

GRAZING CATTLE IN OUR PARKS





INTRODUCTION

The Council currently grazes cattle at three of its parks, Hartham Common (Grazing Meadows) in Hertford, Pishiobury Park in Sawbridgeworth and Red, White and Blue to the north of Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford. We have grazed animals on some of our parks on and off for many years now.

The cattle help us manage the landscape and habitats in our parks by clearing invasive tall grasses, scrub and sapling trees in environmentally sensitive areas, allowing for a more species-rich spread of other grasses and wildflowers in valuable habitats, such as grasslands, heathlands and fens. Cattle also turn over the ground with their hooves and produce natural fertilisers to help the plant life thrive.

Residents often let us know how fond they are of the cattle in our parks, whilst they also give families the educational opportunity to see livestock in an otherwise predominantly arable landscape.



DOGS, DOGWALKERS AND THE CATTLE

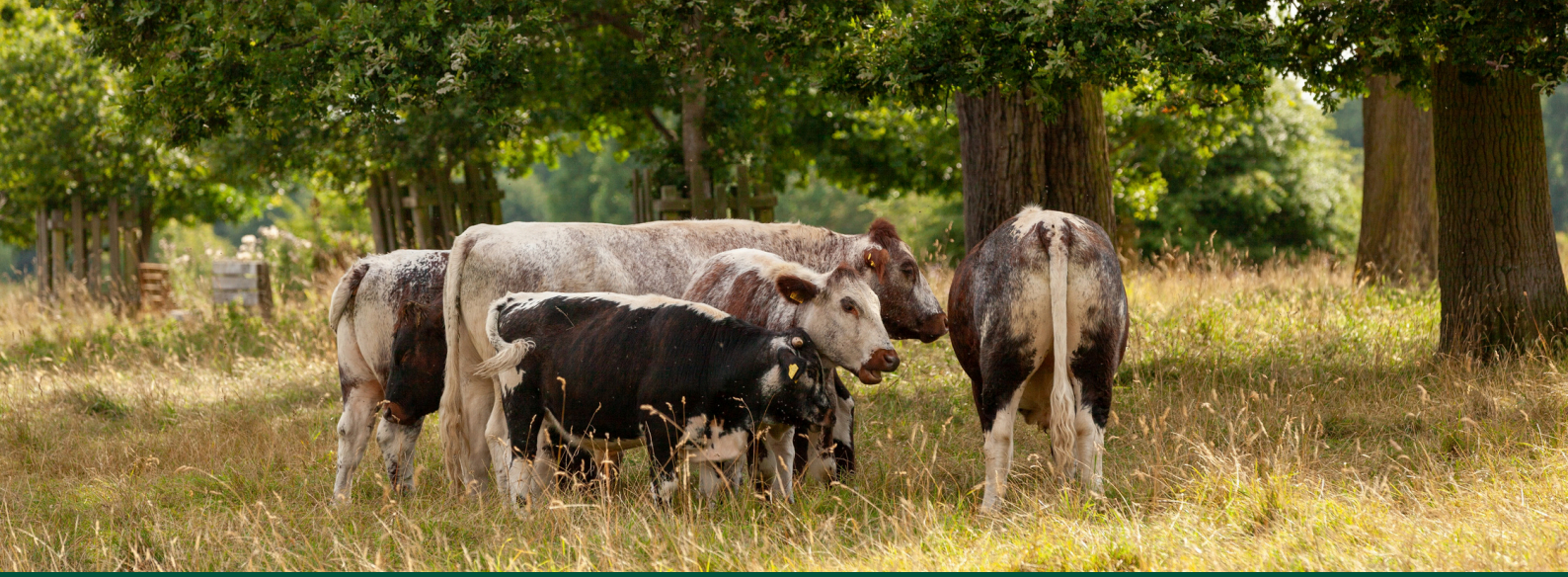
Your dog must be kept on a lead around the cattle in Pishiobury Park. By law, you must control your dog so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals or wildlife.

Livestock worrying can happen when a dog attacks, chases or is loose among livestock. Dogs don't need to make contact for harm to occur. Fear and stress alone can harm livestock, and, in severe cases, cause them to die.

If dogs are not kept under proper control and run off close to cattle, the cattle may instinctively give chase. The dog is most likely then to run back to its owner with a cow in hot pursuit, perhaps even with the rest of the herd naturally following behind. Not only is the owner potentially put at risk in this way, but the cattle are also in danger.

A new law came into effect on Wednesday, 18 March 2026 that will see farm animals in England and Wales get stronger protection from dog attacks.

As such, the fine for livestock worrying has increased from £1,000 to an unlimited fine and police now have powers to detain dogs they suspect may attack or worry livestock.



BEING SAFE AROUND THE CATTLE

All large animals are potentially dangerous. Even gentle knocks from cattle can result in people being injured. Natural England advise that all breeds should be treated with respect.

Our graziers try to ensure that the cattle they own or breed from are of a quiet temperament, but when under stress even normally placid cattle can become aggressive. Changes in the weather, illness, unusual disturbance, or when maternal instincts are aroused can cause stress to cattle.

To ensure your safety around the cattle, please:

- **Move slowly and calmly**
- **Avoid running and making sudden movements**
- **Do not shout or wave your arms at the cattle**
- **Give the animals plenty of space**
- **Keep dogs on a short lead**





BREEDS OF CATTLE IN OUR PARKS

We have been grazing **Longhorns** and **British Whites** at Pishiobury Park since 2008. These specific breeds used by our graziers are known for their docile nature, and each animal brought to the park forms a handpicked herd with a temperament that is best suited to grazing our busy parks.

To help keep the park safe for residents, we do not graze bulls, pregnant or calving cattle in our parks.

Steers are young castrated males, usually raised for beef, whilst a **heifer** is a young cow that has not yet given birth to a calf but is well tempered and suited to an environment where there is likely to be interaction with the public. Our graziers carefully choose the herds from their own steers and heifers.



BREEDS OF CATTLE IN OUR PARKS

The heifers in our parks are especially cautious, tending to keep to themselves, but are naturally curious. They will sometimes approach and sniff out anything new.

Our graziers work in and around these animals on a daily basis and have never seen any of the cattle that are brought into the park look angry or act aggressively. They graze efficiently, often in rows, and can munch through the grass quite quickly at times.

GRAZIERS FROM MAYDENCROFT FARM

Graziers from [Maydencroft Farm](#) look after the cattle in Pishiobury Park, and are proud of what they do. They help us to play an important role in protecting our national landscape heritage.

As well as looking after the animals, the team at Maydencroft provide a friendly, approachable and informative day-to-day service to park users during their regular visits to inspect their animals. They will always be happy to talk to visitors about the animals or grazing techniques. They even provide advice to conservation graziers on a national scale and are leading experts on Longhorns.





VOLUNTEER TO BE A STOCK CHECKER AT PISHIOBURY PARK

For the first time, our Parks and Open Spaces team is looking to recruit residents to be Volunteer Stock Checkers that will be able to visit the site and help with the cattle between May and October.

Volunteer Stock Checkers will have the unique opportunity to get involved with native livestock in their natural environment. They will be trained and organised on a rota, using their training to visually check on the cattle, as well as the infrastructure in the park that's there to keep the cattle and residents safe during their visits.

Those interested in becoming a Volunteer Stock Checker should contact the Countryside Management Service (CMS) by emailing CMS@hertfordshire.gov.uk, using 'Pishiobury Park Stock Checker' as the email subject.





WHAT WE'VE DONE TO MAKE THE PARK SAFE FOR YOU AND THE CATTLE

To be quite sure that any risk at all to our park visitors is kept to a minimum, we take the following precautions:

- We provide separately fenced holding areas in our parks where the graziers can safely load and unload the cattle; this ensures that the animals are not unduly stressed by public interaction during these sometimes delicate operations
- We ensure that cattle watering and feeding stations are located away from routes or areas frequented by the public
- The parks that we choose to graze animals in have good sight lines making sure that it is easy to see the animals from some distance away
- Signs at entry points to the park remind visitors of the requirements to keep their dogs on leads in the vicinity of livestock; visitors are advised for their own safety and that of their dogs to keep clear of the animals wherever possible and to unclip their dogs' leads if they are chased by cattle



- We monitor any incidents where staff or the public have witnessed behaviour in the animals that might cause concern
- Our graziers ensure that the cattle are handled frequently throughout their life and are used to the presence of other people in their enclosures
- Our graziers and staff maintain a good relationship with local RSPCA officers to ensure that they are able to easily contact us about any concerns or reports
- We regularly check that fences, gates and signs in the park are safe and fit for their purpose
- Our graziers regularly check the cattle for illness and other possible causes of changes in temperament
- Our graziers carefully plan how to safely move individual cattle, the whole herd, or part of it, from field to field and to and from the farm



THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

The Country Code was introduced in 1951 as an amendment in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and in 2004 it was rebranded the Countryside Code. It is managed by both Natural England and Natural Resources Wales.

The Countryside Code features rules and guidance that must follow when you're enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside.

We would appreciate it if residents familiarise themselves with The Countryside Code, so that you are better able to enjoy the park and follow guidance about livestock, travel and parking, signage, litter and the weather, as well as other rights and permissions.

Click [HERE](#) to read a summary of The Countryside Code

Click [HERE](#) to view The Countryside Code in full