

Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

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

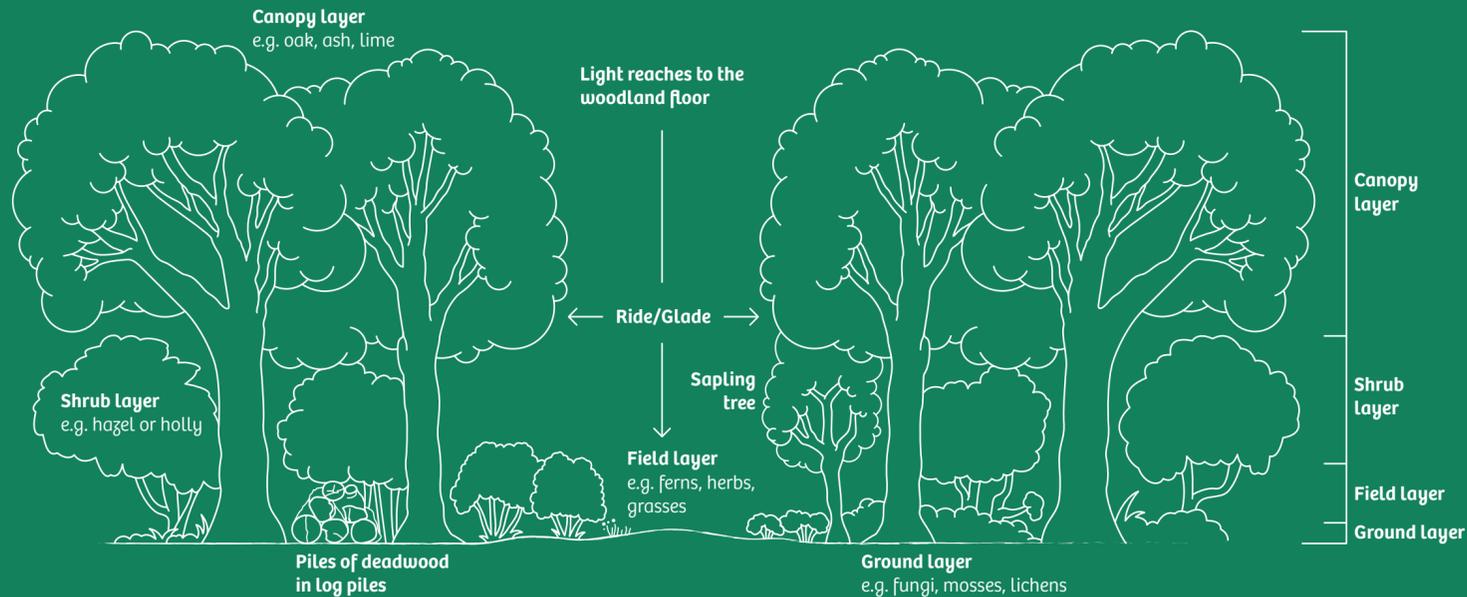
This project has enabled habitat enhancements in twelve of Solihull's woodlands

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.

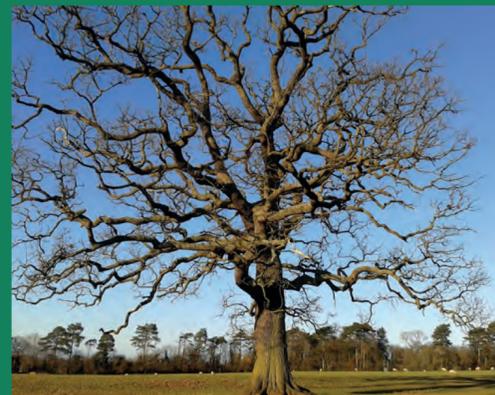
Pow Grove

Pow Grove is a very small piece of ancient oak/birch woodland and all that remains of a larger coppice woodland first recorded as Puck or Powke Grove in 1638, but is probably of much earlier origin.

Since the 1950s, the surrounding farmland changed to suburbia and the wood gradually became surrounded by housing estates and sports pitches. It is now a Local Wildlife Site and an important refuge for many birds such as woodpecker, jay, sparrowhawk and bullfinch.

The understorey was dominated by dense holly, which gradually reduced the ground flora. As part of this work, the holly has been reduced allowing light to reach the woodland floor.

Some species of animals and plants found in the wood



The **English oak** (*Quercus robur*) supports more life than any other native tree species in the UK. The oak tree's loose bark can provide roosting places for bats. The soft leaves of English oaks break down easily in autumn and form a rich leaf mould beneath the tree, supporting invertebrates such as the stag beetle, and fungi, such as the oakbug milkcap. It hosts hundreds of insect species, supplying many birds and bats with an important food source.



Holly blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) is a small blue butterfly that emerges in early spring, from March to May, and then again at the end of the summer between July and September. This is the blue butterfly most likely to be found in gardens, as well as woodlands and parks. The food plants of the caterpillars are mainly holly (for the spring generation) and ivy (for the summer generation).

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) trees can live for 300 years. They provide dense cover and good nesting opportunities for birds. The leaves are eaten by moth caterpillars and particularly those of a holly blue butterfly. The flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. Male and female flowers occur on different trees, with berries developing on the female trees. The winter berries are a vital source of food for birds and small mammals.



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

This project is part funded
by the European Regional
Development Fund

