



Kilcooley Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 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:	Kilcooley Wood
Location:	Bangor
Grid reference:	J481802, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 15
Area:	4.72 hectares (11.66 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

One of the few publicly accessible green spaces within this busy urban area, used and enjoyed by many. Lesser celandine and pockets of bluebells in Spring. Summer months bring early purple orchids. Flat terrain and paths suitable for pushchairs.

2.2 Extended Description

Kilcooley is a long narrow woodland creation site positioned on the outer edge of Kilcooley Housing Estate on the SW edge of the town of Bangor in Northern Ireland. It is flanked, on the southern side, by the Rathgael Road and Clandeboye Estate, and on the northern side by Kilcooley Housing Estate. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive leased the land to the Trust in 1997 for a 999 year period. It is one of 51 Woods On Your Doorstep (WoyD) sites in Northern Ireland. The development and first 5 years maintenance of the 51 sites were 50% funded by the Millennium Commission.

Following consultation with the local community, facilitated by Kilcooley Community Forum, the 4.94 ha site was planted by contractors and the local community in 1998. Each child in Kilcooley Primary School (adjacent to the site) planted a tree, as did many local Guides as part of a UK wide Environment Challenge scheme within the Guide Association.

Once part of a dairy farm, most of the site had been maintained as short mown grass for 25 years by the Housing Executive. It is now planted with a mixture of native broadleaved trees dominated by oak, with a willow/alder/birch mixture in the wetter areas. Old maps show that the whole site was once wooded and there are clumps of bluebells remaining on the bank on the road edge and marsh marigold thriving in the wetter areas. It now acts as a buffer to the mature Clandeboye woodland and birds of prey such as Buzzards and Sparrowhawks have been seen within it.

The SE end of the site and a strip in the centre of compartment 1B are wet woodland, a priority habitat, believed to be linked to an overflow pipe from the lake in the Clandeboye Estate. Frogspawn appears in the sitting water in springtime. The very SE edge of the site hides a river that was culverted in 1987 by the Housing Executive.

Areas of compartment 1B have very low fertility and were possibly covered with rubble when Kilcooley Estate was built. Early purple orchids flourish (common in NI) along many of the path edges in this compartment.

Public access is integral to this WoyD site. A circular path network was drawn up in consultation with the local community. The main path from Ferngrove (sheltered housing) through both sides of the site is hardcore. This was grant aided by BT Countryside For All and the North Down District Partnership. The remainder are maintained grass paths. Access is gained through a series of kissing gates and squeeze posts. Forest Service granted Community Woodland Supplement for the whole site.

There is an open area in compartment 1B, part of which has a hardcore base. The site was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2014.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access exists through kissing gates from both sides of Drumhirk Drive, the Rathgael Road at Ferngrove, and at various points along the wooden fence on the Kilcooley boundary. Many of the kissing gates have been removed by vandals, and have since been replaced by squeeze posts to prevent quads and motor bikes gaining access to the wood.

A bridge has been erected over a wetland area in compartment 1B that will require maintenance.

The hardcore paths should be left to grow over with grass. The hardcore substrate will continue to provide the necessary drainage for the paths while grass mowing will be preferable to the use of chemicals to define the paths and will look more natural. Regular cutting and maintenance of all paths will maintain public access, and access features should be maintained to a high standard.

Metal sculptures have been erected at the four main entrances (2004), these are to celebrate the North Down Local Strategy Partnership (LSP) planting events, that took place on 4 Bangor housing estates, including Kilcooley.

Management access is gained through management gates erected on either side of Drumhirk Drive. Roads Service gave permission for these gates to be installed and they are to their specification, with regard to sightlines. The kerbs have been dropped.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term, whilst maintaining the site for public access, it would be intended to encourage the site to become a self-sustaining high forest of mixed deciduous woodland (upland oak) with alder carr in the wetter areas. The woodland is well established, the site will continue to be managed where necessary to improve species and structural diversity.

It is unlikely that it will ever produce quality timber as it is a small wood and vandalism levels will continue to be high due to its urban nature. The need for thinning should be assessed in year 20 to enable any work required to be written into the budget for the following years.

The alder carr will be managed under a minimum intervention regime, allowing the stools to collapse and regenerate over time. These areas are already well established in Compartment 1b.

The hardcore paths will be left to grow over with grass. The hardcore substrate will continue to provide the necessary drainage for the paths while grass mowing will be preferable to the use of chemicals to define the paths and will look more natural. Regular cutting and maintenance of all paths will maintain public access suitable for the level of use.

Part of an existing hedge thrives in Compartment B, and a new hedge has been planted along the Kilcooley and Drumhirk Drive boundaries within a post and rail fence. The post and rail fence should be removed once the hedge has become established. The trees and hedge along the Rathgael Road are to be assessed annually and cut back as required, to prevent encroachment onto the adjacent public footpath and road. It would be preferable to lay the hedge along the existing boundaries where possible allowing the opportunity to remove the fencing with a thick impenetrable barrier remaining providing better cover for wildlife and opening up a view into the woodland beyond.

This site is important in terms of education and engagement with the local community as well as providing a welcoming green space for sense of health and well being. In 2013 the site was designated a Local Nature Reserve.

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

Public access is provided through kissing gates on both sides of Drumhirk Drive, the Rathgael Road at Ferngrove, and at various points along the wooden fence on the Kilcooley boundary. These allow access for pedestrians, and half cater for single buggies and wheelchair users. Within the site there is a network of paths, both grass and hardcore, allowing access to the majority of the site. There is one bridge over the wet ditch in compartment 1B. The local school and community group are still actively involved on the site for educational visits and social activities.

Significance

The access facilities provide the opportunity to “increase people’s awareness and enjoyment of woodland”, one of the Woodland Trust’s key objectives. The area provides a woodland experience for local people in an area of low car ownership. As this was created as a Woods On Your Doorstep site, it will be important to retain informal public access facilities within the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Management of quality access features is constrained by vandalism and anti-social behaviour, including burning, theft, graffiti and the use of bikes and quads.

Opportunities:

As an urban fringe woodland, this site provides an opportunity for many local people to enjoy woodland.

There is an opportunity to develop further access facilities over time as finances or local eagerness allows.

To bring the wood in to a regular Forest Schools wood in partnership with Kilcooley P.S.

Factors Causing Change

water, climate change, fly tipping, anti social behaviour, road run off.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain informal public access through the site by maintaining a network of paths.

To encourage local involvement in the ongoing management, monitoring and enjoyment of the developing woodland.

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

The hardcore paths should be left to grass over. The hardcore substrate will continue to provide the necessary drainage for the paths while grass mowing will be preferable to the use of chemicals to define the paths and will look more natural. Cutting (approximately 4 times/year) and maintenance of all paths should provide public access until the trees close canopy. After this, the requirement for path maintenance should be reviewed. A bridge has been erected over a wetland area in compartment 1B that will require maintenance to ensure its safety for use - survey annually. To return each of the entrances to gated access and to provide a new access point from the Rathgael Road leading to the "football pitch" area. To monitor the changes over time through visits and regular contact with volunteers and the community forum. Signs should be replaced as necessary and graffiti removed.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

4.94 hectares of new woodland were planted in 1998. A hazel, ash and hawthorn hedge dominates the xx boundary along the Rathgael Road, moving into a wet alder and willow carr woodland to the xx of the site. To the xx of the site there are some mature xx and xx with newly planted bird cherry, birch and oak trees. A native hawthorn hedge runs along the xx boundary adjacent to the open "football pitches" providing ideal foraging habitat for a number of bird species, insects and small mammals. A series of bird boxes have been installed in the xx section of the wood.

Significance

The aim of the Woods On Your Doorstep project was to create community woodland. This also fulfills one of the Woodland Trust's key aims to "increase new native woodland". In addition, woodland creation will add a variety of habitats to the site and improve its biodiversity value.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour, e.g. burning, theft, graffiti and the use of quads and motorbikes.

Opportunities:

The development of native secondary woodland.

The development of a valuable habitat for local biodiversity, enhanced by the proximity of Clandeboye Estate, which contains 900 acres woodland, 90% is mature native woodland, with remnants of ASNW. The site has the potential for rare species such as butterflies and newts to establish.

Factors Causing Change

anti-social behaviour - fires, tree growth, water, climate change.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To encourage the development of a self-sustaining native woodland with public access and a good habitat for local wildlife. Where possible look for potential planting areas and linking this habitat with other existing woodland and open habitats within the area.

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

Establishment of the planted areas is of primary importance. Minimum intervention is required at present, as the trees are established. Thinning shouldn't be required but will be considered around year 20-25 years to encourage age structure and diversity.

Trees along road boundaries are to be assessed annually, and cut back when required to prevent encroachment onto the adjacent public footpath and road. To lay the entire hedged boundary of the site to open up the view into the woodland for visitors and prolong the hedge structure for wildlife habitat. To continue to monitor for new disease threats, species biodiversity and tree health through the use of volunteers.

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	2.34	Bird cherry	1998	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Compartment to the NW side of Drumhirk Drive. The area is gently undulating with a wet hollow close to Drumhirk Drive, which used to flood each winter, prior to planting. The compartment is bounded to the SW by Drumhirk Drive; NE by Housing Executive mown grass and then housing; N by the main Bangor - Belfast dual carriageway; and to the NW by the Rathgael Road and Ferngrove housing.</p> <p>The area was previously maintained for 25 years by NI Housing Executive as short grass, it was planted in 1998 with 60-90cm stock of native species. Following initial problems with vandalism, the trees became established, and the site is now an excellent young community woodland. It received the final payment of the WGS in 2004.</p> <p>A grass and hardcore path network runs through the site that was granted Community Woodland Supplement to complement the site.</p> <p>Metal sculptures with leaf markings and plaques, stand at 3 of the entrances, these are to mark the 3 planting events that took place with North Down LSP.</p> <p>There are were ongoing problems with quad activity, squeeze posts have been installed to prevent their access, but this also restricts disabled access at several entrances. Green waste dumping and fly tipping remains an issue in this area.</p>							
1b	1.60	Alder species	1980	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Compartment to the SE side of Drumhirk Drive. The area is flat with a wet channel running through the centre of its length. It is bounded to the N by Drumhirk Drive; SE by Housing Executive mown grass and then housing; S by private housing; and to the SW by the Rathgael Road.</p> <p>The Drumhirk Drive end was previously maintained for 25 years by NI Housing Executive as short grass, it was planted in 1998 with 60-90cm stock of native species. Many of these trees were planted by local residents. Following initial problems with vandalism, the woodland has established. It was granted a WGS New planting grant in 1998, and the final payment was made in 2004. The remainder of this compartment was already alder carr/wet woodland when the site was acquired. A grass and hardcore path network runs through the site which was granted Community Woodland Supplement to complement the WGS. A metal sculpture with leaf markings and a plaque, stands at the Drumhirk Drive entrance, this is to mark the planting events with North Down LSP. Fly tipping and fires remain an issue in this area.</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.