

Hang around at *Hanningfield!*

Set in mature woodland, the cafe at Hanningfield Reservoir Visitor Centre has a panoramic view over the 870 acre reservoir. Not to mention a ringside seat to watch the Mission Impossible style antics of the resident squirrels.

The light and airy Visitor Centre has plentiful café tables spaced along the wall of glass overlooking the reservoir – everyone gets a great view. Serious birdwatchers, walkers and families can enjoy a good variety of snacks, sandwiches and rolls, ice cream, cakes and muffins. A traditional corner wood burner creates a cosy atmosphere during the winter months.

Volunteers operate the café and shop: a 70-strong team of volunteers works both inside the centre and out in the woodland, together with a small number of full time managers.

To walk off your cake, a sculpture trail follows paths through the lovely woodland of the Trust nature reserve, with fantastic views of the reservoir. Families can search for sculptures of characters from *The Wind in the Willows*: Mole, Ratty, Toad and Badger – as well as two dastardly Weasels.

A full day can easily be spent at the centre. There are picnic areas and a wildlife garden and, of course, birds and wildfowl in abundance, with bird hides for the committed twitcher and the interested nature lover alike.



The centre runs a programme of family events. Coming up in May and June are a hedgehog-searching trail, bluebell walks, and a Bats, Birdsong and Breakfast event, where visitors can see Soprano pipistrelle bats, then take a walk to see the bluebells, listen to the amazing dawn chorus and finally enjoy a bacon roll and hot drink back in the centre building. For the full event listing and prices visit www.essexwt.org.uk

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Open Daily 9am - 5pm
(November, December &
January 9am - 4pm) Ample
parking. Disabled access.