

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

# Willoughby Branch Line



## Location & Access

**OS:** 122 • **GR:** TF 474 736 • 4.90ha  
(12.20 acres) • Leasehold 1982

**Habitat type:** Scrub and Grassland

The main access to the reserve is on the Farlesthorne-Willoughby road. A small car park is provided near this entrance. From the B1196 road, a few metres east of the old Willoughby station crossing, a green lane access may be used by courtesy of the owner. A public path runs the length of the reserve. The reserve is leased from Lincolnshire County Council and is a statutory Local Nature Reserve.

## Description & Management

The reserve is part of the disused branch railway from Willoughby to Mablethorpe. Since the line was taken up in 1971, the track has developed into a fine wildlife area with ashwood, hawthorn scrub and grassland supporting a varied flora, including abundant bird's-foot trefoil and restharrow, hemp-agrimony, spotted orchid, twayblade, lady's bedstraw, yellow-wort and great burnet. Butterflies include common blue and several species of skippers and browns. Whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, blackcap, sedge warbler, redpoll and other finch species nest in the reserve. Hips and haws attract fieldfares and redwings in winter, and barn owls frequently use the track for hunting.

Management consists of twice-yearly mowing of the path and the taking of a crop of hay from the wider tract of grassland at the Farlesthorne end of the reserve. Oak, field maple, birch and alder have been planted in suitable sites along the track. Hawthorn bushes are coppiced occasionally to prevent them overgrowing the path.

## Willoughby Branch Line GR at E TF 474736

