



# Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum

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## Coppicing in the south wood

Tuesday 5th February 2019



**We are currently coppicing an area in the south of the wood. Each winter a different section of this part of the wood is coppiced to create a mosaic of habitats which includes these more open areas.**

In these glades, the greater light levels allow woodland flowers to bloom attracting bees, butterflies and other insects. In subsequent years, the felled trees regenerate from the stumps, creating a low layer of scrub. This is perfect habitat for small mammals and birds to find cover and nest. Dormice in particular like to move through the woodland at this height. After a certain number of years, (usually 15 to 20) the now sturdy stems are felled again and the cycle continues.

Coppicing was once carried out in order to harvest wood for tools, fencing, hurdles and firewood. Today, our primary aim is rather to create the perfect habitats in which our woodland species have evolved to thrive. However, we do find markets for much of the wood. The older (larger) material is cut and split for firewood and we produce bean poles and pea sticks which are sold through our Visitor Centre. This year we will be using the smaller cordwood to produce charcoal that will also be available to purchase. Any material that we can't find a market for will be chipped and used on some of the unsurfaced woodland paths or made available for sale. The coppicing also helps to keep the viewpoint clear: if the areas in front of the viewpoint weren't cut on a 10 year rotation this wonderful view would be lost.

This year, much of this work has been funded through the Queenswood Heritage Gateway project (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund), as well as a grant from Entrust. We are employing a trainer: Toby Allen from local organisation *Say it With Wood*, who will be instructing two volunteers in basic chainsaw operation and two more in

woodland tractor operation. This allows traditional woodland management skills to be passed on and ensures there is a wider team of trained volunteers to continue the woodland work at Queenswood.

The below pictures show one coppice area regrowing over several years and the different habitats created in the space over time.

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