



# Ballyarnett Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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

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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>	Ballyarnett Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Ballyarnet
<b>Grid reference:</b>	C447215, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 7
<b>Area:</b>	2.33 hectares (5.76 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Green Belt

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

A site with Neolithic and Bronze Age remains, this wood houses native broadleaf woodland and oak, with alder, birch and willow in the wetter areas. As the site matures it becomes important as a wet woodland area, attracting birds and waders.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Ballyarnett Wood is a woodland creation site positioned on the northern edge of Derry City in Northern Ireland in the townland of Ballyarnett. Derry City Council gifted the land in June 2000 as one of the 50 Woods On Your Doorstep (WoyD) sites in Northern Ireland. The development and first 5 years maintenance of the 50 sites was 50% funded by the Millennium Commission.

The name Derry is derived from the Celtic Dair - an oak, or Doire - an oak grove/oak wood. In the 6th Century Derry was an island in Lough Foyle on which oak characterised the landscape. Derry has retained the symbolism of the native oak through the centuries. It is therefore fitting that this is one of 5 Woods On Your Doorstep sites which the Woodland Trust created as millennium woodlands at the turn of the 21st century in the Derry area.

The 2.5 ha site is situated between Ballyarnett Country Park (owned and managed by Derry City Council) to the south and Travellers' accommodation on Lenamore Road to the North. To the east lies wetland surrounding Ballyarnett lake, with a footpath and a small area of agricultural land to the west. This footpath is part of the former Ballyarnett Racecourse. The whole of the figure-of-eight shaped racecourse has been developed into a surfaced path. The main pedestrian access to Ballyarnett Wood is between 2 stone pillars beside this path. Public access is currently provided to this WoyD site.

Much of the site is poorly drained, draining Northeast into Ballyarnett Lake. Historic records note that as Ballyarnett Lake has shrunk over thousands of years it has revealed relics of prehistoric life in this area. Flint tools and a wooden track from the Neolithic Period (400-2600BC) show extensive settlement here during this period. A man-made island (crannog) and cooking places (fulacha fiadh) indicate settlement in the Bronze Age (2500-600BC) also. No artefacts are recorded as having been found on the site of Ballyarnett Wood.

The field on which the woodland has been planted was formerly a small pig farm. It is now planted with a mixture of native broadleaved trees with oak in the dry areas, and a willow/alder/birch mixture in the wetter areas.

Each WoyD site had a feature created to mark and celebrate the millennium. In Ballyarnett Wood this is a stone seat shaped as a horseshoe, commemorating the association with Ballyarnett Racecourse.

The site will be important as a small wet woodland and should attract many small birds and waders. It has both biodiversity and access benefit to the wider community and to the Trust three of the four key objectives; new planting, biodiversity and connecting people to woods and trees.

Derry City Council, who gifted the site, fully supports the Trust in buffering the Country Park with planting and with the increased access from the old racecourse track, a circular access route around the country park.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

As part of the Woods On Your Doorstep project, Ballyarnett Wood was created as a community wood providing informal public access. Two pedestrian entrances are provided from the footpath that link the Springfield Road with the Lenamore Road allowing access for pedestrians. This is the footpath created along the route of the former Ballyarnett Racecourse. Within the site there are approximately 300 metres of grass path network with 3 culverts over the streams. An information board informs visitors about the site. Forest Service provided a Community Woodland Grant to help create the visitor features.

### 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. It is likely that this will consist of upland oak on the raised hummocks with wet woodland in the damper areas towards Ballyarnet Lake. This will be achieved initially through the establishment of the planted trees. The trees were planted in clumps of approx 50 and should be left with enough density to deter the public choosing additional routes through the woodland but to allow a woodland ground flora to encroach from the surrounding hedged areas.

In the short term the site will be surveyed for thinning and restructuring to improve stand stability and structural diversity. Given that the main purpose of the woodland is for public enjoyment, the canopy composition will be flexible in the future allowing native tree species best suited to the site to form the climax community. The wetland area should have minimum intervention allowing it to regenerate naturally or remain as wetland.

Public access will remain over the whole site determined by the levels of public as well as the level of facilities and future work plans. The path and 3 culverts will be monitored annually. The path will be mown regularly. Once the canopy closes path maintenance will be re-assessed. Fly tipping will be significantly reduced through working with local authorities and connections with local community based organisations such as the Shantallow Community Residence Association. If interest is shown, this site would be best placed as a community managed resource for the local people of Ballyarnet area.

To prevent incursion on the wetland beside the housing a path and fence have been placed by Derry City Council. There may be threats to the wetland from future housing schemes and this will need to be monitored.

The ditches are maintained by Roads Service to prevent flooding on the local road. It will be important to ensure that they do not damage the feature interests of the site during this process.

## 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

As part of the Woods On Your Doorstep project, Ballyarnett Wood is a community wood providing informal public access. Two pedestrian entrances are provided from the Ballyarnett Racecourse footpath that link the Springfield Road with Lenamore Road allowing access for pedestrians. Within the site there is 300 metres of grass path network with 3 culverts over the streams.

#### Significance

The access facilities provide the opportunity to "connect people with woods and trees", one of the Woodland Trusts key objectives. The area provides a woodland experience for local people. Also, as this was created as a Woods On Your Doorstep site, it will be important to retain informal public access facilities within the site dependent upon the level of use.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

##### Constraints:

Wet ground restricting further access in the site.  
 Fly tipping mainly along the Springfield Road.  
 Ash dieback - tree safety adjacent to paths and road.

Opportunities: As an urban fringe woodland, this site provides an opportunity for local people to enjoy woodland. It may be possible in the future to create a link between Ballyarnett Country Park (and the Amelia Arhart Centre) and the open farm (on the Lenamore Road), through the site.

#### Factors Causing Change

Weather, Visitor use of path, Transient wetland area, Canopy closure, Fly-tipping

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

To maintain informal public access to the site by providing facilities appropriate for the level of use.

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

The grass paths are to be mowed regularly, this will be reviewed in future plans. The culverts should be inspected annually to insure their safety for use. Signage and furniture will be provided/retained dependent upon the level of public use, again this should be assessed annually. The management entrance has proved to be a hotspot for dumping. If this continues the fence could be moved to the road edge in discussion with Roads Service. To survey the site paths when looking at woodland restructure in order to widen rides and glades through the site, thus preventing further wet path issues.

## 5.2 New Native Woodland

### Description

In 2000/01 2.5 hectares of new native woodland were planted as part of the Woods On Your Doorstep community woodland creation project. 3,150 trees, predominately alder and ash, with 450 shrubs, elder and hazel, were planted. The paths in some areas are lined with tunnels of young hazel and herb flora such as wood aven and lesser celandine starting to creep into the site. Cuckoo flower and marsh marigold can be seen in some of the wet areas across the site.

### Significance

The aim of the Woods On Your Doorstep project was to create a community woodland. This also fulfils 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. Wet woodland and wetland are both priority habitats in Northern Ireland.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: Vandalism, transient wetland area, ash dieback and other tree diseases.

Opportunities: The development of native secondary woodland.  
The development of a valuable habitat for local biodiversity.

### Factors Causing Change

Vandalism, natural succession, climate change, tree disease and tree growth

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

To encourage the development of a self-sustaining mixed native woodland as a good habitat for local biodiversity. To look for opportunities where possible to link the woodland to adjacent woodland/wetland habitat.

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

The woodland is now established and the canopy closing or closed in many sections of the site. The site will be surveyed for the need to thin and/or restructure the woodland to encourage age and structural diversity in the next coming years.  
The wetland area will have minimum intervention and will be assessed in terms of species richness and habitat health.

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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	2.50	Birch (downy/silver)	2000	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Green Belt

The whole site constitutes one compartment. It totals 2.5 hectares. The land slopes very gently from the Ballyarnett Racecourse path in the west towards Ballyarnett lake in the east. The ground across the site is wet.

A series of drains run through the site. The drains are cleared when necessary by a Government Agency to prevent the Springfield Road flooding. The water from these drains and the surface water from the Traveller's accommodation (from a small culvert on the northern boundary) flows towards Ballyarnett Lake. The small pond in the centre of the site does not hold water when the drains have been cleared.

The area is bounded by the sections of hedge along its northern, eastern and southern boundaries, boarding on to the Travellers site, Racecourse path and Springfield Road respectively. The 4th edge to the east is partially demarcated by the remains of a post and wire fence. On the other side of the fence the wet land becomes fen, graduating into Ballyarnett Lake.

The field on which the woodland has been planted was formerly a small pig farm. Rank grassland had developed once the farming ceased. It is now planted with a mixture of native broadleaved trees dominated by oak, with a willow/alder/birch mixture in the wetter areas. It was given a WGS New planting grant in 2002 enabling 3,150 trees and 450 shrubs to be planted, predominately ash and alder.

There are approximately 300 metres of grass path network with 3 culverts over the streams. There are no paths through the dampest area of the site in the north-east, closer to Ballyarnett Lake.

## 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.