



Clements 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Clements Wood
Location:	Ballygowan Road, Larne
Grid reference:	J349978, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 9
Area:	3.23 hectares (7.98 acres)
Designations:	Environmentally Sensitive Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Clements Wood includes hazel copses, open spaces and wet meadows, providing good habitats for plant and wildlife. Mature hedgerows border the wood and late summer sees a burst of colour with seasonal ground flora.

2.2 Extended Description

The wood was called Clements after the vendor farmers grandfather, who first bought the land in the late 1800s. It was farmed traditionally throughout the family line, with no use of fertilisers. It was mainly used for grazing and hay. Clements wood consists of approx. 0.5ha of hazel copses, 2.5 ha planting including open space, and 1ha wet meadows, situated between the Larne river and the disused Larne railway line with fields to the sides - all now planted.

The fields were grazed until mid 2000 and are now regenerating with native tree species. The wet meadow is low lying and floods from the river in winter. It has good floral assemblage in late summer. The surrounding land is mainly heavily grazed cattle pasture. Mature hedges border the wood on all sides.

An extended field was added in 2001 which links the wood to the main A8 road to Larne only to lose a section of this part of the wood to the A8 extension in 2014. It is all treated as one site and both have the remains of secondary woodland with good floral species in the hedges and copses such as native Irish bluebell, wood anemone, lesser celandine and water aven.

Public access is off the Ballygowan road to a small parking lay-by access into the wood is through a kissing gate where a looped path takes you along the river edge to your left and the old Larne railway line banked with hazel coppice to the right, through the Royal Oak grove across a boardwalk and wet meadow flood plain and back through the newly planted woodland. An additional management gate is accessible off the Ballygowan road (now a dead end) from an access lane.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

A 300m path was created for access from Ballygowan Road and the A8 Larne road. Access is down into the meadow, the wood and planting. The path follows the Larne River and ends up at the meadow or a small hill viewpoint. Views are to the Larne valley and the south Antrim hills.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In terms of the WT objectives Clements Wood delivers woodland creation, biodiversity & public access benefits, with occasional community involvement from the NI Bushcraft association.

The overall long term aim is to establish a new planting to link the existing fragments of secondary woodland and to retain the wet meadows beside the river and in the long term manage the whole area as high forest. Where opportunities arise we will look to extend the woodland where possible and to connect it to any adjacent woodland.

The hazel and ash copses should regenerate and merge with the bank hedgerows and planted woodland.

Public access through the one kissing gate exists for low key informal recreation to the small wood and wetland. Access to this woodland suffers periodically due in part to the rise in rainfall and the energy flow of the river Larne, upgrades will also depend on local use of the wood. It is predicted this wood will remain a small community woodland for local use.

The wild flower meadows will be retained as open because of it being on a flood plain and thus it will continue to be important for biodiversity. Long term management will be minimal due to the annual flooding maintaining it as an open area.

Overall this is intended to be an area for quiet informal recreation and enjoyment of the wildlife, riverside and woodland, but not for high public usage.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

About 0.5 ha consists of ash and hazel copses along the Larne river and beside the old railway line likely to have regenerated there since the 1850s as relatively untouched river and railway bankings. Meandering through the site they come to life in the spring time with bluebells, wood sorrel, wood anemone and marginal species such as water aven. The remainder of the fields were planted in 2000 using native species, in 2009 a small section of the newly planted area was thinned by the NI Bushcraft association.

Significance

As a secondary woodland with long established woodland indicator species and veteran hazel coppice it has an increased value if it is buffered and extended, which is the purpose of planting alongside it and in some of the open areas. This kind of woodland is increasingly rare and where possible should be protected, in doing so a myriad of associated flora and fauna will remain a feature in the surrounding landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to link and buffer the copses through the establishment of new planting and the doubling the size of the wood. To further extend the woodland to adjacent habitats through purchasing land where opportunities arise.

A constraint may be the water flow/floods down the old rail line. Extension of the A8 road.

Factors Causing Change

Natural Succession To...ash and hazel, occasional sheep/cattle break through, climate change, tree disease

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In the long term the aim is to have established 3ha of mixed secondary woodland, where the planting links the copses as one unit. To link the planting further where possible to adjacent hedgerows and woodland in the surrounding landscape.

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

The secondary woodland and newly planted areas are now connected and the canopy closed. To complete a survey of the site looking at species composition and structure in terms of long term resilience as a woodland habitat. To thin the woodland where necessary through the use of contractors and or volunteers. Retain copses and hedgerows by non intervention.

5.2 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

A small wet meadow sandwiched between the Larne river and a flowing ditch where both flood periodically in winter it has many wetland and meadow plants such as marsh marigold, water forget me not and cuckoo flower the food plant of the orange-tip butterfly.

Significance

Lowland meadows especially wet meadows are being lost at an alarming rate hence they are a priority habitat in the NI Biodiversity Strategy. In the context of this wood it is worthwhile conserving this wet meadow for its mosaic & biodiversity value.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities - to graze the meadows where suitable and accessible grazers are available. To manually cut the meadows using hand tools and volunteers. To work with other environmental interested groups such as Butterfly conservation and Buglife.

Constraints - difficult to cut as it remains wet throughout the year. Therefore no mowing takes place.

Factors Causing Change

Flooding annually covers most of the meadow, change in water levels through scrub encroachment, climate change, pollutants through road runoff.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Retain the wet meadows at 1ha. as a significant local area for biodiversity. To look for opportunities where possible to extend and or buffer the existing wetmeadows.

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

Retain wet meadows, to survey through condition assessments and use of wildlife recorder volunteers. To manage for floral and invertebrate diversity where possible.

5.3 Informal Public Access

Description

One access route remains to this site off the A8 via the Ballygowan Road to a small parking lay by. A kissing gate leads onto a 300m gravel path which follows the Larne River on the left with the old railway line on the right, winding a figure of eight route crossing through the veteran coppice hazel and newly planted woodland with a small Boardwalk path over the wet meadow. Limited local groups and local people use the access due to its rural location and low population locally.

Significance

To provide access to a locally and historically important woodland. To connect people to trees and woodland, to raise the profile of "local woodlands" and the voice for trees and woods in the landscape character area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities - to create an extension of the existing pathway by looping across the river to the entrance replacement lane way adjacent to the A8.

Constraints - funding

Factors Causing Change

invasive briars on the path, closed canopy over the path routes, climate change, increased rainfall, damage through occasional cattle/sheep break through.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Retain the access to the site in the long term via the paths and kissing gate.

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

Annually to cut & clear the paths at 1metre minimum width and keep the entrance open to the public. Paths to be widened where necessary through scalloping edges of the woodland path or removing a row either sudden where possible. Powerline wayleaves are kept clear by NIE. Annual safety checks are carried out on the site.

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	3.00	Aspen	2000	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access	Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Secondary woods of hazel and ash copses and fields between the Larne river and the old Larne railway line (hazel stands) plus an extension field between the river and the main A8 road to Larne. Half the area is fragments & hedges of hazel and ash woods that hold indicator flora of bluebell, primrose and wood sorrel.</p>							
2a	1.00	NULL	2000	Non-wood habitat	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access	Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Wet meadows left open because of winter flooding beside the Larne river yet rich in flora and invertebrates in summer. The surrounding land is pasture with odd copses with the river to the north lending a traditional water meadows atmosphere to them. The Royal Oak Grove has been planted around this area, providing a pleasant contrast.</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.