

Sandy Smith Nature Reserve



Addresses : Lane adjacent to Top Farm, Shefford Road, Beadlow, Shefford SG17 5PL. Nature Reserve is signposted at the bend in the road beside the Farm.

Alternative: Appley Wood Corner, Standalone Warren, Haynes, Bedford MK45 3QQ

Parking Both parking areas are small, especially Standalone Warren, but they seem to cope with the not very great demand for parking.



Parking is beside Top Farm. Sandy Smith is signposted on a bend in Shefford Road.



You can also park at Standalone Warren, but parking is quite limited.

Walk: There are at least two ways onto the Sandy Smith Nature Reserve that we know of, and for walkers the best option is probably via the lane adjacent to Top Farm. Cyclists are better served by the entrance at Standalone Warren. Both addresses are set-out above.

For walkers beginning at Top farm there are two entrances close to the small parking area, one is next to a large five-bar gate, the other is a marked footpath. Whichever you choose to take, the walk makes a natural circuit: you enter through one entrance and end-up at the other. Both are within metres of where the cars are parked.

This 93 hectare site is owned and managed by the Greensand Trust, and is at least partially situated on the site of the formerly, locally well-known Chicksands 'Stonehenge' radio antenna array. This was a military facility operated by the United States Air Force which was used, along with other such bases around the world, to triangulate radio transmissions emanating from the Russian Armed Forces.

These days, as well as being a nature reserve, part of Sandy Smith still functions as a live shooting range used by the army at JFC Chicksands. On Sunday mornings in the autumn and winter there are often red flags flying to signify clay pigeon shooting, deer culling and military target practice. The golden rule, therefore, is to always follow the many signs, observe the red flags, and keep to the marked footpaths. In any event, it's difficult not to notice the sound of gunshot or to hear the spectacular echoes that sound ominously like near-miss ricochets.

Food and drink: The Flying Horse at Clophill is a short drive (maybe two miles) from the nature reserve. In fact, it's on the same road.

Address: The Flying Horse, 2 The Green, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK45 4AD.

Tel: 01525 860293

Website: <https://www.theflyinghorse.co.uk/>