

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate use



Herts & Middlesex

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Woodland restoration project made possible with lottery award

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are embarking on a huge project to restore and raise awareness of woodlands in South Hertfordshire, backed by a grant of £420,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The three-year Woodlands for People and Wildlife project starts in September and will focus on Gobions Wood and Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserves near **Potters Bar** and Balls Wood Nature Reserve near **Hertford**.

The local community will play a key role in the project. Around 100 volunteers will be recruited to assist Wildlife Trust staff with work to improve the habitats for wildlife, surveying key species including butterflies, bats, reptiles and amphibians and helping to run a programme of guided walks and community events.

The Woodlands for People and Wildlife project forms an important part of the Trust's vision of a living landscape, which sees nature restored on a big scale. Tom Day, Head of Living Landscapes commented: "The natural world has been hugely fragmented; protecting wildlife on nature reserves alone will not stop the decline in biodiversity the UK is experiencing. That's why The Wildlife Trusts are looking at the bigger picture. We're working with landowners and local communities to join up fragments of habitat so our wildlife has room to adapt and move, and so that people can get close to the natural world wherever they live. We're grateful to HLF for recognising the importance of the woodlands in South Hertfordshire to our vision of a living landscape."

The project will provide opportunities for people to learn about woodland wildlife and explore the nature reserves through a series of

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President - SA Bowes-Lyon, PCA

open days and other activities, which will highlight the importance and value of these special places.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said, “These ancient woodlands and heathland are an important part of our shared natural heritage. Valuing and learning about our natural environment is vital to ensure that we preserve our precious woodlands for future generations. Thanks to lottery players, many more people will be able to get involved, learn about and appreciate these living landscapes.”

Information and access for visitors to the woodlands will be improved with new signage and paths. Vital conservation work will include pond creation, the restoration of woodland ‘rides’ that allow a greater diversity of woodland plants and animals to thrive and management of the older (veteran) woodland trees.

Key species that should benefit include white admiral and purple emperor butterflies and the hazel dormouse, which is in decline as a result of shrinking woodland habitat. Hertfordshire has lost 44% of its ancient semi-natural woodland in the last 50 years.

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Notes for editors:

Balls Wood Nature Reserve was bought by the Trust in 2009. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust campaigned for eight months to raise support and money locally and from its members and partners to buy the 145 acre woodland, as well as adjacent Hobby Horse Wood. In all over £130,000 was raised and the wood was saved from an uncertain future. The HLF funded project is the next step in the Trust’s strategy to restore the woodland landscape in South Hertfordshire.

Woodland wildlife

Gobions Wood is famed for its fungi, with 558 different species identified. Balls Wood supports many butterflies including the stunning white admiral, which has seen a dramatic population decline in the last twenty years, and herb paris, an unusual wildflower. Ancient oak and hornbeam woodland makes up much of Fir and Pond Woods, the best remaining part of Enfield Chase, which is teeming with bird life including woodpeckers, sparrowhawks, warblers and tits.

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

We are the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and neighbouring areas. With 44 nature reserves spanning 1,900 acres, from beautiful woodlands and wetlands to rare patches of heath and orchard, we take practical action every day to help wildlife flourish. The Wildlife Trusts are unique in being the only organisations that work to protect the full range of UK habitats and species, at a local level. We are a membership organisation, relying on supporters for three quarters of our income.

A living landscape

[A Living Landscape](#) is The Wildlife Trusts' vision for the future of the UK. It is a new way

of thinking about how we manage land to do more for wildlife, people and the economy.

In a living landscape:

- Wildlife is **abundant** and **flourishing**, both in the countryside and our towns and cities
- Whole landscapes and ecosystems have been **restored**
- Wildlife is able to move freely through these landscapes and **adapt** to the effects of climate change
- **Communities** are benefitting fully from the fundamental services that healthy ecosystems provide
- Everyone has access to wildlife-rich green spaces and can enjoy and **be inspired** by the natural world.

The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) wildlifetrusts.org

There are 47 individual Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK and the Isle of Man and Alderney. All are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We have more than 800,000 members including 150,000 members of our junior branch [Wildlife Watch](#). We manage around 2,300 nature reserves and every year we advise thousands of landowners and organisations on how to manage their land for wildlife. We work with thousands of schools and our nature reserves and visitor centres receive millions of visitors.

Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5 billion across the UK, including almost £305 million in the East of England across almost 3,000 projects. www.hlf.org.uk

Contact for further information and high res images:

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