

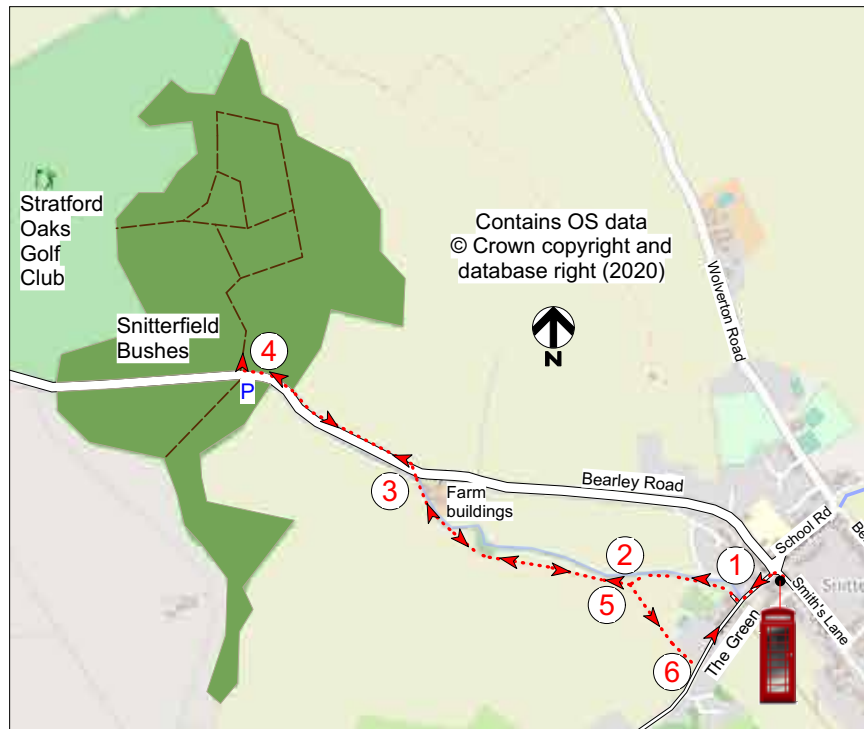


Snipe Walk 8 The Snitterfield Bushes Walk

About a mile (1.6 km) in each direction then as far as you wish in the woodland

A walk from the village across fields and then along the Bearley Road to reach Snitterfield Bushes. This nature reserve covers around 50 hectares (123 acres) and is full of wildlife, both flora and fauna, and wonderful in all seasons. This walk gives you a route there and back (sadly not circular) but we suggest you explore the reserve by choosing your own paths. Dogs are not allowed in the reserve.

Start at the telephone box at the crossroads of The Green, Smith's Lane, Bearley Road and School Road.



Turn left to walk up The Green until, after about 150 yards, you turn right into The Knob, a small lane just past Sharrow House. **1** Walk up the lane and go through a metal gate ahead into a field.

2 At the end of the field go through a waymarked metal kissing gate and continue through a large field in the same direction, keeping the treeline and brook on your right. Head towards the right corner of the field in the direction of farm buildings and cross a double stile and bridge. In the next field keep the hedge line on your right and shortly after passing the farm buildings look out for a stile and bridge in the hedgerow ahead. Cross this to join the Bearley Road. **3** Turn left and walk up the road with care for about eight minutes until you reach a pedestrian metal gate on your right to the side of a metal farm gate. **4** Go through this to explore Snitterfield Bushes. You will find an information board on your right.

On your return retrace your steps down Bearley Road. Cross the stile and bridge before the farm buildings and at the end of the field go across the double stile and bridge. Walk down the large field with the brook on your left. When you are close to the end of the field, instead of going straight on through the metal kissing gate you used on the way out, look right and go through a gate in the hedgerow. **5** Follow the left field edge, through a gate and keep going until you reach a gate onto The Green.

6 Turn left and walk down the road to the crossroads, where you turn right to reach the start point.

Snitterfield Bushes has been a natural forest for hundreds of years and used for timber and agriculture. You can still see old ridge and furrow plough markings in some areas. During the Second World War the trees were felled and the land was used as an airfield. It was used to train Belgian air crews and closed in 1946. Traces of the old concrete runways and bomb stores (now overgrown but visible as long, domed shapes) can be found towards the centre of the woodland.

After the war the site was one of two possible locations considered for the British Grand Prix, but Silverstone was chosen and the woodland was allowed to regenerate. It is owned and managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, with help from local volunteers. It has SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) status.

Visit in spring to enjoy bluebells, primroses and, later in May and June, numerous common-spotted orchids. The woodland supports 250 different species of plants, many being rare in Warwickshire such as herb paris and broad-leaved helleborine. It also has a high diversity of moths, including

Light Orange Underwing and Alder Kitten. In summer, rare butterflies are found such as Grizzled Skipper, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary and White-letter Hairstreak. A small area has a population of glow-worms.

Autumn brings an impressive selection of fungi including puffball, milkcaps and boletes (do not be tempted to pick mushrooms as many are very poisonous). If you are lucky roe and fallow deer can be seen among the trees.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust thanks you for safely keeping your distance at Snitterfield Bushes nature reserve by staying 2 metres apart, the equivalent of:

