



COED CADW
WOODLAND
TRUST

Coed Gwempa

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 www.woodlandtrust.org.uk 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 www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. 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.
4. 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:	Coed Gwempa
Location:	Pontantwn
Grid reference:	SN437115, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 159
Area:	18.36 hectares (45.37 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Mixed native woodland and ancient trees along with abundant floral species like bluebell, meadowsweet and dog violet allow a pleasant circular walk to be taken, although paths are often wet. Dormice have been recorded at this site.

2.2 Extended Description

Most of the site comprises mixed native broadleaved Ancient semi natural woodland. Other adjoining land is improved permanent pasture.

Woodland ground flora species present include abundant bluebell, wood anemone, polypody fern, soft shield fern, dog violet, areas of wet alder dominated woodland support marsh marigold, water avens, and meadowsweet. The main block of woodland, compartment 2a and 2b, shows a clear hazel coppice with oak and ash standards structure. Dormice are present. Compartment 1 was formerly similar woodland but apart from a thick fringe of trees along the road was cleared in about 1980 and sown to ryegrass. The improved grassland was not maintained and a diverse range of wet grassland plants have now appeared, The Trust replanted nearly half of this field with native broadleaves in 1993, the remainder has been fenced and is periodically grazed.

The whole site is part of the Coed Gwempa SSSI, forming sizeable lowland woodland on fertile base-rich soils - a rare woodland type in Wales.

The main entrance is off the minor public road which forms the southern boundary of the site. From here a footpath runs along the edge of the young planted woodland and back through the main woodland block to return to the road. This provides an easy and attractive circular walk. However paths are wet much of the time.

The key features present are Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Open ground habitat, historical features and informal public access.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location

The site is about 1 mile from both the villages of Llandyfeiliog and Pontantwn. From Llandyfeiliog it is reached by a quiet, undulating B road with no pavement. From Pontantwn it can be reached via similar roads or via a public footpath that starts by the telephone box. There is not much other woodland in the area and few public rights of way in the immediate area but there are plenty of footpaths within 5 miles.

Paths and entrances

The main entrance has a kissing gate and there is a stile at the second entrance. The site is very flat with a short circular walk but it can be very wet especially in winter.

Public transport

There is a bus stop in Pontantwn near the bridge with seven daily buses to Carmarthen and Llanelli. The buses are run by First Cymru 01792 572255 or www.firstgroup.com.

Parking

There is no car park at the site but there is a lay-by between the two entrances where one or two cars can park.

Toilets

There are none very close but there are public toilets in Kidwelly (at Castle Square), at Ferryside (at beach entrance), in Llansaint Village Hall and at Menciau Community Hall. All have disabled access which requires a RADAR key.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention is to maintain the Ancient Semi Natural woodland where succession is achieved by the periodic collapse of senescent trees and the natural regeneration of trees and shrubs within the gaps so created.

The previous intention to introduce coppicing has been abandoned because site is too small for any continuous rotation and too wet for any vehicular access. Manual coppicing in the absence of any timber market or extraction is prohibitively expensive and unsustainable. The grassland of sub-compartment 1b will be maintained by periodic grazing and as the younger planted woodland matures will effectively become a sheltered grassland glade surrounded by woodland.

Informal pedestrian access will be provided with the maintenance of the existing single circular route.

Invasive non-native species will be controlled where possible and historic features conserved.

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Mixed native broadleaved Ancient semi natural woodland (on 2011 AWI maps).

Woodland ground flora species present include abundant bluebell, wood anemone, polypody, soft shield fern, dog violet, areas of wet alder dominated woodland support marsh marigolds, water avens, meadowsweet. Cmpt 2 shows a clear hazel coppice with oak and ash standards structure. Cmpt 3a is not recorded on AWI but treated as such as it shows many ancient woodland characteristics. The woodland is linked to hedges surrounding the grazed field forming sub cmpt 1b, including a tree belt alongside the road which was widened by additional tree planting by the Trust in 1994. Dormice are present in both the woodland and the interconnecting hedges

Within the northern half of the site are a series of earth embankments with associated ditches. These help to form the sub-compartment boundaries and most probably are relics of former 'wood lots' where areas of the site were subdivided and managed independently for local wood fuel or building materials. As such these sub compartments help to show the slight variance in tree species with each area having a difference in composition and ages class.

In 2012, the woodland expanded with the entire woodland block (as shown on the aerial photograph being under the management of the Woodland Trust. The new parts of the site to the south west have a slightly different character with a more characteristic 'wildwood' feel and less intervention by man. Little or no earth embankments are present in this section. ground flora in this section is more abundant with a variance in species composition and age structures present.

Significance

Together with adjoining woodland to the west is designated as SSSI as good example of species rich wet woodland. Rare example in Wales of flat lowland woodland. Dormouse is a BAP species

The woodland shows through on site historical features of intervention by man through the presence of earth embankments within the site, each having a slightly different character to the next in terms of age and species composition of trees within the given areas.

Opportunities & Constraints

Much of woodland is very wet throughout the year so access on foot and by vehicle is difficult.

Presence of dormice on site, which is dependent on the continuation of understory, scrub and dense hedgerow habitats.

Historical features such as the earth embankments around the perimeter of the site and compartment boundaries internally. The present a constraint for woodland working but also an opportunity to research into the historical significance of the site in the local area.

Opportunities are available to improve grassland conditions within woodland site and manage accordingly

Factors Causing Change

Breaking up of canopy, possible storm damage as well as canopy species composition changes as a result of Ash Dieback, recorded on site and evident in high canopy in summer 2016 and 2017.

Invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Cherry laurel have been found and are under control but can alter the diversity of species within the woodland if left unchecked for long periods of time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A naturally-developing broadleaved woodland with a diverse shrub and ground layer. Natural gaps within canopy will occur through factors causing change and little or no intervention should be carried out with natural regeneration taking place.

Control invasive species on site and keep site clear of historical rubbish and debris where appropriate.

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

Woodland Management - Non intervention other than that required on the grounds of tree safety, control of invasive species and removal of historical rubbish from site.

5.2 Open Ground Habitat

Description

Sub-cmpt 1b of botanical interest with wet grassland species present including Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*). The rare Dark Bush Cricket, *Philidoptera grieseoptera*, mentioned in the SSSI designation has been recorded in this area.

Significance

Species rich grassland adjacent to native woodland, and part of SSSI providing a well sheltered open space with surroundings of mature woodland and abundance of woodland edge habitat. Grassland provides low input grassland within a intensive dairy farmed region.

Opportunities & Constraints

Close juxtaposition of species rich grassland and woodland increases the value of both habitats. opportunities to maintain a minimal intervention grassland management regime with low inputs.

Constraints include lack of water supply to the field and scale of the field making letting of the area under a license or lease potentially difficult.

Factors Causing Change

Changes in grazing regime or type of stock, Risk of cessation of grazing or over grazing with large amounts of scrub/trees establishing changing the overall conditions along with nitrification caused by overgrazing leading to changes in sward composition to include more nettle and dock species.

Invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam ingressing into field.

Potential environmental impact from surrounding dairy farms where nutrient run off from surrounding fields may occur.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain species diversity and prevent succession to woodland by periodic grazing. Retention of wet grassland plants including ragged robin, purple loostrife, water mint, jointed rush, meadowsweet, marsh birds foot trefoil

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

Establish grazing. Cut grass by 'topping' in late Summer if not grazed to diversify sward lengths and manage areas of scrub periodically.

Pull invasive species where necessary.

Keep field clear of scrub and regenerating trees (no more than 10% across area in 5yr period)

5.3 Informal Public Access

Description

Attractive circular walk in spring and summer months with views over ancient woodland and open meadow areas. Spring flowers are abundant within woodland and in summer months around margins of meadow areas. Walk takes the visitor through the different types of habitats along grassed footpaths and occasional boggy patches within woodland.

Significance

There are few ancient amenity woodlands in the locality with easy access. Most other ancient woodlands which are easily accessible are within private ownership and other accessible sites are generally new woodland creation sites created following industrial coal mining activities.

Opportunities & Constraints

Wet ground means path is wet even in Summer months and high usage of site will become a long term issue and impact upon the site.

Factors Causing Change

Increased levels of use by local people and safety issues around the footpath with onset of Ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain basic provision for pedestrian access along existing path route removing obstacles where necessary and maintain a welcoming entrance.

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

Maintain basic provision for pedestrian access along existing path route, some maintenance of sleeper footbridges and walkways may be required annually along with removal of old access stiles when they are due for removal due to poor condition.

Maintain pathways and entrances to improve roadside presence and ensure signs are clean, oiled and legible.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	0.83	Sessile oak	1900	Min-intervention	Archaeological features, Landscape factors, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>A long and thin part of the site lying between the unclassified road and the grazed field (Cpt 1b). This area comprises of a strip of woodland of variable width along the public road that forms the southern boundary of the site, widened by an approx. 20 metre wide strip of the former field planted by the Trust with native broadleaves in 1994 and a small strip of grassland which was left unplanted but now contains a number of self-sown trees and shrubs. The 1994 planting included ash, hazel, rowan, with oak, wild cherry and other shrubs</p> <p>The boundary of this compartment along roadside comprises of mature and veteran Oak trees of significant maturity and crown spread growing alongside or on top of an old earth embankment for the entirety of the boundary with the roadside with an understory hedgerow of hazel, holly and hawthorn. The mature tree line over-arches the narrow country lane and provides a landscape feature as well as significance for connectivity of the site with surrounding hedgerows for species such as the dormouse.</p>							
1b	1.33	NULL		Non-wood habitat	Archaeological features, Management factors (eg grazing etc)		Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Remaining part of grass field created in early 1980s by the clearance of woodland between sub-compartment 1a and cmpt 2. Re-fenced by WT in 1993 and subsequently grazed intermittently by cattle, horses or donkeys. Of some botanical interest with wet grassland species present including purple loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>) and ragged robin (<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>). The rare dark bush cricket, Philidoptera grieseoptera, mentioned in the SSSI designation has been recorded in this area.</p> <p>Field is boarded on 3 sides (south/east/west) by earth embankments and partial ditches which could be interpreted as being medieval in origin with the field created as part of a woodland clearance for farming practises.</p>							

2a	3.18	Ash	1940	Min-intervention	Archaeological features, Diseases, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>(Combines sub-compartments 2a, b and c from the earlier plan.</p> <p>Mature ash dominated woodland, with oak or alder predominant in places with elements of mature Hazel coppice to southern parts of the site and willow to the western fringes. Many trees within the woodland are multi stemmed. Gently undulating topography is wet most of the year, with several very small springs and streams. Age and overall structure is varied in places following natural wind thrown gaps often in filled by Sycamore and regenerating ash.</p> <p>Compartment is boarded by open field (cpt 1b) to the east, mature stand of Ash and Sycamore to the north, marked by an internal wood bank and a small stream to the south making up the boarder with Cpt 2b. This earth bank is approximately 1 metre in height and is probably medieval in origin, created to mark internal compartments as either field boundaries following clearances or small wood lots used to supply firewood locally (hence the reason for lack of large and ancient tree species present)</p> <p>Ground flora species include bluebell (abundant at western end) bramble, dog's mercury, ivy, rose, honeysuckle, moss, nettle and wood anemone and wood sorrel. Wet woodland species in alder stands include marsh marigold, water avens, and angelica which can be predominantly observed in the western boundary.</p>							
2b	8.60	Ash	1940	Min-intervention	Archaeological features, Diseases, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest

Compartment is boarder to the north with an earth embankment bordering Cpt 2a and field edge to the east and west.

The compartment is characteristically different to Cpt 2a but shares a similar ground flora mix of species including bluebell (abundant at western end) bramble, dog's mercury, ivy, rose, honeysuckle, moss, nettle and wood anemone and wood sorrel. Wet woodland species in alder stands include marsh marigold, water avens, and angelica which can be predominantly observed in the western boundary.

The canopy composition is much less structured compared to cpt 2a and shows less signs of intervention and is classified as ASNW with areas of more extreme wet woodland (non ASNW) to the west where the canopy changes from a predominantly Ash, Alder, Birch mix to more grey willow species present

Occasional springs can be found throughout the woodland and the compartment is boarded by a narrow stream with compartment 2c to the south west.

2c	2.18	Sessile oak	1940	Min-intervention	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest
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A predominantly wet woodland bordering open agricultural grassland fields to the south and a small stream to the north with compartment 2a.

Woodland shows little signs of recent management and has well developed areas of understory with mature Hazel a key component. Mature Alder species and Ash are present within the canopy along with Sycamore around the woodland edges mostly. Evidence of coppicing are present in some Hazel stands but not of a significance.

Ground flora is abundant with an array of ancient woodland specialist species.

A man made plateau area is evident along the eastern boundary with the unclassified highway which appears to be created and constructed from man made materials such as brick rubble and concrete which has lead to inclusion of Himalayan balsam being brought to the site.

3a	2.12	Sessile oak	1850	Min-intervention	Diseases, Mostly wet ground/exposed site		Site of Special Scientific Interest
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Oak dominated broadleaf sub compartment with ash and alder also present. Two approximate age classes of oak appear to be present. The sub-compartment has a dense shrub layer in which ash regeneration is prolific. Ground flora is abundant and species include dog's mercury, honeysuckle, bramble, ivy, moss, fern, nettle, rose, lesser celandine, wood sorrel. Several small springs create patches of wet ground with opposite leaved golden saxifrage.

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.