

Welcome to Lowndes Park



Lowndes Park is the premier open space in Chesham. This leaflet introduces you to its history, points of interest and key information to help you enjoy your visit.

An Historic Place

Lowndes Park, in the centre of Chesham, is recorded in history as far back as the 12th Century. At that time, the land was part of the Bury manor, which was owned by a succession of families, including the Skottowes.

In 1802, the estate was bought by William Lowndes, who promptly demolished the manor house, Bury Hill House (where the Guide Hut now stands) and added the grounds to those of his house, The Bury, which still stands today, in Church Street.

The Lowndes family let the park for agricultural use in the 19th Century, whilst making a number of alterations to the site, including gravelling the avenue and replanting the rows of elms that flanked it.

In 1920, William Frith-Lowndes let the Lower Park to Chesham Urban District Council for use as a public recreation ground. By 1970 the whole park was owned by the council and in 1972 the park was dedicated a Public Open Space and named Lowndes Park. In 1974, the newly formed Chesham Town Council took over care of the park.

SITES OF INTEREST



Skottowes Pond was created in the early 18th Century. Once reed-lined, the pond edge was concreted in the 1920s, when the island was also built. The pond has had many uses over time, such as being a cattle watering-hole and a site for training soldiers in bridge construction during World War One. These days the pond is home to waterfowl and is used for sailing model boats most Sundays by the Chesham & District Model Boat Club.



The Stone Trough In 1902, the Urban District Council accepted the gift of a stone trough presented by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. It was initially installed in the Broadway, where the Town Pump had stood. The trough was used for providing water for cattle, horses & traction engines. Later, the trough was located at the Pound in Red Lion St, before being moved to the park at the northern end of the Rue de Houilles, where it is used as a flower bed.

Rue de Houilles is the main avenue through the park. Once this was a carriageway flanked by a row of elms, first planted in c.1760. The elms were felled and replanted in 1845 by William Lowndes. These elms were felled in the 1950s, for fear of Dutch Elm Disease. Most trees, however, were found to be healthy after they were felled. The avenue is now more informal, planted with a mixture of species, including blossom trees. The avenue is also a bridleway and forms part of a national cycle route.



The Scented Garden is found off the Rue de Houilles in the middle of the park. The garden was created in 1956 by Chesham Rotary Club to provide sensory stimulation for blind visitors to the park. Following refurbishment by the Chesham Society in 1993, it is now maintained by the Friends of Lowndes Park. The scented garden is particularly lovely at the start of the year, thanks to a beautiful display of spring bulbs.



The Rolling Pin is a circular earth mound at the top of the park, surrounded by ornamental trees. The structure may be a bowl barrow dating back to the late Neolithic or Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC). Work by local archaeologists is underway to discover the origin of the mound and how it has been used throughout history. The views from this part of the park are excellent, extending out across Chesham and beyond to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Pudding Stone Near the barrow you can find an example of the local pudding stone, which gave the town its name. In the Middle Ages, Saxon settlers named their new hamlet *Caesteles-hamm*, meaning 'the water meadow by the stone heap', which has evolved into modern-day Chesham. Pudding stones were used in the Chilterns by Neolithic man to mark routes and important meeting places. They also form the foundations of the nearby 12th Century parish church of St. Mary.



GO WILD IN THE PARK!

Discover Nature All Around You



Visit the Upper Park to get back to nature and escape the hustle and bustle of the town. Relax in the meadowland area as you listen to the song of skylarks and green woodpeckers. Majestic red kites can often be seen gliding overhead and a variety of songbirds are active in the trees and long grass, including goldfinches and long tail tits. You may even be able to see deer passing through from the surrounding countryside.

For the Kids...



Lowndes Park has play areas for children of all ages. The main play area was refurbished in 2009 with all new, innovative equipment. Sports are catered for with an informal football pitch in the Upper Park and there's a multi-sports court for games like basketball. There is also a popular skateboard park for boarders.

Help Us to Help You

To ensure that you enjoy your visit to the park in safety, please observe the following:

- There is **no** swimming, paddling, fishing or boating in Skottowes Pond.
- Please **do not feed** the ducks or geese. A diet of bread leads to malnutrition, disease and premature death for waterfowl.
- There are lots of dog waste bins. Please do not allow your dog to foul in the park, or you can be fined £1000.
- Please take care with BBQs to ensure they are fully extinguished after use.
- Please put your rubbish in the bin.



Walkers Are Welcome in Chesham and Lowndes Park is on the route of four local walks. See Walkers Are Welcome at www.chesham.gov.uk for more information.

Get in Touch and Get Friendly!

Lowndes Park is managed by Chesham Town Council. If you would like to get in touch, contact us in person at the Town Hall (10 am to 4.30 pm, Mon to Fri), phone 01494 774842, or email admin@chesham.gov.uk.

The **Friends of Lowndes Park** is a group of people who care passionately about the park. Formed in 2007 they make a significant contribution to the strategic direction of the park and are strong contributors to the management plan, in addition to holding monthly work parties in the park. A regular newsletter and their web site www.lowndespark.org.uk keeps everyone up to date. To find out more contact Michael Rowan 01494 785146, or michael.rowan@ntlworld.com.

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