

# Damsels & Dragons

Damsels & Dragons is a project to re-naturalise the brook running through Elmdon Park, improving its shape and water quality to increase its biodiversity. In future years this should help to bring a healthy increase in wildlife such as damselflies and dragonflies.

This section of watercourse has previously been heavily modified, which has resulted in a straight channel with steep banks and straight sides. There has been an absence of natural river processes, and a reduced ability to accommodate large populations of wildlife.

We have worked closely with the Environment Agency to design a range of physical interventions to reverse the decline in biodiversity in recent years. The brook will be restored to a more natural look including meanders and the introduction of gravels, streamside wildflowers and grasses.



Excavation of the existing brook prior to re-profiling

Sections of the banks are being excavated to allow natural erosion and deposition processes to operate, and some wider shallow 'scrapes' will create other wildlife habitat opportunities.

Despite challenging weather and soft ground conditions in autumn 2020, contractors were able to complete the majority of improvements to a section of the brook running through Elmdon Park. Physical in-channel changes included the

creation of meanders, pools and riffles, marginal planting and the addition of gravel. A series of wetland scrapes (shallow ponds that may dry out during the summer) were constructed along the brook. Tree planting at the northern end was completed in November 2020 and marginal planting of wetland scrapes is scheduled for spring 2021. We are awaiting an improvement in ground conditions before contractors can undertake reinstatement of the brook corridor (including reseeding disturbed areas of ground).



A section of the re-profiled stream

Recent wet weather and heavy machinery working this section has left large areas of deep, soft mud – additional signage and sections of barrier tape have been installed to warn park users of the hazards and provide additional information about the brook restoration scheme.

The collaborative project, funded by the Environment Agency and European Regional Development Fund, and delivered by Solihull Council, helps to deliver biodiversity benefits for local users, visitors and wildlife.

The main works are expected to be completed in the autumn of 2020. The establishment of grass and planting should make for a better, greener brook in spring 2021.

