



Whitelee

Windfarm
Access Guide



Welcome

Whitelee

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This booklet contains useful information regarding access to Whitelee Windfarm and forest, including route suggestions, maps and tips on what you can see.

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Welcome to Whitelee



Whitelee Windfarm opened in 2009, with two extensions following in 2013. It's 215 turbines are spread across 78km² of forest and moorland, making Whitelee one of the largest onshore windfarms in Europe. The 158km/99 miles of largely traffic-free tracks and paths are a great place to start exploring Eaglesham moor and Whitelee forest. Work is under way to improve access provision at Whitelee, through the creation or upgrading of paths and other facilities.

The site has marked trails and routes available for self-led excursions. Further details and route suggestions for walking, cycling and horse riding can be found in this booklet, including a detailed site map.

Whitelee also has additional facilities including a visitor centre managed by Glasgow Science Centre. This offers an exhibition hall and café as well as bus tours and educational workshops. Other facilities within the centre include toilets, baby changing, showers and cycle storage. The visitor centre is open between 10am and 5pm, 7 days a week between March and October, with restricted opening hours in the winter. Please visit the website for further information www.whiteleewindfarm.co.uk

Remember when exploring at Whitelee that weather conditions can be variable so ensure you come equipped with suitable footwear/clothing and are prepared for sudden changes in the weather. Please respect other visitors and keep dogs under close control at all times.

The Whitelee Countryside Ranger Service (WCERS) work to promote responsible access to the countryside through a variety of events and groups, and by producing resources and information for visitors. They also provide environmental education and conduct wildlife surveys. They are always happy to talk with visitors, hear of wildlife sightings and deal with any enquiries. Please use the details listed on page 11 of this booklet to contact the ranger service.



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Whitelee

Things to see

Wildlife

The Whitelee plateau has always been important for wildlife and has significant populations of some species. Owls, buzzards and falcons regularly grace the skies, as do almost 100 other bird species, from songbirds to summer migrants.

Supporting this varied birdlife is a mosaic of moorland habitats containing iconic plant species such as the carnivorous Round-Leaved Sundew that devours flies, and nationally rare lichens and liverworts. A variety of different species provide year-round colour. As well as providing nesting opportunities for specialist birds like Hen Harrier, the blanket bog and heath at Whitelee are perfect habitats for amphibians and reptiles, with Adders lurking around Heather bushes to ambush field-voles.

Mammals such as Brown Hare and Roe Deer provide exciting glimpses as they forage and the moors are also abundant with insects including beetles, bees and moths. Dragonflies patrol the scattered breeding ponds of amphibians and butterflies such as Orange Tips can be spotted on warm days.

History

The history surrounding Eaglesham moor and Whitelee can be traced back thousands of years and remnants are still visible today. Near the visitor centre, Dunwan Hill retains signs of an Iron-age fort with depressions on the hilltop indicating where dwellings possibly stood. Crumbled farmsteads and rig and furrow scars indicate past farming practices and Queenseat Hill where the visitor centre stands, hints at a royal connection to Mary Queen of Scots.

The Lochgoin monument and farm museum, found in the west of the site, are associated with Covenanting history and one of the three Victorian reservoirs on site is rumoured to have the remains of red coat soldiers below it. There is also a WWII Hurricane crash site.

Rights of way along ancient trading routes cut through the windfarm, dating from the heyday of the area's weaving industry and even the peat has a tale to tell with 'bog oaks' being regurgitated by the 5000-year-old bog indicating a woodland heritage, before the peat formed.

Explore on foot

For those wishing to explore on foot, Whitelee offers almost endless route options. The routes available are mainly on unsealed roads with some less formal paths in places, so sturdy footwear is recommended. Please ensure you are fully prepared before setting off on your walk and have adequate time and equipment. Please respect the interests of other visitors and take any litter home or use the bins provided. Please use the following route descriptions alongside the fold-out map to help plan your walk.

Recommended routes:

- **Blackwood Hill (5.5 km / 3 miles) & Lochgoin Circuit (12.5km / 8 miles)**
– see page 6.

- **Walk through the windfarm – 17 km / 10.5 miles**

The fold-out map in the centre of this booklet can be used to navigate throughout the site, with the visitor centre in the west and Ardochrig in the east. This hike through the site from the visitor centre car park to Ardochrig, covers a distance of 17km following the spine road.

- **Whitelee 2, routes in the extension**

The network of tracks in Whitelee 2, the extension area, offers a variety of circular and linear routes available for walkers, through both conifer plantation and open countryside. Access can be gained by walking south west from the visitor centre, connecting onto the spine road. Aim for the extension turn-off from the spine road just past turbine 6. At the first junction, the road on the right, after turbine H209, will lead down to Craigendunton reservoir and turning left will lead onto a wider network of tracks. Alternative entry points to the extension include from the Hareshawmuir Road, High Overmuir and from within the Windfarm at the junction at turbine 17.

For help in negotiating the routes in Whitelee 2, use the map provided in this booklet or speak to a ranger.

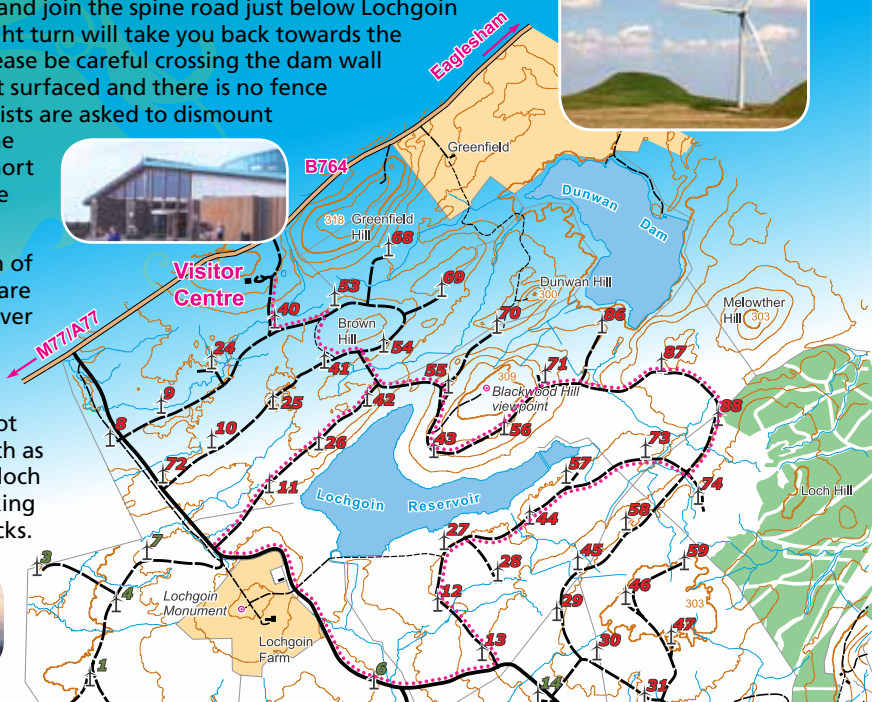


Lochgoin Circuit 12.5km/8 miles

This is a popular route around Whitelee's largest reservoir with green fingerposts directing the way along the complete 12.5km route. Starting at the first turbine below the visitor centre, the fingerposts direct walkers, cyclists and horse riders around Lochgoin reservoir in a clockwise direction and point out other 'off circuit' destinations along the way such as the Blackwood Hill viewpoint and Ardochrig. If you choose to complete the full Lochgoin circuit, follow the purple dotted line on the map, or the green fingerposts located beside the tracks at junctions. The route is on unsealed tracks and can be occasionally rough in places so sturdy shoes/boots are recommended for walkers.

For a slight shortcut, take the path over the dam wall after turbine 27 and join the spine road just below Lochgoin Farm where a right turn will take you back towards the visitor centre. Please be careful crossing the dam wall as the path is not surfaced and there is no fence alongside it. Cyclists are asked to dismount when crossing the dam wall. This shortcut is not suitable for horseriders.

Along the length of the route, there are stunning views over the reservoirs and out to the coast, as well as the chance to spot some wildlife such as wildfowl on the loch and reptiles basking on the warm tracks.



Blackwood Hill viewpoint 5.5km/3 miles

The Blackwood Hill viewpoint is a great mid distance route with a couple of small hills to negotiate. This route utilises part of the Lochgoin circuit walk. Follow the purple dotted route on the map around the edge of Lochgoin before turning left just after turbine 55 and walking up the signposted path to the top of Blackwood Hill where great views to the coast and mountains can be enjoyed. A summit toposcope will help to interpret the views in all directions, and seating is available at the viewpoint. To return to the visitor centre, retrace your steps back along the edge of Lochgoin and Brown Hill, using the green finger posts in reverse.

Whitelee

Explore by bicycle

Whitelee's network of largely traffic-free routes have become increasingly popular with cyclists. With 158km / 99 miles miles of tracks and paths to explore, cycling is the perfect way to discover the area's gently rolling hills, forests and moors.

Whether you're looking to do a short 'out and back' trip to Blackwood Hill, the 8 mile Lochgoin circuit (see page 6) or an all-day excursion, Whitelee has a route to suit everyone - from families/beginners through to more experienced riders. The windfarm itself is surrounded by a network of quiet country roads, many forming part of established cycle networks. These can be combined with windfarm roads to provide longer or more varied routes.

Whitelee visitor centre is the perfect start/finish or stopping-off point during your cycle, offering secure cycle storage, refreshments and other facilities including showers. The development in early 2014 of bespoke, technical mountain biking tracks at Brown Hill is part of wider efforts to improve cycling facilities at Whitelee.

The majority of routes at Whitelee are also used by walkers and horseriders. Please respect the safety of other users at all times. Some vehicles also use roads throughout the windfarm and forest including construction, maintenance and forestry traffic.

Advice for cyclists and other access users

- ✓ Check equipment before setting off and wear a helmet when cycling
- ✓ Follow any information or warning signage on site
- ✓ Leave gates as you find them
- ✓ Enjoy your visit
- ✓ Keep dogs under close control
- ✓ Plan your route, take a map & check weather conditions
- ✓ Do not alarm grazing animals or wildlife and take extra care during lambings/bird nesting season (spring- midsummer)





Explore by horse

Since opening, Whitelee's network of routes has become a popular destination for horse riders to explore the countryside. With the number of self led trail options available, it's little wonder it has become a draw for riders of all kinds.

The windfarm is largely traffic free but please note; maintenance vehicles, timber haulage and felling machinery move around the site and riders are advised to be vigilant, particularly at junctions.



Recommended routes:

- Western end – Lochgoin circuit. Distance – 12.5km / 8 miles**
 With ample parking at the visitor centre this is a popular route for horse riders, and has been used by BHS Scotland for horse familiarisation events. The route is signposted at junctions and leads riders around Lochgoin reservoir with spectacular views to the coast and the Isle of Arran. Track conditions are generally excellent along this route. Please note there are three cattle grids with field or bridle gates next to them to pass through as well as two further gates which are generally always open. Some riders may require to dismount to open/close gates. Mounting blocks or stones are close by to aid remounting. Please see page 6 for further information and advice.

- Eastern end – Ardochrig Loop. Distance – 7.8km / 4.8 miles**

Please note that track conditions are variable and there are two gates with bridle gates to the side to pass through, with boulders/ mounting blocks close by.

The total route covers a distance of 4.8 miles although longer or shorter routes can be followed. Turning right (north) at the substation, the track meanders through a section of conifer plantation before exiting into the open where there is a series of small ponds that are good for wildlife watching. For a short route option, turn left (south) at the junction towards turbine 125 and then on past #126, #140 and back towards Ardochrig.

For the full length route, follow directions as above but turn right at turbine 125, then take the first left, which will take you past #119 and #135 back to Ardochrig. Please see the map for route outline.



Environmental education

The Whitelee Countryside Ranger Service is available to provide environmental education sessions at Whitelee to support outdoor learning, with activities linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. Sessions can be booked on the following themes or bespoke sessions can be created to meet more specific group requirements. Bespoke sessions can also be arranged for universities and colleges.

Popular themes available for nursery and primary school groups include:

- Minibeasts
- Habitats and homes
- Senses
- Biodiversity
- Wind and water

Popular themes for secondary groups include:

- Sustainability
- Biodiversity
- Field studies
- Management of shared use sites

You could make the most of your visit to Whitelee by taking part in the visitor centre education workshops. It is possible to arrange a full day of complimentary activities by booking an environmental education session with the rangers and a science/renewables session with the visitor centre. Please note there is a charge for the visitor centre education sessions.

Please contact both providers to check availability, see page 11 for Ranger details and the visitor centre can be contacted via their website www.whiteleewindfarm.co.uk





Bespoke bookings

Whitelee is a great place to come and enjoy the outdoors, and the rangers are on hand to help make any visit a little more unique. They will happily arrange and lead a bespoke guided walk/event for groups and clubs that wish to get a little more out of their visit to Whitelee. Whatever the group or interest, the rangers can offer walks and activities tailored to the ability and availability of most groups. They can be contacted directly via the details on page 11 of this booklet.

Major events

Just 20 minutes from Glasgow city centre, Whitelee is the perfect place to hold a large event such as a sponsored walk, run or cycle. The site offers safe, largely traffic free routes as well as stunning scenery within the unique setting of the UK's largest windfarm. There are a variety of route options for longer or shorter challenges depending on the event requirements. If you are an event organiser looking for a suitable site, you can follow in the footsteps of MacMillan Cancer Support and others to hold a successful charity event at Whitelee. Whitelee has the potential to host events of all sizes, but all proposals will be considered on an individual basis. Please contact the rangers to discuss your event or submit an enquiry form via the website (see page 11).

Whitelee Stroller Striders

Leaving from the visitor centre at 10am every Tuesday morning, this group takes their babies safely tucked up in buggies for a brisk four-mile walk. Aimed at parents/guardians of young children, the group meets every week, and walks in the rain or shine, returning to the visitor centre café for a well deserved rest and drink. There is no need to book in advance. Please ensure you come prepared with suitable buggies, footwear/clothing and rain cover. Winter walk times are adjusted slightly. Please check the website for up to date news and information.

Contact details

**Whitelee Countryside Ranger Service
and Whitelee Access Officer**

**Ranger Cabin, c/o Whitelee Visitor Centre
Moor Road, Eaglesham, G76 0QQ**

Phone: 0141 614 0962

E-mail: whitelee-crs@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Website: www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/whitelee



Get all the latest news and views on Facebook **www.facebook.com** search Whitelee Countryside Rangers



Follow everything that the rangers are up to in bite size chunks on Twitter **[www.twitter.com@Whiteleerangers](https://twitter.com/Whiteleerangers)**



Browse photos from life at Whitelee on Flickr **www.flickr.com/photos/whiteleerangerservice** or join the group and add your own Whitelee photos to the gallery **www.flickr.com/groups** search for Whitelee Windfarm in the group section.

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Everyone in Scotland is entitled to enjoy access to the countryside and most inland waters, under the guidance of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This means access users can enjoy freedom to undertake outdoor pursuits such as walking/cycling/horse riding amongst others, provided they do so within the three key principles of the code:

- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Respect the interest of other users
- Care for the environment.

For further information on Scottish access rights, please visit the S.O.A.C website **www.outdooraccess-scotland.com**



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Site location & directions



Grid ref – NS528490. Post code – G76 0QQ

Whitelee Windfarm is situated off the B764 Eaglesham Moor Road and is 20 minutes drive from Glasgow city centre, Kilmarnock and East Kilbride. Look for the brown tourist information signs when approaching the windfarm and follow these to the visitor centre.

From Glasgow

Take the M77 south for Kilmarnock/Ayr. Exit at junction 6 (Galston) & follow signs.

From Kilmarnock

Leave the A77/M77 at Fenwick (junction 8) then follow the old A77 for 4km/2.5 miles. Pass under the M77 and then take the first road on the right (B764) and follow signs.

From East Kilbride

Take the A726 west for 4km/2.5 miles until the Belle Craig roundabout. Take Eaglesham exit. In Eaglesham, at the traffic lights, turn right onto Montgomery Street. Follow the road out of the village for 5km/3 miles to the visitor centre.

By public transport

There is currently no bus (or train) service to Whitelee, and Eaglesham is the closest village.

Ranger service activity meeting points

Directions to activity meeting points/Whitelee entrances other than the visitor centre, start in Eaglesham (use QR codes for more details or download PDF's from the WCRS website). If coming via M77 southbound, exit at junction 6, follow signs to Eaglesham and use directions given to reach the meeting point.



Ardochrig entrance

Grid ref – NS638468 nearest post code G75 0QN

Take the B764 towards Jackton. Before Jackton, take road on the right.

At the T-junction, go right and after 200m, take the left at the fork and follow this to the next junction. Turn right and after 50m, take the left turn. Travel for 2km/1.2 miles, then take the second right. Now on Ardochrig road, the windfarm entrance is after 3km/1.8 miles on your right (signposted 'Whitelee Forest'). If coming from East Kilbride or the surrounding area, you can download alternative directions (via Auldhouse) from the WCRS website.



Carrot entrance

Grid ref – NS576482 nearest post code G76 0PN

At traffic lights near the Eglinton Arms take the Strathaven Road, past the primary school. Just after Nether Enoch Farm, take the right fork and continue for 3km/1.8 miles. Limited parking at Carrot is in a lay-by on the left and the entrance to the forest is just down the road.

