

# Seton Dean

## (Plan period 2024 to 2029)



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](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.

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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust [operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

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

## Location and Access

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

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

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

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

# The Management Plan

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GLOSSARY

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### Seton Dean

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Location:              | Longniddry Grid reference: NT425755 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 66 |
| Area:                  | 1.14 hectares (2.82 acres)                                   |
| External Designations: | Special Landscape Area                                       |
| Internal Designations: | N/A  |

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

This narrow strip of woodland and stream is part of a series of small parallel valleys that have remained wooded in an otherwise agricultural landscape. Seton Dean is located, 100m north of the A198 between Longniddry and Tranent in East Lothian. The site is bound to the north by a strip of woodland, to the east by arable fields, to the west by a caravan park and to the south lies the settlement of Seton Mains. The northern edge of the wood is approximately 200m from the Firth of Forth coast at Seton Sands.

The woodland slopes very gently from south to north, towards the sea. However, the more noticeable topography is the slope on either side of the Dean towards the burn. The burn itself flows in a relatively deep, steep-sided channel. The altitude of the woodland varies from approximately 25m above sea level (a.s.l.) in the south to 15m a.s.l. in the north.

The underlying geology of this part of East Lothian is from the Namurian carboniferous period. The rocks formed are sandstones, marine limestone's and coals. This area is also characterised by Lingula bands of igneous intrusions. The soils in the area are brown forest soils with some gleys.

The land around Longniddry, including Seton Dean, is described as warm, dry lowland. The area is moderately exposed with fairly mild winters.

The woodland cover at Seton Dean has been affected by Dutch Elm Disease (DED). Much of the boundary is delineated by widely spaced mature ash, sycamore, and limes with an occasional horse chestnut, yew and beech. The main body of the site has a number of mature examples of these species, but the majority of the area is covered by pole stage sycamore, ash, elm and a few oak with mixed scrub, dominated by elder, hazel, willow sp, holly and hawthorn. Ivy covers many of the trees and shrubs. There is good vertical structure within the woodland.

Near to the location of the overhead power line crossing the site, are four mature yew trees. The age of these trees is difficult to ascertain, but their size would indicate that they have been growing on site for a substantial period of time.

Parts of the site are dominated by scattered groups of ground flora, such as: a nettle, bramble, thistle, hedge bindweed and ivy, which is abundant throughout the site. Wild garlic dominates the ground flora and patches of bluebells occur, suggesting a relatively long history of woodland cover. Since the Trust first began managing Seton Dean, the majority of the dying elms have been removed for safety reasons and some broadleaf replanting (oak/ash/hazel) has been carried out. Natural regeneration is sparse throughout the woodland but there is a dense group of regenerating ash at the south western corner. The woodland condition assessment of 2024 saw occasional levels of elm, horse chestnut and elder regeneration.

The water quality in the burn in Seton Dean has improved substantially, following the installation of mains sewers to all properties at Seton Mains. A survey carried out by SEPA in March 2000 found the burn to be highly polluted with bacteria associated with raw sewage out flowing from septic tanks up stream. With this pollution

source removed the burn can now develop naturally and hopefully this will lead to increased aquatic biodiversity in the burn.

Very little is known about the history of Seton Dean. The presence of wild garlic and bluebells indicate a long history of woodland cover, however it is not included on the Inventory of Ancient and Long Established Woodland Sites in Scotland.

The site was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1996.

Located between Longniddry and Port Seton, this area of East Lothian is well catered for light recreational use with informal and formal paths as well as good links to longer distance routes such as the John Muir Way. Seton Dean forms an integral part of this network lying adjacent to Core Path 141 (CP 141) between the A198, through Seton Mains, and the coast road (B1348).

Due to the small size of the wood, it is not generally a destination site but used as a through route or as an integral part of longer routes for local residents.

There are three entrances to the wood all reached from the CP 141. Within the wood there is approximately 380m of generally firm, un-surfaced paths, running parallel with the burn.

There is a small car park on site which is capable of holding three to four cars. The car park is reached along the private road through Seton mains and is at the end of the road on the left. Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site can be gained by this route. Management access to the site is good with access from the south along the private road through Seton Mains and then along the farm track running along the east of the wood for its entire length. Access along the western boundary is also available subject to the owners consent. There is no vehicular access within the wood but due to its narrowness this is generally not required.

### 3. LONG TERM POLICY

#### Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin

The site will be allowed to develop naturally using minimum intervention, with the aim of allowing a diverse age structure to develop. The original long-term intention was to regenerate the site as an oak-ash woodland (NVC type W8/W10), with small open areas for diversity. The intention being that this would gradually replace old growth, and infill any gaps created as a result of removal of the dead and dying elm trees and eventually return the site to mature high forest. However, with the spread of ash dieback it is likely that much of the ash will eventually succumb and die, and the main successional tree species is likely to be sycamore. Should significant gaps in the canopy occur as a result of ash dieback then the recruitment of natural regeneration will be favoured, although re-planting with native broadleaves (predominately oak) may be considered.

#### Connecting People with Woods and Trees

Existing on-site access facilities will be maintained to suit the existing local demand, which is classed as Grade C – low use, responding reactively with changes in demand and with consideration to the development of East Lothian's Core Path Network.

## 4. KEY FEATURES

### 4.1 f1 Connecting People with Woods and Trees

|   |
|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| <p>Seton Dean is a small woodland with a through path. As such it is used as part of a circular return route, generally by local users rather than a destination in itself. The woodland path offers an alternative to the CP 141 which is the farm track forming the eastern boundary of the wood as well as offering an attractive diversion off the longer distance route of the John Muir Way only 200m to the north, which runs along the entire length of East Lothian's coast. There are also a number of more informal desire lines, formed as return routes around the fields to either side of the wood and around the holiday park to the north west which also link in with the woodland path.</p> <p>The current level of public use is defined as WT Access Category C (low usage sites where we do maintain paths)</p> |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| <p>The footpath through the woodland forms part of a longer walk from Seton Mains right through to the coast at Seton Sands. This is well used by the residents of Seton Mains to gain access to the sea front.</p> <p>The local area in East Lothian is dominated by agricultural land. There are, therefore, limited opportunities for participating in recreation in wooded areas.</p>   |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| <p>Opportunities:<br/>None significant.</p> <p>Constraints:<br/>Small scale nature of site means that there are no opportunities for expansion of the internal paths.<br/>Steep and narrow path sections.</p>   |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>   |
| Ash dieback,  |
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>  |
| To maintain and enhance safe public access facilities for the purposes of informal recreation. The site will continue to offer the opportunity for quiet informal recreation for principally local users.   |
| <b>Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)</b>   |
| The site will be kept in a safe and welcoming condition. The path will be kept free from obstructions and overhanging vegetation and regular safety surveys and remedial work will be carried out as per the site risk assessment.  |

## 4.2 f2 Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin

|   |
|---|
| <b>Description</b>  |
| <p>Although the site is not recorded in the Inventory of Ancient Woodland, the presence of wild garlic, bluebells, dog's mercury &amp; other indicator species on site suggests that parts of the site may have been under woodland cover for several centuries. The mature tree species present indicate that at some point trees typical of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century estate policies were planted. Although the canopy has been drastically altered by the loss of many mature elms to Dutch elm disease (DED) there are still widely spaced mature ash, sycamore, and limes with an occasional horse chestnut and beech. Within the site there are also four mature yews, their size indicating that they have been growing on site for a substantial period of time. The majority of the area is covered in mixed younger woodland, dominated by: sycamore, elm, ash, oak, hazel, willow sp., with elder, holly and hawthorn all present to greater or lesser degrees. Larger gaps created through the loss of trees to Dutch Elm Disease and Ash Die Back have been replanted with oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn and rowan.</p> <p>The burn running through the site provides another habitat for wildlife and further contributes to the biodiversity of the site .</p> |
| <b>Significance</b>   |
| <p>Locally, the woodland is extremely significant and is an integral part of the local designation 'Special Landscape Area'. Much of the rest of the land around Seton Mains is agricultural and thus this small area of trees is a relative local rarity. The site has obviously been under tree cover for a substantial period of time and has a ground flora assemblage that reflects that, and so a high biodiversity value given its small size. Small woods are particularly important in East Lothian, where there is very little woodland in the agricultural landscape. The burn can provide further diversity, through the presence of aquatic and semi-aquatic life.</p>   |
| <b>Opportunities &amp; Constraints</b>  |
| <p>Opportunities:<br/>None significant</p> <p>Constraints:<br/>Small scale of woodland and limited 'core area'.</p>   |
| <b>Factors Causing Change</b>   |
| <p>Ash Dieback will continue to affect trees on site.<br/>Dutch Elm Disease will continue to affect elms as they reach maturity.</p>  |
| <b>Long term Objective (50 years+)</b>  |
| <p>To enhance the resilience and biodiversity of the site through the restoration of mature high forest, with a varied age structure and species composition. Any interventions will aim to move the woodland composition towards NVC</p>   |

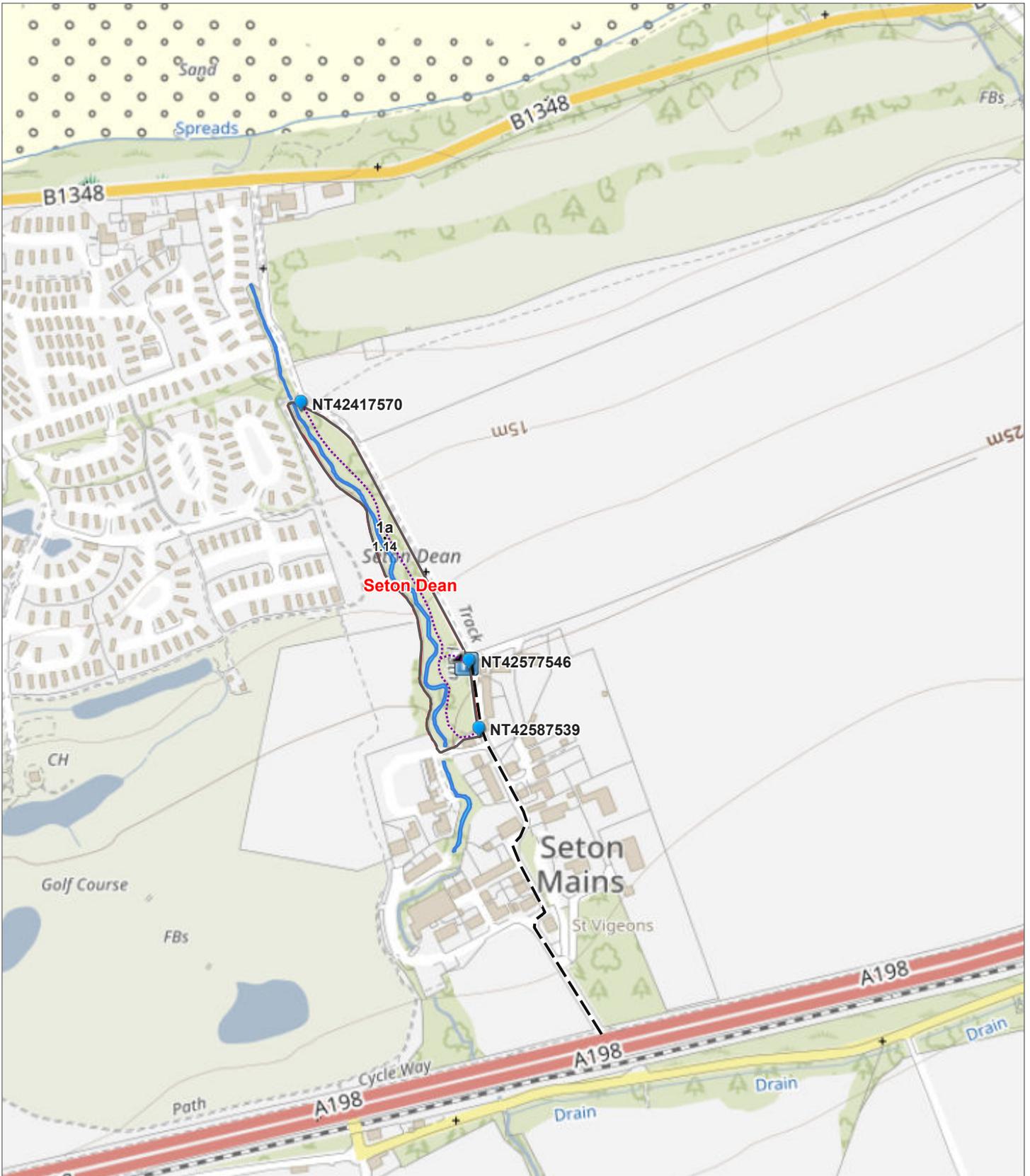
W8/W10 (ash-elm / lowland oak). There will be a range of woodland specialist ground flora and shrub species developing under the mainly native tree canopy. Some respacing may be required to benefit the few oak trees on the site.

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

There will be no silvicultural intervention in the next plan period, except for tree safety work.

## APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.  | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints             | Designations           |
|--|-----------|--------------|------|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1a   | 1.2       | Sycamore     | 1900 | Min-intervention  | No/poor vehicular access within the site | Special Landscape Area |
| <p>Mature canopy of sycamore, ash and limes with an occasional horse chestnut and beech, the majority delineating the woodland boundary. Within the wood to the south there are 4 mature yew trees.</p> <p>The pole stage/scrub understorey is dominated by sycamore, elm, ash, oak, sycamore, hazel, willow sp., and elder, holly and hawthorn all present to greater or lesser degrees, some planted in '1997, 2000 and '2004.</p> <p>Ground flora is dominated by wild garlic with patches of bluebells, ivy, nettles and dog's mercury. Brambles, thistles and buttercup are also present along with hedge bindweed.</p> <p>There is abundant dead wood; both standing and lying.</p> <p>Small groups of tree planting of varying ages are establishing well (with oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn and rowan). There is also an area of naturally regenerated ash on the south west corner of the wood.</p> <p>The boundaries are unfenced except for the south east corner which in 2010 had a successful planning application for one house.</p> |           |              |      |                   |  |                        |



**Estate Access Points**

Access points

**Estate Path Network**

Permissive-Footpath

**Estate Other Features**

Steps

Estate SubCompartments

Estate SubComp Labels

Estate SubComp Labels Hectares

Estate Water Features - Waterbodies

Estate Access Route Management

Estate Car Park

EstateManagementUnitsPolygonsGB

**Seton Dean**



Scale: 1:5,000 @A4

Date: 24 April 2024

Author: Woodland Trust



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## 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.

### **Windblow/Windthrow**

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

### **Registered Office:**

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

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