

Bluebell

What's going on at Whittleford Park?

We are currently creating a new 'balancing basin' which we are confident will contribute to the much cherished character and biodiversity of Whittleford Park. This will replace the old basin, which wasn't sufficient for the needs of the new homes currently being built in the area.

A balancing basin is quite simply a pool of water which supports the drainage of the area, especially during times of heavy rain. It also provides a sanctuary for the local wildlife.

We have worked very closely with the Friends of Whittleford Park, the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, as well as with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to develop the most suitable plan and will continue to do so throughout the progress of this project.

Along with our landscaping and ecology advisors we have undertaken extensive research, site surveys and data analysis using local and county records to gain a thorough understanding of the ecology within the park. This information has allowed us to develop a basin that will actually enhance and complement the ecology found here.

For example native tree and shrub species, grassland seed mix and wetland vegetation have been selected based on the type of vegetation already found within the park. Over time, as this new landscape matures, the balancing basin will create new habitats and will positively contribute to the character of the park.

It will take time for the new park to fully develop as a functioning ecosystem but it has been designed to minimise this time lag. For example existing willows have been harvested and will be used in the habitat re-creation following construction. Reeds from the adjacent balancing lake will also be harvested and used in the habitat creation.

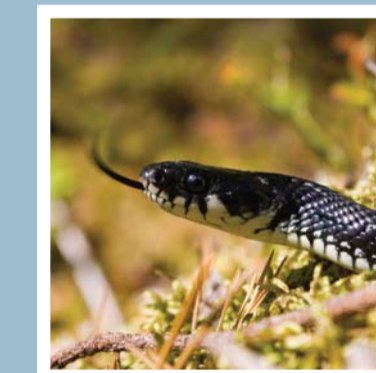
Once finished, access to the perimeter of the basin area will be available using the existing footpath network. There will also be some seating along side the basin to enjoy views across and out of the park, making the new basin a place of peace and tranquillity that everyone can enjoy.



Flora – The scheme will provide a diverse range of floristic species appropriate to the local area, focusing on species that will attract a wide range of species from butterflies to birds.



Birds – The mosaic nature of habitats will support a diverse population of bird species, focused on those previously recorded such as swans but also providing additional habitat for other species. Birds recorded included kestrel, sparrowhawk, blackcap, song thrush.



Amphibians and reptiles – Although no great crested newts were found (a protected species), the habitats have been designed to provide suitable home for this species should it disperse into the area at a later date. A low population of grass snake were confirmed and the habitats have been designed to support a moderate to high population.



Invertebrates – The wetland features and areas of open water will be of particular value to a range of invertebrates including dragonflies and damselflies.



Mammals – Our surveys indicated low use of the area by bats but it is anticipated that the mosaic of terrestrial, wetland and transitional habitats will provide higher quality foraging for them.

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