



## Location

**Wilton SP5 5DT**  
**Grid ref SU047238**

**Access** –Not suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Dogs on leads are welcome.

## Directions

**If driving** – Travelling from Salisbury on A354 to Blandford. When you reach Coombe Bissett turn right on to Stratford Tony Road heading for Broad Chalke. Drive through Bishopstone and turn left on to Newtown which takes you into Broad Chalke. In village take left turn signposted for school and sports centre. Continue past school and Knighton junction. Continue along Bury Lane to Howgare Road and drive for about 2.5 miles to crossroads. Turn left onto Ox Drove and continue for 0.5 miles past farm buildings. Immediately after farm and before track fork, is parking area – please don't block gates. Walk down track for 0.25 miles and entrance to reserve is on right.

**If using bus** – The 29 Salisbury-Shaftsbury service stops in Broad Chalke approx. every 1.5 hours. From the Broad Chalke stop, follow the above walking directions to reserve gate. Visit [www.salisburyreds.co.uk](http://www.salisburyreds.co.uk)

**If cycling** – Leave regional route 20 at Broad Chalke. Lock bike up in car park and follow walking directions as above. Visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**Nearby reserves** – Coombe Bissett Down

## About Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Our vision is to create a county rich in wildlife and help people live sustainable lifestyles that protect the environment for the benefit of everyone.

We have about 18,500 members, look after almost 40 nature reserves, are supported by hundreds of volunteers, and work with local communities, schools, businesses and public bodies to achieve our aims. To do all this we rely on the support of our members.

If you would like to join us, or to find out about how you can help the environment, please visit [www.wiltshirewildlife.org](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org)

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Front Cover: Common blue butterfly, Sarah Marshall WWT

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Nature reserves

# Middleton Down





## Middleton Down

### 25.42 Hectares

The curves and dips of this peaceful and secluded reserve in the Chalke Valley offer stunning views across the countryside, but be aware that the slopes are steep to climb.

The reserve is a wonderful example of the traditional chalk downland that was once widespread in Wiltshire and is designated a **Site of Special Scientific Interest** due to the rich variety of its grassland plants.

For 600 years the reserve formed part of the Wilton Abbey estate. At Dissolution it was transferred to the Wilton estate owned by the Earl of Pembroke. It was sold for the first time ever in 1919.

This land has changed little for nearly a millennium, with the downland being used to graze sheep. Today the reserve is grazed by our own Dexter cattle for most of the year. They create a varied structure of short and long grass, the best habitat for insects. Since we acquired the reserve in 1988 biodiversity has increased.

Grazing also prevents invasion by scrub and coarser vegetation.

### Wildlife

From early May the slopes are a tapestry of yellow cowslips and early purple orchids.

The display continues all summer, with the intense blue chalk milkwort, the early purple gentian and many orchids. These

include common spotted, fragrant, pyramidal, bee, frog and autumn lady's-tresses. Here too are clustered bellflower and the nationally rare dwarf sedge.

Its many butterflies include the rare Adonis blue, **common blue** and **marbled white**. Most are attracted by the trefoils and vetches that provide food for their caterpillars.

On late summer evenings **glow worms** sparkle on the slopes. These are not worms at all, but beetles. The wingless females glow for a few weeks to attract the flying males, only to die soon after laying their eggs.

Look out for a large, shiny **oil beetle** in early spring, or the narrow-bordered bee hawkmoth – a day-flying moth that looks like a bee.

Listen for the papery rustle of grasshoppers at ground level and the pure notes of the **skylark** above. You may also spot buzzards and sparrowhawks flying overhead.



Glow worm, Raymond Blythe. Small copper butterfly, Andrew Kerr. Clustered bellflower, Steve Day WWT  
Marbled white butterfly on knapweed, Nick Upton. Oil beetle, Paul McRae WWT

