

by HertsCMS a year ago

Bentsley Spinney welcoming woodland wildlife project

PROJECT COMPLETED MAY 2016



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PROJECT UPDATES

MAY 2016

Mayor of St. Albans attends Bentsley Spinney Project Celebration Event. We had the pleasure of welcoming The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City and District of St Albans, Councillor Salih Gaygusuz to Bentsley Spinney where he was shown improvements to the woodland for the benefit of both people and wildlife. He unveiled a new, beautifully-illustrated interpretation panel which highlights the woodland's main features.

The celebration event was well attended by local residents, CMS volunteers who had been involved in the project delivery, Parish, District and County Councillors and other project stakeholders.



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Group at Launch Event



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Mayor Speech



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Interpretation Board unveiling

Volunteers install new entrance signs at entrances off The Ridgeway, Sky's Wood Road and Bentsley Close. Also install new interpretation panel close to the Byway by the group of old Hornbeam trees on the woodbank. All trees were checked and replacement stakes and guards put on as required. The volunteers also found time to install a number of bat boxes to provide roost sites in areas where natural features e.g. rot holes in trees were low in number.

Contractors carry out surfacing work along Byway, constructing approximately 20metres of 2m wide path from Sky's Wood Road entrance to meet up with existing surfacing on the Byway. The large step down from the footway at The Ridgeway entrance onto the Byway was eliminated with the construction of a shallow sloping surfaced ramp. Mud was scraped off the existing surfaced Byway within the woods and areas repaired to provide a firm all weather surface for users.



Path 1 before



Path 1 after



Path 2 before



Path 2 after



Path 3 before



Path 3 after

New rights of way waymarking finger posts installed at each entrance showing the Byway number, destination and distance.



FEBRUARY 2016

Volunteers followed up the forestry work planting 400 young trees, a mix of hazel, hawthorn, hornbeam, field maple and oak to provide for a varied, new generation of trees to succeed, as existent maturing trees begin to decline and also to enable the establishment of a more diverse understory layer within the thinned area of the Spinney.



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Volunteer Tree Planting after thinning

Contractors completed the forestry works, pollarding several old Hornbeam trees and thinning an area of Sycamore. A lot more light coming into areas now. All timber extracted to road for collection and sale on open market for firewood.



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Before thinning



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Following thinning and extraction



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Log stack



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Hornbeams before pollarding

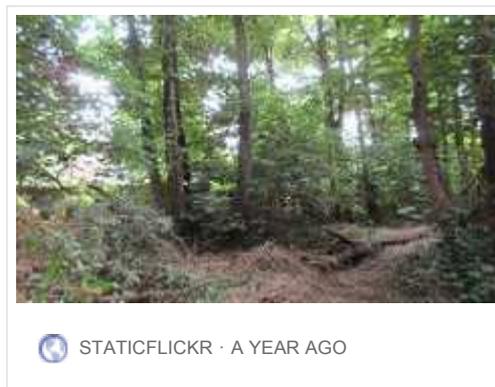


Hornbeams after pollarding

JANUARY 2016

Woodland management works will commence in the Spinney on **Monday 8th February** and last for approximately 2 weeks.

The area dominated by Sycamore will be thinned (see above map), involving the felling of some trees in crowded groups and those close to the boundary. This will give the remaining trees more space to grow healthily and provide space for native trees and shrubs grow. Over time this work will improve the area for woodland wildlife.



In addition, some of the old Hornbeam trees adjacent to the main path will be pollarded, a traditional management technique where tree stems are reduced to promote new growth and perpetuate the trees into old age.



The majority of the resulting timber will be extracted for use e.g. as firewood. Access to the Spinney will generally remain unaffected, however temporary path closures maybe necessary on safety grounds, so please follow the health and safety instructions given by the contractors.

Following the thinning works this area of the wood will have a mixture of young native trees and shrubs planted. This work will be carried out by volunteers on **Wednesday 24th February**, the volunteer task is open to all (under 18s must be accompanied and supervised by an adult) so come along and join in. For more details [Contact Us](#).

The interpretation panels and entrance signage is currently being illustrated and designed ready for installation on site in the spring. I have attached a copy of the initial draft illustration for the panel.

JUNE 2015 – New Steps and Old Signs Removed



CMS regular Wednesday Practical Conservation Volunteer team visited the Spinney to install a new set of steps on the path which runs along the eastern side of the woodland where it goes down a steep slope. This section of path is particularly slippery in the winter and the steps will make walking this area of the Spinney much more enjoyable and safer. Whilst on site the volunteers removed old signs from the entrances and trimmed back vegetation from the path edges to make them more accessible. On the day the group were joined by Councillor Geoff Churchard.