



Enjoy this one-hour easy walk discovering water meadows, ponds and a wide range of waterfowl. This walk is funded by the UK government through the by the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).

Distance: 2.5 miles (4 kms) Allow 1 hour

Start and End : Ash Community Centre Car Park, Ash Hill Road, Aldershot  
Postcode: GU12 5DP

Enjoy this one-hour easy walk discovering water meadows, ponds and a wide range of waterfowl. A really great walk for families, buggy friendly, with two playgrounds to discover along the way. At the end of the walk there is a variety of food and drink options in the village centre to choose from or an attractive traditional English pub just a short drive away.

1. With the Ash Parish Council offices behind you, walk back towards the entrance to the car park and turn right. Cross over at the junction and follow the B3411 straight ahead towards Frimley, on Vale Road.
2. Once over the bridge, turn right and right again under the bridge, following the Basingstoke Canal. Continue on this path, passing under the railway bridge and soon you come to an aqueduct (water bridge) that takes the canal over the A331 Blackwater Valley Relief Road. Just before you get the aqueduct there is a tarmac path to your right. Take this path. (Do stop to marvel at this feat of engineering over the busy road, but turn back to take the track into the reserve.)

3. Follow the tarmac slope (or short cut down the steps) around to the left into the Lakeside Nature Reserve.
4. At the Nature Reserve sign at the bottom of the slope, the path turns right, following a stream on your left. The path then widens out and bears right, with ponds on both sides. Keep on the main path through woodland. When the path splits and narrows, take the path to the right. DO NOT follow the Blackwater Valley Path beyond this point.
5. When the path splits again, keep to the path on the right and then almost immediately right again, onto a wide path. After a short distance you cross over a narrow stream to reach an attractive playground with picnic area and seating.
6. As you reach the playground area, turn right towards the large pond, mostly hidden behind bushes. Follow this path around the pond, keeping the pond on your right. There are several viewing platforms here from which to watch the waterfowl. Ignore a path to your left heading to a road. Eventually you will notice the railway line running along on an embankment to the left of the path. Keep bearing right and another fenced fishing pond will come up on your left. Keep following the main path until you come to a T- junction with a wooden post (marking a car park to the right). Turn left.
7. At the next T junction, turn left again and you will be back on the path by which you entered the Nature Reserve. Re-trace your steps to the Basingstoke Canal. Turn left, retracing your route back along the canal towards Ash and the car park.

#### Local Facts:

- The Lakeside Nature Reserve is a complex of wetland habitats including river, ponds, lakes, reed beds, orchid meadow and wet woodland. It is managed by Guildford Borough Council.
- The area has been shaped by years of gravel extraction, dug in the 1950s. The course of the Blackwater Valley Road was moved in the 1990s when the Blackwater Valley Relief Road was built.
- The parish of Ash, though quite small, is the most densely populated of the rural parishes within the borough of Guildford.
- The Basingstoke canal was completed in 1792 to connect Basingstoke to the River Thames at Weybridge, via the Wey Navigation. It is 31 miles long and has 29 locks. It was never a commercial success.
- After many years of neglect, restoration of the canal was commenced in 1977 and on 10 May 1991 the canal was reopened.

#### Footnotes:

Parking: Free car park for 4 hours

Public Toilets next to car park.

Grid ref: SU894 516

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This project is funded by the UK government through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#).

