

Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

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

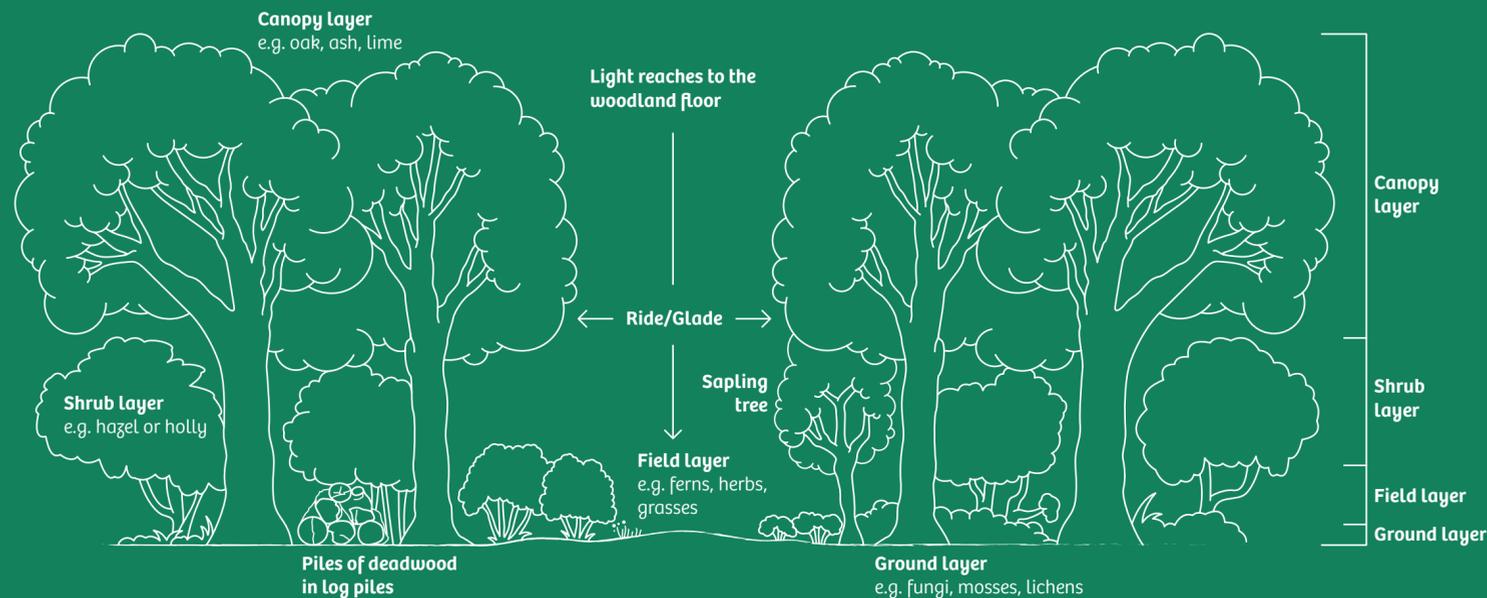
This project has enabled habitat enhancements in twelve of Solihull's woodlands

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.

Palmers Rough

Palmers Rough comprises two blocks of semi-natural ancient broadleaved woodland. It has been suggested that these woods once formed the edge of the Forest of Arden and they are mentioned in the Domesday Book.

The woodland is predominantly oak of the same age, with some birch. The shrub layer has hazel and guelder rose. The flora includes English bluebells, wood anemone, lesser celandine, ivy and bracken. In the ditches and by the pond, plants include wavy hair-grass, marsh cinquefoil and common cow wheat.

Some species of animals and plants found in the wood



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Common cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*) is a plant of woodland edges and is an ancient woodland indicator species. It has deep golden flowers from May to September. It is a hemi-parasitic plant, meaning that it relies on obtaining some of its nutrients from the roots of nearby plants. The nectar can only be reached by insects that have a long proboscis, especially bees.



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The nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*) is about the size of a great tit and resembles a small woodpecker. It can be seen climbing headfirst down tree trunks in woodlands and parks, climbing onto the tree with its strong toes. It has a distinctive black stripe on its head across its eye. It feeds on insects, hazel nuts, acorns and seeds. They nest in holes in trees or abandoned nests.



Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) is a low-growing bush with solitary blue-black fruits, found wild in heathland and woodland edge. Small pink flowers appear in June and develop into bilberries in the autumn. Bilberries are similar to blueberries and are used to make jams, pies and sauces. The plant has been used for nearly 1,000 years in traditional European medicine, treating disorders of the gastrointestinal tract and diabetes.



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