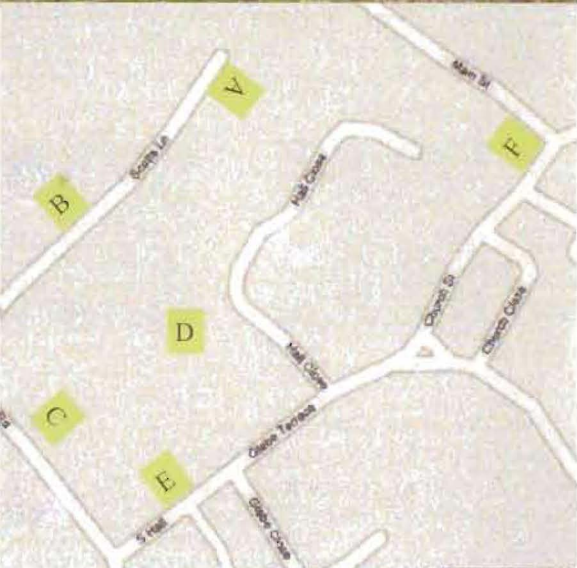


Annex 18

Maids Moreton Circular Walk



The aim of this leaflet is to point out interesting wildlife features of this easy village walk.

All sections of the walk are accessible to wheelchairs, electric scooters and pushchairs thanks to new dropped kerbs. These resulted from the Parish Plan produced by Maids Moreton Conservation Group in 2004.

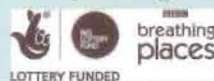
The Conservation Group works to improve village footpaths which lead out into the surrounding countryside in Maids Moreton parish.

New members and helpers are welcome (tel. 813014).



The Conservation Group thanks local artist, Sally Bostock-Leggatt, for her drawings in the leaflet.

Sponsorship for the Maids Moreton Circular Walk has been provided by the Big Lottery Fund.



Maids Moreton Circular Walk



This easy walk around the centre of the village can be done in as little as fifteen minutes, or much longer if you use our notes to sit awhile and admire views, do brass rubbings, or chat to people.

An ideal starting point for the Circular Walk is Jim Dancer's bench in Scotts Lane (see A on map). This is also the first of six brass plaques showing local wildlife.

To rub each wildlife plaque you will need black wax crayon and paper. The crayon should be used at right angles to the paper. Please note that the newt and badger plaques are in Maids Moreton School grounds which are only accessible on Open Days.

A Scotts Lane - kestrel plaque

A pair of kestrels can often be seen flying around these fields hovering in their search for prey. The back of the male kestrel is a beautiful pinky-brown colour. You might spot one perched on a nearby telegraph pole. To encourage their breeding here a kestrel box has been mounted on the trees at the Avenue Road end of the lane.



The sheep are Devon and Cornwall Longwool sheep, and their lambs are much admired in the Spring.

A footpath crosses the lane, running from near the church to the Old Manor House. It was once called Church Path, and was believed to be the route that the Maids of Moreton took from their manor home to the church they built.

The bench reminds us of Jim Dancer. He was a farmer, born in the village, who loved country ways.



B Scotts Lane - squirrel plaque



The brass plaque shows a squirrel holding an acorn from an oak tree. A splendid oak tree is opposite the bench, and is home to thousands of insects, caterpillars, moths, spiders and birds. Another oak tree in the lane has a barn owl box high amongst its branches.

On warm summer evenings hundreds of bats swoop up and down the lane, feeding on flying insects that live in the trees.

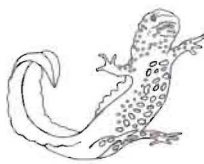
Many species of wild flowers have been planted along Scotts Lane to encourage bees and butterflies. These include ragged robin, lady's smock and yellow archangel. Other local plants such as bluebells, primroses, celandines and violets now have better growing conditions here compared to some years ago.

Close to the pine trees is a pond and wet area for grass snakes, newts and visiting ducks.

C Maids Moreton School Grounds - newt plaque (only accessible on Open Days)

The School has developed a Sensory Garden to enable the children to use all five senses through plants. The daffodil spiral and strawberry beds are very popular features.

The pond is a great place to study creatures such as dragon flies, water-boatmen, frogs and toads. Gardeners like amphibians because they eat slugs and insects. Can you spot any water snails? How do you think they breathe in the water?



Great crested newts live there too, and they are a protected species. You can spot them swimming around, or keeping cool in the muddy bank. They have probably come from the natural ponds in the Scotts Lane fields.

D Maids Moreton School Grounds - badger plaque

In the far corner of the grounds is the spinney where the children study wildlife topics. There are homes constructed for stag beetles, toads and hedgehogs. Bird boxes in the trees encourage the children to look up and be observant.

Tracks in the snow have shown that a badger enters the spinney at the back, crosses the school field diagonally and passes through a hole in the hedge bordering Avenue Road, in his nightly search for food. His sharp claws can dig tunnels, and root out shoots and slugs to eat. Look out for his five claw prints and scratches on trees where he cleans and sharpens his claws.



Badgers' black and white hairs are flat so when you find one caught in a fence, if it is a badger's hair, it will not roll between your fingers.

E South Hall - bee plaque

In this sunny spot you can sit and listen to the bees on summer days. There is a bee nesting box nearby which solitary bees which cannot sting or swarm, nor damage buildings. The female bee lays individual eggs in compartments along the tube of the nesting box. Leafcutter bees (different from mason bees) are likely to these sites. They pollinate flowers and blossoms, and are gardeners' friends.

The trees nearby are bird cherry trees. They are particularly lovely in May when they are full of soft almond-scented flowers, which attract the bees. The bark from bird cherry trees used to be made into medicine in medieval times.



Continuing down into Church Street you pass the grounds of Maids Moreton Hall where there is another barn owl box. Most of the imposing trees here have tree preservation orders.

F Rose Garden - blue tit plaque

On the corner of Church Street and Main Street is the Rose Garden, with the newly planted mountain ash tree in memory of Ray George, a parish councillor.

Hidden amongst the roses and trellis are two boxes for blue tits, one box for a blue tit (smaller entrance hole) and another for a robin. Blue tits have yellow chests, and black and white faces. Many goldcrests have also been seen in the gardens of Main Street. They are Britain's smallest bird, their brightly coloured plumage of olive green, yellow and black makes them easily spotted.

The Millennium Signpost will direct you back up Main Street past thatched cottages and the old village school. Look out for the jitty on the left with its kissing gate.

The next jitty takes you back into Scotts Lane.

