

# Harras Moor

# Management Plan 2016-2021

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## THE WOODLAND TRUST

## INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

## PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website <u>www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</u> or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- · Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- · Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website <u>www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</u>. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

- 1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
- 2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
- 3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
- The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
- 5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
- 6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
- 7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
- 8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
- 9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

## SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

## **1.0 SITE DETAILS**

Site name:	Harras Moor
Location:	Whitehaven
Grid reference:	NX979185, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 89
Area:	1.94 hectares (4.79 acres)
Designations:	NULL

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

## 2.1 Summary Description

This wood is barely 20 years old but is maturing well and has some great views to the west across the old town, the port and towards the Irish Sea. A bit of a climb to get into the woods but it is well used by local people.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Harras Moor is a young woodland in the town of Whitehaven, planted on land gifted to The Woodland Trust in 1990. It lies on a west sloping site above the town of Whitehaven (elevation range 70m to 90m). The almost rectangular area extends to 1.94ha and is fronted on the western boundary by the A595 Loop Road South, on the northern boundary by Park View and on the eastern and southern boundary by a housing and access road both called The Highlands.

The areas surrounding Harras Moor were developed for housing before 1991. To the west the site overlooks the northern tip of White Park, the old town, the once industrious port and harbour of Whitehaven and beyond to the Irish Sea. The rising land and the housing estate obscure views to the north and east but those to the west are particularly noteworthy. Though isolated by the main road and residential areas the woodland forms part of an important group of sites managed by The Woodland Trust in Whitehaven. Combined these woodlands assist in improving the aesthetics of the town and secure areas of woodland and open ground for landscape, habitat and recreation.

The main central area of the site, planted in 1991, consists of mixed broadleaves including sessile oak, alder, rowan, ash, sycamore and hawthorn; this area forms the core of the woodland and will, in time, become high forest. The remaining areas of woodland, planted during 1994, consist primarily of shrubby species including hazel, goat willow, hawthorn, blackthorn and minor shrub species forming a graded edge. An area of open grassland running east-west around the only path is managed for amenity and also to ensure that views over the town and harbour are retained.

Soft grasses dominate the herb layer and grassland, though a number of common rough pasture species were also noted to be present. In particular creeping thistle is well represented and common ragwort is known to be present.

Management and pedestrian access may be gained from The Highlands road to the east of the wood and pedestrian access from the A595. The path between the two which is well used is fairly steep.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

## 3.1 Getting there

Harras Moor is adjacent to the A595 Loop Road South in the parish of Bransty, Whitehaven, West Cumbria; and the road and housing estate both called The Highlands. There are points of public access from each road and they both have a squeeze stile entrance with Woodland Trust welcome signs, and are linked by a path running east-west through the grassland and part of the woodland. From the west, the path rises quite steeply, with a flight of stoned steps for around 20m before levelling to a gentler gradient. The path, which extends to approximately 110m, continues east through the meadow rising all the way to the eastern entrance. A wooden seat is situated at the eastern entrance where there are excellent views over the town and harbour. The wood is a short walk from the centre of Whitehaven where there are many facilities available. Parking is limited to nearby streets or town centre car parks. The C2C Hadrian's Wall National Cycle Route passes through Whitehaven and along Bransty Row to the west of Harras Moor.

Whitehaven Railway Station is a stop on the scenic Cumbrian Coast Line 63 km (39½ miles) south east of Carlisle and is operated by Northern Rail. Many trains on the route from Carlisle terminate here. There is generally an hourly service from Carlisle and an infrequent service southbound to Barrow-in-Furness. On Sundays, three trains a day run to Carlisle. Please note there are two stations in the town and the nearest to Harras Moor is the main station at Bransty Row. From Bransty Row turn left onto George Road. Take the next left on Wellington Road to St James Pitt Road. Near the end of the road on the left is a public right of way. This leads up into White Park (part of Crow Park). When the path meets the surfaced route through the wood turn left and follow this all the way up to the Loop Road South. Harras Moor is on the opposite side of the road.

The nearest bus stop to the wood is on Loop Road north served by bus number 22 and Loop Road South served by local route 17 and for buses to/from Carlisle the bus stop is on Lowther Street. Traveline Cumbria provides comprehensive timetable and fare information for all bus, coach, rail and Lakeland ferry journeys to/from and within Cumbria & the Lake District. A journey planner will help you plan your journey regardless of who operates the services Tel: 0870-608-2608.

There are numerous public toilets in the town centre including facilities on Irish Street, full facilities at the main railway station at Bransty, and occasional facilites for shoppers at nearby supermarkets. For local information try www.whitehaven.org.uk or www.copelandbc.gov.uk or the Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre, Market Hall, Market Place, Whitehaven Telephone: 01946 598914.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Trust will manage the young woodland to ensure successful establishment of the trees and shrubs and with time create predominantly high forest woodland in perpetuity. The Trust also aims to increase the biodiversity of the woodland through retention of old trees and by managing for uneven age structure over several rotations of the wood, by managing for mixed species, mixed age, encouraging succession and through the retention of deadwood both standing and fallen.

The woodland was planted with a mixture of broadleaved tree species during 1991 whilst the edges were planted with shrubs in 1994 to create a graded woodland edge, creating a small wood with about 25% open ground (meadow, road frontage and small glades within planting). Over time as the woodland develops through natural processes the composition may change especially as views and safety are key factors in the long term management of the site, although this is not likely in the short term.

The main area of grassland along the path and espcially from the top of the site will be managed to retain views over the town and harbour where possible and provide an area for recreation. Generally this will be by mowing, as this also controls the noxious weeds present which are mainly creeping thistle and some common ragwort. It is necessary to coppice some of the shrub areas be coppiced on a rotational basis every 7 to 10 years to retain the views. This will also promote a varied structure and ensure retention of a mixed wooded habitat.

The Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland with the provision of entrances with welcome signs. Public access will be encouraged with paths, stiles and gates maintained and improved where necessary to ensure that local users and visitors can enjoy the woodland for walking and peaceful recreation. Public information and promotion of the woodland locally will be enhanced where possible and posters will be used to inform and involve visitors to the woodland.

It is anticipated that this approach will ensure the development of the woodland habitat in the long term, and maintain and enhance the level of public access.

## 5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

## 5.1 Informal Public Access

#### Description

Harras Moor is adjacent to the A595 Loop Road South in the parish of Bransty, Whitehaven, West Cumbria; and the road and housing estate both called The Highlands. There are points of public access from each road and they both have a squeeze stile entrance with Woodland Trust welcome signs, and are linked by a path running east-west through the grassland and part of the woodland. From the west, the path rises quite steeply, with a flight of stoned steps for around 20m before levelling to a gentler gradient. The path, which extends to approximately 110m, continues east through the meadow rising all the way to the eastern entrance. A wooden seat is situated at the eastern entrance where there are excellent views over the town and harbour. The wood is a short walk from the centre of Whitehaven where there are many facilities available.

#### Significance

This permissive access is important as it links the housing estate to the east with access to the town mostly off main roads. The permissive path is well used by local people, normally as part of an extended walk, and meets one of The Woodland Trusts key outcomes as well as promoting its aims and objectives to locals and visitors alike. The eastern access to the site also provides superb views over the town and harbour.

The Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan incorporates the action for landowners to give the public the opportunity to experience and appreciate wildlife and this is successfully achieved at Harras Moor. The role of green spaces in urban areas is recognised in Green Spaces, Better Places, where it states that 'Parks and green spaces have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, by providing places for walking, cycling and other physical activities. They can also reduce stress related illness.'

#### **Opportunities & Constraints**

The permissive path is frequently used by people walking to and from the new housing estate to the east and via the public right of way through Crow Park and White Park, also managed by The Woodland Trust, which leads to the town centre. Harras Moor provides local amenity open space and a resting/view point for visitors. It is small in area, which is a constraint on the extent of the permissive path network. However, further public rights of way exist to the north west of the site and though not directly linked it is possible to enjoy a circular walk taking in the permissive path, public rights of way and minor public roads. A major constraint for visitors by car is the lack of parking nearby.

Opportunities also exist to inform the public of the Woodland Trusts objectives, the role of woodlands in the urban environment and management practices relevant to Harras Moor through posters and consultation.

## **Factors Causing Change**

#### Loss of views due to tree growth.

## Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Woodland Trust will maintain informal access to the woodland through the provision and maintenance of 2 entrances with welcome signs, a bench and a permissive path route. The area of grass will be managed to retain views over the town, and for amenity recreation. It is intended that some of the shrub areas be coppiced on a rotational basis every 7 to 10 years to help to retain the views where possible over the harbour. Public information and promotion of the woodland locally will be enhanced where possible and posters will be used to inform and involve visitors to the woodland to promote greater understanding of the importance of woodland within the environment.

## Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Maintain two pedestrian accesses with welcome signs, a bench at the view point and 110m of permissive path including the flight of steps, to Woodland Trust specification. This will be achieved by cutting back vegetation along paths and entrances, periodic mowing of the grass areas and regularly carrying out safety inspections. Boundaries will be inspected regularly (every three-five years) and repaired as necessary, working with neighbouring owners as appropriate. Litter pick site and remove material as necessary. Continue to involve local people by consultation. Monitor the growth of shrubs and loss of views and when necessary and where possible undertake control over a minimum area to retain views.

## 5.2 Secondary Woodland

#### Description

Harras Moor is on a west sloping, exposed site above the town of Whitehaven and is clearly visible from the town and harbour. The woodland was planted with a mixture of broadleaved tree species during 1991 to 1994. The composition is mixed broadleaves: sessile oak 15%, ash 10%, sycamore 10%, alder 10%, rowan 5%, hazel 10%, mixed shrubs including hawthorn, blackthorn, goat willow, guelder rose and dog rose 15% and retained open ground of approximately 25%. The herb layer is generally made up of soft grasses including rye grass, cocksfoot, Yorkshire fog, crested dogstail and timothy with a good distribution of creeping thistle, creeping buttercup, ribwort plantain and red and white clover. In addition though not in such great numbers rose-bay willowherb, rushes, common nettle, common dock and small patches of bramble were also noted to be present amongst others. Most indicate previous farming activity and disturbed ground.

#### Significance

Harras Moor is important woodland within an urban setting. Though separated from White Park, Crow Park and Midgey Gill by the A595 the landscape impact of woodland through the town is strong and creates a magnificent green corridor along the Loop Road South. Such sites, particularly in a large developing town, help to break up the visual impact of houses and bring the countryside to the local community. Trees and woods offer a wide range of benefits to residential and urban areas, such as noise filtering, shade, improving aesthetic appearance of an area, and improving biodiversity. The woodland provides cover, food and nesting sites for a variety of bird species and small mammals. Vitally, in an expanding town such as Whitehaven, the areas managed by The Woodland Trust ensure that such green spaces are secured against development and will be available for future generations.

## **Opportunities & Constraints**

With new planting it is not possible to create diversification within the age structure of the woodland in the medium term. In time opportunities will exist to manage the high forest for increased habitat diversification and the retention of deadwood communities. Tree safety work may constrain the retention of standing deadwood. Covenant to restricted area trees to be retained to 12ft. With the proximity to urban properties it is possible that exotic species from gardens may colonise the woodland. Where colonisation poses a threat key species removal or control may be considered. Where there is no threat the species can be accepted as part of the succession characteristics of the woodland with reference to Trust policy.

## **Factors Causing Change**

Other - Invasive exotics, Other - Tipping of garden waste, covenanted boundary management. Ash dieback, as the wood is approx 20% ash.

## Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will manage the young woodland to create predominantly high forest woodland in perpetuity. To secure habitat diversification through creation of a mixed woodland ecosystem with a varied structure, natural development of woodland shrub and herb layer and retention of deadwood habitats both standing and fallen and of mature trees. The woodland composition is mixed broadleaves (75%) and includes sessile oak, ash, sycamore, alder, rowan, hazel, mixed shrubs and grassland (25%). The open ground will be managed to retain the views. Light re-spacing may be required to ensure long term safety and stability.

## Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Continue to manage the growing woodland re-spacing once during the plan period where necessary to ensure the development of stable trees that are able to reach maturity, within this work retention of mixed species, particularly oak is planned. Monitor once during the plan period through observations for the colonisation of non native invasive species, undertaking control where necessary. Inspect and repair Woodland Trust boundary walls and fences liaising with neighbours as necessary. Monitor the growth of trees on the eastern boundary and estimate the top height for covenanted boundary management, re-coppice if necessary.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME					
Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By		

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.94	Oak (sessile)	1991	Wood establishment	Legal issues, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

Harras Moor, a woodland creation site, extends to 1.94 ha on reasonably free draining clay soils overlying coal measures; and is made up of a mixture of trees, shrubs and open ground on a westfacing slope above the town of Whitehaven. Though the slope is generally even it becomes steeper to the west and a small dry gill was noted to be present near the northern boundary. The woodland is enclosed by a variety of fencing; most of the western boundary has iron railings though these terminate some 70-80m from the southern tip of the woodland and this section is unfenced. The eastern side is delineated by a simple post and three-line wire fence. A similar post and three line wire fence heads northwest and then north to join a stonewall denoting the northern boundary along Park View road. Between the road and eastern entrance there is an area of mown grass and established cotoneaster planting. Finally toward the southern end of the wood there is a strip of adjacent land with a number of garden shrubs including an escallonia hedge. The main central section of the woodland was planted during 1991 whilst the peripheries were planted in 1994. Within the woodland the current approximate species representation is sessile oak (Quercus petraea) 15%, ash (Fraxinus excelsior) 10%, sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) 10%, alder (Alnus glutinosa) 10%, rowan (Sorbus aucuparia) 5%, hazel (Corylus avellana) 10%, mixed shrubs including hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), goat willow (Salix caprea), blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), guelder rose (Viburnum opulus) and dog rose (Rosa canina) 15% and retained open ground (grassland & road frontage) 25%. Generally the trees and shrubs are well established and beginning to close canopy though growth has been slow due to the exposed nature of the site. The herb layer is generally made up of soft grasses including rye grass (Lolium perenne), cocksfoot (Dactylis glomerata), Yorkshire fog (Holcus lanatus), crested dogstail (Cynosurus cristatus) and timothy (Phleum pratense) with a good distribution of creeping thistle (Cirsium arvense), creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens), ribwort plantain (Plantago lancealata) and red and white clover (Trifolium pratense, T. repens). In addition though not in such great numbers rose-bay willowherb (Epilobium angustifolium), rushes (Juncus Spp) common nettle (Urtica dioica), common dock (Rumux obtusifolius) and small patches of bramble (Rubus fruticosa) were also noted to be present amongst others. Most indicate previous farming activity and disturbed ground. Two points of public access exist linked by a path leading through the grassland. A squeeze style is located approximately half way along the wood on the western boundary along with a Woodland Trust welcome sign. A wooden seat is situated at the eastern entrance (dedicated to Councillor Mary Stalker) where there are excellent views over the town and harbour. Management access to the wood is gained via a 12' wooden gate with a plaque dedication.

## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1a	Coppice	0.25	212	53
2019	1a	Thin	1.25	56	70

## GLOSSARY

## Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

## Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

## Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

## **Beating Up**

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

## Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

## Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

## Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

## Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

## Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

## Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

## Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

## Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

## Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

## Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

## Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

## Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

## Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

## National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

## Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

## Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

## **Origin & Provenance**

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

## **Re-Stocking**

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

## Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

## Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

## Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

## Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

## Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

## Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

## Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

## Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

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