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WOODLAND
TRUST

Craig y Wenallt

Management Plan 2018-2023

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Craig y Wenallt
Location:	Risca
Grid reference:	ST259908, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 171
Area:	7.13 hectares (17.62 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, Planted Ancient Woodland Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Craig y Wenallt occupies an east facing hillside overlooking rolling farmland, with views down to the Severn Estuary at Newport. The town of Risca is immediately to the west, but hidden from view. The wood merges with a much larger block of coniferised ancient woodland to the north, and farmland adjoins to the east and west. Two miles to the northwest is Cwmcarn forest, a publicly owned site managed by Natural Resources Wales.

The whole of Craig y Wenallt is classed as semi natural ancient woodland but only the upper western slopes now support mature woodland. This area is dominated by large mature beeches, which also occur in the hedge to the unsurfaced public road which runs adjacent to the lower eastern boundary. The remainder of the wood, lying between the mature beech woodland and the lower boundary hedge is young broadleaved woodland growing on land formerly cleared for grazing in the 1960s, but abandoned by 1985, and subsequently planted by the Woodland Trust. There are small areas of open ground within broom too.

A circular walk is available along a footpath running through the wood and returning along the unsurfaced public track.

The key features of the wood are semi-natural ancient woodland and informal public access.

2.2 Extended Description

Craig y Wenallt occupies an east facing hillside overlooking rolling farmland, with views down to the Severn Estuary at Newport. The town of Risca is immediately to the west, but hidden from view. The wood merges with a much larger block of coniferised ancient woodland to the north, and farmland adjoins to the east and west. Two miles to the northwest is Cwmcarn forest, a publicly owned site managed by Natural Resources Wales.

The whole of Craig y Wenallt is classed as semi natural ancient woodland but only the upper western slopes now support mature woodland. This area is dominated by large mature beeches, which also occur in the hedge to the un-surfaced public road which runs adjacent to the lower eastern boundary that is marked as 'other route with public access' on ordnance survey map. The remainder of the wood, lying between the mature beech woodland and the lower boundary hedge is young broadleaved woodland growing on land formerly cleared for grazing in the 1960s, but abandoned by 1985, and subsequently planted by the Woodland Trust.

A circular walk is available along a permissive foot path running through the wood and returning along the un-surfaced public track.

The key features of the wood are semi-natural ancient woodland and informal public access.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location

This wood is located around 2¾ miles (just over 4km) north west of Newport, close to the suburban area of Ty-Sign and Risca. From Junction 27 (High Cross) of the M4, take the B4591 towards Risca. Head straight over three roundabouts, then take the next right towards Risca Comprehensive School and the Leisure Centre. After the entrance to the school, take the next turning right. From here, the last opportunity to park a car is in the residential road of Mountainside, which is on your left. Continue past the entrance to Mountainside and turn left at the T-junction. Take the first fork to the right down the unsurfaced lane; after about 100m you will arrive at the wood, marked by a sign on your left.

Overview of Entrances and Paths

The entrance is up some steps and through a kissing gate. The path is an uneven track - which is either grassy or covered in leaf litter. Although located on the side of a steep hillside, the path follows the contour, rising and falling fairly gently, though steep in places. If taking the circular walk option, you return along the lane. This may be a lot muddier than the woodland track.

Parking

There is no car park at the site. As it is close to a residential area, there are some opportunities to find space in one of these roads: Mountainside is the closest, otherwise around Cotswold Way.

Public Transport

The closest bus stop is in Cotswold Way ('Trenwydd Park') and is served by the R1 Newport - Risca bus.

Get off at the Mendip Close stop in Cotswold Way. With your back to Mendip Close, go right (downhill) along Cotswold Way. After 100m turn left into Elm Drive. After walking approximately 300m turn left into an unnamed road which leads past Risca Comprehensive (on your right) and Mountainside Road (on your left). Having passed Mountainside the road narrows to a country lane - follow directions as above.

For further details: Traveline Cymru <https://www.traveline.cymru/>
0800 464 00 00

Public Toilets

The nearest known are located around 2 ½ miles (4km) away at the Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre, High Cross. The Visitor Centre is open throughout the week (free admission). The toilets are located outside the building around the back. Both gents' and ladies' are adapted for disabled use. A radar key is not required, but the toilets are locked when the visitor centre is closed. For more information visit <http://fourteenlocks.mbact.org.uk/>

Other Trail Networks:

Craig y wenallt is less than 1km away from cycle route 47 between Newport and Fishguard.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

This ancient woodland will be allowed to mature naturally, accepting any balance of broadleaved species. Beech is assumed to be native on this site and has regenerated freely. Other species present, including birch and oak, may become most abundant. Squirrel damage may be severe especially to beech and sycamore and may limit the numbers reaching maturity. We will not control squirrels by any available method as it is unlikely to be effective if not managed on a landscape scale. The lower slopes planted in 1990-92 (after clearfell by the previous owner for use as grazing pasture) will be allowed to mature. The single permissive footpath running through the wood will be maintained.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Craig y Wenallt is an ancient semi natural woodland, with few mature trees remaining; only on the western and northern boundaries, and an outgrown hedge to the east. The lower slopes (sub compartments 1b and 1c) went through a brief phase of clearance and grazing in the 1960s. Beech is the predominant mature species and is considered site-native. Bluebells are present in several patches.

Significance

Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable and threatened habitat type in Britain. Protection and restoration of ancient woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's objectives. Craig y Wenallt is notable for the presence of mature beech, and provides an attractive woodland walk near to residential areas.

Opportunities & Constraints

Past agricultural disturbance has impoverished the ancient woodland characteristics in the lower slopes.

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage. Loss of ash due to ash dieback disease, either through felling/removal or dying in situ.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The young woodland will be allowed to mature, accepting all surviving broadleaved species. The resultant mixture is expected to contain beech, oak, ash, sycamore, birch, rowan and hazel. Intervention will then be minimal, allowing natural succession to occur.

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

No intervention required in this plan period for conservation or woodland structure; woodland regenerating well with good species diversity and valuable open areas naturally not becoming enclosed. Areas of high forest may begin to self thin. Little ash on site and very few mature specimens on boundaries so unlikely to need to manage for ash dieback to a great extent; any intervention will be based on results from tree safety inspections along the internal footpath and boundary alongside the public trackway.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

A public un-surfaced track labelled as 'other route with public access' on OS map, runs adjacent to the eastern boundary. A permissive footpath runs through the length of the wood, these combined provide a circular walk.

Significance

Close to Risca comprehensive school and residential areas, and links them with the larger woodland area of Craig y Merchant to the north. Pathways fairly well used.

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the wood constrains any further path development

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain public access via permissive footpath running through the wood, maintaining infrastructure to a tidy and welcoming standard.

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

Twice yearly maintenance to limit encroachment and allow easy public access. Replacement of entrance infrastructure when required.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.16	Beech	1950	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>Steeply sloping, east facing strip of mature woodland running along much of the upper western boundary to adjacent grazed land and scrub. On the eastern side is an indistinct boundary to sub-compartments 1b and 1c. Beech is dominant and assumed to be native, with birch, rowan, sycamore, ash and sessile oak also present. Birch is most abundant at the southern end. Several clear areas are present, which are being mostly colonised by sycamore, elder and occasional broom. Ground flora is abundant in most areas, except under beech, with species including bramble, ivy, mosses, ferns, bluebell and primrose. Bluebell is abundant at the southern end and patchy elsewhere. Several large windthrown trees are present throughout.</p>							
1b	2.73	Oak (pedunculate)	1990	Wood establishment	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>Although classed as ancient woodland, this area was felled and temporarily converted to grazing land when part of Lower Wenallt Farm in the 1960s. It had been abandoned by the time of purchase by the Woodland Trust in 1987, with bramble and scrub well established. It was planted in 1990-92, and is developing well as a broadleaf woodland, with, amongst others, oak, ash birch and beech present. Ash locally dominant in some areas.</p>							
1c	2.24	Mixed native broadleaves	1990	Wood establishment	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>The northern end of the woodland, classed as ancient woodland but was clear-felled by former owners. At time of purchase by Woodland Trust in 1987 this area was dominated by bracken, bramble and broom. Supplementary planting of beech took place in 1990 from locally collected seed. The woodland is establishing well, with a good variety of broadleaves, including birch, sycamore, oak and rowan; some mature trees remain. There is a strip of alder woodland following the Castroggi brook at the northern boundary of the site.</p>							

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

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