

Gaywood & The Rookery

(Plan period – 2026 to 2036)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Gaywood & The Rookery

Location:	King's Lynn Grid reference: TF639195 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 132
Area:	4.68 hectares (11.56 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site at Gaywood & The Rookery is split into two distinct parts.

The wood is often known as Gaywood plantation, and contains many ancient woodland characteristics. The main tree species within the wood are as follows: Penduculate oak, Turkey oak, Common ash, Field maple and Wych elm. The understorey is dominated by Hazel with some Hawthorn and Blackthorn. The ground flora is quite diverse with Wild Garlic, wood anemone, bluebell and dog violet. Gaywood has a good diverse age and deadwood structure some of which is related to Ash die-back.

Gaywood contains a chain of ponds that have been heavily modified and affected by the creation of the Fairstead estate, a lot of rubbish and soil was deposited within the north western corner of the wood during the construction of the Fairstead estate creating a large mound.

Around the north edge of the wood there is a high amount of nettle found partly due to the past disturbance and ongoing fly tipping on site.

The western half of the site and the second distinct part of the site, contains the area known as the Rookery . This is an area of wood pasture like habitat with standard oaks and grassland intersected by paths.

Gaywood and the Rookery is situated on the urban fringe of King's Lynn and is situated adjacent to a number of large housing estates, in the urban fringes of King's Lynn. There is a main ride running east – west through the wood and many other paths that cross the site, with a total of 1350 m of paths across the site. Around the boundary of the Woodland and also running through the Rookery are tarmac paths that are also used as cycle ways. All Tarmac paths and lighting are maintained by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

The site has high footfall and links urban fringe estates, with the centre of Kings Lynn. To the south of the site is an area of wetland which the site and increases the area of green space locally. This area is in the process of being transferred to the management of a local conservation organisation.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention for Gaywood & The Rookery is to be managed as an ancient semi natural woodland (although not officially classed as an Ancient Semi natural Woodland) and wood pasture, through natural process and good silvicultural management. The site will consist of native broadleaved tree and shrub species, with standing and fallen deadwood habitat .

The woods dominant tree species will be Oak and Field Maple with a supporting species mix of Ash and Elm . The woodland flora such as Bluebell and Wild Garlic will form an important habitat layer within the woodland .

Ash will still be a component of the site, but will provide the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hazel, Hawthorn, and Blackthorn alongside other regenerating species.

The Rookery area will be managed as wood pasture with the dominant tree species being Oak. Where possible areas of the Rookery will be left un-mown to encourage wildflowers to grow, where this doesn't impact on the safety of the site and surrounding properties.

The woodland and the area known as the Rookery will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Gaywood & Fairstead and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will be part of the much wider access provision in the area providing important links to the centre of Kings Lynn town from the surrounding housing estates.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Gaywood and the Rookery is situated on the urban fringe of King's Lynn and is situated adjacent to a number of large housing estates, in the urban fringes of King's Lynn. There is a main ride running east – west through the wood and many other paths that cross the site, with a total of 1350m of paths across the site. Around the boundary of the Woodland and also running through the Rookery are tarmac paths that are also used as cycle ways. All Tarmac paths and lighting are maintained by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. The site has high footfall and links urban fringe estates, with the centre of Kings Lynn. The site suffers with high levels of fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour.
Significance
Gaywood & The Rookery is a small but significant local amenity woodland. It is very important to maintain open public access. If problems of vandalism, misuse and fly tipping can to be prevented in the future more people will enjoy the wood and feel safe in it.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">- to promote site as a key area of green space- to enlist a third party volunteer group to help manage site issues Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none">- cost of dealing with issues- limited options to reduce impacts without significant investment
Factors Causing Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Fly Tipping-Vandalism- Fires- bike trails- recreational drug use
Long term Objective (50 years+)

The woodland and the area known as the Rookery will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Gaywood & Fairstead and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will be part of the much wider access provision in the area providing, important links to the centre of Kings Lynn town from the surrounding housing estates.

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

The approximately 1350m of Paths and rides are to be managed annually , ensuring works are carried out as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access as detailed in EMC spec 2.01.

Manage site safety through safety observations and inspections

. -Associated signage (Site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition and regularly maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager.

Annual inspections of the site to monitor human impacts to be undertaken and any works actioned

- Annually in summer

Access inspection

- August 2030

- August 2035

Tree Safety surveys

-Zone A Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 12 months

-Zone B Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 24 months

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The wood contains many ancient woodland characteristics. In the north-western edge of the site. The main tree species within the wood are as follows: Penduculate oak, Turkey oak, Common ash, Field maple and Wych elm. The understorey is dominated by Hazel with some Hawthorn and Blackthorn. The ground flora is quite diverse with Wild Garlic, wood anemone, bluebell and dog violet. Gaywood has a good diverse age and deadwood structure some of which is related to Ash die-back.

Gaywood contains a chain of ponds that have been heavily modified and affected by the creation of the Fairstead estate, a lot of rubbish and soil was deposited within the north western corner of the wood during the construction of the Fairstead estate creating a large mound.

Around the north edge of the wood there is a high amount of nettle found partly due to the past disturbance and

ongoing fly tipping on site.

The Rookery has a wooded parkland appearance, consisting of mature even aged Penduculate oaks over rough grassland and is of little ecological interest but has great amenity value.

Significance

Gaywood and The Rookery is an important site due to its structure , species and ancient woodland characteristics. An additional significance is the location of the wood in the urban fringes of Kings Lynn and the site provides an important urban woodland green space allowing public access to trees.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

- important urban woodland green space

Constraints

- small wood limited option for expansion
- large population immediately adjacent to site

Factors Causing Change

- Fly tipping
- Vandalism
- fire damage to significant oak trees
- Ash dieback
- Acute Oak Decline
- illegal bike trails

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term intention for Gaywood & The Rookery is to be managed as an ancient semi natural woodland and wood pasture, through natural process and good silvicultural management. The site will consist of native broadleaved tree and shrub species, with standing and fallen deadwood habitat .

The woods dominant tree species will be Oak and Field Maple with a supporting species mix of Ash and Elm . The woodland flora such as Bluebell and Wild Garlic will form an important habitat layer within the woodland .

Ash will still be a component of the site, but will provide the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer.

The shrub component of the site will include species such as Hazel, Hawthorn, and Blackthorn alongside other regenerating species.

The Rookery area will be managed as wood pasture with the dominant tree species being Oak. Where possible areas of the Rookery will be left un-mown to encourage wildflowers to grow, where this doesn't impact on the safety of the site and surrounding properties.

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

Gaywood & The Rookery is to be managed as an ancient semi natural woodland and wood pasture, through natural process and good silvicultural management.

The woodland will primarily be left to undertake a natural process, where intervention will be left to a minimum, apart from any health and safety issues that could pose a threat to public safety.

Within the Rookery area of the site , the grassed wood pasture areas will be left un-mown, to encourage wildflowers to grow, where this doesn't impact on the safety of the site and surrounding properties, as per the request of the site owners the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk . This will be trialled on site in 2026 & 2027 . This change in regime will be monitored by Woodland Trust staff and a decision will be taken in late 2027 as to whether this will continue for the remainder of the management plan.

Monitoring of human impacts and factors causing change affecting the wood will be undertaken regularly, to ensure that the woodland is not being unduly impacted .

Annual monitoring of human impacts & factors causing change

-Summer annually

Woodland Condition Monitoring

Undertake assessments of woodland condition every five years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.

Woodland Ecological condition assessment

- June 2030

- June 2035

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2027	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2028	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2029	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2030	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2031	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2032	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2033	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2034	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February
2035	LC - Fly Tipping	Works associated with removing fly tipped waste – one off /unplanned litter and rubbish removal	February

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.3	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention		
<p>The Rookery, to the west of Gaywood, is best described as Wooded parkland consisting of a plantation of mature, even-aged oaks of around 100 years of age with no understorey and a rough grass sward as the only ground flora. The grass is regularly mown by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk who also maintain the street lighting and tarmac paths that cross the wooded parkland area.</p>						
2a	3.6	Oak (pedunculate)	1800	Min-intervention		County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Gaywood is characterised by large mature oaks with a hazel coppice understorey. Ash and field maple are also present along with a few hawthorn in the understorey and elm and blackthorn along the edges. In the north western corner of the wood there are two ponds and several open ditches inter-connecting them; originally there was a third but this was filled in many years ago with building rubble, which is still visible today. There is a main path running east – west through the wood and many other paths that cross it. In order to make the wood less threatening and boggy, the main ride has been opened up with coppicing.</p>						

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.

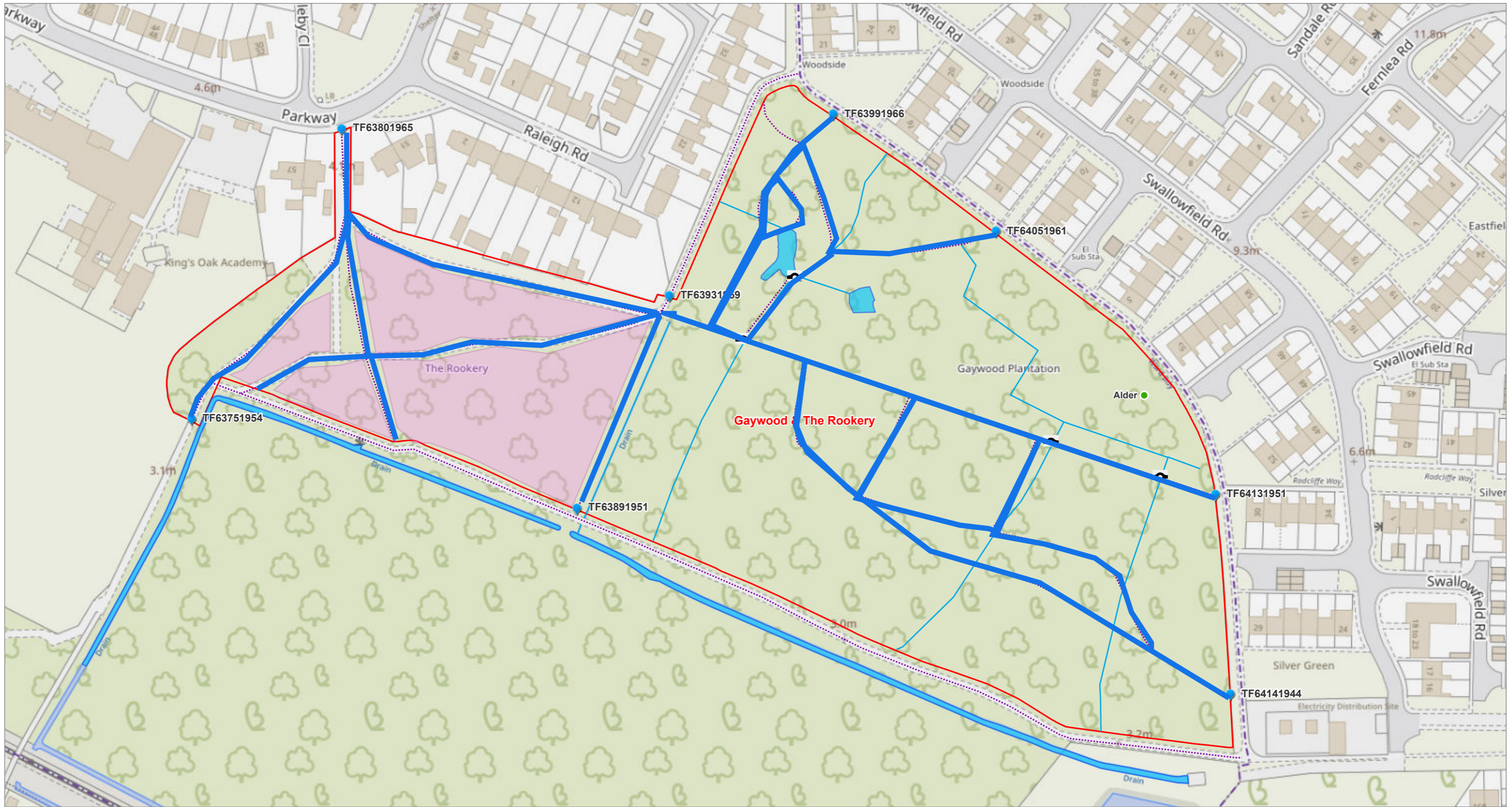
Windblow/Windthrow

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

Registered Office:

The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

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|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <p>Access Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access points | <p>Path Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permissive-Footpath | <p>Watercourses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Bodies | <p>EMC Path Cuts</p> |
| <p>Other Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridge | <p>Features Point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation | <p>Woodland Trust Site Boundary</p> | <p>Unmown areas - 2026 & 2027</p> |

**Gaywood & The Rookery
Management Works 2026-36**

0 0 0 km

Scale: 1:1,411 @A3 Date: 11 March 2026

Author:

