



# Brackfield Wood

## Management Plan 2017-2022

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## THE WOODLAND TRUST

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

### PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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

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

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## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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

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

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk). Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

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

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

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

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

## SUMMARY

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

## 1.0 SITE DETAILS

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Site name:</b>      | Brackfield Wood, Burntollet Wood, Killaloo Wood, Oaks Wood  |
| <b>Location:</b>       | Brackfield, Claudy, East of Londonderry, Killaloo, Ness Burn, Londonderry   |
| <b>Grid reference:</b> | C504102, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. N/A<br>C505108, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 7<br>C511094, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 7<br>C500109, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 7                  |
| <b>Area:</b>           | 26.92 hectares (66.52 acres)<br>22.67 hectares (56.02 acres)<br>6.71 hectares (16.58 acres)<br>10.54 hectares (26.04 acres)                                     |
| <b>Designations:</b>   | Area of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation<br>Area of Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation |

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Brackfield Wood, our First World War Centenary Wood for Ireland, is part of a patchwork of newly planted, long existing and ancient woodlands nestling in the beautiful Faughan Valley. An Area of Special Scientific Interest, the valley is rich in flora and wildlife, including red squirrel and otter.

## 2.2 Extended Description

The Faughan Valley landscape is a patchwork of ancient woodland, farmed fields and connecting hedgerows. The majority of the ancient and long established woodland in this area hugs the banks of the Faughan River. The river and its tributaries are designated as an ASSI (Area of Special Scientific Interest) for its Atlantic salmon and its many other associated species e.g. European Otter, Kingfisher and Purple Hairstreak butterfly.

In the 6th Century Derry was an island in Lough Foyle on which oak characterised the landscape. Derry has retained the symbolism of the native oak through the centuries. The name Derry is derived from the Celtic Dair - an oak, or Doire - an oak grove/oak wood. The Oaks Wood is a fitting tribute to this tradition planted with a mix of native broadleaved trees as part of the Woods on Your Doorstep Millennium Project in 2000 along with Killaloo Wood, both protecting, buffering and extending ancient woodland along the river. In 2009 Burntollet Wood was planted as part of the Forest of Flowers initiative as well as buffering and extending the Ness and Ervy ancient woodlands. Then more recently Brackfield Wood was acquired as part of the Faughan Valley Landscape Partnership in 2012 to begin to connect the patchwork of sites together along with Bonds Glen in 2016 and Red Brae in 2018. Each site was planted in reflection of the landscape character maps of the Faughan Valley and surrounding area including species - oak, downy and silver birch, ash, rowan, hazel, holly, willow and alder in wetter areas and a scattering of scots pine. Aspen can be found in abundance growing naturally at Oaks Wood.

A total of 6.5km of pathways have been created throughout the sites linking in with a further 7km of paths throughout Ness and Ervy Country park, providing access for visitors to explore the landscape. Natural carved / themed seating or wooden benches are dotted throughout the sites at a number of viewpoints along with signage and information panels about the site and its wildlife inhabitants. Other features include; a poetry trail in Brackfield Wood as part of the commemorations of the Trusts First World War project (2014 - 2018), a mosaic tile wildlife trail in Burntollet created with the help of local artist Grainne KIELTY, from Artworks and a time capsule created by staff at Homebase in 2000 in Oaks Wood after donations to the planting of the woodland - to be opened again in 2025.

A variety of native flora can be found in the hedgerows, along the river banks and in the patches of ancient/long established woodland which in time will seed and naturalise throughout the newly planted areas and open spaces of the valley - such as - primrose, pignut, bluebell, eye bright and early purple orchid. Fungi such as hair ice, scarlet elf cap and jelly ear at Oaks Wood. Cuckoo calls and circling buzzards as well as sightings of irish stoat, pine martin and hedgehog. A wildlife pond in Oaks Wood created in 2000 boasts home to common newt population and a small grassland meadow in Killaloo Wood provides haven for pollinators - bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

By bus: There is a limited bus service from Londonderry to Killaloo and Claudy, travelling along the A6.

By train: The closest train station is Londonderry (13km/8 miles).

For up-to-date information on public transport, visit [traveline.org.uk](http://traveline.org.uk) (0871 200 22 33).

By car: Travelling along the A6 from Belfast to Londonderry, pass through Dungiven and proceed for about 19km (12 miles).

On the right hand side of the Glenshane Road, you will see Cumber Church and the ruins of a castle. Shortly after this, there is a layby signed 'Brackfield Picnic Area'.

There is also a car park close to the Trust's Burntollet Wood. Follow the signs for Ervey Wood car park.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

The site has two new vehicle and pedestrian all-ability access points: one from the Ardmore Road and one from the Brackfield picnic layby. From the top layby entrance, one kilometre (0.6 miles) of stone and grass path winds through the main part of the site, providing views across the valley and along the river. The route has a series of benches.

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## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

A hundred year vision for this site would see the newly planted areas mature and buffering the existing veteran trees and ancient woodland remnants protecting the banks of the River Faughan. An important piece in the jigsaw to link woodland and sustainable carbon free access to the surrounding valley. Secondary woodland linking long established and ancient woodland on both sides of the river. A structurally sustainable and species diverse woodland supporting a biodiverse community of native flora and fauna, from nationally rare invertebrates such as the purple hair streak butterfly to providing a haven for protected species such as the otter and pine martin.

In twenty five years time the woodland canopy will have closed and a first thin will already see a secondary layer and structure within the wood, encouraging an understory shrub layer with holly and hazel encompassing glades and rides throughout the site where any wildflower edges will be managed as semi-shade tolerant woodland edge herbaceous flora.

The feature trees, long established hedgerows and riparian woodland will be supported and reflected in the surrounding landscape, seeing remnant woodland flora such as bluebells, wood anemone, dog violet and primrose gradually creeping into and taking refuge in the planted woodland.

In ten years time the woodland will be fully established in all compartments with some sections along the river remaining open rush pasture as a natural flood plain and other sections of the site allowed to naturally transition over time through regeneration from the existing feature trees and neighbouring Ness, Ervy and Tamnemoor woodlands. The wildflower scalloped path edges at Burntollet and Brackfield will continue to be cut as a traditional hay meadow, noxious weeds controlled and over time gradually managed as woodland edge habitat.

### Newly planted woodland

The newly planted woodland compartments will be managed to encourage a diverse and reflective species mix both of the surrounding landscape, ancient woodland and the Derry/Londonderry county landscape character maps.

### Ancient/Long established woodland/feature trees

The remnant ancient, long established woodland will be managed to sustain a structural and species diverse habitat which can best cope under the increasing climatic and ecological pressures. Any feature trees will be managed where necessary in terms of prolonging their presence on the site, safety of site visitors and the unique and diverse communities present and dependent upon e.g. bryophytes, fungi and invertebrates many of which can be tree species specific.

### River

The Faughan River runs like a life giving artery through the ecologically diverse and habitat mosaic landscape of the Faughan Valley. It is the key to the past and what will continue to shape the land into the future of this wood and others adjacent to it. Designated as an ASSI and SAC any management decision affecting the river will be made in agreement with the relevant government



departments, statutory bodies and local stakeholders.

Extensive surveys of riparian woodland along the river from the source to the lough will be completed and used to inform the best possible solution for habitat links, ecological corridors, bank stabilisation and thus contributing to long term solutions around pollution prevention, flood elevation, ecological protection and the river as a sustainable economic resource.

#### Rough pasture / Pond / Meadow

The rough pasture, open transitional habitats, meadows and rush will be managed where possible to optimise in terms of species diversity. Areas created to encourage the potential feeding sites for a variety of breeding waders and feeding grounds for the recorded presence of the barn owl. Pond at Oaks will continue to be managed for wildlife - breeding newt population, dragonflies, etc. Meadows where possible will be grazed to encourage a diverse species mix for pollinators and small mammals

#### Public Access

To sensitively connect, improve and link existing and new pathways throughout the Faughan landscape with a total of 35km of public pathways to explore by 2030.

## 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 Feature Trees

#### Description

A number of large significant veteran Oak and Sycamore trees exist on the site both at field margins and along the river, including a number of long established or ancient hawthorn trees. Presence of some recorded woodland herbaceous species such as pignut, wood anemone, germander speedwell, wild primrose and bluebell as well as some meadow species such as meadow sweet, sweet vernal grass and bugle.

#### Significance

Protection and management of these trees as they provide a link to the ancient woodland, landscape management and peoples connection to the area. They will provide a natural local provenance seed source for the newly planted woodland and the surrounding Faughan Valley. The Oaks especially will support a vast diversity of species from dependant communities of fungi and bryophytes, invertebrates, birds and mammals.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities -

Seed source for collecting, interplanting, potential transplanting on site.

Constraints -

Sycamore seedlings will need to be monitored and controlled where necessary.

#### Factors Causing Change

Climate, seed mast, age of trees, disease, Natural Succession To...non native species, Deer population.

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

Look at opportunities to further link patches of woodland and long established hedgerows with feature trees within the landscape. To become part of the mosaic of habitats and ancient woodland linkages across the Faughan Valley. Any feature trees will be managed where necessary in terms of prolonging their presence on the site, safety of site visitors and the unique and diverse communities present and dependent upon e.g. bryophytes, fungi and invertebrates many of which can be tree species specific.

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

Survey the trees on site with volunteers and or contractors/consultants to record what would be classified as ancient trees on the site. Monitor the trees annually in terms of tree seed production and every other year for tree health.

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

There are currently two main entrances into the site and two smaller kissing gate entrances, two off the Ardmore Road and two off the Brackfield picnic layby both off the A6 Glenshane Road. From the parking layby entrance a 1km board edged gravel path, flanked by cornfield meadow flowers guides you along parallel with the road then curving down towards the lower gravel path which takes you along the base of the slopes through the long established hedgerows, up wooden steps and along the Faughan river edge out to the Ardmore Road. A grass path takes you along the river edge joining back into wooden steps and to the south of the site joining back into a permissive anglers path leading along the faughan edge. A series of wooden benches and stopping points can be found along the way.

### Significance

**Access & Recreation:** The aim is to create 2km of access routes through the newly planted woodland for the benefit of the communities of the faughan valley, to enhance the local environment and quality of life.

**First World War Centenary Woodland** - to mark the anniversary and to provide a lasting living legacy to those across the Island of Ireland who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This is important for the public to gain enjoyment of the valley, to create a sense of ownership and well being, to learn and appreciate the wide variety of wildlife and the spectacular views. Also this Hill project will fulfill all of the Trust key outcomes of biodiversity, access, engagement, new planting and protecting ancient woods. A showcase woodland that really demonstrates the importance of trees and woods.

### Opportunities & Constraints

#### Opportunities -

To link the existing pathways on site with the informal anglers paths along the faughan river.  
To link Brackfield Wood with Oaks Wood and Killaloo Wood

#### Constraints -

Funding for access works and interpretation  
Erosion of the river banks  
Widening scheme of A6

### Factors Causing Change

Climate change, erosion of the river banks, increased users - litter / fly tipping, dog fouling, development and road expansion of the A6 Belfast to Derry road scheme.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

A network of useable, sustainable and accessible pathways for locals and visitors to the area of up to 35km by 2030. A greenway linking people to the landscape, sustaining wildlife resilience throughout the faughan valley as well as providing opportunities for growing a greener economy. To provide an interpretive educational trail along your journey through the valley.

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

To link pathways to the adjacent sites within the landscape - Oaks and Killaloo Woods, using the Faughan River and the existing ancient woodland remnants as the focus to the access. Providing interpretive points and information for users and visitors to the site.

### 5.3 New Native Woodland

#### Description

A mixture of Oak, Hazel and birch woodland planting to reflect the surrounding landscape and what is present in the landscape character maps for the Faughan Valley as well as scatterings of Rowan and Alder were planted with contractors, local volunteers and members of the public in 2015. Scots pine and hazel along the top banks and some further down the slopes with some oak on the flat near the river. Existing species present include wood sorrel, meadow foxtail and cuckoo flower.

#### Significance

Newly planted woodland in this landscape area has particular significance in order to extend, link and create a more sustainable and resilient "woodscape." The newly planted compartments achieve the woodland trust objectives through creating woodland and protecting existing important woodland. Brackfield wood sits at the heart the Faughan valley treescape area. As part of the Centenary Woodland project each tree has an individual importance, representing each of the estimated individuals across the island of Ireland who died during the First World War.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

##### Opportunities

- to work with adjacent land owners through various planting schemes connecting patches of existing woodland.
- Using the River Faughan as a connective route through the landscape looking at riparian planting around bank stabilisation and water quality

##### Constraints

- A6 road expansion scheme
- Funding

#### Factors Causing Change

Ash Dieback, tree disease, climate change, natural regeneration of oak, ash, beech, sycamore. Docks and spear thistles, grey squirrels, snowberry and other invasive species in the area, deer population.

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

The newly planted woodland compartments will be managed to encourage a diverse and reflective species mix both of the surrounding landscape, ancient woodland and the Derry/Londonderry county landscape character maps.

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

To establish the newly planted areas over the next four years through beat up where necessary, checking and monitoring for deer and or hare/rabbit presence and protecting the trees where needed through guards and canes.

## 5.4 Watercourses

### Description

The Faughan River runs like a life giving artery through the ecologically diverse and habitat mosaic landscape of the Faughan Valley from its source in the Sperrin Mountains (AONB) to where it meets Lough Foyle (Ramsar). It is the key to the past and what will continue to shape the land into the future of this wood and others adjacent to it. Designated (and its tributaries) as an ASSI and SAC for its atlantic salmon, and a variety of other species. Records of priority species twaite shad, european smelt, sea lamprey, and river/brook lamprey have been reported from the estuaries. The river also provides important habitat for otters, kingfishers and sand martins.

### Significance

The river is at the heart of the valley and its remnant ancient, long established riparian woodland habitat along the edge of this site and others provides a connection to past land use and the existing ancient woodland in the surrounding landscape. The river is nationally important for its atlantic salmon population and a priority habitat for Northern Ireland including the european protected species - otter and feeds into Lough Foyle, a Specially Protected area for migratory bird species and important wetland sites. The river also supports a local interest in the sport of angling which offers an opportunity to link people with river protection through woodland management and appreciation of trees and woods in the landscape.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities -

- Connecting, protecting and enhancing riparian woodland along the river and linking to Killaloo and Oaks Woods.
- Woodland friends of group through the Faughan Anglers
- bank stabilisation through use of rotation coppice on site and adjacent sites

Constraints -

- Erosion of banks
- funding
- extension of the A6 road

### Factors Causing Change

Pollution incidents, tree disease, bank erosion, poaching, climate change, A6 extension, surrounding land uses, invasive species e.g. snowberry, knotweed.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Extensive surveys of riparian woodland along the river from the source to the lough will be completed and used to inform the best possible solution for habitat links, ecological corridors, bank stabilisation and thus contributing to long term solutions around pollution prevention, flood elevation, ecological protection and the river as a sustainable economic resource.

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

To continue the legacy of the Faughan Valley landscape partnership through working with our Treescapes Officer, landowners and various other stakeholders such as the Faughan Anglers and the Loughs Agency looking at further riparian surveys. Bank stabilisation through planting and or weaved hazel coppice banks along sections.

## 5.5 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

### Description

Compartments of Killaloo Wood are semi-natural ancient woodland and sections of Oaks Wood are long established woodland, as well as remnant ancient woodland along the Faughan river and its tributaries in Brackfield Wood and Bonds Glen. This is of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Upland Oakwood type with oak, hazel and holly as the predominant species and an understory of woodrush, bluebells and moss. While much of the mature oak was removed from the woodlands during plantation times, over time oak would be expected to become the dominant canopy tree once again. When the Woodland Trust took over the management of the sites some had been overgrazed, but the ground flora such as early purple orchid, wood sorrel and wood anemone is recovering now that grazing has been excluded, and natural regeneration is successful.

### Significance

Upland Oakwood is a Priority Habitat within the NI Biodiversity Strategy.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Access, funding, invasive species

Opportunities:

There is additional agricultural land surrounding these compartments where more buffering and linking of SNAW fragments could be encouraged through work with other landowners or land purchase.

Continued riparian work with Loughs Agency and other local partners to link and strengthen existing patches.

Collecting of acorns with volunteers/community groups to plant and grow on

### Factors Causing Change

Snowberry, knotweed, salmonberry, laurel and rhododendron. Natural succession and tree growth, damage by grey squirrels and deer, tree disease, climate change, acid rain/pollution - increase of traffic flow A6

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

The remnant ancient, long established woodland will be managed to sustain a structural and species diverse habitat which can best cope under the increasing climatic and ecological pressures. To continue to link and buffer existing patches of woodland through ecological corridors/hedgerows and new planting where possible within the landscape.

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

Remove and treat snowberry growing within the woodland and treat small patch of knotweed. Set up monitoring program for grey squirrel and deer. Look for opportunities with volunteers and the treescapes project to build up a species list of the area.

## 5.6 Connecting People with woods & trees

### Description

Faughan valley sites can all mainly be accessed off the Glenshane Road, A6. There are entrances with kissing gates and small car park laybys / areas usable for events and the general public, most are big enough to take a small minibus or three cars. There are approx. 6.5km of mostly wide, with a mixture of smooth grassy paths or stoned loose gravel paths, there are some sections with stone steps and features such as stone/wooden bridges to cross and some steep sections. Information panels are installed at each of the entrances with ideas of things to do and look out for. A series of information boards can also be found on Burntollet Wood informing members of the public about the history of the area, the wildflowers and trees to be found and the stunning views. Additional features include a mosaic sculpture trail with a biodiversity theme including nest boxes and bug hotels at Burntollet and a poetry trail at Oaks and Brackfield Wood.

The sites offer a number of points to stop on benches throughout the landscape, space for family picnics, dog walking and woodland creation. One of the entrance points of Burntollet leads directly from and into Ness Country Park/Ervy Woods and Tamneymore Woods all of which are designated ASSI's for their ancient woodland and geological features of the area. 55 hectares of mixed woodland along with open parkland make up the Park which extends along both sides of the Burntollet River. There are over 7km of stunning woodland and riverside walks including a magnificent waterfall walk. For the less able visitors, there is also a meadow walk which offers easy access walking. The park also has picnic tables, wildlife ponds, wildflower meadows and a new visitor centre with local information, an exhibition on woodland biodiversity and toilets. The car park holds approx 40 - 50 cars and can accomodate coaches and small mini buses.

The nearest village would be Drumahoe at 4 miles, with a population size of 1,367, average income and demographic of majority around the age of 17 - 59 with 27% under 16 and 11% over 60. We have close links with the local primary school, Drmahoe Primary. The closest population centre is the village of Claudy (population approximately 1,300) with Derry/Londonderry (population approximately 107,877) within 6 miles. Claudy has two primary schools and one secondary school and we have excellent close links with all 3 schools. In the wider area there are 15 primary school and 2 secondary schools within 10 miles of the site. Claudy also has a GAA club, two football clubs and a small leisure centre facility (Diamond Centre).

This site receives an approximate average of 500 visitors per month, some through access via the Ness/Ervy Wood sites and mainly regular dog walkers/walkers. In 2010 when the wood was planted there was a public consultation. There are currently two wood wardens that patrol this site with a potential to avail of a "friends of" group covering the Faughan Valley area in the future. There is also an active red squirrel group in the county area and have one large branch of Sainsbury's approximately 12 miles from the site who have previously volunteered with tree planting in the area.

### Significance



The area holds some last remaining remnants of ancient woodland in the North West region where these have been buffered and in part allowed to naturally regenerate alongside the Ness/Ervy/Tamneymore woodlands/ Faughan River. The older hedgerows and feature trees already existing on the sites alongside the new planting help to link and extend the surrounding habitat mosaic. Burntollet Wood was part of the "Forest of Flowers" initiative and in 2010 a total of 11ha of wildflower meadow was sown along with the planting of new native woodland. Brackfield Wood as part of the First World War Centenary commemoration also had wildflowers sown including the iconic field poppy. The sites also fall within the "Treescapes" area of the Faughan Valley.

The sites are significant in terms of their biodiversity value connecting the adjacent ASSI woodland dominated by Sessile Oak with a hazel, holly and downy birch understorey flushed with typical ground flora species e.g. bluebells, wood anemone including greater wood rush and bilberry. As well as rich communities of bryophytes and lichens, nationally rare butterfly purple hair-streak, sightings of barn owl, irish stoat, hare, pygmy shrew, red squirrel and pine martin.

The name Burntollet within the Faughan Valley has both significance in terms of the Burntollet River designated an ASSI and SAC as a tributary of the River Faughan and in relation to the townland and the Burntollet bridge which is a site of significance in terms of the legacy of the "the Troubles."

### Opportunities & Constraints

To form a "friends of group" as part of the Treescapes project to transfer rural skills, woodland management techniques and wildlife recording.

- Future brand moments e.g. summer picnics, dog walking events, easter / bluebell trails.
- To improve or add to the sculpture trail in Burntollet - new nest boxes
- Partnership events with NIEA at Ness Country Park
- Woodland creation
- To re-engage with local primary schools in the area
- Working with Ulster Wildlife on Red Squirrel conservation

Constraints;

- Funding
- some sections of site are steep and not completely accessible to all users
- some recent anti-social behaviour on site

### Factors Causing Change

Climate change, some burning recently on site and anti-social behaviour at Burntollet, tree disease, seasonal flooding, road widening scheme of A6.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Wildlife rich and structurally diverse woodlands with open rides and glades alongside managed pathways leading you through the sites to various feature points. A connecting network of habitat mosaic and pathways up to 35km linking you through the valley using the river and its tributaries as your guide. A growing local volunteer base/ rural skills group and or friends of group to help manage the woodland for people and wildlife. Yearly brand moments, public awareness and engagement events around the importance and connection of woodland to local residents. People of the Faughan Valley, Drumahoe, Derry city and beyond know the site and feel confident and assured to protect and stand up for the area as an essential natural asset.

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

To survey site access based on the "paths for all" guidelines to determine any improvements that can be made to increase user ability and variety. To work alongside the Treescapes manager and project officer for the valley to increase volunteer opportunities for the area. To re-engage with local primary schools in the area around tree packs, events and green tree schools award.

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## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type of Work | Description | Due By |
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.  | Area (ha) | Main Species  | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Key Features Present | Designations                        |
|--|-----------|---------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1a   | 1.95      | Oak (sessile) | 2015 | High forest       |                              |                      | Area of Special Scientific Interest |
| <p>Main entrance off the A6 layby. Field boundary adjacent to cattle crush, hedge and stream ditch to the SE of the site. Steep banks with rocky outcrops, gorse scrub and some veteran sycamore. Planted with scots pine and hazel along the top banks and some further down the slopes with some oak on the flat near the river. Ends at adjacent field boundary.</p>  |           |               |      |                   |                              |                      |                                     |
| 1b   | 3.13      | Oak (sessile) | 2015 | High forest       |                              |                      | Area of Special Scientific Interest |
| <p>Accessible off the A6 layby. Referred to as the "middle field" with significant long established hedgerows interspersed with veteran oaks flanking the North west and South eastern field boundary with the faughan river to the east.</p>  |           |               |      |                   |                              |                      |                                     |
| 1c   | 1.81      | Oak (sessile) | 2015 | High forest       |                              |                      | Area of Special Scientific Interest |
| <p>Accessible from a management gate to the ardmore end of the layby. This area begins from the hedge boundary of the "middle field" with the faughan river continuing along the western boundary with rush meadow to the west of the gravel path and a grass path following the river meeting together to bring you up some wooden steps and along a mature hedge boundary to the east and a steep sloping riparian habitat with veteran oaks along the river edge. As the river bends the compartment meets the ardmore road but continues on along the river following the riparian ancient woodland and veteran trees until you reach the burntollet bridge.</p> |           |               |      |                   |                              |                      |                                     |
| 2a   | 1.30      | Oak (sessile) | 2016 | High forest       |                              |                      | Area of Special Scientific Interest |
| <p>"Donkey field" - located on opporsite side of Faughan River adjacent to Red Brae Wood. Access is through management gate on the Ardground Road.</p>   |           |               |      |                   |                              |                      |                                     |
| 3a   | 2.50      | Oak (sessile) | 2016 | High forest       |                              |                      | Area of Special Scientific Interest |
| <p>Situated on the opposite side of the A6 Glenshane Road and compartment 1. A long rectangular site flanked by a long established old right of way lane to the east, the road to the west and field boundaries to the north and south. As for compartments 1 and 2 was up until Nov 2016 was grazed for sheep.</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.