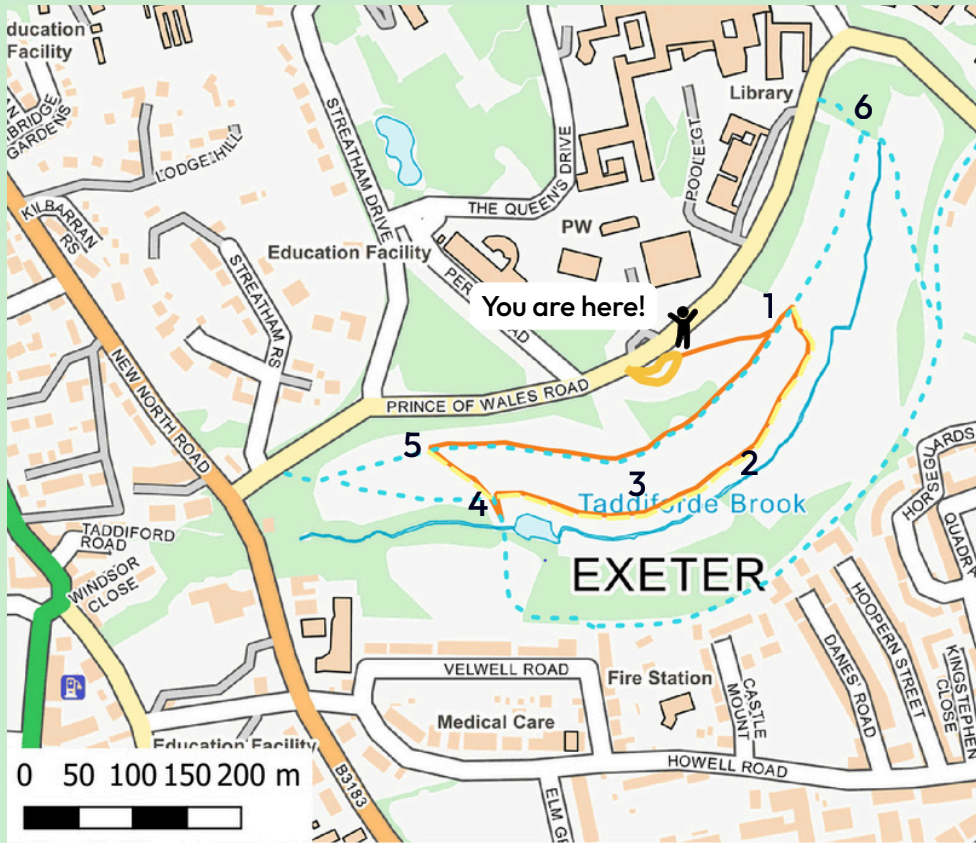




SELF GUIDED TOUR – LOWER HOOPERN VALLEY



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Key

- Accessible Path
- Permissive Path
- Public Right of Way
- Self guided tour - steep route!

The Lower Hoopern Valley is a County Wildlife Site managed for biodiversity and for people.

Please help us to protect the Valley:

- Leave nothing but foot steps
- Keep your dog under control and clear up any mess
- Don't light fires or camp
- Use alternative routes for bicycles to protect the soil

1. Take a left, then a right, and follow the steep, narrow path through the brambles.

Brambles are great for wildlife:

- Spring flowers support pollinators
- Autumn fruit feeds birds
- Dense cover provides shelter for dormice and nesting birds
- Bee species nest in the hollow stems



2. As you walk through the grassy area, look right to spot mature ash trees.

- Some show signs of ash dieback. We are keeping the trees as standing deadwood is valuable habitat for bats, birds, and insects.
- The surrounding bramble fringe prevents people from getting too close
- Native scrub species have been planted here, including blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, spindle, and elder.

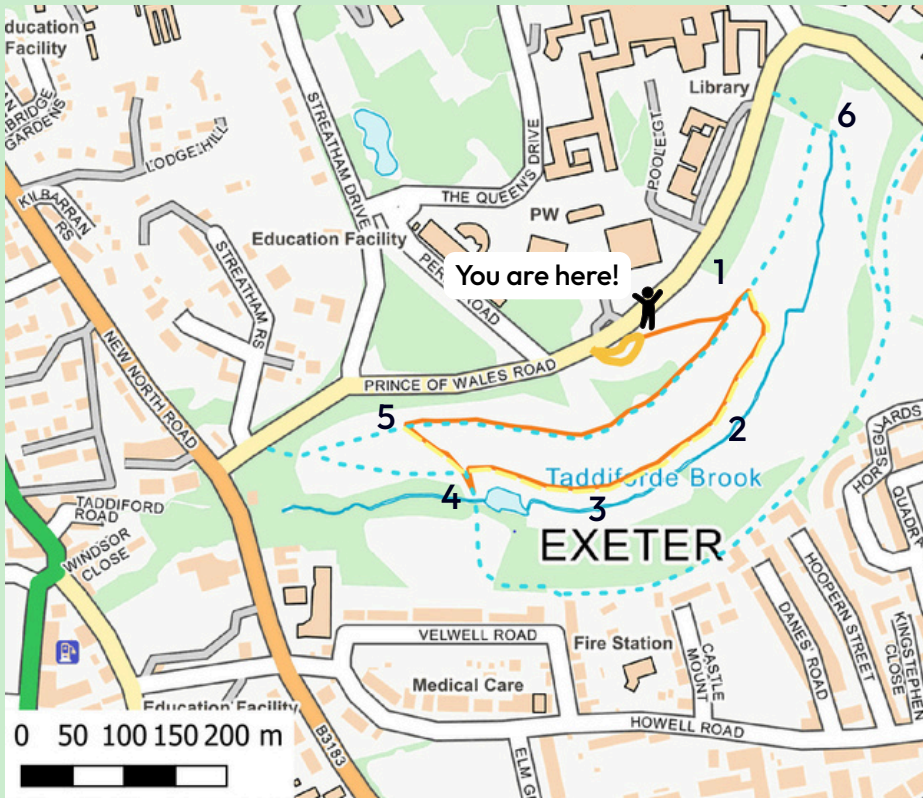


3. At the bottom of Brookfield Meadow, the grassland has a mix of tussocky grasses and wild herbs including common knapweed and agrimony. In the summer keep an eye out for corky fruited water dropwort - an unusual species.

- These plants suggest a species-rich grassland. Without management, grassland turns into scrub and then woodland. With 97% of species-rich grassland lost in the UK, this area will be maintained as grassland. Ideally through grazing but instead it will be cut and the cuttings removed or raked aside.
- This reduces nutrients, helping wildflowers thrive over dominant grasses.



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4. Walk down to the bridge over the culvert to see the Taddiforde Brook. This brook runs through the Valley and collects water from streams higher up on campus. We have made some changes to the brook:

- Removing some man made weirs
- Adding leaky woody dams made from trees fallen on campus and some that were shading the Taddiforde Brook. Some shade is good for watercourses, but too much shade means that plants that grow in shallow water and provide habitat for invertebrates can't grow.
- Adding woody material into the stream



These features help:

- Slow the flow of rainwater during heavy rain
- Let fish and other wildlife move along the brook
- Reconnect the brook with its natural floodplain



5. At the junction:

- Turn right to head back to the accessible path
- Turn left to follow the public footpath to Streatham Drive
- As you walk, look out for the veteran Downy oak trees on your right – they could be over 150 years old!

6. Have more time? Head back along the path to check out our noticeboard. It's updated regularly with events and news from the Valley!

