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WOODLAND  
TRUST

# Coed y Bobl

## Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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>	Coed y Bobl
<b>Location:</b>	Devil's Bridge (Pontarfynach)
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SN735762, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 135
<b>Area:</b>	6.84 hectares (16.90 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

On the southern edge of Devil's Bridge (the terminus of the popular Vale of Rheidol Steam Railway), Coed y Bobl was created as part of the 'Woods on Your Doorstep' initiative in 2000. There are good views to the surrounding hills which are linked to the area by a dense network of footpaths.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Set within an upland landscape of mainly sheep grazed pasture this small site now provides a concentrated wildlife haven. Sessile oak, alder, rowan, ash, thorn and hazel that were planted by local people and the Woodland Trust once the site became a Woods On Your Doorstep project in 2000 have grown into a young woodland. The mosaic of wetland, semi open moorland and dense scrub provides excellent niches for a rich variety of birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and plants. The woodland is maturing well with a tree cover of about 20ft starting to dominate the site. Other than a similar piece of land on the southern boundary, much of the neighbouring land has been drained and improved and is grazed by sheep.

The land was clear felled of a crop of Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine in 1995. The previous owner then planted some broadleaved trees which grew alongside native regeneration. The Woodland Trust acquired the site in 1999 and planted further native stock in the autumn of 2000. The public involvement in the design and planting of the site was enabled through our Woods on Your Doorstep project, and Informal Public Access continues to be a Key Feature of the site. Its development into new native woodland is the other Key Feature.

The site is always wet and in the winter is only walkable in wellington boots. The land is level and so water tends to stand in low parts and the remains of some ditches. A pond was opened up and is now kept clear. This has become important for much wildlife, damselflies being particularly conspicuous.

Devils Bridge itself has a high population of summer visitors on holiday, some discover the site, however its main use is by the local residents who can walk to the site. The primary school which is within easy walking distance.

Views to the surrounding hills can be seen from Coed y Bobol and red kite are often seen circling overhead.

There are several other tree species growing on the site as well as the planted native species. These include occasional spindly, mature birch trees which grew within the conifer plantation and have been left to help reseed the site, some lodgepole pines left after the plantation was felled, and natural regeneration which is predominantly birch and willow species with occasional conifers seeded from the old crop of trees. Some unusual saplings including copper beech, laburnum and red oak which were planted by the previous owner following the clear felling of the site.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

The main entrance from the B4343 leads to a network of public and permissive footpaths through the site.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The site will be allowed to grow to maturity. Some areas will be kept clear of trees, such as the areas around the pond, the entrances and the paths. To achieve an interesting mix of species has now become necessary to thin out some birch to favor other broadleaves. This thinning work has the potential to be delivered by 3rd party volunteer groups if it fits in with their training programmed. The level of public access will be monitored to ensure that our investment in path maintenance matches the amount of visitors. Its a naturally wet site so visitors are encouraged to wear suitable footwear.

## 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 New Native Woodland

#### Description

Prior to Trust acquisition, Coed y Bobl was a clearfelled site that had previously held a crop of spruce. With the aid of local communities, the Trust has augmented the existing natural regeneration of birch, rowan, oak and willow with sessile oak, alder, rowan and woody shrubs in order that the site is fully stocked. Roughly a tenth of the site has also been retained as open ground, as wetland and pathways. Canopy closure has occurred and some areas are very dense with thinning of the birch trees required.

#### Significance

The native woodland that now occupies the site is not only more harmonious with the local landscape than the previous conifer crop, but also provides a naturally developing habitat for local wildlife, such as the birds and frogs that have been recorded on site.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The development of woodland has been constrained to a certain degree by the wetness of the site, although this has been remedied by the planting of appropriate species such as alder and willow in the wetter areas.

#### Factors Causing Change

Natural succession to native upland woodland...

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

The site develops naturally into broadleaved woodland, with some help by thinning to allow different species to grow and start to encourage a better diversity of age ranges. to with the areas that are currently open ground maintained.

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

Annually maintain areas of open ground, such as ride edges and glade, in order to provide habitat diversity. Woodland condition assessment due for spring 2019, this to determine a potential thinning program the compartments particularly the birch to allow different species to grow and start to encourage a better diversity of age ranges.



## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

Informal public access exists on site in the form of a public footpath and a network of permissive paths that allow access within the site. A bilingual information board is situated at the main entrance. As part of the Woods On Your Doorstep project, a grove has also been planted near to the site entrance and a pond created at the southern end.

### Significance

The site was planted as part of the Woods On Your Doorstep project, with strong backing from the local community in the form of a volunteer group. Community fundraising, tree planting and volunteering did strengthen people's pride in looking after the wood. There is also a school nearby and the site is well used by the public. The volunteer group has now disbanded after achieving a great amount of success in getting the woodland planted and established. Its creation has made it an important part of the history of the community and it is now an established wood available for quiet enjoyment by local people and visitors.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Public access is constrained by the wetness of the site, although the construction of the permissive paths and foot bridges has taken this into account.

### Factors Causing Change

Public behavior on site.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site continues to offer informal public access to local communities. Paths are maintained, along with visitor features such as the benches, pond and glade.

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

Annually maintain paths and open areas. As the new woodland has become established thinning work will be determined by the woodland condition assessment and there are several local volunteer organisations interested in running supervised sessions for volunteers looking to get training in hand tools.

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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	3.00	Birch (downy/silver)	2000	Wood establishment	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Relatively flat sub-compartment of planted broadleaves and natural regeneration. Natural regeneration species include downy birch, rowan, crab apple, lodgepole pine and hawthorn. Ground flora is dominated by grasses and common rush, other species present include willow herb, heather, gorse, bramble, moss, bracken and bilberry. Several semi-mature (1985) lodgepole pine have been retained along the southern boundary. Downy birch regeneration is particularly prolific in this sub-compartment. A permissive footpath forms the northwestern boundary. Lizards have been seen basking in this area. This compartment was once part of a conifer plantation and so there is occasional spruce regeneration, but of no consequence.</p>							
1b	2.50	Birch (downy/silver)	2000	Wood establishment	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Very gently sloping, west facing sub-compartment of planted broadleaves and natural regeneration. Natural regeneration species include downy birch, rowan, beech, crab apple and sitka spruce. Ground flora species include grasses, willow herb, bramble, moss and foxglove. Part of the clear-felled conifer plantation but the small amount of spruce regeneration is not significant. In 2012 a re-widening of the B4343 involved some land take from the area. A small number of trees were transplanted, the footpath was diverted with a new footbridge constructed and a new fence put up. The old volunteer group created a new path and small pond along the blackberry way.</p>							
1c	1.40	other willows	1970	Wood establishment	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Small area of wet ground at the southwestern end of the site that has been retained as willow scrub, this area was never part of the conifer plantation as it has always been very wet. Downy birch is regenerating well, along with rowan and crab apple. Ground flora species include grasses, common rush, willow herb, bramble and moss. Two small ponds are situated in this sub-compartment, with a mulched path leading to it.</p>							

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**Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)**

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1c	Thin	1.40	1	1
2020	1b	Thin	2.50	1	2
2021	1a	Thin	3.00	1	3

## 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.