

Hillhouse Woodland



Images: South woodland (left); Map & information board (right)

Hillhouse Woodland is located in the north section of Beechraigs Country Park, near the ancient town of Linlithgow. The site is a woodland landscape which has a 1.2 mile multi-user surfaced footpath designed to provide easy access to this precious piece of countryside.

Hillhouse Woodland

The south entrance of Hillhouse Woodland can be accessed via a gate to the north of the Beechraigs Visitor Centre. This entrance also offers a fantastic view of the Firth of Forth and the surrounding farmland. Hillhouse is situated on the hillside overlooking Linlithgow and the area once comprised of farmland which was used to harvest silage. However, to the end of the 1990's it was planted, transforming it into the managed woodland that stands today. In the past the local area was widely quarried and mined for limestone to produce quicklime to fertilize the farmland that was present during that period. As a result, the remains of quarries and cave systems can be found throughout Hillhouse. One of the most significant features of the site is the open stretch of grassland at the middle of Hillhouse which provides a stunning vantage point of the surrounding picturesque landscape.

From this location you can see across the Forth Estuary in the east, as well as the mountains past Stirling in the west. The main surfaced footpath in the area was laid in 2013 as part of plans to improve access within West Lothian's Country Parks. However, the area also offers unsurfaced routes which facilitate exploration deeper into the woodland environment. Hillhouse is ideal for recreational activities such as walking, running and cycling and is well serviced with a variety of amenities at Beechraigs Visitor Centre.

Wildlife

Although the main body of Beechraigs Country Park is principally coniferous woodland, Hillhouse by contrast comprises of largely 15-20 year old mixed broadleaf woodland. Tree species include Oak, Apple, Birch and Beech, whilst other plant species bear fruit like Raspberry and Bramble. Wildflowers like the Common Spotted Orchid and Wild Pansy grow on the grass slopes during summer and these attract Ringlet and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies amongst others. The area is also abundant with mammals including Grey Squirrel, Rabbit, Roe Deer and Badger. In addition, a number of Bat species reside in the local cave system such as Daubentons and Brown long-eared Bats.



Contact Details

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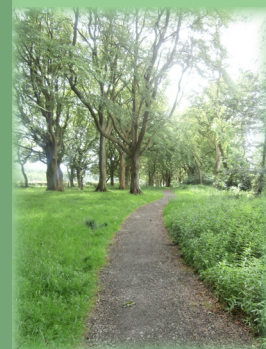
Information

- Free entry

Postcode: EH49 6LP

Grid Ref: NT002747

Map: OS Landranger 65



Woodland environment



Grassland

Facilities & Access

- Free parking at the Beecraigs Visitor Centre car park or Balvormie.
- Several resting benches situated along the main surfaced route.
- Signposts, information display boards, maps and bins.
- Public toilets available at Beecraigs Visitor Centre or Balvormie.
- Refreshments available from Visitor Centre.
- Main surfaced footpath is steep downhill towards the Linlithgow end of the route.
- Unsurfaced paths can be narrow, slippery and more difficult to access.

Travel

Hillhouse Woodland is accessible via the minor road connecting Linlithgow and Bathgate. From Linlithgow follow Preston Road out of town turning left at the top of the hill for Beecraigs. Alternatively via Bathgate follow the Torphichen Road from the town and turn right at the sign for Beecraigs. Travel on this road until you reach the Country Park. The site can also be accessed from the traffic free footpath that runs from Preston Road in Linlithgow up to Hillhouse. The closest train station is in Linlithgow.

Hillhouse Woodland Map



Surfaced footpath



Unsurfaced footpath



Wild Pansies



View across the Forth