

Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

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

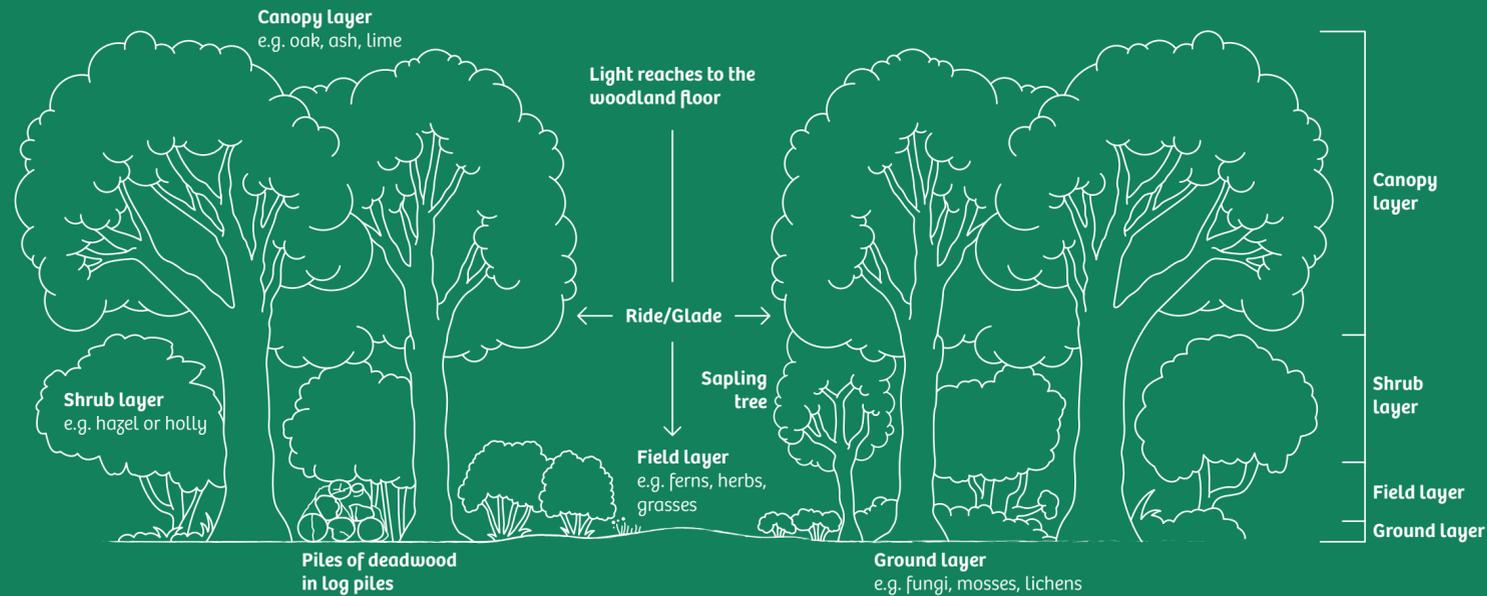
This project has enabled habitat enhancements in twelve of Solihull's woodlands

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.

Hillfield Park Woodland

Hillfield Park woodland is a combination of semi-mature mixed species plantations and wet woodland habitat by the stream. Although not designated as ancient woodland, there are plant species present which could indicate woodland cover having been there for a long time. The stream-edge woodland has significant variation and biodiversity interest. The dominant tree is alder which grows well in damp conditions.

Birds are numerous within the wood providing nesting sites for willow warbler and garden warbler. The trees attract treecreeper, redpoll and goldfinch to feed on abundant seeds in winter.

Some species of animals and plants found in the wood

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*) is a small, active, bird best seen on the trunks of trees in broadleaved and coniferous woodland. They creep up trees using their long, sharp beaks to pick out spiders and insects from crevices in the bark. Once they've reached the top of the trunk, they will often fly down to the base of another and repeat their upward climb. The collective noun for treecreepers is a 'spiral', so named for their habit of spiralling up a tree trunk as they hunt for insects.



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Common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) is the most common orchid in the UK and grows in woodland, grasslands, hedgerows and roadside verges. Its name comes from the numerous purple spots on the green leaves. The flowers range from white and pale pink, through to purple, with distinctive darker pink spots and stripes on their three-lobed lips. The flowers are highly perfumed which attracts day-flying moths from June to August.



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The **speckled wood** (*Pararge aegeria*) flies in partially shaded woodland with dappled sunlight, hedgerows and sometimes gardens. It is a brown butterfly with three small, cream-ringed eyespots on each hindwing and one on each forewing. Adults feed on aphid honeydew and the caterpillars eat various grasses, including false brome, cock's-foot and Yorkshire fog.



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