

# Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

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

Watercourse enhancements have focused on the River Cole and its tributaries the Kingshurst Brook, Hatchford Brook and Low Brook

## Fordbridge Road Reed Bed – improving water quality and diversifying habitats

This reed bed scheme has been designed to improve water quality, diversify habitats and enhance public open space.

A connection into the river Cole was identified as poor quality which could be improved by forming a reed bed alongside. A basin was hollowed out of the gravelly soil and planted with reeds and other wetland plants. The channel has been moved so that natural filtration will help to remove pollutants before it connects into the river.

The reed bed is mainly planted with common reed (*Phragmites australis*) with additional native aquatic and marginal species such as reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) to enhance the plant diversity of the new habitat. These wetland plants act as natural filters, cleaning the suspended sediment as the water runs through, while also slowing down the rate of flow, and oxygenating the water. They also provide food and shelter to freshwater invertebrates, fish and birds.



The area was excavated to create a basin lower than the surrounding land



The reed bed starts to take shape, with gently sloping banks



Newly planted reeds will establish over time, acting to clean the water and provide habitat

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

The **Grey heron** (*Ardea cinerea*) is a tall bird, with a wingspan of 1.8 metres. It is one of the UK's most familiar birds. It feeds mainly on fish, but also eats small mammals, waterbirds and crayfish. It is often seen standing still in the shallow waters of lakes, rivers and ponds, patiently hunting fish. They breed in colonies called heronries, usually high up in trees.



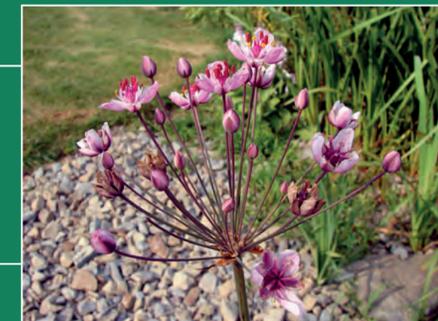
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**Broad-bodied chaser** (*Libellula depressa*) is a medium-sized, broad-bodied dragonfly, commonly seen around ponds. The male has a powder-blue body with yellow spots and the female is greeny-brown. They can be seen from May to July, and occasionally into August. It regularly returns to the same perch after swift flights out across the water looking for insects.

**Flowering rush** (*Butomus umbellatus*) is a common plant in England, growing in wetlands such as ponds, canals and ditches. Its upright, green stems display clusters of bright pink flowers from July to August, and its leaves are long and grass-like.



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