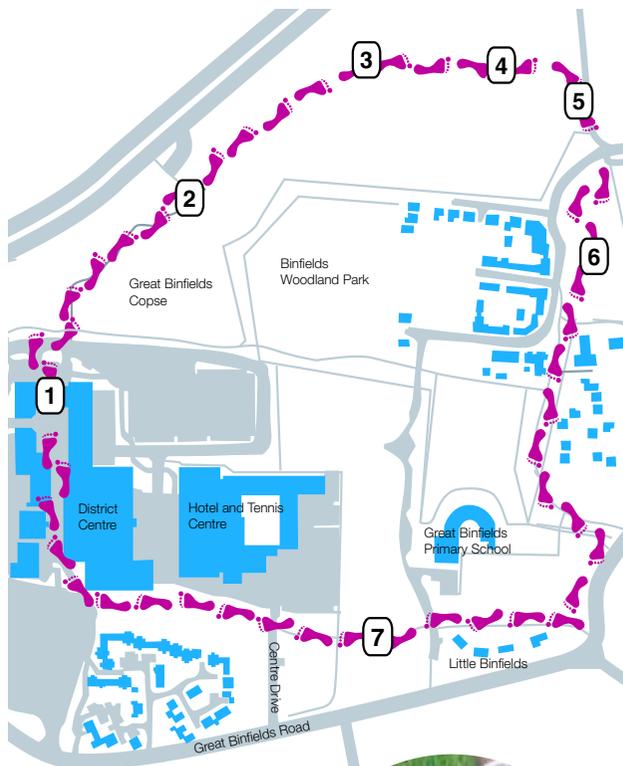


In summer it provides nectar for bees and butterflies, followed by berries in the autumn, which are eaten by birds and humans alike. The arching stems also provide a safe haven for birds to nest, away from cats and other predators. To the right of the path you can see Scots pine, a tree easily identified by its golden orange bark. Scots pine is one of our three native conifers, the other two being juniper and yew. The trees you can see here were originally planted for timber, but are now more important for their wildlife value. Some birds prefer coniferous woodland, including our smallest native bird, the Goldcrest. As its name suggests, this tiny bird has a distinctive golden stripe on top of its head. Walk along the path running adjacent to the school playground. Just after the post box, turn right down another footpath, walking towards the Centrecourt Hotel.



8. On your left you will see a line of trees that are possibly the remains of ancient woodland. Continue along the path walking past the school, cross the road that leads into the school and onto the footpath opposite. Continue straight on, walking past an area of scrubby grassland on your left, then past the tennis courts. Cross the road that leads into the Centrecourt Hotel onto the footpath opposite. Follow the footpath that cuts through a shrub bed into an area of short grass. You will see the Tesco car park in front of you. Although not of great wildlife value, short grass is used by foraging birds, in particular blackbirds, hunting for leather jackets just below the soil. After leaving the area of short grass, walk back into the Chineham District Centre and you will see the Chineham Library in front of you.

Binfields Map



This walk starts and finishes at **Chineham District Shopping Centre.**

Most of the walk is on hard surface, but sensible footwear is recommended.

The walk distance is **2km** or **1 1/4 miles.**

Binfields Woodland Nature Walk



Basingstoke
and Deane

As you walk through the woodland look out for its flora and fauna and a series of artworks inspired by the woodland and local residents (the artworks were funded by a Percent for Art contribution from Bellwinch Homes).

Start from Chineham Library at the Chineham District Centre.

Walk through the shopping centre, with Tesco on your right. Leave the centre walking through the archway, past the fish and chip shop on your left. Turn right out of the Chineham District Centre and walk across the road into Great Binfields Copse.

1. As you walk into the woodland you will see an old wood-bank and ditch running from either side of the path.

This was once used to keep livestock out of the woodland. Historically, Great Binfields Copse was managed using an ancient woodland technique called 'coppicing'. Broad-leaved trees were cut down to the base, allowing them to re-grow. The re-growth was then harvested to make fences and was also used for fuel. It was important to keep livestock out of the woodland, to prevent new shoots being eaten. If you look to your left as you walk along the path, you will see some old hazel trees, evidence of this coppice management. Cutting the hazel in this way allows a variety of different flowers to grow in the woodland; many of which can be still seen here today. On the other side of the path is plantation woodland, dominated by beech trees. On the woodland floor you can see the prickly shells of the beech mast. The dense shade cast by beech trees is ideal for bluebells and in spring the woodland floor is covered with this lovely flower.

2. Continue along the path until you reach a wooden sculpture called

'Working Wood' by artist Jeff Higley. The three sided oak artwork reflects the traditional art of woodland coppicing and relates to the shelter structure that workers would build whilst in the woods. The central locking piece is carved as a Green Man, the mythical caretaker of ancient woodlands. The other images carved into the piece represent a medieval coppice worker and a Victorian stool maker, who are both working the same area of coppice but centuries apart.

Continue through the woodland and the path will shortly change from tarmac to gravel. Look out for the oak totems by wood carver Clinton Chaloner. The pieces include representations of the Harts Tongue fern, the Nuthatch and the Cuckoo Pint flower, or 'Lords and Ladies'

3. One of our largest butterflies, the silver washed fritillary, may be spotted in this part of the wood during mid-summer. Their numbers have declined over recent years, so we are lucky to still have them in Binfields Copse. The silver washed fritillary needs open woodland to survive, so scallops have been cut into the vegetation alongside the path.

Common dog-violet is the favoured food plant of this butterfly. You may also see striking 'willow flowers' made by local children and artist Angela Morley in clearings alongside the main pathway.

4. As you walk along the path you will see clumps of honeysuckle growing through the trees on either side of the path. The winding growth of this plant is well described through its old name of woodbine. It flowers between June and October, attracting insects both

during the day and throughout the night. Moths that appear as the sun goes down will in turn attract bats. The bright red berries that appear in the autumn are eaten by woodland birds.

5. Keep walking along the path and you will see two giant metal insects created by artist blacksmiths Thrussell and Thrussell. Both the centipede and stag beetle are key species within the woodland and the stag beetle; Britain's largest insect is also an endangered species. Continue along the path until you reach the edge of the woodland. As you leave the copse, look on the woodland floor for a common woodland plant, Lords and Ladies, which has an unusual flower.

6. When you leave the woodland, turn left and cross over the road. You will now be on a tarmac path that heads towards the play area. Follow this path through a small wooded area. This area is full of woodland birds. You may be lucky enough to spot a tree creeper, spiralling its way up the trunk of an old oak tree. It has a long thin beak, perfectly shaped for retrieving insects from the cracks in the bark. Walk past the play area, following the path over a wooden bridge. The path changes to gravel as it winds its way through the woodland. Turn right when the path changes to tarmac. At the next path junction, next to lamp-post number 11, turn right. At the path T-junction, turn left. Continue along the path towards Great Binfields Primary School.

7. On either side of this path are banks of bramble. This plant is important for a variety of wildlife.

