



# Binswood

## 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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

<b>Site name:</b>	Binswood
<b>Location:</b>	East Worldham
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SU764371, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 186
<b>Area:</b>	61.53 hectares (152.04 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Great Landscape Value, National Park, Registered Common Land, Site of Special Scientific Interest

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

This is a very interesting and important site as it is one of only a few lowland woodland pastures that are maintained by the traditional method of grazing by commoners' stock. A wonderful mosaic of woodland and grassland. A fantastic range of fungi and lichens cling to the ancient trees and dead wood and there are many woodland flowers. If you want to see how the medieval landscape might have looked, this is the place to visit.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1985, Binswood is 61.2 hectares of wooded common located close to East Worldham in Hampshire.

Located in the north of the South Downs National Park, Binswood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to it being a characteristic example of a rare habitat - wood pasture.

Being wood pasture, Binswood contains a mosaic of habitats including large tracts of acid grassland, scrubby areas and woodland that have evolved over hundreds, possibly thousands, of years. These habitats are transient in nature, changing between grassland, scrub and woodland as areas are cleared, grazed or re-colonised with naturally regenerating trees and shrubs.

There are three main areas of grassland, most of which are interlinked, and overgrown by scrub in places. The south and west parts of Binswood are generally more wooded, although there is a more open parkland feel to the stands of trees in the north and east. A number of large veteran oak and beech trees are dotted throughout the wood, among areas of denser woodland and former coppiced areas now open to grazing.

Binswood has sustained a tradition of grazing by commoners' stock and before 1300AD formed part of a large tract of wooded land known as Woolmer Forest (a Royal Hunting Forest). The wood is virtually surrounded by historic boundary banks and hedges, and remains designated as Registered Common Land and therefore commoners' rights apply to the whole site. This type of pasture woodland is a fascinating example of an evolved cultural landscape that provides a glimpse of the countryside as it might have been in medieval times.

The site is connected via hedgerows, hollow lanes and other wildlife corridors to two other nearby SSSI's - Shortheath Common to the east and Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers to the west. Apart from old banks, ditches and very slight stream valleys, the site is mainly flat. Two main seasonal streams drain the site, which is often part waterlogged in wet conditions.

It also had a close association with the medieval deer park of Worldham. The common survived the enclosure of Worldham Park and 17th century surveys indicate it had a similar composition, including ancient oak and beech pollards (some of which remain today), to the now enclosed pasture woodland of the nearby royal hunting forest of Alice Holt (now vastly changed following 20th century forestry management).

Public access to Binswood is via a number of public rights of way. Most people use the car park at Shortheath Common and walk along the public bridleway. Once on site there is a good network of permissive footpaths.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

There is a public car park at Shortheath Common, to the east, where a public bridleway provides a pleasant walk to the site.

The Public Bridleway enters the wood on the east side and exits at the north end, leading up to Green Street (B3004) between East Worldham and Kingsley. There are also public footpaths which cross the wood in the centre and at the west end, linking East Worldham and Shortheath. This is part of The Hanger's Way Long Distance Footpath. Fine views to the upper greensand and chalk "hangers" - steep wooded hills - can be enjoyed from many parts of Binswood, particularly in winter and early spring.

Within the wood there are permissive paths which are mostly grassy. They can be muddy, especially at the east end. The site is also crossed by the line of the Chichester to Silchester Roman road. Part of this is still visible as an "agger" - an earth embankment, in the southern wooded area.

Nearest Bus Stop : East Worldham, Three Horseshoes. Accessible from Alton and Liphook by Stagecoach Route No. 13 (Information from [www.stagecoach.com](http://www.stagecoach.com) May 2007) From there walk 1.5 miles east along B3004 (Green Street), a busy road, then turn south after Oaklands Farm down track to cottages and north entrance of wood.

Nearest Station : Alton 3 miles.

Nearest Public Toilet : Alton, Lady Place carpark (3 miles) (disabled facilities) (Information from Alton Tourist Info 01420 88448 May 2007)

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In fifty years' time Binswood will be a mosaic of woodland, grassland, wood pasture and scrub. Each habitat will be interwoven, blending into each other and will be transient in nature as the trees and scrub are cut, animals graze and natural regeneration continues the cycle. Grazing animals will remain an essential component of the sites management. This approach will ensure the continuity of habitats that have developed over hundreds of years.

The ratio will remain around 75% woodland and 25% open ground. The woodland will comprise a variety of native species and will have a diverse structure from saplings to veteran trees and everything in-between. The open areas will have no more than 20% scrub and support a diverse range of grassland species. Ancient and veteran trees will be found across the site throughout the various habitats whilst the next generation of these valuable trees will be developing.

The site will remain open to the public with a good network of paths throughout. It will provide an aesthetically pleasing, tranquil place which will benefit both people and wildlife.



## 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 Wood Pasture

#### Description

Binswood represents a fragment of the old Royal Forest of Woolmer, and important habitats and wildlife niches have been created and sustained through hundreds of years of wood pasture management, including grazing, which still continues today. The vegetation consists primarily of acidic poorly-drained unimproved pasture overlying Gault Clay and Sand, with scattered old oaks and beeches, areas of denser woodland with a sparse shrub layer and ground flora, and former coppiced areas now open to grazing.

The pasture is dominated by bents, especially common and creeping bent, sheep's fescue and soft rush, with abundant lesser spearwort, autumn hawkbit, tormentil and heath bedstraw, amongst other herbs characteristic of damp acid grassland.

The majority of the woodland is ancient and exhibits a varied age structure, though many of the oldest generation of trees were removed in the 1970s, and regeneration is sparse because of the grazing pressure. The oldest remaining trees are probably 150-200 years old and they support a rich corticolous lichen flora, recognised as being of county importance. The former encoppicements support a rich ground flora, dominated by bluebells and including yellow archangel, wood-sorrel, wood anemone and wood-sedge. The following NVC woodland types are represented:

W10 - Oak (*Quercus robur*) - Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) - Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) woodland  
 W12 - Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) - Dogs mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) woodland  
 W14 - Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) - Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) woodland  
 W8 - Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Field maple (*Acer campestre*) - Dogs mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) woodland

Entomologically the site is rich, with a wide range of groups well-represented. For example, 27 species of butterfly have been recorded in recent years, together with eight species of grasshoppers and crickets, and a range of species dependent on dead and dying wood.

With its rich mosaic of veteran trees, secondary woodland, hedges, banks, ditches, ponds, streams and wet flushes throughout the site Binswood is a characteristic example of a rare habitat - actively managed wood pasture.

#### Significance

The woodland and grassland habitats that exist at Binswood today are mainly present due to its long history as wooded common. These diverse but interrelated landscapes and habitats rely on the entire site remaining a wooded common. In the past the wider landscape would have been similar to Binswood however agriculture, commercial timber production and development have impacted on these. Whilst it is a mainly rural area with woodlands interconnected by hedges, Binswood remains a very important, biodiverse area, providing a refuge for wildlife.

Wooded common (a specific type of wood pasture) is a rare land use in modern Britain and provides an important visible link with our medieval past.

### **Opportunities & Constraints**

#### **Opportunities:**

To build long term arrangements with commoners and grazier(s) for the benefit of the entire wooded common.

To further develop partnership working with the South Downs National Park Authority and their volunteer group to assist with the management activities at the site.

To set up surveys of the sites flora and fauna (within the Woodland Trust and/or with partnership groups and organisations).

#### **Constraints**

The presence of Red Water Fever could have an impact on grazing.

Access between the open areas is difficult due to narrow paths and waterlogged conditions

### **Factors Causing Change**

Levels and timing of grazing, natural succession in open areas to scrub then secondary woodland, bracken encroachment, ash dieback, deer.

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

The site will remain a rich mosaic of woodland, grassland and scrub with the edges of each habitat blurring into each other. The overall ratio will remain approximately 75% mature woodland and 25% open grassland.

The woodland will continue to exhibit a varied age structure, from saplings to veteran trees. All four of the existing NVC woodland types (W8, W10, W12, W14) will be represented, however, it is likely that ash may be severely affected by ash dieback. They will support a rich ground flora supporting woodland specialist plants such as bluebells, wood anemone and yellow archangel.

The pasture will remain dominated by grasses with other herbs characteristic of damp acid grassland.

The site will have a very 'natural' feel and will be a haven for wildlife.

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

During this plan period we will aim to manage scrub levels to comprise a maximum of 20% in sub-compartments 1b and 1c, and manage bracken to comprise a maximum of 10% of the whole site. We will also aim to improve the establishment of a sustainable population of veteran trees.

This will be achieved with the following management:

Roll bracken in sub-compartment 1b annually (late July to avoid ground nesting birds) approx. 4ha

Cut and collect sward in selected areas in sub-compartments 1b and 1c. approx. 12ha

Open up a minimum of a further 600m of woodland footpaths by a process of sympathetic ride side coppicing and selective removal of a small amount of suppressed canopy trees at the largest glades or path junctions.

Cut scrub in sub-compartments 1b and 1c

Year round cattle grazing with modest numbers of livestock in line with Natural England's current recommendations. The effect of grazing will be monitored annually and the number of cattle and timing of grazing adjusted accordingly, if appropriate.

Halo and/or pollard 10 - 15 young trees (oak and beech) with the aim of developing future veterans.

Cord wood will be retained on site to increase dead wood habitat.

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

Binswood has an access category B (regular usage, 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day. Some higher usage more than 15/entrance/day, but seasonal or weekends only). There are six minor entrances around the site and many permissive footpaths, several of which connect with external paths and sites. "The Hangers Way" is a 21 mile route that runs from Alton Station to Petersfield and crosses part of Binswood. There is also a bridlepath that connects from the northern part of the site and exits further south east where it links with Shortheath Common - an LNR site managed by Hampshire County Council.

Another main footpath runs from East Worldham in the northwest to Oakhanger in the southwest. It enters Binswood in the northwest corner, exiting by Binswood Farm.

As there is open access there are also many informal paths. The most easily described is the perimeter path - running as near to the boundaries of Binswood as vegetation and desire lines allow. This links with all rights of way and access points.

With its status as Registered Common Land, the public have open access to all parts of Binswood. Certain specific rights of access, for grazing, turbarry and estovers apply only to registered commoners and graziers (details on WT files see Register of Commoners and Their Rights - and Existing Information)

### Significance

Informal public access fulfils the Trust's corporate aim of inspiring everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees. Binswood provides suitable areas for people to walk and ride, affording excellent opportunities for nature study and the appreciation of the countryside. Access to areas of high conservation value, particularly woodland, has been shown to improve people's mental and physical health.

Whilst there is a good network of public rights of way in the area, Binswood provides a reasonably large open access area that, due to it's location, feels very tranquil and remote.

### Opportunities & Constraints

#### Opportunities:

Visitors can experience a unique medieval landscape and enjoy a large selection of paths.

#### Constraints:

Cattle and the occasional pony may be grazing on the site.

The site is difficult to park near - however this constraint benefits Binswood by helping to preserve its secret and isolated atmosphere.

Many areas of the site become waterlogged during the wetter months.

### Factors Causing Change

Future housing developments in East Hants may result in an increase in visitors to the site.

### **Long term Objective (50 years+)**

With regular but low-level visitor numbers, Binswood will have a well established and maintained network of paths and infrastructure (e.g. stiles and footbridges) for informal public access. Visitors will find the wood aesthetically pleasing, with the entrances and paths allowing easy access to enjoy the natural environment.

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

During the plan period, the site will be maintained for informal public access with the following management:

- Cutting back vegetation encroaching on paths in late spring and late summer
- Managing ride-side vegetation (as described under the Wood Pasture key feature) to create open sunny paths for people to enjoy.
- Inspection of trees in areas of high use (eg. roadsides or adjacent to properties), and along maintained paths and rides, with any remedial work undertaken in the appropriate timescale, in line with the Woodland Trust Tree Risk Management policy.
- Inspection of infrastructure such as signs, footbridges, culverts and steps and any remedial work undertaken in the appropriate timescale.
- 10 tasks per year with the South Downs National Park Ranger Service and volunteer group to encourage local members of the community to carry out basic practical management tasks on site, to include ride-side coppicing and scrub removal.

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## 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	46.18	Oak (pedunculate)	1850	Wood pasture	Management factors (eg grazing etc), No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Wood Pasture	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Great Landscape Value, National Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest

This is the largest sub-compartment and is mainly ancient woodland, generally with more widely spaced trees and canopy gaps than high forest, and more open peripheral areas with open grown trees - a reflection of the sites historical management as a wood pasture system. Oak dominates the canopy in most parts of the compartment with beech in some areas, and hazel and holly established as an understory. Other tree species found around some wood edges and boundaries include crab apple and aspen. Goat Willow is frequent in wetter parts of the site. Bluebells and wood anemones are common in the ground flora, but areas of bracken, gorse and bramble are also evident. There are several paths that cross through the compartment and the remains of a Roman road toward the south and west (see archaeological map).

1b	13.40	Open ground		Wood pasture	Management factors (eg grazing etc), No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Wood Pasture	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Great Landscape Value, National Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest
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This northern sub-compartment is largely an open grassland area with rush beds and occasional scrub. From the central part of this compartment heading south, scrub dominates many areas. The scrub is predominantly gorse with occasional blackthorn and hawthorn.

1c	1.95	Open ground		Wood pasture	Management factors (eg grazing etc), No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Wood Pasture	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Great Landscape Value, National Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>This small sub-compartment is located to the far south west of the site and is mainly open grassland with some gorse and blackthorn creeping in from the borders.</p>							



## 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.