# Runnymede Pleasure Grounds promoted as 40-minute Thames day trip with sandy 'beach' and paddling pool



The Runnymede Pleasure Grounds, on the banks of the Thames at Egham, is one of the family-friendly spots singled out in a recent Evening Standard travel feature as an accessible option for a wild‑swimming day trip from London. Set beside the river and linked to the Thames Path, it doubles as a convenient launch point for waterside walks to local memorials and makes an easy half‑day outing for parents with children looking for sand, shallow water and a café nearby.

The site’s appeal is straightforward: a stretch of sandy river “beach” sits to the north of a supervised paddling pool, while a large grassy Pleasure Grounds provides space for picnics, kicking a ball and playground fun. The adjacent Runnymede Café serves snacks and light meals in season, and visitor pages and local tourist guides all note that the park fills up quickly at weekends and during hot spells, when families particularly favour the shallow water and play areas.

Getting there is relatively simple. South Western Railway runs frequent direct services from London Waterloo to Egham that typically take about 39–40 minutes; from Egham station the park is roughly a mile’s walk, following Station Road and Church Road before joining Windsor Road to the Pleasure Grounds. For cyclists the Thames Path provides a scenic route from central London that many guidebooks estimate at roughly three and a half hours of steady riding; drivers will find on‑site parking for short visits.

Visitors planning to drive should note the council’s published parking arrangements for the Windsor Road car park: there are several hundred spaces and a short‑stay allowance is explicitly provided (up to 30 minutes free), with longer‑stay tariffs, coach bays and permit options also listed. The council details payment methods, including RingGo and pay‑and‑display, and highlights provisions such as disabled bays and vehicle‑height restrictions that may affect some users.

Practical facilities are managed by Runnymede Borough Council. The paddling pool is currently operational and treated to maintain water quality, while the authority explains that a small number of other paddling pools in the borough remain closed because of repair and drainage costs. The council also emphasises routine park rules—such as a ban on barbecues—and notes that the grounds close at dusk and public toilet availability is governed by set hours.

Anyone planning a visit should check ahead. The Evening Standard and local tourist listings advise readers to verify seasonal opening times, lifeguard provision and any booking requirements before travelling; the council directs would‑be visitors to its social channels or contact points for up‑to‑date notices about closures or events. Likewise, rail‑planning services recommend checking live timetables for services to Egham, particularly at weekends or on bank holidays, to avoid being caught out by engineering works or altered schedules.

### 📌 Reference Map:

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html), [[6]](https://www.visitthames.co.uk/things-to-do/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-p1501761)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html), [[6]](https://www.visitthames.co.uk/things-to-do/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-p1501761), [[3]](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/directory-record/32/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html), [[7]](https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Waterloo-Station/Egham-Station), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/RPG/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/parks-open-spaces-1/paddling-pools), [[3]](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/directory-record/32/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-), [[6]](https://www.visitthames.co.uk/things-to-do/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-p1501761)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html), [[3]](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/directory-record/32/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-), [[7]](https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Waterloo-Station/Egham-Station)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/wild-swimming-london-lakes-rivers-heatwave-b1175601.html> - An Evening Standard travel piece lists ten accessible wild-swimming spots within about an hour of London, offering practical details for day trips. It describes each location’s features, transport options and onsite facilities, covering lakes, rivers and reservoirs such as Bray Lake, West Reservoir and Runnymede Pleasure Grounds. Practical directions from stations, walking distances, cycling options and parking notes are included alongside tips on safety, lifeguard provision and seasonal opening. The article draws on Outdoor Swimming London and local operators, highlights paddling pools, cafés and play areas, and warns readers to check individual sites for current opening times and booking requirements.
3. <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/directory-record/32/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-> - The Runnymede Borough Council page for Runnymede Pleasure Grounds provides official information about the park’s location, opening hours, facilities and amenities. It confirms the presence of a paddling pool, children’s play areas, public toilets and parking, and notes that the park closes at dusk with toilets available during set hours. The page advises visitors about seasonal arrangements such as paddling-pool opening times and local rules including a ban on barbecues. It gives the Windsor Road address and practical details for families and day visitors, directing users to council contacts for updates and further queries about events or maintenance and accessibility.
4. <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/RPG/> - The Runnymede Pleasure Grounds car park page on the council website details parking arrangements at Windsor Road, Egham, including opening times, capacity and charges. It states the car park has several hundred spaces, specifies chargeable hours and explicitly confirms up to thirty minutes free parking for short stays. The page lists longer stay tariffs, coach parking rates and permit options, and explains payment methods including RingGo and pay-and-display. It provides practical contact numbers and a location identifier for mobile payment, and notes restrictions such as maximum vehicle height and the availability of disabled bays, helping visitors plan visits and stops.
5. <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/parks-open-spaces-1/paddling-pools> - The council’s paddling pools page explains the status and management of local paddling pools, highlighting that the paddling pool at Runnymede Pleasure Grounds is operational with opening times and chlorine treatment to maintain water quality. It contrasts this with other pools in the borough that remain closed due to costly repair requirements and drainage issues. The page outlines the council’s rationale for prioritising limited resources, cites safety and environmental concerns about filling and emptying pools daily, and encourages families to use the Pleasure Grounds facility while following safety guidance and checking for updates via the council’s social channels before visiting.
6. <https://www.visitthames.co.uk/things-to-do/runnymede-pleasure-grounds-p1501761> - The Visit Thames attraction page for Runnymede Pleasure Grounds describes the riverside park as a popular, family-friendly destination on the banks of the River Thames. It notes play equipment, a paddling pool, children’s rides in summer and an adjacent café, and recommends the site for picnics and as a starting point for walks along the Thames Path to local memorials such as the Magna Carta and John F. Kennedy memorials. The page warns visitors that paddling-pool availability can change and advises contacting the council for the latest information, and it supplies practical details including opening, parking and toilet facilities nearby.
7. <https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Waterloo-Station/Egham-Station> - Rome2rio’s route page summarises travel options between London Waterloo and Egham, noting frequent direct South Western Railway services that typically take around thirty-nine minutes. It gives journey durations, approximate frequencies and typical fares, and highlights that trains run at least twice hourly with some services faster than the average. The page lists alternative connections by bus or coach and provides links to operators and booking platforms. It is aimed at trip planning and supplies estimated times and distances, while advising travellers to check live timetables and operator notices for up-to-date service information before travelling please.