



Work underway for ancient woodland restoration project at Whippendell Wood

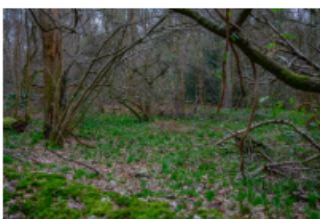
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Watford Borough Council, which maintains Whippendell Wood will be gradually removing invasive non-native trees over the next five years to bring it back to its true and natural historic state...

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The non-native conifers previously planted add little benefit to the plants and wildlife in the local area and over the years have stopped native plants from growing and wildlife from flourishing. The aim is to improve the structural and species diversity of the woodland to support more wildlife, improve access, create better links with the park and wider landscape, and to fulfil our statutory duties in protecting this SSSI and keeping it at 'favourable condition' status.



Over the next 5 years, the following work will take place:

- Removing invasive non-native species such as cherry laurel, snowberry and rhododendron which spread and outcompete our native plant species and reduce the diversity of ground flora
- Creating a more diverse mosaic of tree/shrub species, age and structure through sensitive thinning of densely shaded woodland areas
- Increase open spaces by opening up rides and glades, and creating links between the bigger open spaces (strawberry fields) for ecological connectivity
- Reducing the amount of non-native conifers that were planted as plantations to favour a natural broadleaf mix of trees and shrubs
- Identifying and mapping veteran and biologically significant trees and removing the competition that threatens their survival and health
- Reintroducing traditional management of coppicing to provide link with historic management
- Retaining dead and decaying wood such as fallen logs or snags to support habitats for fungi and invertebrates
- Conserving historic landscape features such as wood banks, dells, avenues and roundels
- Improving access and signage including new entrance signs and maps, and a public rights of way (PROW) project with the Rambles Association and Hertfordshire County Council and a bridal way project with the National Horse Association.

Elected Mayor of Watford Peter Taylor said: "Whippendell Woods is a real gem which is enjoyed by thousands of people each year. However, there is work to be done to make it a healthy woodland. Looking after our environment and making Watford a greener town is so important so I'm really pleased we are starting these works. Woodlands need to be managed to ensure they can be enjoyed by future generations. The scheme will help us to keep the woods healthy for many more years."

Whippendell Wood is designated a SSSI by Natural England, which means it is protected by law to conserve its wildlife and geology. For more information and the latest updates about the project, visit www.watford.gov.uk/cassioburyprojects

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