

Fox Covert

A small beech woodland on the edge of Therfield Heath

Fox Covert is of quite recent origin, being planted in the late nineteenth century with beech. Many of these trees have become tall and thin and the gales of 1987 and 1990 caused several to come down.

The resulting upturned root boles show how shallow-rooted beech trees are and also how close to the surface the underlying chalk is. Beech woodlands generally cast a deep shade where little grows beneath, except for the pale flower spikes of the white helleborine. The gales have created more open areas where wild privet, sycamore, ash and beech are quickly regenerating. Some fallen trees have been left on the ground as they provide a valuable [micro-habitat](#) for many [invertebrates](#) and fungi.

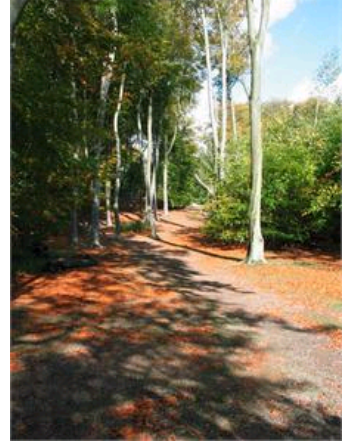
The woodland is frequented by deer and many species of birds.

Fox Covert is on the edge of Therfield Heath, one of the most extensive remaining areas of [chalk grassland](#) in eastern England.

Church Hill on Therfield Heath is renowned for its large colony of rare pasque flowers which bloom in early spring. Grassland herbs include bastard toadflax, lesser meadow rue and spotted cat's-ear. Other typical chalk grassland flowers include horseshoe vetch, squinancywort and the nationally rare field fleawort, together with wild candytuft and five species of orchid.

During winter you can see fieldfares and redwings, while meadow pipits and skylarks are present all year round. In summer several species of butterfly can be seen including the brown argus and the largest colony of chalkhill blues in Hertfordshire.

Therfield Heath is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and also a Local Nature Reserve.



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

How to Get Here

Location

Royston

Directions

From Royston take the A505 bypass towards Baldock. Take the first exit at roundabout with the Little Chef. Take right turn signposted Therfield. Park in layby a little way along this road, on the left. Cross the road and walk through the metal gate. The reserve is a 5 minute walk along the woodland trail.

Public Transport Links

Rail: Royston (two minutes walk from Therfield Heath).

Walking Links

Therfield Heath; Hertfordshire Way; Icknield Way.

Map Reference

TL 337403

Visitor Guide

Size

2.9 hectares (7.2 acres)

Access to site

Via track through woodland or across Royston golf course.

Access around site

Track runs through the reserve, some steep slopes.

Walking time

1/2 - 3/4 hour

Advice on what to wear/bring

Map of site (if available)