



Oakfield Glen

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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 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:	Oakfield Glen
Location:	Carrickfergus
Grid reference:	J414894, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 15
Area:	8.86 hectares (21.89 acres)
Designations:	Woods on your Doorstep

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Explore this enchanting little woodland glen and you'll come across fascinating birdlife, sculptures of mythical creatures peering from the trees, and reminders of its past as the gardens of a Victorian country house. Surfaced paths provide easy access for all abilities, and it's just 15 minutes' walk from town.

2.2 Extended Description

This long wooded glen and burn of 8.9 ha is half mature woodland and half planted fields. It's on the western edge of Carrickfergus town & has historic interest in its Victorian estate features from the old estates of Oakfield, Glenfield and Bessfield. The old houses and watermill were demolished and covered over by the Housing Executive in the 1960's.

Since then Carrickfergus Borough Council took over the estate intending to create a country park and in the mid 1970s a 3km network of concrete paths along with five foot bridges were constructed with a work creation team. The path is still in good repair but since 2000 when the Trust took over the glen, four of the wooden bridges have been replaced with stone culverts. The local Glenfield YMCA and community group have contributed to a stone bridge leading from Oakfield estate and have adopted the top fields (cpt 1a) to place seats in. Many residents use the site for walking.

The planting on 5ha took place in 2000 and is a mix of native species of ash, wild cherry, rowan, hazel, oak, wych elm and scots pine.

Management of the site began in September 1999, there is ongoing work clearing Japanese knotweed, laurels, rhododendron, salmonberry and snowberry to open the canopy for native species regeneration and re-growth, as well as maintaining 12000 native trees planted in Jan 2000. The paths are concrete 2m wide and join the Lovelane ward to Oakfield estate.

The opening up of the lower glen with cherry laurel clearance, has allowed for native tree regeneration & more light to encourage under storey flora under Ash (Cmpt 1b). This in turn will diversify the tree canopy from the dominant laurels which suppressed native woodland regeneration.

Due to laurel clearance some Victorian brick work was unearthed; an icehouse, a small mill dam weir, victorian bridge and riverside stone walls. Only the weir was salvageable & is now repaired with stone from the burn. The path is still used beside the burn so some steps have been made to make it safe to use. There were track connections to the open fields to the east, which belong to Carrickfergus council. In 2007 the Woodland Trust in partnership with Carrickfergus Council planted these fields and upgraded the paths to create a community woodland that buffers Oakfield Glen. Mid East Antrim Council (MEAC) manage these planted fields as Bashfordsland Wood.

In 2014 and 2016 further funding was secured to repair sections of the concrete pathway, create and install new interpretation, restore and secure the ice house feature and create a woodland sculpture "pukka" fairy trail throughout the site. In 2015 between WT and MEAC the "Friends of Bashfordsland and Oakfield Glen" volunteer group was revived to help manage the sites and create a sense of community ownership for the area. The group currently meets every 2nd saturday of the month to carry out a variety of practical tasks.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Oakfield Glen is around 15 minutes' walk from the Carrickfergus town centre, between Marshallstown Road and Prince Andrew Way.

There are buses to Oakfield Drive and Prince Andrew Way. For details of public transport, visit Translink at translink.co.uk or call +44 (0)28 90 66 66 30.

By car: From Belfast, take the M5 towards Carrickfergus. At the first roundabout (near Sainsbury's) in Carrickfergus, take the first exit, signed North Road and Railway Station. Continue under a railway bridge and past a golf club on the right. At the end of the road, turn right on to the B90 Marshallstown Road.

There are two unofficial car parking areas at either end of the woodland. Parking is also available at the community centre on Oakfield Drive and in the housing estate.

(February 2017)

3.2 Access / Walks

There are six entrances:

- three off Oakfield Drive - two kissing gates and a set of steps
- one kissing gate off Prince Andrew's Way
- two squeeze post entrances coming from the council-managed Bashfordsland.

There is a three kilometre (two mile) network of wide, concrete paths throughout the wood providing easy access for all abilities. The path crosses the burn with the aid of four stone culverts and a long metal bridge in the centre of the glen.

There are a number of steel sculptures to greet you as you stroll through the wood. The 10 Púca sculptures represent mischievous, fairy-like creatures from Irish folklore. They are the work of local artists Alan Cargo and Eleanor Wheeler, with help from the Acorn Integrated Primary School and Oakfield Primary School. The leaf-shaped steel sculptures are by Kevin Killen, with input from Oakfield Primary School.

For energetic visitors, there is an orienteering trail. Download the map at carrickfergus.org/orienteering. There is also a green gym, designed to inspire visitors to exercise outdoors.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The policy is to achieve 8.9ha of high forest in the long term by minimal intervention because of the good regeneration and multi aged stands which exist and hopefully will remain self sustaining. The main site purpose is for public access, therefore we will accept a diverse mix of species in the canopy but favouring native broadleaves where management is possible.

- Aim to deliver secondary woodland by establishment of the planting on half of the site and merging this with the mature mixed woodland in the glen.
- Aim to retain public access through existing five access points, two main gates, a metal bridge and four stone culvert bridges, which will be maintained to a standard, suitable for current public usage.
- Aim to preserve all the built heritage within the site, including the icehouse and stone bridges, etc.

Heavy shading species like Cherry Laurel and other non-native understory species (e.g. Portugese Laurel and salmonberry) will no longer feature on the site following a period of regular removal and control.

The variety of native and exotic species is prevalent in this wood and long term it is only valid to allow this varied woodland to continue. Thus no species are favoured because of the mixed species which include conifers of yew, redwood, cypress and broadleaves of lime, beech, chestnut, ash and oak. Sycamore will remain controlled to < 5% cover of new saplings.

This community wood is for public enjoyment and all of the above provide for this current amenity use. The Friends of group will continue to work on both this site and Bashfordsland Wood in line with the mutually agreed management plans.

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

A Woods on your Doorstep project, Oakfield Glen provides free public access across the entire site at all times. The woodland runs along Sullatober Burn and there are 6 entrances into this linear woodland, 3 off Oakfield Drive, 2 kissing gates and a set of steps, one kissing gate entrance off Prince Andrew's Way and 2 squeeze post entrances coming in from Bashfordland Wood.

Significance

The access facilities provide the opportunity to "increase people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland" one of the Trust's key objectives. Oakfield Glen received a large amount of support from the local residents. The public have had access for the last 20 years and the local estate would expect this to be maintained. Community and YMCA involvement has meant bridges are renovated. High usage by dog walkers and local children. It provides an important resource for the people of the housing estate and indeed the whole of Carrickfergus. It will be important to retain this informal public access. At present the woodland has several active volunteers as a "Friends of" group for both this site and Bashfordland Wood.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Situated between 2 housing estates, there is some antisocial behaviour, including motorbikes. There is no official car park, but there are 2 unofficial car parking areas either end of the woodland, and parking is available at the community centre off Oakfield Drive and in the housing estate.

- Funding
- Dog fouling has become an issue on the site

Opportunities:

- This site provides an opportunity for the public to enjoy the woodland. Many local people walk their dogs through the wood daily.
- Opportunities for small funding through the friends of group projects e.g. live here love here
- Opportunities for further joint projects with the council

Factors Causing Change

Level of public use, canopy closure, vandalism, climate change, scramblers

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain informal public access through the site by providing facilities appropriate to the level of use. This will include the maintenance of the concrete paths to an acceptable standard, where it can be used all year round and maintaining the provision of site information.

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

The paths should be regularly checked, leaf fall cleared annually and encroaching vegetation cut back to maintain the 2m x 2m corridor. Levels of vandalism, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping are monitored and tackled in partnership with the community, PSNI, council, friends of group and ourselves.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The 8.86 ha property comprises two distinct woodland structures:

- Mature mixed broadleaf high forest, primarily in the southern compartment.
- Recently established (2000) mixed species plantation in the majority of the northern compartment.

The mature high forest in the lower glen comprises: ash, oak, sycamore, beech and locally lime, horse chestnut and goat willow, with some superb veteran specimens of all species. The overall woodland structure is excellent with a good range of age classes present, together with a reasonably intimate species mixture. Stocking is very high in the semi-mature age classes and subsequently individual form is often very drawn with small crown proportions (see Photo 1). The semi-mature cohort appears to be derived from both natural regeneration and stored coppice.

Locally specimen trees include a huge redwood, large cypress, Corsican pine and a grove of veteran yews. The woodland understorey includes wych elm and hazel with Wild Plum in the hedgerow. It also includes invasive exotics: laurel spp., snowberry, salmonberry, rhododendron and dogwood. The p2000 plantation comprises a very wide range of species, including: horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, oak, red oak, aspen, lime, rowan, birch, ash, cherry, apple, white willow, hazel, alder, beech, larch, Scots pine, hornbeam, whitebeam and, an as yet unidentified, ornamental species.

Ground flora includes a display of bluebells, wild garlic, wood anemone, celandine, wood aven with other fringe species such as; enchanters nightshade and hartstongue fern. A variety of common bird species including bullfinch and buzzard, bat roosts and common butterfly and bee species visiting the woodland edge and open grassland habitat adjacent and scattered throughout the site.

Significance

Although the site contains a variety of exotic non-native tree species the veteran specimens of some of the oak and ash provide significant importance in terms of biodiversity support within this mixed broadleaf woodland. As well as the buffered new planting both in 2000 and in 2007 on Bashfordsland Wood and the open areas of grassland and mature hedgerows bordering the sites. The historic specimens of the yews and redwood connect the wood to its past use, local importance and features to connect people with woods and trees through the access provided through the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opp: The planting of half the site has added to the mature woodland in the glen.
Control of invasives through community work parties and friends of group.

Cons: vandalism of signs and gates continues. Quad and trial bikes are causing damage. Burning from time to time.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive Rhododendron, Natural regeneration of ash & sycamore, vandalism, quads and scramblers, climate change, disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To manage the secondary woodland to allow the more resilient species such as Oak to thrive where possible and compliment this through some restructuring of the newly planted areas to encourage a varied structure. All invasive species removed and being controlled on site. Where possible to look for opportunities to extend and or buffer woodland rides, street trees, connective planting in the wider Carrick area to support both future ecological and economic resilience and well-being. Ongoing community liaison and input from local groups and the friends of group.

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

Check annually, in compartment 1b, for Laurel and Rhododendron recurrence. Regrowth should be cut and sprayed to encourage regeneration of floral/trees. Continue management of other invasive species present - knotweed, snowberry and salmonberry. Widening of rides where possible throughout site by removing trees at the edge of paths. Continue the management co-operation with the friends of group.

5.3 Historic Features

Description

Oakfield Glen was once a countryman's residence built in the early 1800s. The site is the remnants of where three large estates - Oakfield, Bessfield and Glenfield Houses. Built heritage features that remain on the site include; an ice house, a victorian bridged wall, stone built weir and stone walled remanants throughout the site. In 2014 the ice house was restored, repointed and made secure.

Significance

The features on this site carry a significance in the form of local history, landscape features and connecting people to woods and trees. Forming a link to the past use of the land and what makes the site distinctive to others in the local area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities - to restore the victorian bridged wall and weir as a built features, to include further interpretation around these features and the history of the site and landscape.

Constraints - funding, localised vandalism and anti-social behaviour

Factors Causing Change

Climate change, ivy and scrub encroachment, invasive species, anti-social behaviour, friends of group.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To fully restore where possible all salvagable built heritage features on the site.

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

To monitor the features as part of safety and contract site checks on regular visits. To continue to remove and treat any invasive species that may be damaging or compromising the features.

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	5.30	Ash	1999	High forest	Legal issues, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Woods on your Doorstep
Planted fields with mature hedges in the glens Victorian planted estate and sloping gently to the burn. Since March 2000 its been planted with 12,000 trees of mixed species at 2.1x2.1m spacing. Access via four points, two with gates, onto long concrete paths and three stone culvert bridges.							
1b	3.50	Beech	1850	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Woods on your Doorstep
Secondary woods dominated by mixed species in the river glen. Access paths through north to south. One metal bridge and one stone culvert at lower glen. The mixed woodland has invasive cherry laurel. Glenfield estate originally planted with beech, Irish yews, a redwood, laurels, pine and cypress. Extensive areas of thorn, ash sycamore regen. although the laurel has dominated in parts. Since Jan.99 the laurel has been cleared, burnt and sprayed.							

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.