neighbourhood. These are cut infrequently to encourage biodiversity.



Another swale at Pheasant Drive

Grassland behind Storey's Field Centre



## 2 Cricket Pitch Area and Bats

South of the cricket pitch is one of the three small woodlands that were present before Eddington was built. This one is dominated by mature oak, sweet chestnut and ash trees, with an understorey of elder and hawthorn. Bird boxes and bat boxes (50 of each) have been installed across the three woodlands, and many are already in regular use. Look closely at the cricket pavilion and see lots of gaps leading up into the roof structure and in the end walls. These provide access into purpose-built bat boxes, at least one of which was used by bats within a year of the building being completed. Purpose-built bat roosting sites have been incorporated into University owned buildings across Eddington.

At least nine different species have been recorded so far at Eddington: common pipistrelle; soprano pipistrelle; Nathusius' pipistrelle; noctule; serotine; barbastelle; brown long-eared bat; Daubenton's bat and at least one other bat of the genus Myotis,

considered likely to be whiskered bat. The patches of woodland are now well connected by tall hedgerows, and there are areas of grassland and wetland habitat that also provide good foraging opportunities which were not available in the open farmland previously. At Eddington the overall number of bats and the number of different species is likely to be significantly higher than before the development commenced.



Cricket pavilion with bat roost sites circled in purple



Ridge and Furrow field

## 3 Hedgerows, Ridge & Furrow field, and Butterflies

Along Eddington Avenue, the hedgerow on your left is dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn and elder, but also supports elm trees as well as several mature oak trees. These tree species are important for two of the butterfly species present at Eddington: white-letter hairstreak and purple hairstreak.

On the other side of the hedgerow is the 'Ridge and Furrow' field. When the field has been cut you can still see the ridge and furrow pattern formed by an ancient system of ploughing. Prior to Eddington being built the field was grazed by cows and of little ecological interest. It is now cut twice a year to maximise its biodiversity value. A diverse range of invertebrates using the field populate the area in summer, including various species of butterfly, bee and dragonfly.

## 4 Ponds and Amphibians

The green space between Eddington and the Park and Ride contains a pond which has a wide fringe of common reed around it. Don't try to get too close to the pond – it is deep and has a very silty bed, making it dangerous to access. The pond is home to a wide range of bird species including reed warblers. It also supports at least four different amphibian species: common frog;

common toad; smooth newt; and the protected great crested newt. All of these species are found in the pond in spring, when they return to it to breed. The presence of great crested newts in this pond was a major constraint during the construction, which required some of the works to take place under a Natural England licence to protect the population.

The area between the pond and Eddington Avenue was a picnic area with closely mown grass. In order to benefit the wildlife associated with the pond, it is now mown only once or twice per year, and a new hedgerow and fruit trees have been added. In some years a pyramidal orchid is visible in this area.

The Washpit Brook, or at least a small tributary of it can be seen in this area: it flows west and then north through Eddington, into the Beck Brook at Girton and eventually into the River Great Ouse. The culvert through which the stream flows under Eddington Avenue was designed to include narrow ledges on either side to facilitate the movement of wildlife safely under the road, including for great

## 5 Courtyard gardens and Birds

Around the built environment at Eddington a series of courtyard spaces with patches of green space provide amenity for residents as well as opportunities to enhance local nature. Some of these areas have been established with wildflower seed mixes and whilst some parts are regularly mown to provide amenity space for local residents, significant areas are left uncut to promote their biodiversity value.



Green space within Eddington



Wildflowers at Ridgeway Corner

crested newts. There is a vertical barrier on either side of Eddington Avenue to prevent newts from accessing the road as well as a temporary green fence which stops them from getting into areas under construction, which will be removed once works are complete.



Male great crested newt



Some birds decided to move into Eddington before construction had finished. A pair of kestrels nested high up on the western face of one of the buildings on Turing Way just as the builders wanted to complete the brickwork facade. The kestrels took priority and were left undisturbed to fledge two chicks; completion of the building was delayed for a few months. Then in 2020 a pair of crows decided that the far end of the jib arm of one of the tower cranes used to construct the hotel would be the perfect place for a nest!



Kestrel chicks in a nest on some exposed wall insulation just prior to fledging

