



# Coed Gwernafon

Management Plan  
2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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.

## 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.

## 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>	Coed Gwernafon
<b>Location:</b>	Llawryglyn, Llanidloes
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SN926903, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 136
<b>Area:</b>	31.08 hectares (76.80 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Mixed broadleaves and coniferous areas combine to create a woodland of various habitats. Oak and birch dominate and several streams cut through the site. A good level footpath runs the length of the woodland.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Coed Gwernafon is one of an isolated cluster of 8 blocks of valley-side ancient woodland around the headwater valleys of the River Trannon immediately west of the village of Llawr y Glyn. It is the largest of the 5 of these blocks that make up the Coedydd Llawr y Glyn SSSI and European SAC - "A remarkable group of acid sessile oak woodland situated on hill slopes around the headwaters of the river Trannon". Not all of the site is within the SSSI and SAC boundary. The woods are separated by mostly improved pasture on the lower hill slopes and large open tracts of improved upland grazing land on the hill tops. There is a large area of conifer forestry to the north, and the Llyn Clywedog reservoir and Cambrian Mountains Environmentally Sensitive Area lie immediately to the south.

The key features for management purposes are ancient woodland and the provision of public access although as it is predominately a SSSI and SAC the habitat has legal priority over public access where the two are in conflict. The public access provision consists of a public footpath and a series of permissive paths mainly along old management access tracks.

The wood is predominantly of sessile oak and birch on a moderately to steeply sloping, mostly west facing, hillside. Oak is of variable age and structure, with stands last felled or coppiced anywhere between 1850 and 1950. The centre of the wood, sub compartment 1b is dominated by birch, oak re-growth reputedly having failed following summer coppicing during the Second World War. The woodland was grazed until purchased by the Trust in 1992. Ground vegetation was then dominated by grasses, mosses and drifts of bilberry, but since the cessation of grazing, bramble, bracken and bilberry have become more vigorous and abundant. Rowan and oak regeneration is frequent wherever there are gaps in the canopy, but other under storey is sparse. Hilltop land above the wood is improved pasture, but the upper margins of the slope were fenced in with the woodland following purchase by the Trust, and are now dominated with bracken or gorse, with some young birch, rowan and oak.

The wood is cut by several west flowing streams running in deep gullies, providing suitable conditions for the occasional ash tree, and plants associated with more damp and fertile woodland flushes.

Public access and parking is available from an entrance off the minor public road running through compartment 2. From here a good level public footpath track runs the length of the woodland and this now joins a higher permissive path to make a circular route. There is also a public footpath from the village of Llawr y Glyn across a field to the wood. A minor tarmac road, classified as Bye-way Open to all Traffic runs inside the property close to the South west boundary.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

### General Location:

Coed Gwernafon is about 0.5 miles from the village of Llawr-y-Glyn, along a public footpath over some stiles and through fields or about 1 mile by road, a quiet single lane B road with verges but no pavement. Trefeglwys is approximately 3 miles along the same road. It is in a well wooded valley and there are plenty of public footpaths but the nearest open access land is Fan Hill, about 1.5 miles away. The Clywedog Reservoir is 2 miles away.

### Overview of paths and entrances:

There is a gate at the car park and a stile where the public right of way from village enters the wood. The narrow B road also runs through the site itself. The internal paths are unsurfaced although not muddy and there is a fairly flat track along the bottom of the wood with a short flight of steps at the North Eastern end. There is also a recently (2005) constructed circular path but this is steep and very narrow in parts with a steep drop down the side, three footbridges and a flight of steps.

### Parking:

There is a small Woodland Trust car park at the site with space for 2-3 cars at the Westernmost corner of the site, it is a small quarry.

### Public transport:

The site is not well served by public transport but there is a bus stop on the road between Llawr y Glyn and the site. Call Traveline on 0870 6082608 for details.

### Public toilets:

There are public toilets at Bwlch y Gle Dam on the Clywedog reservoir about 2.5 miles away by road, these are closed in winter and do not have a disabled toilet any morea. There are no disabled toilets nearby.(Information - Powys County Council December 2006)

Public road runs through cpt 2. Parking is available off this road near the main entrance and from here a public footpath follows the main track running north following near to the lower western boundary of the wood. There is also a higher permissive path through the middle section of the wood providing a circurlar walk.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Coed Gwernafon will be maintained as predominantly sessile oak and birch woodland with a diversity of structure with minimal intervention as the management principle. In those areas dominated by mature oak it may be necessary to allow small numbers of over-mature trees to collapse thereby expanding canopy gaps and releasing pre existing regeneration of rowan, birch and oak. This will depend on the frequency of severe storms. Areas of birch and oak coppice will be allowed to mature without intervention except for small areas of maintained coppice along ride edges. The upper woodland margin will be allowed to extend by unassisted natural regeneration into areas dominated by bracken and gorse. Additional habitat diversity will be retained by the retention of some glades, rides, boundary hedges, and standing and fallen dead timber. Public access will be maintained with a circular walk having recently been improved with footbridges along existing paths. Car parking is available at the main roadside entrance.

## 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

Predominantly Oak with a variable portion of birch. W11a areas typified by grass dominated ground flora, some bluebells in places. W17b areas have bilberry dominated ground flora. Supports a typical upland oak wood bird community including pied flycatcher, redstart, wood warbler, tree pipit. Includes in sub cmpts 1b and 2a small area of bracken and gorse dominated land on upper margin of woodland but within the woodland boundary fence. These demonstrate the un-assisted spread of woodland onto ungrazed land by unassisted natural colonisation.

Small fast flowing streams in deeply cut valleys, especially in compartment 1c, but also the stream forming the boundary between sub cmpts 1b and 2a, and the stream marking the southern boundary of cmpt 2. The only occurrence of ash is along the streams in sub cmpt 1c, together with plants such as the golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*).

#### Significance

Part of Coedydd Llawr y Glyn SSSI and SAC, only part of SSSI in ownership of a conservation organisation. Boundaries are not exactly the same - i.e. some parts of the site are outside the SSSI and SAC.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Possibly modified by past planting of oak.

Bird community may be affected by cessation of grazing in 1992. Bird box scheme monitored by local volunteer.

Potential moss interest requires that the streams are kept shady

#### Factors Causing Change

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

Retain as predominantly sessile oak and birch woodland with sufficient regeneration to ensure a diversity of age classes. There should be plentiful standing and fallen deadwood. Woodland gradually developing and extending over the open areas along the upper margin of the wood.

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

No intervention required during this plan period.

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

Good level through track which is a public footpath; car parking and attractive stream side area near main entrance links with an improved permissive path through upper part of the wood, together these make up a circular walk.

### Significance

Very attractive site with parking close to main entrance and a village near by connected by a public footpath. The recently constructed upper path provides an additional challenging yet stimulating walk.

### Opportunities & Constraints

SSSI and SAC status mean that public access must not threaten the ecological interest of the site.  
Very limited parking.  
Steep slopes.

### Factors Causing Change

Damage, degradation of built structures. Bridges, steps, boardwalks and benched paths.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Provision of a variety of attractive walks mainly for local walkers and visitors already in the area.  
(access category B) Promotion of this will be low key taking into account the limited parking and the SSSI / SAC status.

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

Maintenance of existing provision through standard Estates Maintenance Contract. Annual inspection of built structures.

## 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	6.80	Oak (sessile)	1900	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation
<p>Northern end of site, north facing moderately steep slope; oak high forest, possibly of planted origin, circa 1920, minimal understorey. Grass dominated ground flora, especially around margins, W11a; bilberry and mosses dominated (W17b) in centre of compartment. Below and to the north of the main internal track the canopy trees are mostly older and wider spaced, some groups of young birch and oak are present under canopy gaps, and bramble and bracken are dominant in places.</p> <p>Formally planted conifers in area north of track. The Cub-compartment ws previously divived into 1a and 1b on the 1990 map and is shown as Cpt 1 on the 1992 WGS map..</p>							
1b	11.00	Birch (downy/silver)	1950	Min-intervention	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation
<p>To west of Cmpt 1a, and north of Cmpt 2; steep west facing slope; oak and birch coppiced circa 1950, the previously moss dominated ground flora with some heather and bilberry. (W17b.) is becoming dominated by bramble now that the grazing has been removed. Birch becomes dominant in the southern / western end of the compartment with oak almost absent. On upper margin of compartment is an area of former pasture now fenced with the woodland. This is dominated by bracken but with scattered young hawthorn, rowan and oak. This sub cmpt includes what was formerly subcmpts 2A, 2B and 2C in the map dated 1991, and was Compartment 2 in the 1992 WGS map.</p>							

1c	3.40	other oak spp	1900	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation
Stream valley head area in centre of the wood, very steeply sloping and dissected by several fast west flowing streams. Wet woodland in places dominated by willow. Canopy variously consists of oak coppice, singled mature oak, willow and sapling birch. Sapling rowan is also present under the canopy. Occasional mature ash occur in the stream gulleys . Mostly W11a, but with bilberry dominant in ground flora especially in higher areas (W17b.) This sub compartment was Compartment 3 in the 1992 WGS map.							
2a	4.20	Oak (sessile)	1920	Min-intervention		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation
Gentle to moderate sloping hillside around main entrance , mostly south west facing, open canopy oak woodland, young oak and rowan frequent in canopy gaps, with gorse and bracken. Extends across the public road to the steam which forms the site boundary. Mostly W11a, merging to W17b on the steep south west facing slope of sub cmpt 2b. This was compartments 4 and 5 in the 1990 map and in the 1992 WGS.							
2b	5.30	Oak (sessile)	1850	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation

Narrow, steep south west facing slope forming the southern 'tail' of the woodland. Lower slopes have a pure oak canopy, circa P1900, of coppice origin, and very knarled and wind stunted, no understory. Grasses and bilberry dominated ground flora with patches of gorse and heather. W17b Along the upper margin are large areas of bracken (at northern end) and gorse (at southern end). Some young oak and rowan (P 1970 - 1990) have got established in the bracken dominated areas, but there is little recent regeneration through the dense ground vegetation. Oak dominated woodland continues in a narrow strip below the public road, and down to the stream that forms the southern boundary of the site. Most of this sub compartment is outside the SSSI / SAC. This was sub cmpts 6a and 6b on the 1990 map and Compartment 6 on the 1992 WGS.

## 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.