

There's a green place for everyone somewhere in Leighton Buzzard & Linslade. Enjoy a quiet walk in the woods or get fit fast on the fitness equipment; play a hard game of football or a quiet game of croquet; walk to a concert at the bandstand or just take the children to a local play area to burn excess energy! Whatever you do, wherever you go, even gentle exercise will help you feel better and live longer.

Below: a concert at Parson's Close.



Right: a game of croquet at Pages Park.



Left: a family walk in Pages Park.



Below: part of the Canal Festival at Tickdenfoot Waterside Park.



Do you fancy a breath of fresh air?

This leaflet was produced by the Leighton-Linslade P3 (*Parish Path Partnership*) group to help you explore the public footpaths and green spaces of historic Leighton-Linslade. P3 groups work with Bedfordshire County Council to improve and encourage access to the countryside and green spaces. Please contact us or the P3 officer if you find problems (such as paths in bad condition or missing signs) on the footpath network in Leighton-Linslade.



Useful contacts:

P3 Officer steve.halton@bedscc.gov.uk	01234 228759
Leighton Buzzard P3 Group	01525 631920
Leighton-Linslade Town Council <i>information about the town, open spaces and community events</i> http://www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk/	01525 631920
The Greensand Trust <i>works to conserve and promote the distinctive landscape of the Greensand Ridge</i> http://www.greensand-trust.org.uk/	01234 743666
The Sandpit Project <i>promotes recreation and conservation in Leighton-Linslade and Heath & Reach</i> http://www.sandpitproject.co.uk/	01525 378101
Leighton Buzzard Library	01525 371788
Leighton Buzzard Ramblers <i>offers the opportunity to walk in a group</i>	01525 374796



This project was supported by Leighton-Linslade Town Council



Leighton Buzzard & Linslade Green Places

parks, playgrounds & open space and the paths to get you there



Bluebell Wood

LEIGHTON BUZZARD AND LINSLADE have been thriving settlements for at least 1000 years. The *Theedway* that runs to the south of the town was an important east-west route in Saxon times, and some of our most important local place names are of Saxon origin. 'Tiddenfoot' was *Yttingaford*, the river crossing where Edward the Elder made peace with the Danes in AD906. The origins of 'Leighton Buzzard' are obscure, but Linslade was once *Hlincgelad*, "the sandy bank beside a stream".

Water and sand have influenced Leighton Buzzard and Linslade for nearly half a million years

The River Ouzel carved the valley in which the town sits out of the Greensand Ridge nearly half a million years ago, during the Ice Age. Now a much smaller stream, it meanders across the Ouzel Meadows, traditional flood meadows to the north of the town.

For centuries quarries provided the sand and ironstone used in local buildings. The completion of the Grand Union Canal in 1800 and railway lines in 1838 and 1848 allowed bulk shipment of sand to the Midlands and London. By 1878 carts carrying sand from the quarries to the railhead and canal wharves caused so much damage to the roads of central Leighton Buzzard that the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway was built by the quarry owners. Both the Canal and the Railway remain important features today.

Sand, the buried treasure of the Greensand Ridge ...

Many old sand quarries are now hidden under housing and industrial development, but some that are closing now will become green places for wildlife and people. Tiddenfoot Waterside Park shows what can be achieved; it was quarried until the 1960s. The landmark line of poplars were planted for use as matchwood, but never felled.

Right: The spire of All Saints seen from the canal towpath.

Below: Tiddenfoot Waterside Park.



Left: The Ouzel Meadows.

Below: A guided walk in Heath Wood.



Trees ancient and modern

The sandy infertile soils of the Greensand Ridge were often left as woodland. To the northwest of the town, you can visit two very different woods separated only by a fence. Insects and birds thrive in the grass around the new trees of Linslade Wood. Walk through the gate at the top of the hill into Bluebell Wood and you enter a dark green, shaded world of ancient native trees. In spring the woodland floor shimmers blue and the scent of bluebells fills the air. *Please don't pick the flowers; leave them for others to enjoy.* In contrast, across the valley on the hills to the east are Heath Wood and Knolls Wood, planted with exotic trees in the 19th century.

Other things to see and do

Explore Leighton-Linslade's history and landscape on a self-guided walk around the town. Look for Sandpit Project leaflets in the library or contact them for more information.

Once you've walked the canal towpath reward yourself with the chance to see the town from a different viewpoint: on the water! Take a cruise or hire a narrowboat on the Grand Union Canal. Wyvern Shipping 01525 372355

The narrow gauge railway was built in 1919. Restored by volunteers it is now an important centre for historic railways, offering visitors a 5½ mile round trip from the station at Pages Park. Leighton Buzzard Railway 01525 373888

The Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre offers indoor exercise facilities including two swimming pools, four squash courts, gymnasium, weight-training and a sports hall.

Visit the wonderful new splash and play area in Parson's Close. Spend the afternoon listening to the band concert on a summer Sunday afternoon.



Leighton Buzzard & Linslade Parks & Open Spaces

- Shenley Hill/Avon Walk:** Open space
- Vandyke Road:** Football pitches and bike ramps
- Danes Field:** Children's play area and bike ramps
- Roundell Drive:** Children's play area
- Astral Park:** Pond and fitness equipment
- Weston Avenue:** Children's play area
- Pages Field:** Football, kite flying and open space
- Pages Park:** Children's play area, croquet, tennis, cricket, football, and kite flying. The bumps and hollows in the park may be signs that this was once a quarry.
- Lovent Drive:** Open space
- Leighton Town Football Club and Tennis Club, Leighton Cricket Club**
- Parson's Close:** Bandsstand, splash and play area, skate park, children's play area. An old map shows 'Parsonage Close' was already a public recreation ground in 1840. The bandsstand was built during the Festival of Britain in 1951.
- Tiddenfoot Waterside Park:** This disused sand quarry has become a pleasant place for wildlife and for people. A surfaced track runs around the lake, and there's space for picnics while you watch the birds and dragonflies.
- Mentmore Road:** Junior and adult football pitches, bowls, cricket and memorial gardens, children's play area
- Linslade Park:** Children's play area, junior football pitch
- Derwent Road:** Children's play area
- Alwin's Field:** Children's play area
- Linslade Wood and Bluebell Wood:** Linslade Wood is a community wood planted in the 1990s; Bluebell Wood is a small area of woodland at least 800 years old.
- Vimy Road:** Children's play area and meadow trail
- Mill Road:** Children's play area
- Ouzel Meadows:** Summer livestock grazing helps to encourage wildflowers in these traditional water meadows. Old pollard willows and Black Poplars (one of England's rarest trees) edge the ditches and riverbanks.
- Heath Wood & Meadow:** The meadow lies on a steep hillside rising to give good views over the Ouzel Valley.
- Knolls Wood:** In the 19th century both Knolls Wood and Heath Wood were part of the grounds of Knolls House. They were planted with trees from across the world, including redwoods from western North America, the Chilean pine known as the monkey puzzle tree, and rhododendrons from southeast Asia.
- Adams Bottom:** Children's play area and stream
- Billington Park:** Open space

