

Balls Wood

A sizeable and varied woodland, where plantations of conifers contrast with old coppiced hornbeams.

The boundary of this woodland is clearly marked on a map of 1790 although it may not always have been a woodland. The northern part of the wood is the oldest and varies from old hornbeam [coppice](#), which is now very mature, to mixed woodland of ash and field maple. Aspen has become more abundant in recent years and stands out when its leaves quiver in a breeze.

Throughout the wood there are [rides](#) which, being open and sunny, abound with butterflies, including the white admiral, and other insects in the summer. It is important to keep these rides open for wildlife and to open other areas by coppicing or the removal of trees too close to the ride.

In spring the woodland rides are full of birdsong and wildflowers, including bluebell, wood anemone, early purple orchid and the rare herb paris. Breeding birds include great-spotted woodpecker and sparrowhawk.

There are many ponds in Balls Wood which vary from shallow, muddy pools to deeper more open ponds. These support a range of aquatic organisms, including great crested newts, dragonflies and toads. Surprisingly the wood is home to grass snakes and slow worms.

Balls Wood is adjacent to [Hertford Heath](#).

Volunteer Warden Needed

After many years as warden for Balls Wood, Paul Hewitt will be taking up a job with the National Trust at their estate at Wallington in Northumberland. In his time as volunteer Warden for Balls Wood Paul has lead numerous work parties and walks at the reserve. He also brought volunteer groups to the reserve, doing work on the ponds and generally improving the rides.

We will miss his involvement with the Trust and wish him well in his new role. HMWT is looking for a volunteer Warden to continue Paul's work at Balls Wood. [Click here for more information.](#)

Balls Wood work parties

Make a difference to wildlife by taking part in one of our monthly work parties. Work parties take place at Balls Wood on the third Sunday of the month from September to March at 10:00am-1:00pm. The work programme is shared between Balls Wood and Hertford Heath NR. For more information contact Paul Hewitt on 07803 243 687.

For other volunteering opportunities within the Trust, [click here](#).

- [Get driving directions](#)
- [Find nearby public transport](#)

How to Get Here

Location

Hertford Heath Village

Directions

From Hertford Heath village turn into Roundings Road adjacent to the College Arms pub. There is limited parking along this road although not in the private section. From here walk about one kilometre along the road, keeping to the right where it joins an unsurfaced section of the Roman Ermine Street. The entrance to Balls Wood is on the left where there is a Forest Enterprise sign.

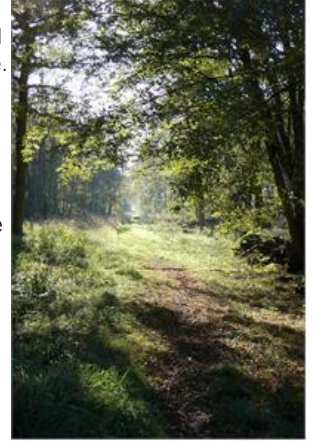
Public Transport Links

The nearest bus stop is in Hertford Heath Village and the nearest train station in Hertford.

Walking Links

Map Reference

TL 348106



Visitor Guide

Size

55 hectares

Access to site

Open access to paths. (Please do not enter the woodland areas).

Access around site

Walking time

Advice on what to wear/bring

Wellingtons usually necessary.

Map of site (if available)