



# Highgate Wood

Registered Charity



# Welcome to Highgate Wood

This is one of  
14 green spaces  
managed by the  
City of London at  
little cost to the  
general public.

# Welcome to Highgate Wood

Highgate Wood is a 28 hectare ancient woodland open to the public from 7.30am until dusk every day of the year. It is a wonderful place for you to walk and explore, with a restful, leafy atmosphere. Children will love our large and well-equipped playground, open every day until approximately one hour before the wood closes. You will find the picturesque central field provides a perfect setting for sport, recreation and relaxation. Visit the Pavilion Café, on the field edge, where great food is served every day. A small car park nearby is provided for people with impaired mobility.

Find our events diary at all entrances and at [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/highgatewood](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/highgatewood). Highgate Wood's rich wildlife and geology make it a great place to learn about nature and we offer guided walks to school groups. Visit our information centre, next to the café, for wildlife and historical information and self-guided trail leaflets.



# History of an ancient woodland

Evidence of human activity and use of wood dates back to prehistoric times. Flints have been found and travelling artisans were producing pottery using the local clay and timber between AD 50-100. During the Medieval period, the wood was part of the Bishop of London's hunting estate. Between the 16th and 18th centuries the church leased the wood to tenants, who managed it as 'coppice with standard'. Hornbeam was coppiced, being regularly cut and used for fuel, and oak standards were left to grow to maturity, before being felled for construction of ships and buildings.

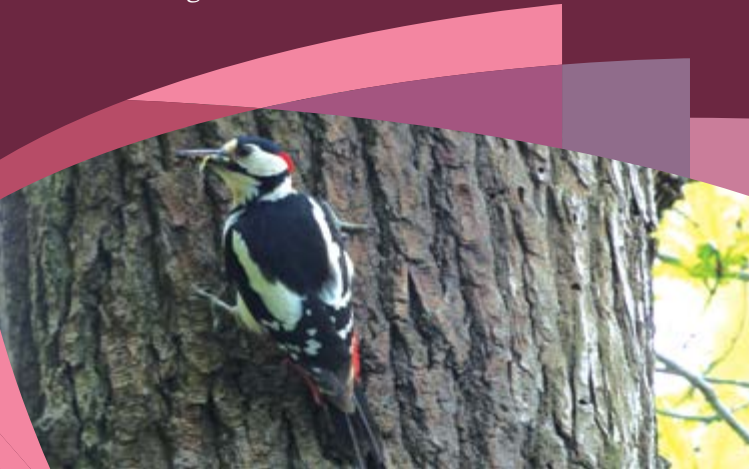
In the 1880s, the surrounding area was being rapidly built-up. Local residents feared that the church would sell off the wood for development, as the last tenant had given up his lease.

A high-profile campaign to save the wood began, led by Henry Reader Williams. It was successful and in 1886 the wood was gifted to the City of London and declared "open for the use and recreation of the public forever".



## An oasis for wildlife

Highgate Wood is a Site of Metropolitan Importance, recognising its great value for nature conservation. Over 950 species of invertebrates have been recorded here, with more being discovered each year, some of which are rare and notable. Many of these species are reliant on very particular niches found only in ancient woodlands, with their well-developed and complex ecosystems. To date, 362 moth, 353 fungi, 70 bird and seven bat species have been recorded. At least 28 species of bird regularly breed here, including great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and treecreeper. There are more than 50 species of trees and shrubs, with oak, hornbeam and holly being the most common. Look out for several mature wild service trees; these are considered to be good indicators of the wood's ancient origin.





# Conservation areas

The wildlife in the wood thrived under centuries of active management and harvesting. But, this ceased and during the 20th century many of these trees were left to grow tall and old, resulting in the high dense canopy of hornbeams and increasing decay and death of the old oaks. In response to this situation positive management was reinstated in 1977. Since then, a small area of woodland has been partly coppiced every five years, developing a wider, healthier, age range of trees. These conservation areas are fenced for 10 years to allow the ground flora to regenerate and the saplings to get established.

# Biodiversity for the future

The long-term aim of the woodland management is to create and protect space for both growth and decay. The challenge is to maintain this healthy balance with the added modern pressures of increased visitor numbers, introduced pest species and extreme weather events. In conjunction with our conservation areas, we carry out creative dead-hedging, thinning, and planting throughout the wood, often with the help of volunteers. We educate our visitors to be respectful of fungi and other vulnerable species to help us support a rich biodiversity for the future.





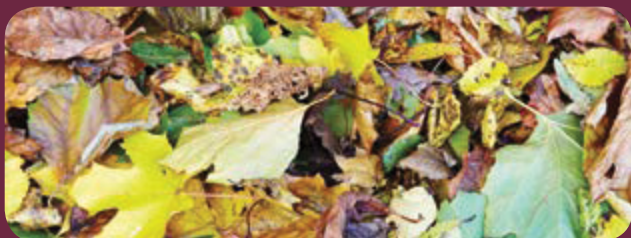
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Highgate Wood is one of a number of open spaces, parks and gardens in and around London protected and managed by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to London's culture, heritage and green spaces. Each open space is a unique resource managed for the benefit of people to enjoy and for its wildlife and conservation importance. Please respect the peace and quiet enjoyed by the many other users of Highgate Wood and nearby residents. A full list of sites and visitor information can be found at: [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces)



## Contact us

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