

Costells Wood

(Plan period – 2025 to 2035)



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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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 - 4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

MAP

1. SITE DETAILS

Costells Wood

Location:	Scaynes Hill Grid reference: TQ366237 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 198
Area:	21.14 hectares (52.24 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order
Internal Designations:	N/A

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Costells Wood is a 25.5 hectare (63 acre) site on the edge of the village of Scaynes Hill, West Sussex, just within the southern boundary of the High Weald National Character Area (NCA), where it meets the Low Weald NCA. The Woodland Trust acquired the majority of the site (21ha) in 1996, with a further area (4.84ha) between Costells Edge housing estate and Lewes Road acquired in 2025.

The High Weald NCA is an area of ancient countryside consisting of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management. Costells Wood is characteristic of these ancient woodland habitats and is designated ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) due to its long history of continuous woodland cover that makes the site of considerable importance for wildlife. Together with the predominantly ancient woods to which it is adjoined (the privately owned Henfield and Nashgill Woods), the site forms a locally important tract of this habitat, loosely connected to the wider landscape.

The site is mainly level with a steep-sided gill running roughly parallel with the north-east boundary and a stream marking the western boundary. Its soils are stagnogleyic argillic brown earths with the underlying geology being Tunbridge Wells Sand, which supports a range of woodland types. This includes areas of oak and occasional ash standards with hazel, birch and hornbeam coppice and pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland ground flora such as bluebell and wood anemone. Alder flush woodland predominates in the gills, with carpets of mosses and ferns and the occasional and scarce alder buckthorn. The most notable stand type is the 'wooded heath' area with open-grown oak, birch and Scots pine with a ground flora of bilberry, heather and bracken; a scarce habitat in lowland England.

Overhead powerlines run along the north-east boundary under which regular clearance has created a wide grassy ride known locally as 'Bunny Walk'. This ride is flanked with shrubs and has a variety of ground flora which includes common spotted orchids, wood spurge and heather. There is a small, boggy, wetland area at the southern tip of the wood and several small ponds in the gill stream valley, one of which has been restored through the installation of a weir with a footbridge over it.

Within the site there are approximately 4.5km of footpaths with steps and footbridges installed in steeper and wetter areas to aid access, and six pedestrian entrances offering access and egress to the site and surrounding countryside.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Costells Wood is characteristic of the longevity of ancient High Weald habitats and will be managed to maintain this continuity over the long-term.

The diverse habitats of oak woodland, wooded heath, gill woodland and associated ground flora will be largely self-sustaining through natural processes. The diverse species, age-classes and composition will provide successional growth to maintain continuity of cover, requiring minimal silvicultural intervention throughout the majority of the wood.

Short-term successional habitats and temporary open space will be present following coppicing of trees and understorey (mainly hazel) on ride edges. This will benefit species which rely on temporary open space and scrub habitats such as butterflies and scrub-nesting birds, in addition to those that benefit from the continuity of minimum or non-intervention areas, such as lichen and fungi.

Wide rides will also provide open space and a variety of vegetative zones including herb, scrub and shrub layers which will be present following annual cutting and statutory clearances under the power lines along 'Bunny Walk'.

A proportion of oaks and Scots pines will mature into characterful veteran trees and dead wood will be plentiful throughout the wood, from standing dead trees retained where safe to do so, to naturally fallen trees and branches and retention of some material cut during coppicing.

Riparian habitat surrounding ponds and in stream valleys will largely be left to natural processes except when additional 'natural flood management' (NFM) works (e.g. installation of large woody debris and leaky dams) and/or coppicing may enhance water retention and quality within the site.

Pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (e.g. cherry laurel and rhododendron ponticum) will be monitored and management undertaken where essential to prevent detrimental impact to the overall condition of the site. The sites' diverse habitats and structure will provide resilience, particularly to single species threats such as ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).

Signed entrances and a network of maintained but largely natural paths, with bridges and steps in the steeper and wetter areas, will facilitate access to the majority of the wood, a tranquil site for quiet recreation activities and thriving wildlife.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Many of the woodland stands have a relatively low density of canopy trees, with natural gaps created from self-thinning and natural senescence resulting in a moderate but sufficient level of tree and shrub regeneration to provide continuity of cover and the occasional standing dead tree and fallen dead wood on the ground. Hazel is the most abundant understorey species across the woodland, with derelict hornbeam and sweet chestnut coppice also present, particularly to the south. The oak-dominated areas have swathes of bluebell, anemone, lesser celandine and other associated ground flora representative of this ancient semi-natural stand-type in early spring.

More open still are the 'wooded heath' areas with a higher proportion of open-grown oak, Scots pine and birch with plentiful space between providing conditions for the heathy ground layer of bilberry and heather and occasional understorey vegetation such as rowan and holly between large swathes of bracken.

The gill woodland valleys are flanked by oak and alder, along with occasional birch and sycamore. Understorey species are typically hazel and rowan, with occasional holly and alder buckthorn with a dense ground layer of mosses, liverworts and ferns. Natural Flood Management (NFM) works in the previous plan period 2019-24 (installed leaky dams and felled large woody debris) have enhanced water retention on the approach to the main pond at the northern end of the site, along with other areas along the ghyll stream. Kingfishers have been sighted at the main pond in winter.

Historic maps show a large area of open ground at the north western end of the wood which was likely to be assart fields, medieval clearings for agricultural use. The area that the fields occupied is identifiable by the dominance of well-defined coppice coupes, the majority of which is hazel, either side of the north/south ride in that area. Coppicing of these coupe edges in the previous plan period has encouraged the development of herb and shrub growth on ride edges, along with the routinely cut 'Bunny Walk' beneath the powerlines on the northern boundary of the wood. These areas support a diverse range of ground flora including coarse vegetation and plants more commonly found in semi-natural open space such as bramble, bracken, bugle, self-heal, garlic mustard and occasional orchids.

Ash diminished in 2020 - 2025 from decline from ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxinea*) and removal in tree safety works. However, at its peak ash was estimated to comprise less than 10% of total canopy cover and therefore, it is not anticipated that its loss will be significantly detrimental to the wood overall. There will also be a temporary and beneficial increase in dead wood from those ash that are affected by the disease and retained in the absence of any safety issues.

Non-native invasive species (*rhododendron ponticum* and cherry laurel) are rare but require further control to ensure they do not spread and re-establish. The highest concentration in recent years was in the recently acquired southern section of the wood, adjacent to Costells Edge, but this was largely cleared in the previous plan period by the former

owner. This section also holds the boggy wetland area with rushes and standing water through autumn/winter which forms the southern-most tip of the woodland.

Significance

Costells Wood is characteristic of the ancient woodland, wooded heath and gill woodland habitats of the High Weald; nationally rare ecosystems due to the continuity of woodland cover over hundreds of years. The amount of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) left in Britain has been drastically reduced over the last century, with approximately 40% of England’s ASNW found in the south east. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and its protection and enhancement is one of the main aims of the Trust. Therefore, Costells Wood together with the woods to which it is adjoined, forms a locally important tract of ancient habitat, benefitting the local community and wildlife whilst maintaining resilience and connectivity in the wider landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:
Management access is restricted by the limited access points, undulating terrain and frequently wet ground conditions.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback: Ash cover has reduced due to the disease, which is ongoing. Removal of ash has resulted in an increase in temporary open space giving opportunities for natural regeneration to establish in its place. Some ecological niches (e.g. ash specific lichen and fungi) will diminish from the loss of ash trees, but conversely dead wood will temporarily increase.

Natural regeneration: Self-sown seedlings and saplings will establish and maintain canopy and understory cover (e.g. oak, hornbeam, birch, hawthorn and holly).

Herbivore impact (e.g. deer and squirrel browsing): This has historically had a negligible effect on coppice re-growth and natural regeneration, however, this may change with increasing deer populations in the southeast of England.

Invasive non-native species such as laurel and rhododendron are present and are at risk of spreading and establishing to the detriment of the native ecosystem.

Pollution: There is a low risk of significant nitrification/acidification/pollution from the sewerage system that runs through the wood and from any pollutants that enter the watercourses from other land.

Climate change: Wetter winters may result in significant changes to the water table, saturation of soil and watercourses in and around the woodland. Conversely longer drought periods and increased temperatures are also anticipated through spring and summer. This increases the likelihood of knock-on effects such as drying or waterlogging of soils, increased vulnerability to tree diseases and changes in species composition to those that are best adapted to the changing conditions.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature, long-established ancient woodland stands will be the dominant component of the wood following consistency of overall management over successive plan periods, with notable trees and continuous canopy cover throughout the majority of the wood as a result of minimum intervention.

A diverse species and age-class composition will be present, with a variety of stand-types, most notably the wooded heath and gill stream areas, which provide contrast to the more abundant oak dominated stands.

Ten to fifteen percent of the site will comprise temporary open space, mainly in the form of wide rides with a variety of

vegetative zones including herb, scrub and shrub layers following cyclical ride-side coppicing, annual path cuts and statutory clearances under the power lines along 'Bunny Walk'. Coppicing will be centred on the area of the historic assart fields (sub-cpts 1a and 1b) and the main pond edge, avoiding the wooded heath area and gill stream valleys which are already semi-open with natural glades. A proportion of young trees will be retained as open grown specimens to establish a cohort of potential long-term veterans on ride edges and intersections where possible.

A proportion of oaks and Scots pines will mature into characterful veterans and dead wood will be plentiful throughout the wood, from standing dead trees retained where safe to do so, to naturally fallen trees and branches and retention of some material cut during coppicing.

Invasive non-native species such as cherry laurel and rhododendron will not threaten the woodland following a programme of removal and control. Browsing by animals such as deer will not be causing significant detriment to regenerating vegetation either by natural processes or appropriate management to protect vegetation where necessary.

The variety of regenerating tree species present across the majority of the key feature will provide resilience to diseases and maintain canopy cover. With oak and rapid colonisers such as sycamore and birch present it is anticipated that although the majority, if not all ash within the wood will be affected and lost because of ash dieback, the compensatory species will maintain canopy cover.

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

To maintain short-term successional habitat and temporary open space and prevent invasive species from spreading, establishing and causing detriment to the native ecosystem. This will be achieved through the following:-

- Annual coppicing of selected ride-side trees up to 10m width along a total of approximately 500m of ride and main pond edges during the plan period.
- Removal of non-native invasive species (cherry laurel and rhododendron) in the plan period in line with an environmental and social risk assessment (ESRA) with annual monitoring to assess the effectiveness of herbicide treatment.
- Completion of woodland condition and herbivore impact assessments in 2028 to inform the next management plan review in 2029.

4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Costells Wood is located on the northern edge of the village of Scaynes Hill. With a population of around 1500 living within one kilometre of the site and in excess of 40,000 people within five kilometres, the site is regularly used at all times of year, and is WT access category B (Moderate usage sites. Regular usage, 5 – 15 people using one entrance per day).

There are six pedestrian entrances to the wood. One at the northern tip and two in the south east corner of the wood, accessible via a public footpath that leads from Scaynes Hill common along the northern boundary of Costells Wood, locally known as 'Bunny Walk'. A second public footpath joins Bunny Walk approximately halfway along the north boundary of the wood, providing another entrance to and from Scaynes Hill and the surrounding woodland. There are two further entrances at the southern end of the wood: one in the south west corner directly off the A272 (Lewes

Road) and one off the recreation ground adjacent to the Millennium Centre, both of which link to permissive paths through the site.

There is a network of approximately 4.5km of public and permissive footpaths and rides throughout the wood which are mainly flat however, they are unsurfaced, largely natural and can be muddy with standing water in winter and wet periods. There are occasional footbridges across some stream areas and at the northern-most pond, with steps to aid access in the steepest and wettest areas.

For additional visits there are four other accessible sites in the area: Chailey Common, a 182ha (450 acre) heathland managed by East Sussex County Council, and the Woodland Trust's Beechland Mill Wood, Newick, approximately 3.5km and 5km south of Costells Wood. Approximately 18km to the west are the Woodland Trusts Church Covert, Slaugham, a 5.6ha (13.84 acre) young broadleaf plantation woodland, and Williams Wood, Warninglid, a 4.76 ha (11.76 acre) mature ancient woodland. See the Woodland Trust website for more information.

Significance

Locally, High Weald woodland provides many services to communities living within the area's towns and villages and adjacent urban populations through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation, carbon storage and a range of open-air recreational activities. However, high demands for housing in southeast England threaten to disturb the tranquillity of the Weald and disrupt the historic pattern of the landscape. With a local population of around 1500 people, Costells Wood provides an important ecological and recreational resource to the residents of Scaynes Hill, providing benefits to both mental and physical health.

Costells Wood is also situated within the Woodland Trusts' National Heritage Lottery Funded Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs project area and is used to demonstrate best woodland management practice and to host partner-led activities such as guided walks.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: Although there are footpaths through the whole site, these are largely natural and unsurfaced, meaning that many of the paths are muddy during the winter or prolonged periods of rainfall. The lack of feasibility and cost of installing permanent surfacing is prohibitive and would spoil the natural rural aesthetic of the site.

Factors Causing Change

The current increase in housing developments in the south east is likely to increase visitor numbers. This increases the likelihood of positive and negative effects including anti-social behaviour, littering, dog fouling, fires, cycling, new desire lines and trampling of ground flora, volunteering and local support for the wood and the Trust.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Entrance infrastructure will be maintained to cater for the moderate frequency of visitors to the site. Footpaths will remain largely natural, but suitable infrastructure (e.g. bridges and steps) will facilitate access through some of the more challenging areas of the site to provide a safe, enjoyable and varied woodland experience for visitors. The site will be well used and appreciated by local residents and should retain its largely natural aesthetic.

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

To provide a safe, enjoyable and varied woodland experience for visitors. This will be achieved through the following:

- Annual entrance maintenance and mowing of rides twice a year (July - September) to maintain approximately 4.5km of accessible footpaths and 6 entrances.
- Upgrade of the pedestrian entrance and associated infrastructure and signage in the newly acquired extension (sub-pt 1d) in 2026.
- Annual infrastructure inspections and maintenance.
- Annual tree safety inspections in line with the Trusts Tree Risk Management Policy and remedial works as required.
- An assessment of access infrastructure in 2028 as part of the whole site woodland condition assessment.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants—such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2025	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	August
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	February
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	February
2025	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks , maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/ campsites	February
2026	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Work associated with unplanned emergency tree safety works – such as clearance of fallen trees/branches and associated repairs	February
2025	WMI - General Site Restoration Work	Works associated with initial or restoration phases to conservation and physical features within the sites such as boundary ditches, fences and walls, hedges, infield and boundary trees	February
2026	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	March

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2026	WMI - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the initial phase of invasive plant control – such as rhododendron felling and mulching	March
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	March
2026	AW - Visitor Access Infrastructure	Works associated with the construction of a new or extension to existing car parking facilities.	May
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2026	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks , maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/ campsites	February
2026	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	February
2027	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2027	WMI - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the initial phase of invasive plant control – such as rhododendron felling and mulching	March
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2027	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2027	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	February
2027	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	February
2027	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks , maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/ campsites	February
2028	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	March
2028	WMI - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the initial phase of invasive plant control – such as rhododendron felling and mulching	March
2028	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2028	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2028	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks , maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/ campsites	February

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2028	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	February
2029	WMI - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the initial phase of invasive plant control – such as rhododendron felling and mulching	March
2029	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2029	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2029	SL - Legal Obligation Work	Works that have to be undertaken by Woodland Trust as part of with legal agreements made with third parties such as erection of boundary fencing, surfacing of joint access tracks , maintenance of drainage ditches. Also works associated with safeguarding the Woodland Trust legal position – such as erection of boundary markers on open boundaries, removal of illegal third party structures/vehicles/ campsites	February
2029	WMM - Ride Management	Works associated with the management of existing rides/open areas for biodiversity - ride edge coppicing and thinning programmes, ditch works	February

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	6.84	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	Services & wayleaves	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Streamside mixed broadleaved woodland along the west boundary of the wood. This sub-cpt slopes down from the footpath that extends from the entrance on the A272, with the stream (a tributary of the river Ouse) forming the western boundary. There is mature oak with ash, alder and hornbeam with an understorey of birch, hazel, holly, hawthorn and elder with honeysuckle. There is a notable area (approximately 1.7ha) of mixed coppice (mainly hazel) with semi-mature oak standards on the east boundary of the compartment, extending south from the largest pond at the north end of the site. This area is clearly visible on OS historic maps and is likely to be the site of an old assart field.</p> <p>Ground flora includes bluebell, wood anemone, bracken and bramble with sedges, mosses and liverworts along steam edges and wetter areas. To the north is an area of mostly semi-natural open ground under powerlines, dominated by grass, with bracken in summer.</p> <p>Ash dieback is present within the compartment, affecting ash of all age classes.</p>						
1b	5.34	Mixed broadleaves	1950	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, Services & wayleaves	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Valley/gill woodland adjacent to the north east boundary of the wood. The boundary is defined by a public footpath known as 'Bunny Walk', a regularly cleared ride approximately 3-8m wide which loosely follows overhead power lines and is edged with shrubs, scrub and mixed ground flora including occasional orchids and abundant goat willow in the wettest areas. There is a woodbank running parallel to, but some distance from, the footpath. The area between this bank and the path appears to be secondary woodland with mainly birch and hazel. The gill stream flows north west past two smaller ponds along the valley and into a restored pond with a weir at the north west end of the sub-cpt. From here it flows west into the stream on the western boundary. There is also a tributary stream joining from the south. Within the gill, tree species include oak, coppiced hornbeam, birch, hazel, alder and holly, with rare alder buckthorn (<i>Frangula alnus</i>). Ground flora includes bluebells and wood anemones with ferns, mosses and liverworts along the gill itself. There are permissive paths within as well as around the sub-compartment, with various steps and footbridges to aid access in the steeper and wetter areas. Ash dieback is present within the compartment, affecting ash of all age classes.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1c	8.96	Oak (pedunculate)	1970	Min-intervention	Services & wayleaves	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Central and southern part of the wood occupying a level and heathy area dominated by open-grown oak, birch, rowan, holly and occasional mature Scots pine and honeysuckle. The majority of this sub-cpt has a very different character to the rest of the wood with a very open aspect, sparse understorey and a heathy ground flora dominated by bracken, with frequent bilberry and occasional heather. The south east corner is similar to the other sub-cpts with mature oak, ash and sycamore with a mixed coppice understorey, and the southern third of 'Bunny Walk' as described in sub-compartment 1b. The east half of the southern boundary adjoins the houses of Costells Edge and the west half adjoins sub-cpt 1d (a 4.6ha area of formerly privately owned woodland, with the former boundary indicated by concrete posts and trees marked with orange paint). In the south west corner, adjacent to the A272, ash and alder are frequent in the wettest areas with line f hazel coppice with oak, birch and an understorey dominated by hazel. Ash dieback is present within the compartment, affecting ash of all age classes. The main entrance to the wood is in the south east corner of this sub-cpt and marks the southernmost point of 'Bunny Walk'.</p>						
1d	4.84	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	
<p>Formerly privately owned until 2025, this sub-cpt is bounded by Lewes Road and eleven properties of Costells Edge, and adjoins the main portion of WT ownership to the north. A small garden extension area from Costells Edge remains under private ownership, along with 'Costells Wood' a property and its grounds which extend into this sub-cpt from Lewes Road, both totalling less than 1ha. The canopy is dominated by oak with sweet chestnut, hornbeam, birch and ash with hazel and holly and includes derelict and overstood coppice stools. Yew and Scots Pine are rare anomalies. Cherry laurel and rhododendron were prolific but have recently been cleared. The southern tip of the sub-cpt is boggy with rushes and standing water in autumn/winter. One permissive footpath runs loosely north to south through the centre of the sub-cpt via an entrance on the boundary with the adjacent recreation ground to the east.</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.

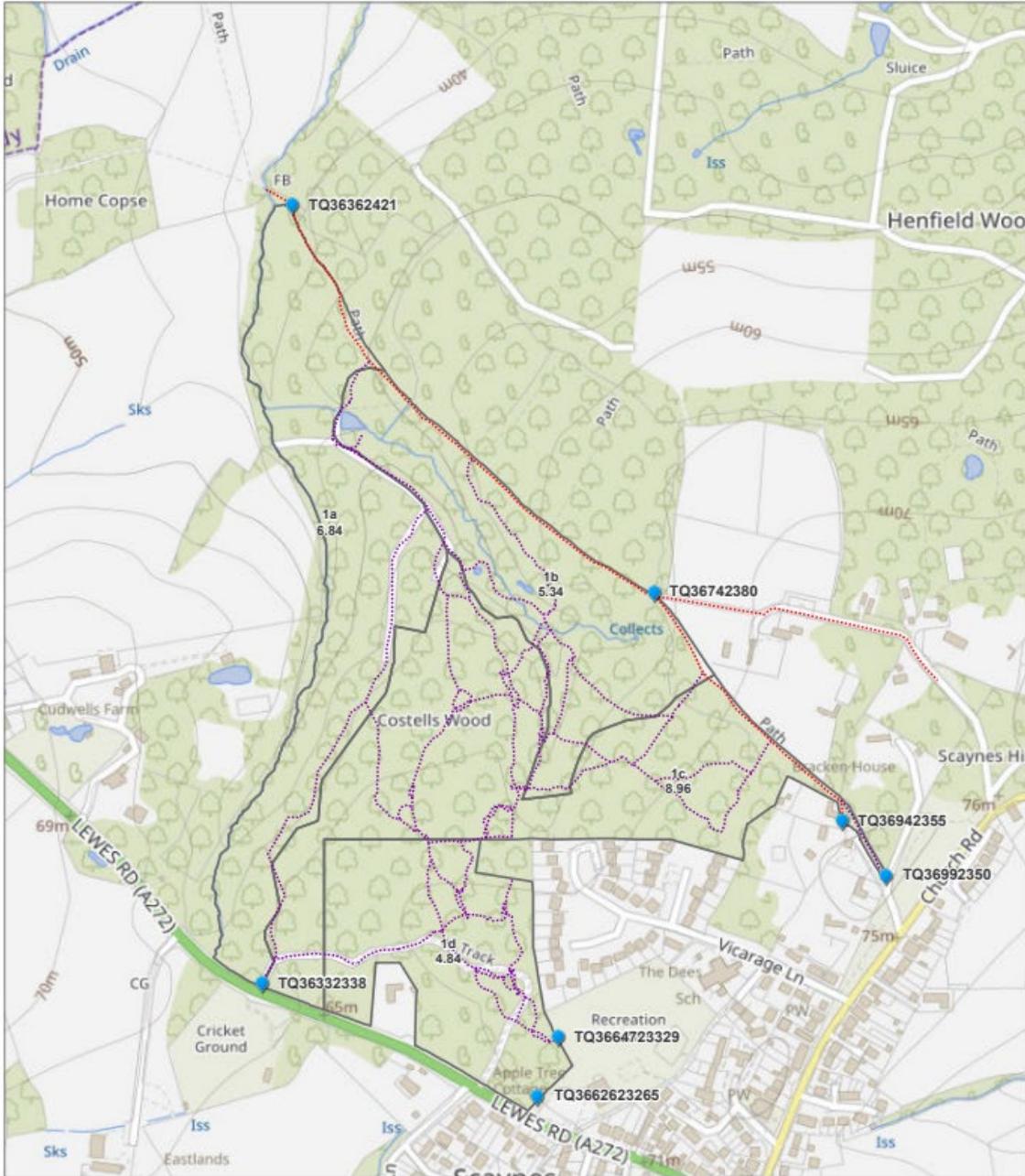
Windblow/Windthrow

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

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Access Points

Access points

Path Network

Legal-Footpath

Permissive-Footpath

SubCompartments

Costells Wood



Scale: 1:5,702 @A4

Date: 19 February 2026

Author:



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