

# Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

A programme of woodland, grassland, wetland and water quality improvements

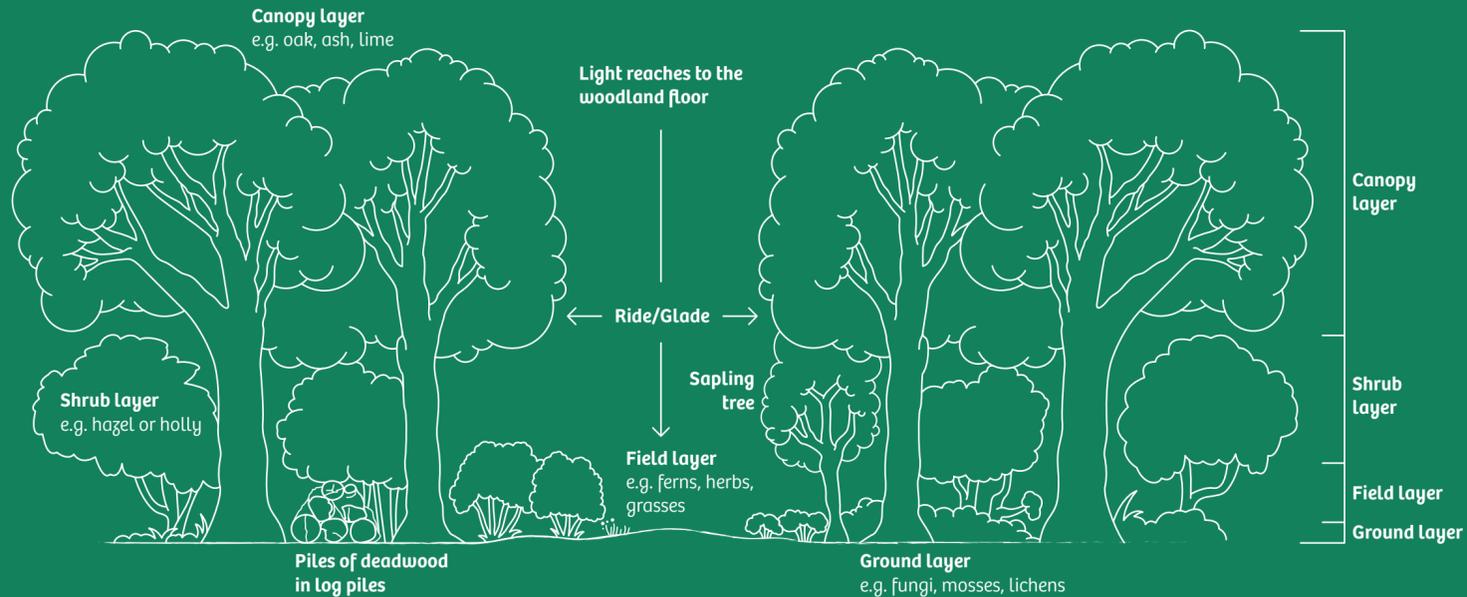
This project has enabled habitat enhancements in twelve of Solihull's woodlands

Solihull Council's woodlands are a key component of the landscape and are important for people and wildlife.

Managing our woodlands ensures that they have more variation in structure, age and species of trees which will increase their biodiversity – attracting and supporting a greater range of wildlife and plants.

Woodlands are composed of a variety of plants of differing heights and shapes. This gives a distinct vertical structure – canopy, shrub, field and ground layers.

Thinning the canopy creates the necessary space and light to enable trees to prosper and allow the next generation of saplings to establish. It also opens glades and rides, creating open areas that attract completely different flowers and wildlife from the rest of the wood.



The woodland structure diagram shows the layers and how rides /glades allow light into the woodland.

Most woodland butterflies are sun-loving insects and the majority only breed in open rides and glades which provide warm and sunny micro-climates. Bats also use rides for hunting attracted by the rich insect life.

## Dorridge Wood

Dorridge Wood is a Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve and re-planted ancient woodland. It includes many ancient woodland species, such as wild service-tree, dog's mercury, common dog-violet, ramsons and wood anemone.

During the 1960s much of the woodland was clear-felled and replanted with a coniferous species plantation. This project has provided the opportunity to remove much of the Scots and lodgepole pine to enable these areas to re-establish as native broad-leaved woodland. Species include oak, ash, cherry, rowan, hornbeam and birch.

## Some species of animals and plants found in the wood



**Soft rush** (*Juncus effusus*) is a thin, tuft-forming rush which grows in wet woodlands. It has smooth, green stems, with a pale green tufted flower in summer which turns bronze. It provides habitat for small mammals. The stems used to be soaked in fat and used as wicks in household lamps as a cheaper alternative to candlelight – this was revived during the Second World War in some rural areas.



The **goldcrest** (*Regulus regulus*), along with the firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*), is the smallest bird in the UK and Europe, weighing in at just 6 grams. It is the distinctive crown that makes this bird stand out, orange in the male and yellow in the female. Goldcrests live in conifer woodland, parks and gardens, and can be seen in mature pine trees picking insects from between the pine needles.

**Scots pine** (*Pinus sylvestris*) is native to Scotland but found widely across the UK. It's tall and straight, up to 35-40 metres and lives up to 700 years. The orange-brown, scaly bark hosts a large number of invertebrates and lichens. It provides shelter and food for a range of species such as the goldcrest.



It has both male and female flowers. Once pollinated by the wind, the female flowers to develop into cones which mature the following season.



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