

Upton Meadow Millennium Wood (Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, 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. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our 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 natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities 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 encourage our woods to be used for 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. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Upton Meadow Millennium Wood

Location:	Wirral, Merseyside Grid reference: SJ266874 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	15.05 hectares (37.19 acres)
External Designations:	Local Wildlife Site, NULL
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Upton Meadow Millennium Wood is located between Greasby and Upton, about 4 miles to the west of Birkenhead on the Wirral, Merseyside. The site is in the urban fringe and is surrounded by houses, main roads including the Upton By-pass and a retail shopping park. It is well used by the local community, particularly for dog walking and is linked to Arrowe Country Park, about 1/2 mile to the south by a public bridleway that runs alongside Arrowe Brook. The Woodland Trust has leased the site from Wirral Borough Council since the late 1990's.

The site is situated on flat, low-lying ground and has a mosaic of habitats including mature secondary woodland (Upton Bridge Wood and Arrowe Brook Plantation) along with younger native broadleaved woodland, two large open ground meadow areas with developing scrub, and a pond and Arrowe Brook. The secondary mature broadleaf woodland comprises oak, ash, sycamore, beech, willow, alder, elm, cherry, field maple, rowan with occasional lime, horse chestnut, Scots pine and Norway maple. Shrub species include holly, hazel, hawthorn, and dog rose. In 1997/98, a further 8ha of native woodland was planted as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep Project. The new woodland includes oak, ash, silver birch, field maple, wild cherry hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn.

Upton Meadow is one of few remaining semi-natural habitats in the local area and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site, locally called a Site of Biological Importance (SBI) by Wirral Council. Within the site are two areas of open ground meadow habitat. The southern meadow area is species rich grassland with meadow and creeping buttercup, common and tufted vetch, white and red clover, goatsbeard, lesser trefoil and yellow rattle. There is a large pond hidden by trees located in the north eastern part of the site close to the boundary with the Upton Bypass. The pond has a good variety of invertebrates and some amphibians, with a significant colony of common toads.

The site is popular with dog walkers and due to its urban fringe location is accessible to a large number of people. There are four public access points from the adjoining roads and housing estates and a network of 1900m of footpaths across the site, with a mix of surfaced gravel paths and unsurfaced grass paths. Some of the unsurfaced paths can become muddy in the winter months. A public bridleway surfaced track runs along the western edge of the site from Greasby Road southwards in the direction of Arrowe Country Park.

Key features for the site are Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland and Open Ground Habitat. A Natural Reserve area (FSC/ Forest Stewardship Council designation) is located within compartment 1a where the pond is located. Within this area, management interventions are limited and so any activity here must be within a permitted list as defined by FSC.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term policy for Upton Meadow Wood is to maintain the mosaic of habitats, including native broadleaf woodland and open ground habitat to provide a variety of habitats for nature conservation and to provide informal access for visitors to enjoy.

The secondary woodland will be managed to maintain a diverse structure with a mix of native tree and shrub species. Dead wood, both standing and fallen will be retained where it is safe to do so and natural regeneration will be favoured as the mechanism for future canopy trees. Ash dieback is having a significant impact within the woodland areas and the amount of ash is likely to decline overtime, leaving oak, silver birch, alder and sycamore to be the main canopy species.

Management operations will focus on maintaining public access and safety and woodland management work will aim to make the woodland more diverse and resilient to future threats from climate change, tree disease and pests. The woodland areas will be managed to maintain a high forest of mixed native broadleaf species. The open ground habitats will be managed to maintain their floristic and wildlife value, including allowing some areas to develop into transitional scrub habitats in the long term. The condition of the woodland and other habitats will be monitored regularly to identify any threats from tree diseases, pests and invasive species, and appropriate action taken where it is practicable to do so.

Public access will be maintained in perpetuity through the annual maintenance of paths, entrances and regular safety checks. Path rides will be maintained with a cyclical programme of coppicing to create a varied woodland edge structure and to maintain open wide path rides. Use of the site by the public will be regularly monitored and appropriate work carried out if necessary. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and carrying out site risk assessment and tree safety inspections regularly as per Woodland Trust policy.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Upton Meadow is located between Greasby and Upton and 4 miles to the west of Birkenhead, Merseyside. The site is bordered by housing, two main roads including the Upton Bypass and a retail shopping park. There are four public entrance points from Greasby Road, Upton Bypass and the housing estate on the south side of the wood and 1900m of footpaths, with a mix of unsurfaced grass paths and surfaced gravel paths linking the main entrances. A surfaced public bridleway route runs along the western edge of the site from the Greasby Road entrance, heading south towards Arrowe Country Park.
Significance
The site provides local people with access to woodland and nature close to where they live. It is popular with local people, particularly for dog walking, due to its urban fringe location.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraints - No car parking provision at the site. Only some of the path network is surfaced and some of the paths can become wet and muddy in the winter. Opportunities - The site offers potential for engagement with local people. There is an existing small group of volunteers who carry out woodland management and litter picking. Path surfacing, particularly areas which become muddy and waterlogged, would improve access for visitors (if funding is available).
Factors Causing Change
Anti-social behaviour - litter, fly-tipping, vandalism, camping and fires occur occasionally. Increased use by the public after the development of a new housing estate to the south of the site, leading to greater use of the paths and disturbance from dogs.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and signage will be maintained and replaced when necessary. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and tree safety inspections conducted regularly, as per internal policies.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Maintain 1900m of permissive footpath for public access by mowing grass paths and cutting back vegetation encroaching on surfaced paths (twice a year).

Public access infrastructure such as entrances furniture (gates/ fences) and signage will be monitored and maintained annually to standard WT specs.

Litter and fly tipping will be removal as required.

Carry out path ride edge coppicing to maintain/ improve access and sight lines, during the plan period.

Inspect trees and site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime, and carry out remedial safety work as required.

Path surfacing will be undertaken, if funding is available, to improve areas where paths become muddy and difficult to use in winter.

Monitor public access and usage of the site every 5 years, including assessment of the condition of footpaths, entrances, signs and other infrastructure, and take remedial action as appropriate.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description
Upton Meadow Wood comprises approximately 11ha of secondary woodland habitat split into three areas: 1/ Upton Bridge Wood is thought to date back to the early 1800s and is semi-natural lowland mixed deciduous woodland with glades and wet areas. The canopy is mainly oak, sycamore, alder, ash, wych elm, and willow. The locally dense shrub layer includes hawthorn, holly, hazel, dog rose and naturally regenerating canopy species. 2/ Arrowe Brook Plantation is adjacent to Arrowe Brook (planted around the 1980's by Wirral Council) and contains alder, willow, horse chestnut, ash, beech, oak, lime, Norway maple, Scots pine, field maple, wild cherry and rowan. 3/ New native woodland (planted 1997/8) with a canopy of oak, ash, silver birch, alder and shrub species including hazel and hawthorn. This was planted to buffer and extend the mature secondary woodland (Upton Bridge Wood and Arrowe Brook Plantation). There is a large pond within this area near to the eastern boundary next to the Upton bypass.
Significance
The site is a significant semi-natural habitat feature in the local landscape and provide an important haven for wildlife in the urban surroundings. Upton Bridge Wood is semi-natural broadleaved woodland and is designated as a Site of Biological Importance (Local Wildlife Site) along with the southern meadow area. Arrowe Brook and the secondary woodland alongside it provides a vital green corridor for wildlife (as well as people) and links the site to other nearby green spaces such as Arrowe Country Park. There are several large mature trees with features which may be categorised as notable or veteran trees.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities: The new native woodland has extended the woodland cover on the site and will give fauna and flora the opportunity to spread from the existing woodlands, Upton Bridge Wood and the Arrowe Brook plantation. Ash dieback is likely to increase the amount of standing and fallen deadwood. It will also create gaps in the canopy which will provide opportunities for natural regeneration to develop and help to restructure the woodland and enhance biodiversity. Constraints: The site is surrounded by development on all boundaries and is a constraint to expanding the site's ecological value due

to a lack of adjacent semi-natural habitats. Some parts of the site can become very wet/ waterlogged in the winter which can be a constraint to carrying out management operations. A Natural Reserve area (FSC/ Forest Stewardship Council designation) is located within compartment 1a. Within this area, management interventions are limited and so any activity here must be within a permitted list as defined by FSC.
Factors Causing Change
Ash dieback - affecting large numbers of ash trees on site now. Squirrels causing damage to trees by bark stripping. Himalayan Balsam - spreading along Arrowe Brook on the western boundary of the site.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long term policy for Upton Meadow Woods will be the continued development of the native broadleaf woodland, with a mix of native tree and shrub species, age classes and a diverse woodland structure. Standing and fallen dead wood will be retained where it is safe to do so. Natural regeneration will be favoured to develop future canopy trees. The wood will be managed to develop and maintain a diverse woodland structure through coppicing, thinning and tree safety operations. Ash dieback is likely to reduce the amount of ash within the woodland considerably over time and it is expected that the main canopy species will be oak, silver birch, sycamore, alder with any remaining ash.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Carry out annual summer ash survey for dieback and remove infected ash in high risk areas. Monitor annually for Himalayan Balsam and if any is found on WT land, where practicable arrange to carry out control work to stop it from spreading within the site. Carry out ride and boundary edge coppicing to improve structural diversity and enhance biodiversity, during the plan period. Carry out regular tree safety inspections and intervention as required as per internal WT policies. Monitor the condition of the woodland for any changes and threats to the woodland once every 5 years by carrying out a WECA.

4.3 f3 Open Ground Habitat

Description
Approximately 4ha of the site is open ground habitat, comprising two areas of grassland meadows and small glades and rides. In the southern half of the site is a wildflower species rich meadow containing yellow rattle, meadow and creeping buttercup, common vetch, goatsbeard and ragwort. In the northern half of the site is a larger meadow area which is dominated by grass species. Scrub species including hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and occasional trees are naturally seeding and growing in the open ground areas.
Significance
Species rich grassland in the UK has declined rapidly in the last century and it is a rare habitat on the Wirral which makes this a significantly important habitat. These open ground areas enhance the biodiversity value of the site by adding to the mosaic of habitats along with the woodland areas, pond and stream which will be utilised by a range of flora and fauna. The wildflower species rich meadow in the southern part of the site is particularly valuable for invertebrates especially butterflies. This meadow area along with the adjoining Upton Bridge Wood is designated as a

Site of Biological Importance/ Local Wildlife Site.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities: Appropriate management of the open ground habitat will help to enhance and maximise the biodiversity value of the site. Constraints: The urban location of the site with high visitor usage including use of the site by dogs, compromises the value of the open ground areas being used by some wildlife species and the grass cuttings are unable to be utilised off site due to contamination with dog waste and litter.
Factors Causing Change
Development of scrub will lead to the loss of some of the open ground habitat overtime.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The long term aim for the open ground habitats will be to manage them to maintain their floristic and wildlife value, allowing some areas to develop into transitional scrub habitats in the long term. The south meadow area will be managed through annual cutting to maintain it as a species rich meadow area. The northern meadow area will be allowed to develop naturally overtime into a transitional habitat with areas of grassland mixed with scrub species.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Annual cutting of the south meadow area with the arisings being mulched. Monitor the condition of the open ground areas once every 5 years by carrying out a condition assessment.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	6.61	Mixed broadleaves	1997	Wood establishment	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Local Wildlife Site
This sub-compartment is located in the northern half of the site. It is mostly newly planted woodland comprising mixed broadleaf species including as oak, ash, silver birch, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn. It includes a large pond and marsh area on the eastern boundary next to the Upton bypass. The pond is surrounded by mature broadleaves including grey willow, crack willow, pedunculate oak, turkey oak, sessile oak, sycamore, English elm, hawthorn, hazel and holly.						
1b	3	Mixed broadleaves	1800	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Local Wildlife Site
This sub-compartment contains Upton Bridge Wood and a linear shelter belt of trees alongside Arrowe Brook on the western boundary to the site. 1/ Upton Bridge Wood is a mature semi-natural lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (previously called Site of Biological Importance). The sub-compartment contains a mosaic of habitats that includes damp ditches with bryophytes, mosses and ferns; open glades with a reasonably diverse ground flora and many mature canopy species. These include pedunculate oak, Turkey oak, sessile oak, sycamore, ash, beech, English elm, wych elm, and horse chestnut. The shrub layer of the woodland is diversely structured with species including hazel, wild privet, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, honeysuckle and ivy. There is good natural regeneration within the wood with many saplings observed in the shrub layer. Ground flora in the woodland is diverse and well established with locally abundant species including lords and ladies, ground ivy, goldilocks buttercup lesser celandine pignut and moscahtel. The woodland contains significant levels of deadwood which offers an excellent habitat for birds and invertebrates. 2/ The plantation woodland alongside Arrowe Brook was planted by Wirral Borough Council in 1980. It contains mostly broadleaf species including field maple, grey alder, grey willow, hawthorn, guelder rose, poplar, oak and ash, with some pines. Ground flora in the plantation area includes common comfrey, common sorrel and coltsfoot. A bridleway runs through the sub compartment from north to south.						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1c	3.11	Open ground	1800	Non-wood habitat	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Local Wildlife Site
This sub-compartment consists of open ground grassland habitat to the north-east of sub-cmpt 1b (Upton Bridge Wood). The meadow is classed as semi-improved grassland and is part of the Upton Bridge Wood Local Wildlife Site (Site of Biological Importance). It supports a variety of wildflower species including yellow rattle, velvet bent, meadow buttercup, common vetch and sneezewort.						
1d	1.33	Mixed broadleaves	1997	Wood establishment		
This sub-compartment is located in the most southern part of the site adjacent to a new housing development. It is mostly newly planted broadleaf woodland with mixed broadleaf species including oak, ash, silver birch, hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn.						
1e	0.91	Open ground	1800	Non-wood habitat		
This sub-compartment consists of open ground grassland habitat to the south east of sub-cmpt 1b (Upton Bridge Wood). The meadow is classed as semi-improved grassland and is part of the Upton Bridge Wood Local Wildlife Site (Site of Biological Importance). It supports a variety of wildflower species including yellow rattle, velvet bent, meadow buttercup, common vetch and sneezewort. A survey in 2016 found approximately 30 meadow species.						

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.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

Registered Office:

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