

# RSPB Old Hall Marshes weekend car park closure

## Background:

RSPB Old Hall Marshes is a quiet visitor reserve with c3000 visits a year and little formal infrastructure catering for visitors. Our management aspirations for this reserve have been to ensure that Old Hall offers a wilderness experience and provides a home for the spectacular wildlife found here. As such we do not actively promote this reserve as a visitor destination. Historically access was controlled via a permit system, but this was removed in 2014.

## Current arrangements:

Currently access to the RSPB Old Hall Marshes car park is controlled by locking and unlocking our nearest neighbours metal gate by a combination of staff and volunteers at 9am and 5pm, 7 days a week and until recently 364 days a year. The gate locking and timings were introduced to ensure that the site is secure when no members of staff or volunteers are present on site and to prevent anti-social behaviour outside of these times.

## Why?

The RSPB Old Hall Marshes Reserve is managed by two full time members of staff and a team of volunteers. It is a remote site where our main focus is on management for wildlife. We welcome visitors to the reserve, but as one of the RSPB's least visited reserves we are keen to get the balance right between delivering as much as possible for wildlife and maintaining low-key visitor facilities.

Therefore, to ensure that our reserve team can dedicate as much time as possible to wildlife management we are planning to make some changes to the way we manage visitors on the site. Weekend opening of the car park in a particular takes up time that could be used for other vital conservation tasks, we are therefore trialling closure at weekends to free up valuable wardening time. This change will also ensure that we are able to maintain site security and prevent anti-social behaviour from developing at the site.

## When?

This change is scheduled to happen on **Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2020**. We will remain open as normal during weekdays. If you are an organised group wishing to visit Old Hall at the weekend, please get in touch as we may be able to arrange access for you.

## Alternative arrangements:

The public footpaths remains open 7 days a week. The nearest alternative parking can be found at Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, where there are adequate parking spaces, toilets and nearby shops and cafés. Please do not park in Old Hall lane, access is required at all times and out of respect for our neighbours.

## Further information:

For further information please contact the RSPB Old Hall Marshes team on [oldhallmarshes@rspb.org.uk](mailto:oldhallmarshes@rspb.org.uk)