Walderslade Woods

Date (from/to)	-
Date of last review [UKWAS 2.1.3]	N/A
Owner/tenant	Boxley Parish Council
Agent/contact	
Signed declaration of tenure rights and agreements to public availability of the plan [UKWAS 1.1.3/1.1.5/2.1.2]	

1 Background information

1.1 Location

Nearest town, village or feature	Walderslade Village
Grid reference	TQ 763620
Total area (ha)	38.52

1.2 Description of the woodland(s) in the landscape

Site Boundary and description

The site boundary follows the edge of the three main wooded valleys of Tunbury Wood and Round Wood. The site consists of three wooded dip slope dry valleys cut into the North Downs at Walderslade. The majority of the woodland boundary is in close proximity with an extensive housing estate, while the boundary to the east of the woods runs alongside the A2045, which is separated from the M2 by a thin strip of woodland.

Beyond the roads is a 17 ha block of woodland, known as Malling Wood, a small area of intensive grassland, and an extensive area of arable land. While the area on the south, east and north sides of the woodland is predominately urban, beyond this to the South is more arable land, with patches of intensive grassland, and there are numerous patches of woodland and grassland to the south, east and west of the woodland, including a long narrow stretch running from the west to the south west, with

less than 300m between the woods at the furthest points, and less than 150m at the closest. Such closely located patches of woodland make the conservation of Walderslade Wood of high importance to prevent further fragmentation of the landscape and important habitats for wildlife.

There are a number of formal and informal access routes within the woodland (see Access Map), and due to the large population surrounding the woodlands there is the potential for a high amount of recreational use of the woodland.

The ancient woodland itself, now unmanaged but once managed as coppice with standards, supports a varied woodland flora, with over 30 ancient woodland indicator species. There is a range of woodland habitats associated with soils that vary from acidic on the plateau and upper slopes to highly calcareous on the lower slopes and valley floors. The ground flora is diverse and reflects the diversity of soil types with bluebell and bramble dominating the plateau and upper slopes, and dog's mercury dominating the lowest slopes and valley floors. Several grassy clearings are present within Round Wood.

1.3 History of Management

The semi-natural ancient woodland was once managed as coppice with standards, with Medway's woodlands in general showing a history of being managed as sweet chestnut coppice (Medway Council http://www.medway.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/countrysidesites.aspx). In Tunbury woods can be found remnants of hazel and hornbeam coppice with ash and oak standards. Although now consisting of three linear stretches of woodlands, the woodland formerly covered a much larger area, remaining unbroken across the plateau areas between the valleys and extending across the wilder area, linking all the surrounding woodlands found today, including Malling Wood. Prior to 1972 the urban area was confined to areas around Walderslade bottom, extending down to either side of Tunbury Wood, the furthest North that the woodlands extended, but allowing the Walderslade Woodland complex to remain intact. By 1972 the urban area had spread further outwards to the North East and North West, and by 1990 the settlements had encroached into Walderslade wood, creating the three linear woodlands that persist today, and with the previously extensive woodland remaining in fragmented areas across Walderslade. With such a reduction in woodland size large scale coppicing as was carried out in the past would no longer be possible within Walderslade Wood, preventing this traditional management of the woodland. The woodland today remains unmanaged.

More recently, small scale/low intensity management has been carried out by Kent County Council (KCC), including tree safety work, such as the removal of branches overhanging residential gardens, and maintenance of the lights. The Walderslade Woodland Volunteer Group also carries out active small scale woodland management including the eradication of Japanese knotweed in a section of the woodland, and the erection of way markers for community benefit.

2 Woodland Information

2.1 Areas and features

Designated Areas	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Special areas for conservation (SACs)			
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)			
Ramsar Sites (see note on Guidance)			
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)			
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)			
Other designations (e.g. National Park (NP) / World Heritage Site)			
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)		✓	✓
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)			
TPO / Conservation Area (CA)		✓	
Details Kent Downs AONB			
Rare and important species	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**
Red Data Book or BAP species		✓	
Rare, threatened, EPS or SAP species		✓	
Details **Taken from Local Wildlife Site Citation –December 2007** Hazel dormouse - Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Priority Species UK Biodiversity Action Plan, 1998 & the 2007 list, National Red Data Book, Priority Species Kent Biodiversity Action Plan. Badgers - Badger Protection Act 1992 Bats - Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Hawfinches - Priority Species UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1998 & the 2007 list, Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-7, Kent Red Data Book Status 3. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000 Whitethroat - Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-7 willow warbler - Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-7 Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* – Protected under Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.			
Habitats	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**
Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)		✓	
Other semi-natural woodland			
Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)			
Semi-natural features in PAWS			
Woodland margins and hedges		✓	
Veteran and other notable trees		✓	
Breeding sites		✓	
Habitats of notable species		✓	
Unimproved grasslands		✓	

Rides and open ground		✓	
Valuable wildlife communities			
Feeding area			
Lowland heath			
Peatlands			
Others			
Details			

Water	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**
Watercourses			
Lakes			
Ponds			
Wetland habitats			
Details			
Landscape	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**
Landscape designated areas		✓	
Landscape features			
Rock exposures			
Historic landscapes			
Areas of the woodland prominent from roads		✓	
Areas of the woodland prominent from settlements		✓	
Details Kent Downs AONB The woodlands are in close proximity to roads, and to housing with the surrounding area being of an urban nature.			
Cultural features	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**
Public rights of way		✓	
Prominent viewing points			
Existing permissive footpaths		✓	
Proposed permissive footpaths			
Areas managed with traditional management systems		✓	
Details There are a number of entrances to the woodland with a number of footpaths, including a trim trail, available for use by the public. The wood was previously managed as a coppice with standards woodland			
Archaeological Features	**Map No.**	**In Woodland**	**Adjacent to woodland**

Scheduled monument			
Historical feature (Inc. designed landscapes, registered parks and gardens)		✓	
Other			
Details Presence of historic features such as a pollard and medieval wood bank. Sarsen stones are also present within the woodland.			

2.2 Woodland resource characteristics

N/A

2.3 Site description

The site consists of three relict wooded dip slope dry valleys cut into the North Downs at Walderslade. Formerly, the woodland covered a much larger area including much of the plateau area between the valleys. The unmanaged semi-natural ancient woodland, once managed as coppice with standards, supports a typical chalk dip slope woodland flora. There is a variety of woodland habitats associated with soils that vary from acidic on the plateau and upper slopes to highly calcareous on the lower slopes and valley floors. Stands include sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* / sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, on the plateau, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* / hazel *Corylus avellana* on the middle slopes, and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* / hazel / field maple *Acer campestre* in the valley bottoms. In addition there is a small area of albeit damaged beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland on the slopes in part of the complex, and scrubby grassland (former woodland) at the north eastern end of the area. Dense secondary ash/hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* woodland has colonised areas that were damaged in the Great Storm of 1987.

The ground flora is diverse and reflects the diversity of soil types with bluebell Hyacinthoides *nonscripta* and bramble *Rubus fruiticosa spp* dominating the plateau and upper slopes, and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* dominating the lowest slopes and valley floors. The varied woodland habitats support 30+ ancient woodland indicator plants including wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosa*, herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, narrow buckler fern and scaly malefern *Dryopteris carthusiana* and *D. affinis*, sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, and goldilocks buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*. A wide range of trees/shrubs in the understory includes woodland and common hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and *C.*

monogyna, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, both whitebeam and rowan *Sorbus aria* and *S. aucuparia*, birch *Betula pubescens* and *B. pendula* and elder *Sambucus nigra*. Climbers are frequent and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* is common in the sweet chestnut/oak woodland whilst traveller's-joy *Clematis vitalba* scrambles through the ash/field maple/hazel areas.

A good number of bryophytes occur, reflecting the soils types and the sheltered damp nature of the valleys. An interesting suite of bryophytes is associated with the Sarsen stones in particular. There is plenty of dead wood scattered throughout the complex which ensures the presence of lignicolous fungi and should also be beneficial to invertebrates.

Several grassy clearings are present within Round Wood. These contain a range of species including those indicative of unimproved grassland such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*. Areas of bramble scrub in the clearings are also included within the site as these have value for birds and other wildlife for example, dormice. Despite the proximity of housing, a variety of woodland birds including common warblers, tits and finches were observed during the botanical survey. The site was known in the recent past to support a winter roost of hawfinches. There are records of whitethroat and willow warbler using the clearings, along with many common grassland butterflies and several day flying moths. Dormice and badgers are present and the site is used by bats.

There are a number of footpaths and access routes in varying condition, although little in the way of facilities for visitors to the woodland. A picnic area with picnic benches and a small number of signs and information boards are provided, as well as a trim trail alongside one of the pathways. The site is in close proximity to a large housing estate and a number of roads, including the M2.

2.4 Significant hazards, constraints and threats

A constraint that may impact on this management plan being carried out is that while the management plan has been requested by Boxley Parish Council, the site crosses several local authority and parish council boundaries and is owned by the County Council. All parties must remain informed of any actions to be taken and any decisions made, with it potentially being necessary for all interested parties to meet and reach accord. In particular for matters concerning specific areas of responsibility, such as maintenance of the paths, lights and steps and other Health and Safety issues as well as provision of finances to secure appropriate management over the whole site.

Sloping ground, particularly on the valley sides, could pose a hazard for extracting coppiced wood and removing cut vegetation. Timing of operations and use of low impact extraction systems should be considered with regards to protected and/or vulnerable species.

The current market for coppice products is poor, which could result in coppice management being very uneconomical. However if coppicing is carried out for the purpose of habitat management only, then this is not considered a constraint.

Presence of European protected species, such as dormice and bats provide a constraint as any activities taking place within the wood cannot disturb such species. Woodland management where European protected species may be present requires a methodology of best practice provided that the overall objective is conservation management, with guidelines for this provided on the Forestry Commission and Natural England Website.
http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies
http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/europeanprotectedspecies.aspx

Most of the established trees within the site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). It is likely that coppicing work, removal of branches, or felling of trees will require permission from the relevant Local Authority. Clarification of the requirements should be sought from the relevant Tree Officer within each of the Local Authorities which are Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils.

Public access is a constraint, with a large urban area surrounding the woodlands, suggesting a high level of footfall through the woodlands, with particular paths providing links between different estates. Anyone carrying out works should be made aware of the presence of public rights of way and where they affect operations. Trees adjacent to and/or overhanging public rights of way should be subject to appropriate checks to ensure they do not pose a risk to public safety.

Invasive Non- Native Species are a potential threat to a site, although to what extent is to be established.
Sycamore, Wilson's honeysuckle and cherry laurel are all present but may not all be in significant numbers. With the current threat of climate change and the associated impacts on factors including rainfall and temperature, such invasive species may become more dominant in the future. Drier/warmer summers in the south east could result in sycamore having an increased rate of growth over native species such as the ash, pedunculate oak and elm, resulting in more sycamore dominant woods in the future. While sycamore is not currently a threat, mitigation efforts may be needed sooner to prevent the species from outcompeting native trees in the future. As sycamore favours disturbed ground for establishment, methods may be needed to ensure that the removal of sycamore trees does not encourage new sycamore growth. Alternatively, there is an argument for the benefits of sycamore to wildlife, including supporting a number of red date book species, providing a pollen and nectar source for insects, and providing the European Protected hazel dormouse with sap sucking aphids found on their leaves at a critical time of the year for dormice. As such sycamore population expansion may be environmentally acceptable, if kept within manageable numbers.

Anti-social behaviour including fly tipping, trespass and unauthorised vehicle activity can all pose a threat to the integrity of the site and safety of the public using the woodlands for

recreational reasons. Patrols, signage and physical barriers will help to mitigate for these threats.

3 Long term vision, management objectives and strategy

3.1 Long term vision

The long term objective is to maintain and enhance the existing wildlife habitats within the Walderslade Woodlands, through use of traditional management techniques where possible, and to encourage community and educational usage of the site. As currently unmanaged woodland the long term aim is to have the woodland under appropriate management to ensure it remains in optimum condition to support wildlife, provide a resource for the local community, and to prevent further loss of an already rare chalk woodland habitat.

3.2 Management Objectives

No.	Objectives
1	To maintain the ancient woodland features of the site through appropriate management, including retaining the 30 or more ancient woodland indicator plants recorded in this important chalk woodland site.
2	To maintain and enhance the biodiversity and existing wildlife habitats within the Walderslade Woodlands through targeted woodland management practices. No exotic species to be introduced to site.
3	To provide and maintain a community and educational resource through provision of well-maintained signposted footpaths, and field work based activity opportunities.
4	To manage the semi-improved permanent grassland plateaus for wildlife such as butterflies, birds and dormice, and prevent further scrub encroachment on the site.
5	To maintain and enhance conditions suitable for a) the population of hazel dormouse within the woodlands through maintaining a small scale hazel coppice cycle b)foraging and roosting bats c)woodland birds d)fungi e) any other significant species.
6	To create and/or maintain scallops boarded by woodland edge to enhance the structure and diversity of the woodland and so enhance biodiversity.
7	Assess the issue of invasive species and initiate a monitoring and control

programme for the site if required.

3.3 Strategy

The rationale for the management objectives is as follows;

The woodland has a number of different soil types, including chalk soil creating a rare chalk woodland habitat of regional importance. Previous traditional management of the woodland as coppice with standards would have created good conditions for a wide range of native flora and fauna. Due to the layout of the three woodlands in narrow linear sections re-introducing a coppice regime to a large extent would not be viable, however small scale hazel coppicing would be of great benefit to the hazel dormouse, a European Protected Species. There are areas of old coppice within the woods which have good potential to be re-established, such as the old hazel coppice at the North end of Tunbury Wood.

The linear design of the woodland also does not allow for woodland ride creation as an appropriate management option due to the wide width required of rides which would remove too much of the vegetation within the narrows strips of woodland. Creating scallops would be considered more appropriate to increase woodland edge habitat, create sunny spots and increase the sunlight reaching parts of the woodland floor, and to provide a varied zone vegetation structure to benefit wildlife, without opening up too much of the wood.

The grass plateaus provide unimproved grassland habitat with certain parts having greatest to minor habitat opportunity for chalk grassland (Kent Landscape Information System), which is a rare, BAP habitat. The grassland areas provide an open habitat to contrast the closed canopy woodland habitat, with scrub, and extensive bramble covering in many places, helping to encourage a greater variety of wildlife to the site. Maintenance of this bramble cover would be beneficial to wildlife such as butterflies and dormice, while loss of grassland should be prevented through scrub clearance and appropriate management to prevent further encroachment. Tree removal with follow up treatment may be required to further ensure maintenance of the open grassland habitat, although some trees may be allowed to remain to create some structural diversity.

Although deemed invasive, sycamore is not currently considered a problem, and need only be monitored to determine whether it is spreading significantly further within the woodland, as may occur when part of the woodland are disturbed through thinning or coppicing operations. Consideration should be given to potential impacts from issues such as ash dieback (Chalara fraxinea). If ash die back were to occur on any of the large

population of ash within the woodlands it could create these disturbed conditions that encourage the spread of invasive trees such as sycamore. Therefore a monitoring programme is of high importance regardless of whether invasive species are currently a problem, as early warning will lead to greater success in eradication or control efforts. This will help ensure that the woodland is kept in a healthy condition with high value for wildlife.

As ancient woodland with a high amenity value in close proximity to a sizeable populace, Walderslade Woodland provides an importance community resource, with good potential to become an educational resource if managed appropriately. There are schools within a close distance to the woodlands, while a hospital also located between Cossington Wood and the West side of Tunbury wood provides the potential for the woodland to be utilised by visitors and recovering patients if appropriate safe access is maintained into the woods.

Due to the shape and layout of the woodlands it may not be possible to create compartments as the areas to be coppiced will be small, and other management options such as scallop creation will not be implemented extensively within the woodlands. Realistically, the woodlands may only be zoned into two parts, the woodland area, and the grassland areas, as the management options suggested for these two areas should differ largely.

3.4 Woodfuel Initiative

Would you be interested in receiving information on funding opportunities for the purchase of harvesting machinery or wood fuel boilers, or for grants that support timber production from your woodlands?

~~**Yes**~~ **/ No**

4 Management prescriptions/operations

4.1 Silvicultural systems

4.1.1 Harvesting

Small scale hazel coppice should be considered for the benefits to the dormice population within the wood, with traditional hazel coppicing helping to provide a suitable habitat and linking corridors for the dormouse. As such the main aim of this coppicing regime will be for benefit to wildlife over financial gain. As a fast growing coppice species, an 8-10 year rotation should be established, with any profit from the coppiced hazel unlikely to be highly commercial.

Coppicing should be undertaken during the period November – March. The hazel should be cut in a pattern that will encourage new hazel growth adjacent to old. Hazel coppice

stools will not regrow if they are in heavy shade, so some associated management, involving thinning of surrounding canopy trees, may be required to create sunny gaps within hazel coppice areas. All workers should be made aware of the potential presence of dormice under the coppice stools. Cut wood should be left to remain in situ as deadwood. Selective coppicing may also occur in the creation/maintenance of scallops within the woodland, but again commercial gain will be negligible.

As traditionally coppiced woodland, and the suggested regime to be on a small scale, the impact on the landscape will be minor. The suite of wildlife within the wood has adapted with the wood and will benefit from the return of appropriate, cyclical management.

Most of the established trees within the site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. It is likely that coppicing work, removal of branches, or felling of trees will require permission from the relevant Local Authority. Clarification of the requirements should be sought from the relevant Tree Officer within each of the three Local Authorities.

4.1.2 Phased felling and restructuring of plantations

N/A

4.1.3 Establishment, restocking and regeneration

N/A

4.2 New planting

As this site is ancient woodland re-planting is neither desirable nor particularly required. Instead, natural regeneration should be encouraged and this should be sufficient to maintain tree density presently. However the future impacts of climate change may affect the resilience of the species commonly found in ancient woodland in the south east, and natural regeneration may no longer be adequate to maintain resilient and diverse tree populations. As such, planting of more resilient species may be necessary, taking into consideration the future climatic conditions, including warmer/drier summers, and wetter autumn and winter periods.

4.3 Other operations

Proposed additions to guidance to clarify consideration of design impacts etc. [UKWAS 3.2.1/3.2.2], to add reference to local native seed zones and FRM regulations [UKWAS 6.3.3].

Fencing

Where pests such as grazing deer are deemed to be a problem, appropriate fencing or layered hedges may be established to deter damage to regenerating stools in coppiced areas. Cut brash may be used to cover stools to the same end.

Scallop creation

Following surveys to determine the most appropriate sites for scallop creation, existing pathways/rides within the wood will be cleared/widened to create scallops. The surveys will consider such factors as the presence of important plant species, including ancient woodland indicator species which should not be damaged/lost through clearance for the scallop, and the impact of disturbing certain areas of the woodland with regard to the spread of tree species such as sycamore.

A series of scallops should be considered along the main footpath which runs across the valley floor. The scallops should be as large as possible and ideally in the range of 20-30m long and wide. Include naturally open areas with short vegetation within the scallops, and retain mature native trees within the scallops; coppice younger trees and maintain by re-coppicing on a ten year rotation. Work should be undertaken during the period November to March inclusive. All workers should be warned of the potential for dormice to be present.

These scallops will serve to increase woodland edge habitat within the wood, and so provide an enhanced benefit to wildlife through the creation of niches and opportunities for a range of species.

Scrub clearance

Where scrub is encroaching on the grassland plateaus routine clearance may be needed to ensure that the unimproved grassland is not lost to succession. Clearance can be carried out with the use of saws and loppers. For more established trees they may need to be cut down and then treated with an appropriate herbicide such as glyphosate. Herbicide should only be applied by appropriately trained personnel. Paths may be cut into the bramble to allow passage through more extensive areas of bramble.

Most of the established trees within the site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. It is likely that coppicing work, removal of branches, or felling of trees will require permission from the relevant Local Authority. Clarification of the requirements should be sought from the relevant Tree Officer within each of the three Local Authorities.

4.4 Protection and maintenance

4.4.1 Pest and disease management

Deer are not presently a problem in North Kent, although the site should be monitored. Rabbits are likely to pose the most significant threat to the regeneration of cut coppice stools. While dead hedging will reduce the impact of any potential deer and of rabbits on the regenerating stools, monitoring will prove or disprove the efficacy of this. In the event that these measures are insignificant, deer and rabbit control will need to be adopted.

To safeguard against bacterial and fungal pathogens, regular dialogue with stakeholders and neighbours will be encouraged to help to protect the woodland.

Where invasive plants occur, industry guidance will be followed to best remove them. Regarding sycamore, which has the greatest non-native species presence within the woodland, consideration is needed into the impact of management operations on the spread of sycamore as the trees are encouraged by disturbed ground. Additionally the potential impacts of ash dieback should be considered as the loss of ash trees due to the disease could sufficiently thin the canopy enough to encourage the spread of sycamore. This may not have a negative impact however, as sycamore do not necessarily spread intensively, and can have a number of benefits including supporting a number of red date book species, providing a pollen and nectar source for insects, and providing the European Protected hazel dormouse with sap sucking aphids found on their leaves at a critical time of the year for dormice. Therefore monitoring of the sycamore population within the woods, particularly if ash dieback is found with the woodlands, is of value.

4.4.2 Fire plan

In the event of a fire being reported the Fire Brigade must be contacted, and the area/woodland vacated immediately. However due to the predominantly broadleaved nature of the woodland, fire risk is considered to be low.

4.4.3 Waste disposal and pollution

Any internal waste such as cuttings and clipping will be dealt with directly on site. As this site is within ownership of the local authority their policies and procedures regarding waste shall be followed.

4.4.4 Protection from unauthorised activities

Signs will help to mitigate disturbance of the woodland away from the marked paths, by making the appropriate passage through the woodlands clear to visitors. Good relations and regular discourse with neighbours and general public will help to understand local trends in unauthorised activities such as fly tipping, and develop a collaborative

approach to dealing with them.

4.4.5 Protection of other identified services and values
N/A

4.5 Game management

While there is currently no indication of significant pest damage, annual monitoring would be advised to identify the level of activity of pests such as grey squirrel or rabbit to allow for early mitigation efforts.

4.6 Protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and special features

4.6.1 Management of designated areas
The site is designated as a local wildlife site on account of its semi-natural ancient woodland with over 30 ancient woodland indicator species, with this plan seeking to maintain and improve the features for which it was designated.

4.6.2 Measures to enhance biodiversity and other special features [UKWAS 2.1.1/6.1.1]
Reinstating traditional coppice rotation (on a small scale) will periodically increase light reaching sections of the forest floor which will benefit the characteristic ground flora of the woodland. Bluebells are a noteworthy part of the understory, and will significantly benefit from a return to more traditional woodland management practices that provide influxes of light. Improving the diversity and age structure of the woodland will be of significant benefit to Dormice, a European Protected Species, which require a dense, species diverse understory and high grade diversity of food through their active periods (April/May – October). Lack of management and canopy closure are likely to see a decline in ground flora and understory, and an associated decline in nesting birds and dormouse populations. Additionally hazel coppicing will benefit the local dormouse population. Further consideration of the wildlife within the woodland will ensure that certain management operations will not be carried out during significant times of the year, such as the nesting or breeding season for birds. Maintenance and creation of wide, 2 or 3 zone scallops will be of significant benefit to

woodland species which require dense woodland edges to attract mates and breed. Transitional zones improve structural diversity in the woodland, create warm, sunny spaces for feeding and breeding insects and mammals, and create additional highly beneficial edge habitat to the advantage of a number of species within the wood. Retention of deadwood will also provide additional important habitats for small vertebrates, invertebrates, fungi and nesting birds. Increasing available nectar sources and host plants would also support a wide variety of woodland butterflies. Measures will also be made to ensure the preservation of historical features such as the wood bank and pollard, as well as selecting trees to be retained or maintained as veteran trees, with a number of notable trees found within the woodland. In these cases issues that can impact on veteran trees will be considered, such as wind blow or the canopy becoming to heaving for an aging trunk, and managed appropriately.

Management of the grassland areas on the plateaus will focus on maintaining the wide open area with minimal invasive encroachment of scrub. While some scrub around the edges, and the occasional tree within the open areas, will be retained for structural diversity, management will focus on scrub clearance in the initial years, and prevention of re-encroachment in later years. As rare chalk grassland, the maintenance of this habitat outweighs any benefits of allowing the scrub to develop into woodland, with the grassland providing a contrasting habitat to the woodland it is found beside.

4.6.3 Special measures for ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and semi-natural woodland (SNW)

See details given in 4.6.2. All management options suggested in 3.2 are appropriate for implementation in ancient semi-natural woodland.

4.6.4 Special measures for plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)

N/A

4.6.5 Measures to mitigate impacts on landscape and neighbouring land [UKWAS 3.1.2]

Due to the narrow, linear layout of the three woodlands that make up Walderslade Wood there is the potential for intensive management practices to thin out the woodland to the extent of losing the trees screening the surrounding houses from the majority of the woodland. This potential loss of screening will therefore be taken into consideration before certain management operations are approved to ensure a continuous woodland cover of appropriate density is maintained, with any management practices such as coppicing carried out on a small scale only and to ensure there will be no significant landscape issues during the course of this plan.

As the woodland is situated in an area of fragmented woodland, management of this

woodland will be of benefit to habitat continuity, with all efforts being made to enhance and restore the woodland and grassland habitat for wildlife, not to alter it.

4.7 Management of social and cultural values

4.7.1 Archaeology and sites of cultural interest
Remnant wood banks to be maintained, together with any notable and veteran trees including pollards. Reintroduction of small-scale coppicing will restore culturally significant management practices. The sarsen stones will remain in-situ and not moved for any purpose, with any management operations carried out around them and to have no impact on their current condition.

4.7.2 Public access and impacts on local people
Anyone carrying out works should be made aware of the presence of public rights of way and where they affect operations to ensure no one using the woodland is put at risk. Due to the proximity of housing to much of boundaries of the woodland, any operations that cause significant disturbance such as noise, to the local populace, will be carried out at appropriate times with advance warning to residents if required.

5 Consultation

Organisation/individual	Date received	Comment	Response/action
Kent Wildlife Trust	On going	Continued advice and support as LWS	

6 Monitoring plan summary

Objective number	Indicator	Method of assessment	Monitoring period	Responsi-bility	How will information be used
1	The woodlands will retain all 30 or more woodland indicator species,	Woodland flora surveys will assess the presence of woodland indicator species, while walking the site will allow for	This should be carried out every 5 years to ensure any negative	Wildlife Trust partner or similar	If any woodland indicator species are lost the management plan may be revised to try and bring back the lost

	ancient woodland features including a medieval wood bank, and no loss or degradation of soil.	checks on historical features and to ensure no damage/erosion of the soil is present in any part of the wood.	changes to the ancient woodland features are reverted before significant detrimental impacts occur.		species/prevent further loss of species.
2	A wide range of species to inhabit the woods, including rare or endangered species, across a range of habitats including woodland edge, deeper woodland and open grassland which are all maintained in good condition. No exotic species should be present.	Woodland fauna surveys will determine the mammals, birds and invertebrates that inhabit the wood (protected species license holders may be required for certain species). A site visit from a member of the KWT or similar may be required to determine the condition of habitats. Walking the site should determine the presence of any exotic species.	Monitoring of these factors should occur on a 5-year basis.	Licensed trainer / Wildlife Trust partner	If exotic species are found an eradication/control regime may need to be initiated. If populations of target species, such as the hazel dormice, are not found to be maintained or increased, the management plan will need to be revised.
3	The woodlands are widely used by both the general public and schools/special interest groups.	Awareness of the volume of footfall through the woods in a given period, and records of the schools/interest group visiting the woodlands for educational reasons through granting permission.	Records should be kept as up to date as possible, although only a general idea is necessary /possible.	Boxley Parish Council	If woodlands are not found to be utilised by the public/interest groups, woodland conditions (particularly access and pathways) may need to be improved/use of the woodland for interest groups better promoted.
4	Grasslands remain open with no significant encroachment of scrub. Abundant wildlife is present, including butterflies, birds	Surveys to determine the presence/numbers of species including butterflies, birds and dormice. Walk of the site to ensure scrub is under control and the grassland habitat is maintained.	Monitoring of species and scrub should occur every five years.	Wildlife Trust Partner or similar	If scrub is found to be increasing significantly then clearance operations may need to be increased/improved.

	and dormice.				
5	A hazel coppice regime should be established, dormice consistently present, a number of bat species found to roost and forage within the woodlands and a range of woodland birds and fungi present within the woodlands.	A hazel coppice regime should be established. Surveys will determine the presence of the relevant species of mammals, birds and fungi within the woodlands. Discussion with a relevant group, such as the KWT may be needed to determine whether management methods are encouraging the more significant species, such as red data book species. Protected species licence holders may be required for certain species surveys.	Monitoring of species such as dormice and bats should be carried out on a yearly basis by a licensed trainer through the checking of bat and dormice boxes. For all other species survey can be conducted on a 5 year basis.	Agent / Protected species license holder / Wildlife Trust partner or similar	If coppice regime is not well established/is struggling, then methods may need to be revised. For example, ensuring coppice is not cut under shade. If significant species are not found to present/increasing in numbers, management plans may need to be revised.
6	Distinct scalloped sections of woodland alongside rides/pathways have been established, with 2-3 zones of vegetation of differing heights.	Once established between Year 1 and Year 3 of the management plan, scallops should be monitored every 2-3 years to ensure vegetation height is maintained as distinctly different between each zone. It should be noted physical management of each zone will occur at different rates, from every 2-3 years for the herbaceous zone to every 8 years or so for the coppiced zone.	Monitored (with maintenance carried out) every 2-3 years.	Boxley Parish Council / Walder-slade Woods Volunteer Group	If distinct zones are not established more frequent maintenance of zone structure/heights may be required.
7	No invasive species should be of significant threat within the woodland.	Survey of the woodlands to determine where invasive species are present in significant numbers and having causing any detrimental effects within the	Surveys should occur yearly.	Boxley Parish Council / Walder-slade Woods Volunteer	Boxley Parish Council and/or the Walderslade volunteer group to decide if control/eradication is required.

		woodland.		Group	

7 Work programmes

7.1 Outline long-term work programme (2019- 2028)

(Use this table to outline medium to long term areas of work)

Cpt. Ref or Name	Activity	Year *(tick)*	
		6-10	11-20
	Coppice	X	X
	Coppice	X	X
	Coppice	X	X
	Maintenance of scallop zoned vegetation – established trees coppiced	X	
	Thinning of shading trees in new coppice areas	X	X
	Maintenance of pollards/veteran trees		X
	Potential grazing of grassland	X	

7.2 Short-term work programme (2013 - 2018)

(Use this table to collect basic inventory data for the woodland areas you propose to work during the next 5 years)

Cpt. Ref / Name	Area (ha)	Main Species	P. Year	Yield Class	Activity	Year				
						1	2	3	4	5
					Scallop creation with zoned vegetation		X			
					Maintenance of scallop zoned vegetation heights – herbaceous and shrub layer respectively			X		
					Provision of dormouse nest boxes.		X			
					Invite a licenced dormouse holder to visit site to check boxes for evidence of use		X	X	X	X
					Provision of bat boxes.		X			
					Invite a licenced bat expert to visit to check boxes for evidence of use		X	X	X	X
					Provision of bird boxes		X			
					Boxes checked for use, (autumn) cleaned out and repaired as necessary.		X	X	X	X
					Retain standing dead trees and fallen deadwood	X	X	X	X	X
					Monitor and maintain ancient woodland features	X				X
					Locate and remove litter/evidence of fly tipping	X	X	X	X	X
					Monitor for invasive species/evidence of spreading	X	X	X	X	X
					Scrub clearance	X			X	
					Establish a hazel coppice regime		X			
					Thinning of shading trees in coppice areas		X			
					Maintenance of access routes and pathways	X	X	X	X	X
					Maintenance of bramble on grasslands areas		X			X

8 Costing Operations

This management plan is on behalf of Boxley Parish Council, who do not expect to generate an income from the woodland, but rather manage it for the benefit of wildlife and the wider community alone. As a result any management operations to be carried out will be self-funded.

Expected potential costs based on the standard costs provided by the forestry commission, and on the assumption all possible management operations are implemented:

	Activity	Approximate length/amount	Cost per unit	Cost
A1	**All ability footpath construction – dry sites**	10 meters	£30 per m	£300
A10	**Interpretation boards**	4	£1,200 per unit	5,000
A14	**Picnic bench with table**	2	£530 per unit	£1,060
A18	**Safety inspection**	-	Agent's hourly wait	-
F1	**Stock fencing**	1000 metres	£4.50 per m	£4,500
H1	**Tree felling & conversion**	0.5 hectares per year	£600 per h	£300
L3	**Tree surgery team & chipper**	2 days per year	£500 per day	£1000
V2	**Open ground tree & scrub manual cutting <7cm**	2 hectares	£800 per h	£1,600
V8	**Stump treatment**	0.5h	£300 per h	£150
V9	**Coppicing 30+ yrs since last cut**	2 hectares	£1,800 per h	£3,600

9 Maps

It is recommended that you show as much information on subject based maps as possible. For example, a map showing site constraints or a concept map showing the main proposals.

List all maps here and append to plan:

Map no./Title	Description
Access Map	A map to show the public footpaths and rights of way throughout the woodland
Habitat Map	A map to show the different habitats present within the woodland
Habitat Opportunities Map	A map to show the potential habitats that could be created/restored with appropriate management
Management Options Map	A map to show where the possible management operations will be carried out within the woodland
Compartment Map	A map to show the boundary of the woodland, and the different compartments within the woodland
Historical and Notable Features Map	A map to show the historical and notable features within the woodland

10 Thinning, felling and restocking proposals

The template and guidance should be carefully followed to aid production of a good management plan, and ensure that we can pay the grant.

Most of the template will need to be completed by everyone, but the following sections are not compulsory, unless you wish to apply for woodfuel grants or Category B approval.

- You must complete **Section 10, Table A** if you want to use the plan to gain Wood Fuel WIG support or seek funding through other wood fuel initiatives.
- You must complete **Section 10, Table B** if you want to gain 10 year thinning and felling approval and / or meet the requirements of Category B.

This section **should not be completed** for any other applications.

10.1 Table A

Applicants seeking funding through a woodfuel initiative for harvesting machinery or wood fuel boilers, or wishing to apply for **EWGS Woodfuel WIG** must provide basic inventory data (WPG template 7.2) and estimate the total volume that is to be thinned and felled during the period of this plan, **by completing Table A**.

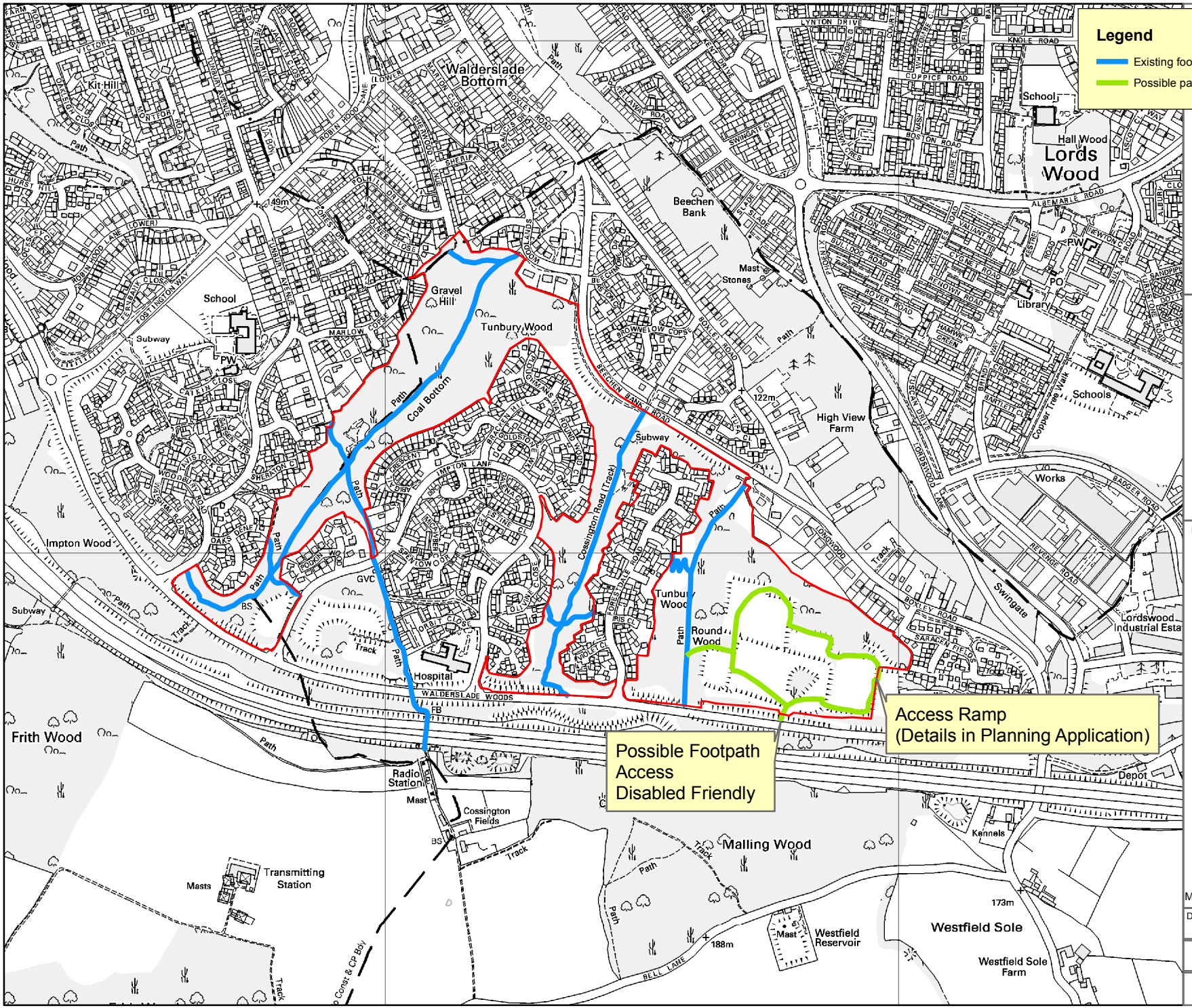
(Using inventory data from table 7.2, complete a timber volume estimate)

Cpt(s) (from table 7.2)	Main Species (BL/Con)	Total work Area (ha)	Estimated volume to be harvested during work periods (m3)		
			Yr 1 - 5	Yr 6 - 10	Yr 11 - 20
Example 1a, 2, 3	*Con*	*7.2*	*300*	-	-

10.2 Table B

This section must be fully completed by the applicant if they wish to gain felling licence approval from the Forestry Commission. The work detailed below must match the proposals set out in the plan. For details on how to complete this table, please refer to **EWGS4 – Woodland Regeneration** for guidance and Tree Felling guidance.

4. Cpt. / Sub Cpt.	5. Area (ha)	6. % area to be worked	7. Type of felling	8. % of felled area comprising:		9. Felling licence type	10. Change in woodland type		11. Preferred claim year	13. Restock mixture		14. % Estab. by natural regen	Standard proposals	12. Notes / Details
				BL	CON		*From*	*To*		Species	%			
1a	*2.7*	*30%*	*SF*	*-*	*100*	*C*	*PAWS*	*Nat*	*11/12*	*POK*	*40%*	*10%*	*1(i)*	*example*



N

Kent County Council

PROPERTY GROUP
County Hall, Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Tel:08458 247247

Drawing Title

LAND AT WALDERSLADE WOODS:

APPENDIX G: FOOTPATHS & ACCESS

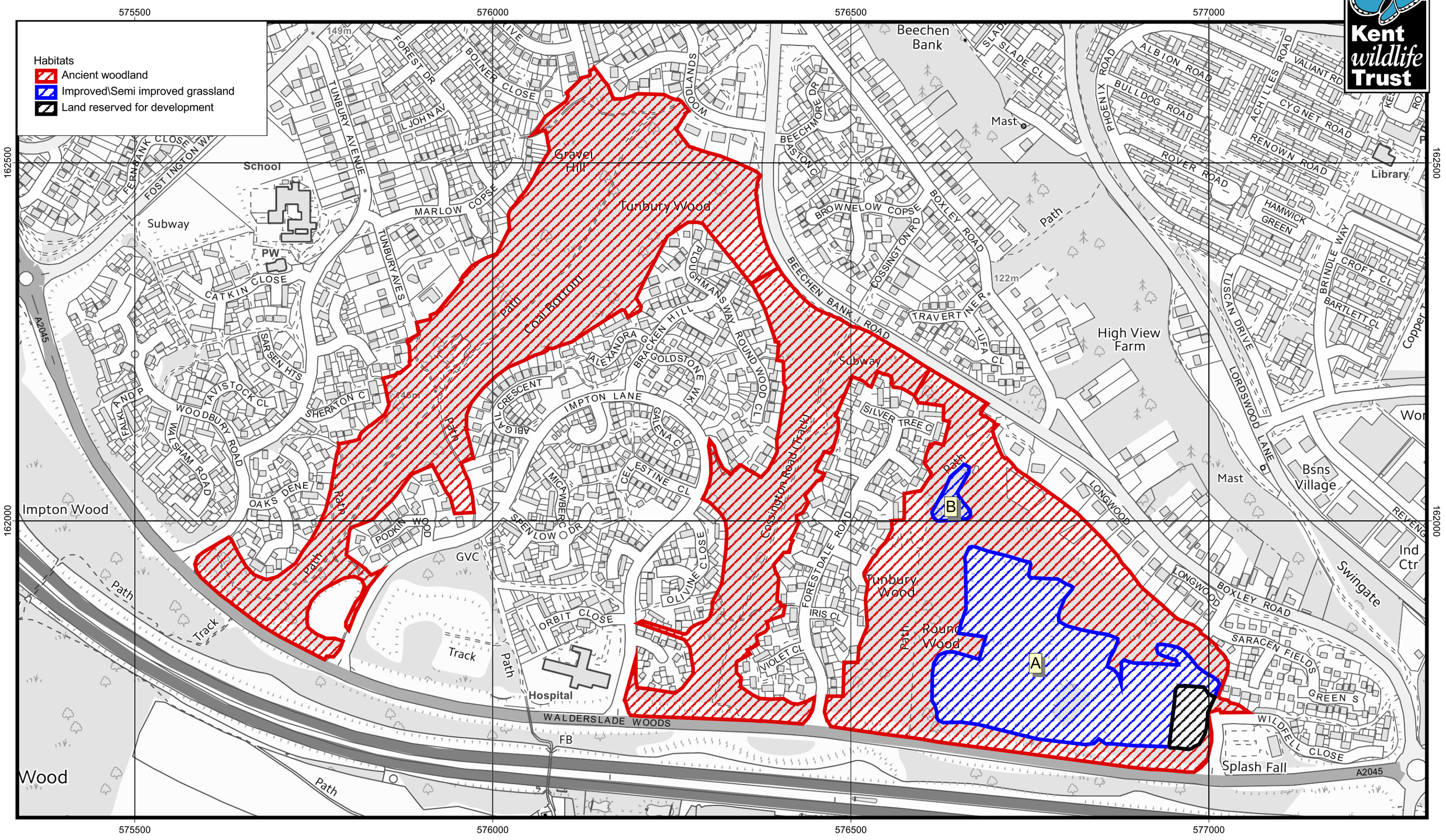
MasterMap

Drawn By	Date
JTN	MAR 2008

0 80 160 240 320 Meters
1:10,000

Drawing No. TQ7661/17A

Walderslade Woods. Habitat Map

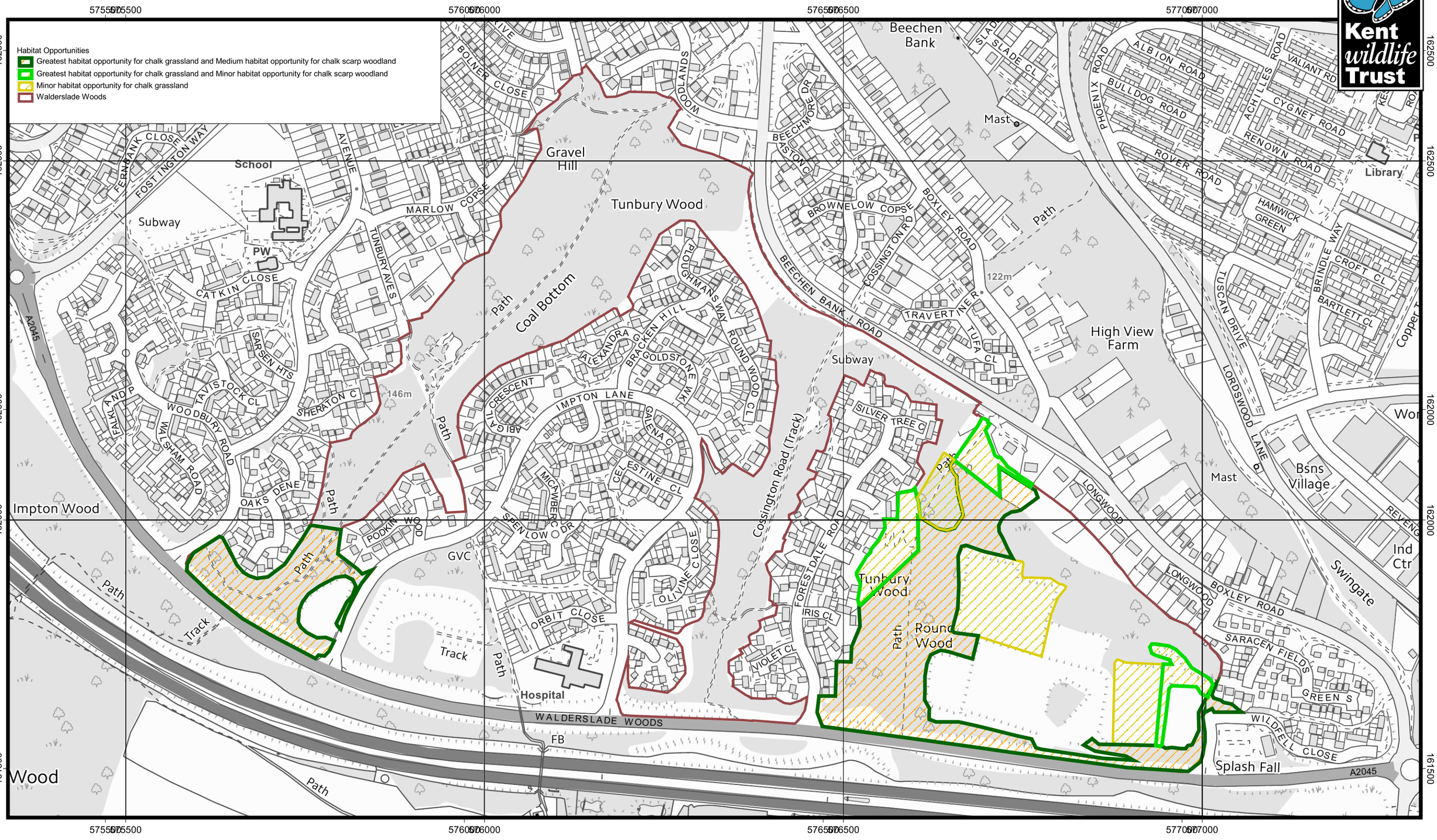


0 250 500 Meters

N

Your living landscape. Your living seas.

Walderslade Woods. Habitat Opportunity Map



0 250 500 Meters

N

Your living landscape. Your living seas.

Walderslade Woods. Management Options Map

Hazel coppice
Maintain ancient woodland features
Monitor for invasive species
Potential area for scallops
Scrub clearance

Provide educational opportunities along pathways.

Maintain ancient woodland features, Sarcen stones and medieval woodbank.

Hazel coppice for dormice and educational resource (restricted access)

Monitor for invasive species.
No exotic species to be introduced..
Retain dead wood on site for wildlife.

Provide signposts and information boards along pathways as an educational resource. Create field based activity opportunities in appropriate places along the pathways.

Scrub clearance, bramble maintenance and tree removal to manage the grassland for wildlife.

575500 576000 576500 577000

162500 162000

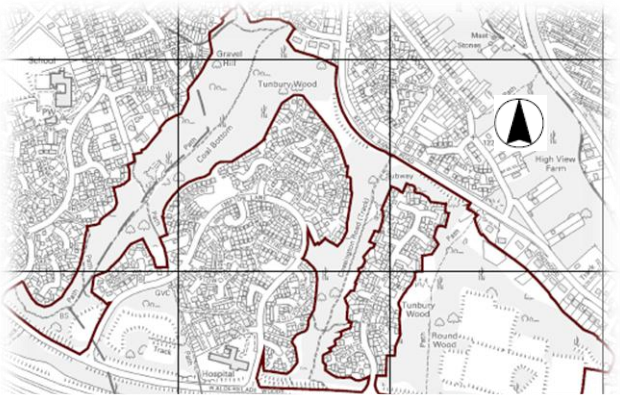
0 250 500 Meters

N

1. SITE

1.1 Location

Walderslade Woods is a 38.52ha woodland, located in Walderslade, on the dry dip slope valleys cut into the North Downs in the county of Kent. Comprising of three woodlands that run in narrow linear strips, a series of grassland plateaus are also present, found to the east of Round Wood. Walderslade Wood is the Local Wildlife Site MA67, as designated by Kent Wildlife Trust for their local nature conservation value.



Kent Wildlife Trust©2007

The majority of the woodland boundary is in close proximity to an extensive housing estate, while the boundary to the east of the woods runs alongside the A2045, which is separated from the M2 by a thin strip of woodland. The woodlands are situated near the larger town of Chatham, north of Maidstone.

1.2 Land tenure

The site is to be managed by Boxley Parish Council and the Walderslade Wood Volunteer Group. The woodland boundaries pass through three council areas, Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, so any management plans would need the approval of the relevant council before they could be carried out.

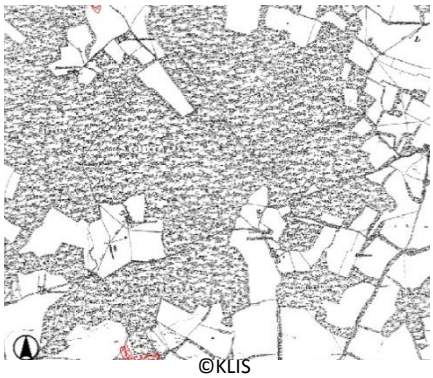
1.3.1 Site Description

The site consists of three relict wooded dip slope dry valleys cut into the North Downs at Walderslade. Formerly, the woodland covered a far larger site including much of the plateau area between the valleys. The unmanaged semi-natural ancient woodland, once managed as coppice with standards, supports typical chalk dip slope woodland flora. There is a variety of woodland habitats associated with soils that vary from acidic on the plateau and upper slopes to highly calcareous on the lower slopes and valley floors. This includes sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* / sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, on the plateau, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* / hazel *Corylus avellana* on the middle slopes, and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* / hazel / field maple *Acer campestre* in the valley bottoms. In addition there is a small area of albeit damaged beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland on the slopes in part of the complex, and scrubby grassland (former woodland) at the north eastern end of the area. Dense secondary ash/hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* woodland has colonised areas that were damaged in the Great Storm of 1987.

The ground flora is diverse and reflects the diversity of soil types with bluebell *Hyacinthoides nonscripta* and bramble dominating the plateau and upper slopes, and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* dominating the lowest slopes and valley floors. The varied woodland habitats support 30+ ancient woodland indicator plants including wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosa*, herb paris *Paris quadrifolia*, early purple orchid *Orchis mascula*, narrow buckler fern and scaly male fern *Dryopteris carthusiana* and *D. affinis*, sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, and goldilocks buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*. A wide range of trees/shrubs in the understory includes woodland hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* and common hawthorn *C. monogyna*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, both whitebeam *Sorbus aria* and rowan *S. aucuparia*, birch *Betula pubescens* and *B. pendula* and elder *Sambucus nigra*. Climbers are frequent and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* is common in the sweet chestnut/oak woodland whilst traveller's-joy *Clematis vitalba* scrambles through the ash/field maple/hazel areas. A good number of bryophytes occur, reflecting the soil types and the sheltered damp nature of the valleys. An interesting suite of bryophytes is associated with the Sarsen stones in particular.

There is plenty of dead wood scattered throughout the complex which ensures the presence of lignicolous fungi and should also be beneficial to invertebrates. Several grassy clearings are present within Round Wood. These contain a range of species including those indicative of unimproved grassland such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*. Areas of bramble scrub in the clearings are also included within the site as these have value for birds and other wildlife for example, dormice. Despite the close proximity of a housing estate, a variety of woodland birds including common warblers, tits and finches were observed during the botanical survey. The site was known in the recent past to support a winter roost of hawfinches. There are records of whitethroat and willow warbler using the clearings, along with many common grassland butterflies and several day flying moths. Dormice and badgers are present and the site is used by bats.

1.3.2 Historic Information


©KLIS

Located within the formerly small rural village of Walderslade, Walderslade Wood is an ancient woodland and grassland complex of medium habitat opportunity for chalk scarp woodland, and great habitat opportunity for chalk grassland, with woodland that has been in existence from at least 1600. Now found within a large urban area of several estates surrounding the original village, Walderslade Wood now consists only of three linear stretches of woodland. Reduced from the large area it formerly covered, the woodland historically stretched unbroken across the plateau areas between the valleys and extended across the wider area, linking all the surrounding fragmented woodlands existing today, including Malling Wood and Beechy Wood. Although available historic information is not extensive, the Kent Landscape Information System shows that prior to 1972 the urban area was confined to areas around Walderslade Bottom, extending down to either side of Tunbury Wood, the furthest

North that the woodlands extended, but allowing the Walderslade Woodland complex to remain intact. By 1972 the urban area had spread further outwards to the North East and North West, and by 1990 the settlements had encroached into Walderslade wood, creating the three linear woodlands that persist today, and with the previously extensive woodland remaining in fragmented areas across Walderslade. The woodland today remains unmanaged, although there is evidence suggesting a coppice regime was once carried out within the woodland.

1.4 Woodland features

Old forms of woodland management are evident, including old coppiced sections of woodland, and pollards. Old historic features including a medieval wood bank can be located within the woods, as well as sarsen stones found to be present in Tunbury Wood. A number of distinctive notable and mature trees are present within the woodland.

1.5 Species present within the woodlands

Latin name	**Common name**
*Carpinus betulus**	Hornbeam *
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
*Acer campestre**	Field Maple*
Corylus Avellana	Hazel
Castanea sativa	Sweet Chestnut
Sambucus nigra	Elder
*Hyacinthoides non-scripta**	Bluebell*
*Quercus spp.**	Oak *
Crataegus laevigata	Woodland Hawthorn
Crataegus monogyna	Common Hawthorn
Euonymus europaeus	Spindle
Rubus fruticosus	Bramble
Lonicera periclymenum	Honey suckle
Clematis vitalba	Clematis
Fagus sylvatica	Beech
Betula pubescens	Birch
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's Mercury
Anemone nemorosa	Wood Anemone*
Adoxa moschatellina	Moschatel*
Oxalis acetosa	Wood Sorrel*
Paris quadrifolia	Herb Paris*
Dryopteris carthusiana	Narrow Buckler Fern*
Dryopteris affinis	Scaly Male-fern*
Galium odoratum	Sweet Woodruff*
Sanicula europaea	Sanicle*
Conopodium majus	Pignut*
Ranunculus auricomus	Goldilocks Buttercup*

Dog's Mercury/Wood Anemone/Bluebell
©EnglishCountryGarden

*Orchis mascula**	Early Purple Orchid*
Centaurea nigra	Common Knapweed[†]
Stellaria graminea	Lesser Stitchwort[†]

*ancient woodland indicator species (30[+] are present in total)
[†] found on the grassland

2. MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1 Rationale for Management Plan

The management plan has been requested by Boxley Parish Council to be carried out by themselves and the Walderslade Woods Volunteer Group on behalf of the three councils that the woodland extends through, to maintain and improve the woodland for both wildlife and amenity value. Aside from this a number of other factors support the necessity of an appropriate management plan for the benefit of Walderslade Wood. As woodland partly comprised of an ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*) arrangement, it provides a highly suitable habitat for the hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius)*, a European Protected Species, thereby making the woodlands of European conservation importance, with presence of this species already noted within the woodland. Such ash, hazel and field maple woodland compositions are commonly found on chalk scarp, with chalk woodland a rare habitat of regional importance, and with Walderslade Wood found to have medium habitat opportunity for chalk scarp woodland (KLIS).

With Kent holding a significant amount of the remaining chalk habitats in England after a substantial decline in such habitats since the Second World War, it makes the management of Walderslade Wood as a chalk woodland habitat, with great opportunity to create chalk grassland habitats, of county importance. Additionally the woodlands fall into the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so the management of the woodlands to retain the aesthetics of the natural beauty of the area is also of county importance.

Locally, the site is a local wildlife site (Walderslade Woods MA67) with such sites designated for their

'…local nature conservation value. They protect threatened species and habitats acting as buffers, stepping stones and corridors between nationally-designated wildlife sites' (The Wildlife Trusts).

Such sites are of local importance as they can help protect land from planning applications which might otherwise remove/damage important areas of local wildlife.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands such as Walderslade Wood develop naturally on undisturbed soils. Combined with the continuity of ancient semi-natural woodlands, such woodlands are very valuable natural habitats, supporting a huge diversity of wildlife including more threatened species than any other UK habitat. Such species often require the relatively stable conditions provided by ancient

semi-natural woodlands, compared to habitats outside the woods, and are unable to move easily to colonise new areas. With modern agriculture and industry it is not possible for woods planted in this lifetime to become ancient woods, even in 400 years, as the soils upon which they would develop have been changed too much, and the land has become too fragmented to allow for natural movements and interaction between species. Due to this the ancient semi-natural woodlands that remain, such as Walderslade Wood, have become irreplaceable, and so the appropriate management of such habitats to ensure their conservation is of great importance.

2.2 Aim of Management Plan

The aim of this management plan for Walderslade Wood is to provide advice on the appropriate management strategies to sustainably maintain and enhance features of this ancient semi-natural woodland to support the biodiversity and conserve the important habitats it provides.

Additionally this plan aims to improve and maintain the amenity value of the woodland to the local populace found in the extensive housing estates, in close proximity to the site, without having any detrimental impact on the woodland, and continuing to maximise benefits for wildlife.

3. CONSTRAINTS AND THREATS

3.1 Protected Species


Hazel Dormouse
©www.Flickr.com

The presence of protected species such as bats and the hazel dormouse provide constraints as any activities taking place within the woodlands cannot disturb such species. Woodlands are extremely important for bats in terms of foraging, roosts and maternity roosts, with the ways in which bats use the landscape making them vulnerable to habitat loss and fragmentation. Individual trees such as old pollards and trees with gaps for roosting are preferred by bats, with the older the tree the more likely it is to provide the gaps and rot holes they require. As ancient woodland Walderslade Wood has a number of old trees meeting these requirements. The dense canopy, woodland edge and connectivity of the woodlands would be exploited for ease of movement from foraging to roost, encouraging the presence of bats, particularly rare species such as the Serotine bat which are restricted to Southern England, and forage along treelines and woodland edges.

Hazel dormice and all bat species are European Protected Species and as such receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Both the animal and their breeding or resting places are protected, and it is an offence for any protected animal to be captured, injured or killed, or eggs to be deliberately taken or destroyed, whether intentionally or recklessly. It is an offense to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of such an animal.

When carrying out management for conservation needs, it is essential to follow guidelines for best practise, to ensure a balance between not disturbing the species, and carrying out necessary management operations to ensure their continued existence in the area. Such guidelines can be

found for each protected species on the Forestry Commission website. The website also provides detailed guidance for each protected species, including what operations can be harmful to the species, and when and how to seek a licence to carry out certain management operations, if necessary.

It is therefore important that any conservation work takes the European Protected Species status of certain species into account and follows the recommendations for European Protected Species and woodland operations as outlined above and taken from the Natural England and the Forestry Commission websites, via following web links. Dormice and bats should only be handled by trained and licensed individuals.

- http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies
- http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/europeanprotectedspecies.aspx

3.2 Access

There are a number of public footpaths extending throughout Walderslade Woods, and as such consideration should be given to the potential risk of trees to the public. Any trees at the edge of public pathways must be routinely monitored for signs of their potential to fall or drop boughs that could put any members of the public at risk of injury. Any trees found to pose a risk must be dealt with appropriately, i.e. with the removal of rotting boughs or removal of the whole tree in extreme cases. A walk through the woodlands should always be conducted after a big storm to check for fallen trees. During a brief site visit to the woodlands by members of the Kent Wildlife Trust, a pathway was found to pass alongside a potential 'category A' tree. In this case management work would be required to remove as much of the tree in terms of boughs/crown/trunk as necessary to ensure public safety, although as much of the tree as is safe to retain should be retained to allow for continued benefit to wildlife.

3.3 Coppice Market

The current poor market for coppice products is a potential constraint as it could result in coppice management being very uneconomical. However if the coppicing carried out is done on a small scale with the main aim to benefit wildlife with selling the coppice as a side or non-existent aim, then the poor market may not be enough of a contributing factor to discourage a coppice regime from being carried out.

3.4 Operations

Sloping ground poses a hazard for extraction of any coppice products. Timing of operations and use of low impact extraction systems should be considered with regard to the local wildlife including breeding birds and European Protected Species such as the hazel dormouse. Woodland management such as coppicing and tree thinning should generally be carried out between November and February, so as to cause minimal disturbance to wildlife.

3.5 Pests and invasive species

Grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis)* may pose a threat by inflicting damage through bark stripping. While there was no evidence of any non-native species on the site it would be advised to remain alert to the potential threat of such species in the future. For example, any management operations that disturb the ground could provide ideal conditions for invasive species such as buddleia *(Buddleja davidii)*, with such areas ideally monitored closely afterwards.

Chalara dieback of ash (*Chalara fraxinea*) © Forestry Commission

Although deemed invasive and found within Walderslade Woodland, sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) is not currently considered a problem, and need only be monitored to determine whether it is spreading significantly further within the woodland, as may occur when parts of the woodland are disturbed through thinning or coppicing operations. Consideration should be given to potential impacts from issues such as ash dieback (Chalara fraxinea). If ash dieback were to occur on any of the population of ash within the woodlands it could create these disturbed conditions that encourage the spread of invasive trees such as sycamore. Therefore a monitoring programme is of high importance regardless of whether invasive species are currently a problem, as early warning will lead to greater success in eradication or control efforts. This will help ensure that the woodland is kept in a healthy condition with high value for wildlife.

Consideration could also be given to the potential benefits of certain species that are considered invasive, if controlled so as to maintain a manageable population size. For example, sycamore can have a number of benefits including supporting a number of red data book species, providing a pollen and nectar source for insects, and providing the hazel dormouse with sap sucking aphids found on their leaves at a critical time of the year for dormice.

4. MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Management possibilities

A number of management options may be considered for the woodlands, dependant on constraints such as time and budget. During the site visit on the 4th of June the following management possibilities were considered.

Description	Option	Priority
Create scallops	Create scallops to improve a potential ride through the woodland without opening up too much of the wood, improving/increasing woodland edge habitat, and creating transitional vegetation zones for the benefit of local wildlife.	MEDIUM
Hazel coppice regime	Consider coppicing hazel for the benefit of the hazel dormouse.	MEDIUM

Dead wood retention	Allow dead wood to remain in situ for the benefit of a diverse range of local wildlife.	HIGH
Pollards and veteran trees management	Monitor old pollards to balance the crown and ensure it does not become too large/heavy for the thinner trunks increasing vulnerability to strong winds. Veteran trees should be managed for their hollow rotting limbs which provide roosting and nesting opportunities, fallen deadwood and habitat for a range of small mammals, insects, fungi, lichens and mosses.	MEDIUM
Invasive species control	Ensure that any invasive species within the woodland are monitored, prior to control or eradication if needed.	LOW (currently)
Protected species consideration	Monitor for protected or endangered species within the woodlands, including dormice and bats.	HIGH
Access	Monitor trees adjacent to public footpaths running alongside and through the woodland and take action if required to prevent damaging or dangerous falls.	HIGH

4.2 Management Objectives

1	To maintain the ancient woodland features of the site through appropriate management, including retaining the 30 or more ancient woodland indicator plant species recorded in this important chalk woodland site.
2	To maintain and enhance the biodiversity and existing wildlife habitats within the Walderslade Woodlands through targeted woodland management practices. No exotic species to be introduced to the site.
3	To provide and maintain a community and educational resource through provision of well-maintained signposted footpaths, and field work based activity opportunities.
4	To manage the grassland plateaus for wildlife such as butterflies, birds and dormice, and prevent further scrub encroachment on the site.
5	To maintain and enhance suitable conditions for a) the population of hazel dormice within the woodlands through maintaining a small scale hazel coppice cycle. b) foraging and roosting bats. c) woodland birds. d) fungi.
6	To create and/or maintain scallops bordered by woodland edge to enhance the structure and diversity of the woodland and so increase biodiversity.
7	Assess the issue of invasive species and initiate a monitoring and control programme for the site if required.

4.2.1. To maintain the ancient woodland features of the site through appropriate management, including retaining the 30 or more ancient woodland indicator plant species recorded in this important chalk woodland site.

As covered in section 2.1, ancient woodlands are extremely valuable for their continuity of environment, range and condition of stable habitats for wildlife, and most importantly, their ancient soils which once lost cannot be recovered. Maintaining the ancient woodland features, from pollards to the soil, will help preserve the woodland in a stable and healthy condition. Management may range from non-intervention to active management operations.

4.2.1.1 Notable and Veteran Trees

Notable and veteran trees are greatly beneficial to wildlife in the form of the deadwood they contain or the gaps under the bark and in the trunk and branches that are used by bats, birds, mammals and insects, and the fungi that grows on and in them. For these reasons old trees can be of high ecological value and should be monitored and managed where possible. For such trees that are nearing, or have already achieved, veteran status, management may consist of non-intervention where the trees are left to continue growing without aid. However, as trees age they can be susceptible to rot or fail, and some management may be necessary, for example where deadwood on a tree is no longer stable enough so as not to pose a risk to the public. In these cases, where possible, as little of the healthy parts of the tree should be removed as possible, with work localised to the problem areas.

Notable trees such as pollards can suffer from having crowns that are too heavy, which can cause problems for the trees. In some cases it can be possible to cut back old pollards, although they can fail if cut severely back, so the first cut should be gradual. One measure includes removing a single limb and monitoring the response of the tree. If good re-growth occurs then pollarding could be carried out. Alternatively, the crown could be thinned/reduced to lessen the weight and so relieve some of the strain on the tree trunk.

An old pollard neglected for 100 years | Crown reduced but low branches saved | Ten years later – from now on the tree could be pollarded

Managing your woodland for wildlife- www.woodlands.co.uk

4.2.1.2 Ancient woodland indicator species

At least 18 ancient woodland indicator species are required before woodland can be considered as ancient, with Walderslade Wood having over 30 such indicator species, including bluebells, early purple orchid, and sweet woodruff. Ancient woodland indicator species are important as they support the theory that the older the woodland is, the greater number of different species it will be able to support, with a high enough number of indicator species giving a strong enough basis for declaring a woodland ancient. Such species also indicate the quality of the woodland, with a greater quality of habitat resulting in a greater number of species.

4.2.1.3 Medieval wood bank and sarsen stones


Sarsen Stones at Walderslade ©Flickr.com

Such features should be managed primarily through non-intervention as they should persist if unaltered deliberately. However if their condition begins to deteriorate it may be necessary to deter visitors to the woods from being able to have access to them, either via signs or use of barriers. When protecting a medieval woodbank dead hedging may be the most appropriate and aesthetically pleasing method, and will create a way to dispose of cut material from within the wood easily and naturally. Such a hedge created alongside a woodbank, for example, would prevent visitors to the wood from being able to walk over the woodbank, and so prevent the important ancient woodland soil from being compacted or the woodbank sides from being eroded away by footfall.

4.2.2 To maintain and enhance the biodiversity and existing wildlife habitats within the Walderslade Woodlands through targeted woodland management practices. No exotic species to be introduced to the site.

This management objective should be achieved by ensuring that the suggested management operations are successfully implemented and carried out. By managing the woodland through the traditional methods suggested within this plan, the quality of habitat for wildlife should be enhanced and maintained for years to come. See in particular Management Objective 5. Throughout the management of Walderslade Wood ensure that no exotic species are introduced to the site.

4.2.3 To provide and maintain a community and educational resource through provision of well-maintained signposted footpaths, and field work based activity opportunities.

As medium sized ancient woodland, Walderslade has the opportunity to be utilised as a community and educational resource due to the amount of space on offer, and the historical value of the woodlands that can be passed onto visiting groups. Sign posting is vital to aid delivery of the message of the importance of ancient woodlands as a link to the past, habitat for abundant wildlife, and resource to the public. Placed around the woodlands, they can provide key information where relevant. For example, they can be used to educate visitors on traditional management practices such as coppicing, if placed near sections of coppice, or they can provide information of the importance of ancient soil and why when lost, it cannot be reclaimed. Such sign posts will hopefully encourage visitors to respect the woodland and so help prevent littering and fly tipping and other such activities which are detrimental to the woodland habitat.

4.2.4 To manage the grassland plateaus for wildlife such as butterflies, birds and dormice, and prevent further scrub encroachment on the site.


Adonis on Scabious

While the majority of the site is ancient woodland, to the South of the site are a series of grass plateaus. These grassland plateaus provide unimproved grassland habitat with certain parts having greatest to minor habitat opportunity for chalk grassland (Kent Landscape Information System), which is a rare, BAP habitat. The grassland areas provide an open habitat to contrast the closed canopy woodland habitat, with scrub, and extensive bramble covering in many places, helping to encourage a greater variety of wildlife to the site. Maintenance of this bramble cover would be beneficial to wildlife such as butterflies and dormice, while loss of grassland should be prevented through scrub clearance and appropriate management to prevent further encroachment. Tree removal with follow up treatment may be required to further ensure maintenance of the open grassland habitat, although some trees may be allowed to remain to create some structural diversity.

Regarding the scrub, clearance can be carried out manually through use of loppers and bow saws by the volunteer team, ensuring that safety precautions are taken, and that a person familiar with use of the tools is available to provide instruction to others. A health and safety talk must be provided. Scrub management should be carried out at least yearly as scrub can establish fairly rapidly and the thinner the stems the easier the clearance. Thinner stems can be removed through use of the loppers, while thicker stems and trunks should be sawn through using the bow saw. Problems can arise when removing large amounts of unwanted vegetation from a site, so where possible burn cut vegetation, or find uses for it within the woodland, such as to create dead hedges.

Regarding the bramble, pathways can be cut through the bramble patches on and between the grass plateaus, to create edge habitat for wildlife, and increase walkways for public use.

Regarding the grass plateaus it would be beneficial if some structural diversity could be achieved in the grass sward. Butterflies in particular require a range of vegetation heights throughout their life cycle, including bare ground. To maintain a chalk meadow, which this site has a greater habitat opportunity for; grazing would be the most appropriate method of management to achieve the tightly closed, diverse sward that is indicative of chalk grassland. However, with the grassland open to public use, grazing is most likely not appropriate for most, if not all, of the area unless temporary livestock fencing can be erected. However structural diversity can be achieved through establishing a mowing regime which creates as much variation in height and age of the sward, and as much edge as possible, as formed when short grass is adjacent to tall grass.

There are a number of patterns in which the grass can be mown to help increase the wildlife value of the sward structure. **The following page is taken from the Spring 2008 Volume 6 Number 1 edition of the Conservation Land Management journal, which details methods of mowing to best diversify the structure of grasslands.**

The benefits of scalloping and the use of wavy edges are well known to managers of woodland and scrub. These principles are, however, not always used on grassland sites. John Bacon suggests that the adoption of similar techniques when mowing grass could provide considerable benefits for wildlife.

Right A piece of even-height, even-aged, straight-edged rough grassland which could benefit from a more varied structure. *Peter Rowarth*

Diversifying the structure of mown grasslands

There are many examples of where the management of un-grazed grasslands by mechanical mowing has produced a uniform sward of even-height, even-aged and straight-edged habitat. Is this because we often employ agricultural contractors who are brought up to make dead straight passes up a field? My father wanted all field work to be ruler straight, and 'the straighter the work, the better the farmer' was an oft-quoted saying in my early farming days. But what an opportunity we are missing if we work like this on conservation sites.

In habitats such as woodland and scrub, the creation of a varied structure is accepted as delivering more niches for wildlife. Grassland managers should be using similar techniques.

Benefits to wildlife

The creation of additional structure in mown grasslands (hay meadows excepted!) is a valid objective and will reduce the acres of monotonous, even-height grass. Variations in the way a mower is driven can produce a huge increase in niches that are good for a range of wildlife.

Cutting only a proportion of the grass on each occasion (say one-third each cut) will lead to variations in the height of the sward and the age of the foliage and seeding heads over the course of a cutting season and from year to year. Cutting in a haphazard way will produce a huge increase in the length of edge, where short and tall grass are adjacent to each other. Edges are widely accepted as being favoured by a range of wildlife, from insects to reptiles. Scalloped edges will help produce a micro-climate in which the range of aspects and number of sun traps is increased, the wind speed is reduced and temperature increased, so improving the conditions for insects to be active.

Further reading

Bacon, J (ed) 2003 *The scrub management handbook*. The Forum for the Application of Conservation Techniques/English Nature, Peterborough

Dagley, J, & Thompson, K Mowing machines for grazing pastures. *enact* 8(1): 4-6

Applications

There are many situations in which varied cutting regimes could be adopted, subject, of course, to the cutting regime meeting the site's management objectives and being approved as an acceptable method of delivering them. For example:

- Wildlife grasslands where grazing is not a management option (note: do not replace grazing with this technique, as grazing normally produces far better results!).
- Large areas of uniform grassland where variations in cutting techniques can provide additional valuable niches.
- Grasslands on public access sites where mown routes can be used to guide visitor access.
- Grasslands on public access sites where a variety of sward structure can be used to extend flowering periods and insect flight periods, and to provide an extended wildlife season for the enjoyment of visitors.
- Any grassland where the aim is to increase the proportion of flowers and herbs in the sward. Removal of cut material is essential, so that it does not form a damp mulch which will smother germinating seeds and the regrowth of any flowers and herbs. For this reason, the use of a cut-and-collect machine should be considered.

Conclusion

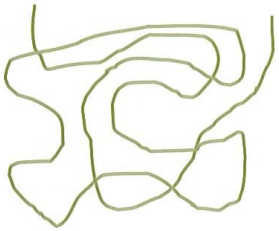
A considered approach to varying cutting regimes on mown grasslands could improve their structure and bring wildlife benefits to sites that are currently managed in a very uniform way. Alongside these benefits is the opportunity to use a little bit of artistic design that may be appreciated on sites where there is public access.

John Bacon was English Nature's Senior Land Management Officer until he retired in 2005. He continues as a volunteer for Natural England.
Contact: tel: 01694 723112;
e-mail: jbacon@ragdon.plus.com

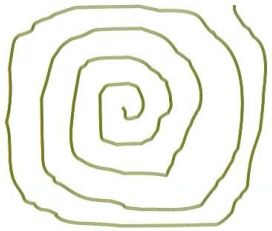
Patterns

There is a choice of patterns that can be used to vary the structure of mown grassland, and the skill of the driver in selecting good areas to create scallops and sheltered areas can give considerable added value compared to a completely haphazard approach. Various approaches can be taken, depending on how much of a 'natural' or 'artistic' effect you prefer.

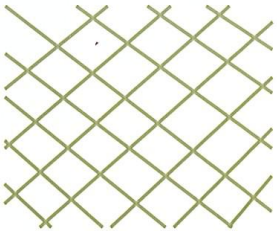
Area Target the areas where edge effect, shelter and warmth can be maximised, or to remove unwanted rank vegetation.



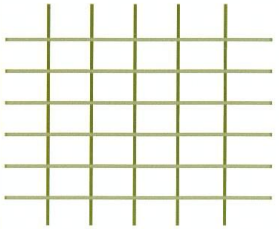
Haphazard Drive around haphazardly until the required proportion of grass has been cut on each occasion.



Spiral Cut in a spiral, from the centre outwards. This is the most economical method, as the cutter never has to be lifted to turn at the end of the field. Spiral shapes can be great fun for children to follow on public access sites, and reflect the spiral structures which occur throughout the natural world.



Diamond Where, for whatever reason, curves are not appropriate, cut diagonally across the site, leaving alternate uncut strips, then repeat by cutting across the original set of passes to create a diamond pattern.



Square This is the same as the diamond pattern, but with the two sets of passes at right angles to each other.

Cutting in a spiral is the most economical method for varying structure, as the cutter never has to be lifted to turn at the end of the field. *John Bacon*

To best create a grassland habitat that is inviting for butterflies, you must aim for a grassland mosaic as butterflies can be very specific about the plant species in their habitat. For example, a number of species will only lay eggs on particular food plants, dependent on what the larvae will eat. The following features will be beneficial for butterflies. An ideal grassland habitat for butterflies would include the following features:

- Bare ground for basking in the sun.
- Short open turf for host plants such as bird's foot trefoil which are easily out competed.
- Tall grass and plants to allow for egg laying such as cocksfoot. Ensure that these remain uncut until after eggs have hatched and developed successfully.
- Tussocks for over wintering cover.
- A range of developmental stages in the vegetation. This includes flowering stages for nectar, and dead stems for over-wintering. This can be achieved through rotational cutting.
- Nearby scrub or hedges, as corridors, stepping stones, and to allow for feeding, resting and sunbathing.
- Trees, shrubs and flowering plants to provide a nectar-rich food source over the season.

4.2.5 To maintain and enhance conditions suitable for: the population of hazel dormice within the woodlands through maintaining a small scale hazel coppice cycle, foraging and roosting bats, woodland birds, and fungi.

Reinstating traditional coppice rotation (on a small scale) will periodically increase light reaching sections of the forest floor which will benefit the characteristic ground flora of the woodland. Bluebells are a noteworthy part of the understory, and will significantly benefit from a return to more traditional woodland management practices that provide influxes of light.

Improving the diversity and age structure of the woodland will be of significant benefit to Dormice, a European Protected Species, which require a dense, species diverse understory and high grade diversity of food through their active periods (April/May – October). Lack of management and canopy closure are likely to see a decline in ground flora and understory, and an associated decline in nesting birds and dormouse populations. Additionally hazel coppicing will benefit the local dormouse population. Further consideration of the wildlife within the woodland will ensure that certain management operations will not be carried out during significant times of the year, such as the nesting or breeding season for birds.

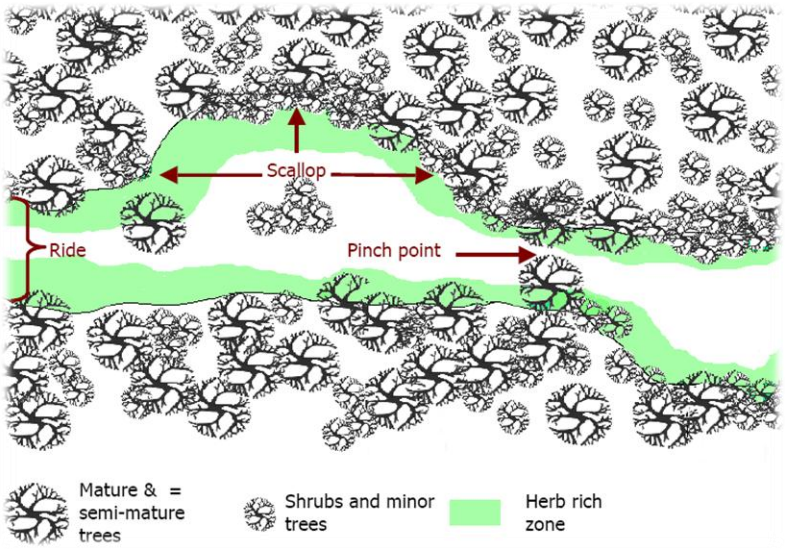
Maintenance and creation of wide, 2 or 3 zone scallops will be of significant benefit to woodland species which require dense woodland edges to attract mates and breed. Transitional zones improve structural diversity in the woodland, create warm, sunny spaces for feeding and breeding insects and mammals, and create additional highly beneficial edge habitat to the advantage of a number of species within the wood. Retention of deadwood will also provide additional important habitats for small vertebrates, invertebrates, fungi and nesting birds. Increasing available nectar sources and host plants would also support a wide variety of woodland butterflies. Measures will also be made to ensure the preservation of historical features such as the wood bank and pollard, as well as selecting trees to be retained or maintained as veteran trees, with a number of notable trees found within the woodland. In these cases issues that can impact on veteran trees will be considered, such as wind blow or the canopy becoming too heavy for an aging trunk, and managed appropriately.

Management of the grassland areas on the plateaus will focus on maintaining the wide open area with minimal invasive encroachment of scrub. While some scrub around the edges, and the occasional tree within the open areas, will be retained for structural diversity, management will focus on scrub clearance in the initial years, and prevention of re-encroachment in later years. As rare chalk grassland, the maintenance of this habitat outweighs any benefits of allowing the scrub to develop into woodland, with the grassland providing a contrasting habitat to the woodland it is found beside.

4.2.6.1 To create scallops bordered by woodland edge to enhance the structure and diversity of the woodland and so increase biodiversity.

Surveys should be carried out to determine the most appropriate sites for scallop creation; existing pathways/rides within the wood will be cleared/widened to create scallops. The surveys should consider such factors as the presence of important plant species, including ancient woodland indicator species which should not be damaged/lost through clearance for the scallop, and the impact of disturbing certain areas of the woodland with regard to the spread of tree species such as sycamore.

A series of scallops could be considered along the main footpath which runs across the valley floor. The scallops should be as large as possible without opening up too much of the woodland. Include naturally open areas with short vegetation within the scallops, and retain mature native trees within the scallops; coppice younger trees and maintain by re-coppicing on a ten year rotation. Work should be undertaken during the period November to March inclusive. All workers should be warned of the potential for dormice to be present. These scallops will serve to increase woodland edge habitat within the wood, and so provide an enhanced benefit to wildlife through the creation of niches and opportunities for a range of species.



This diagram demonstrates a ride/scallop system within woodland, with the beneficial vegetation structure, standalone trees and pinch points.

Taken from the Forestry Commission Guide to Ride Management.

If any wood is cut small stacks should be left for fungi and to provide shelter for small mammals, and a habitat for wood-boring insects. As the vegetation grows shade will increase. To improve lighting and optimise conditions for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, cut back into the woodland edge, again taking into

consideration the linear structure of the woodland, and controlling the amount of woodland opened up. Bays created on both sides and at intersections will help achieve the width if space is limited. There is high potential for wind tunnels due to the shape of the woodland, and this can be avoided by leaving sections of woodland as a wind break.

Ensure that cut material is removed from the ride, as this will help reduce the fertility of the soil on the ride over time, eventually helping to reduce the spread of the more common vigorous species which require more fertile soil. This allows rarer species which can grow in less fertile conditions the space to grow and flourish.

4.2.6.2. To maintain scallops bordered by woodland edge to enhance the structure and diversity of the woodland and so enhance biodiversity.

The season should be considered when carrying out management.

Summer – Vegetation grows rapidly during the summer, and could stifle less competitive species. Cutting back the vegetation is the most reliable option, and will help maintain a range of structures within the ride, from short grass which needs cutting several times a year, to tall grass-herb communities which need cutting every 3-5 years.

A cutting rotation should ensure all stages of each community are present at any one time. The timing and frequency of cutting should reflect on local conditions and the species to be favoured. For example certain butterflies prefer taller grasses with vegetation such as thistles and knapweed which take several years to develop and so the vegetation should not be cut frequently. Problem plants or weeds should be controlled or eradicated, either using herbicides, hand tools such as a scythe, or power tools such as mowers or brushcutters for woody stems.

Autumn - By late autumn and into winter shrubs can be coppiced or cut. Brambles tend to flower quite late, which can beneficial for wildlife, and so should not be cut back too much but allowed to ramble where they won't become a problem. The aim is to achieve a tiered effect from freshly coppiced or cut shrubs to others up to 10-20 years older.

Winter – The season when most woodland management is carried out. When cutting the ride or scallop, woodpiles should be left to provide shelter for small mammals, reptiles and amphibians as well as a habitat for wood-boring insects. Shade cover should be considered with the woodland edge potentially needing to be cut back to improve light conditions and optimise the habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

4.2.7 Assess the issue of invasive species and initiate a monitoring and control programme for the site if required.


Sycamore Tree
©Arkive.com

Invasive Non- Native Species are a potential threat to a site, although to what extent is to be established. Sycamore, Wilson's honeysuckle and cherry laurel are all present but may not all be in significant numbers. With the current threat of climate change and the associated impacts on factors including rainfall and temperature, such invasive species may become more dominant in the future. Drier/warmer summers in the south east could result in sycamore having a higher growth rate than native species such as ash, pedunculate oak and elm, resulting in more sycamore dominated woods in the future. While sycamore is not currently a threat, mitigation efforts may be needed sooner to prevent the species from outcompeting native trees in the future. As sycamore favours disturbed ground for establishment, methods may be needed to ensure that the removal of sycamore trees does not encourage new sycamore growth. Alternatively, there is an argument for the benefits of sycamore to wildlife, including supporting a number of red data book species, providing a pollen and nectar source for insects, and providing the European Protected hazel dormouse with sap sucking aphids found on their leaves at a critical time of the year for dormice. As such, sycamore population expansion may be environmentally acceptable, if kept within manageable numbers.

Consideration should also be given to potential impacts from issues such as ash dieback (Chalara fraxinea). If ash die back were to occur on any of the large population of ash within the woodlands it could create these disturbed conditions that encourage the spread of invasive trees such as sycamore. Therefore a monitoring programme is of high importance regardless of whether invasive species are currently a problem, as early warning will lead to greater success in eradication or control efforts. This will help ensure that the woodland is kept in a healthy condition with high value for wildlife.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 Short-term work programme (2013 - 2018)

Activity	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scallop creation with zoned vegetation.		X			
Maintenance of scallop zoned vegetation heights – herbaceous and shrub layer respectively.			X		
Provision of dormouse nest boxes.		X			
Invite a licenced dormouse holder to visit site to check boxes for evidence of use.		X	X	X	X
Provision of bat boxes.		X			
Invite a licenced bat expert to visit to check boxes for evidence of use.		X	X	X	X
Provision of bird boxes.		X			
Bird boxes checked for use, (autumn) cleaned out and repaired as necessary.		X	X	X	X
Retain standing and fallen deadwood.	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor and maintain ancient woodland features.	X				X
Locate and remove litter/evidence of fly tipping.	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor for invasive species/evidence of spreading.	X	X	X	X	X
Scrub clearance.	X			X	
Establish a hazel coppice regime.		X			
Thinning of shading trees in coppice areas.		X			
Maintenance of access routes and pathways.	X	X	X	X	X
Maintenance of bramble on grassland areas.		X			X

5.2 Long-term work programme (2019- 2028)

Cpt. Ref or Name	Activity	Year *(tick)*	
		6-10	11-20
	Coppice	X	X
	Coppice	X	X
	Coppice	X	X
	Maintenance of scallop zoned vegetation – established trees coppiced	X	
	Thinning of shading trees in new coppice areas	X	X
	Maintenance of pollards/veteran trees		X
	Potential grazing of grassland	X	

References

http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/localwildlifesites

http://www.kent.gov.uk/klis/default.asp

http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcin056.pdf/$FILE/fcin056.pdf

www.naturalengland.org.uk

www.woodlands.co.uk

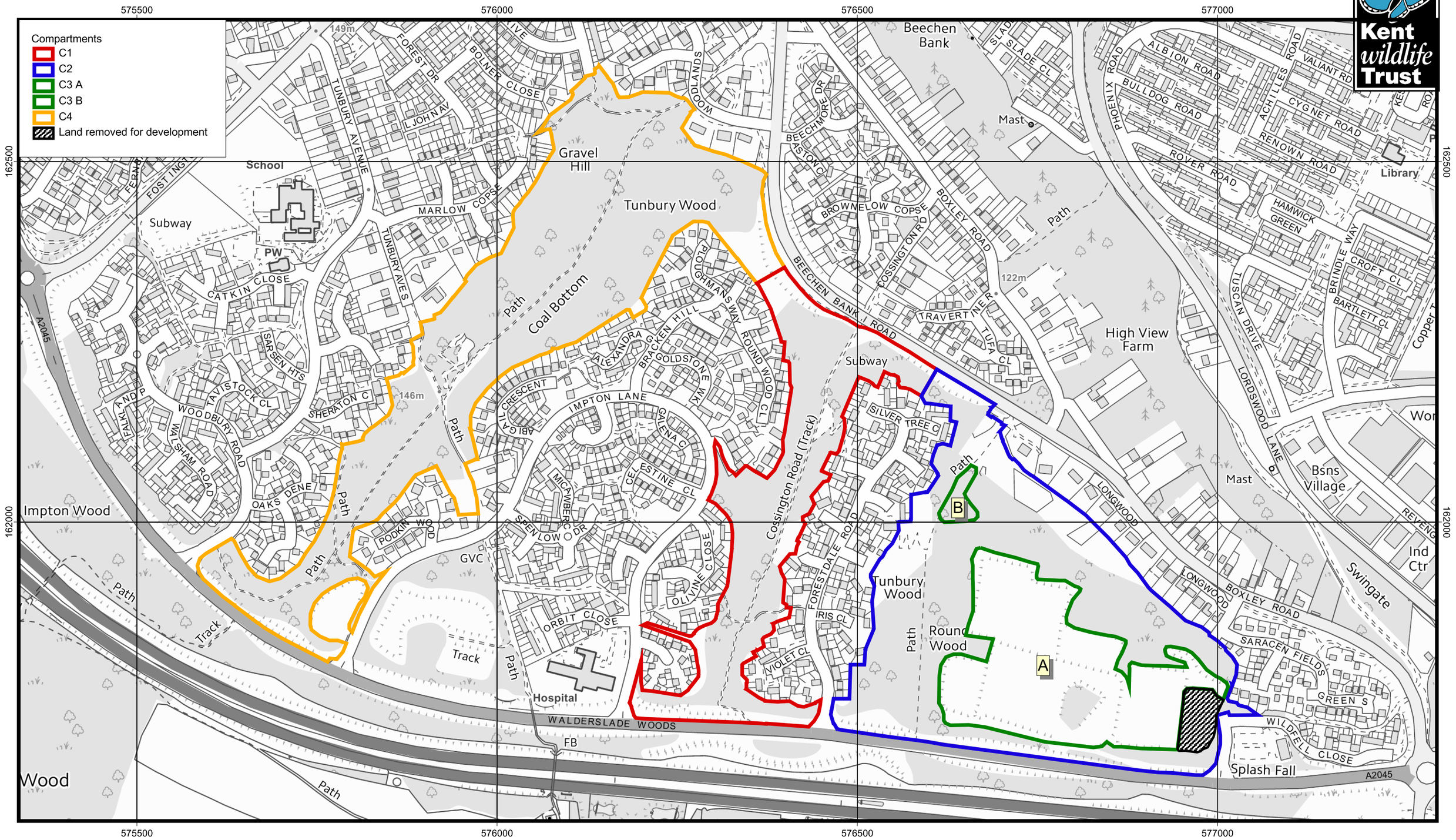
www.Flickr.com

www.english-country-garden.com

Kent Wildlife Trust – Local Wildlife Site Maps

Elin Bentall | Land Management Advisor Trainee
Kent Wildlife Trust

Walderslade Woods. Compartment Map

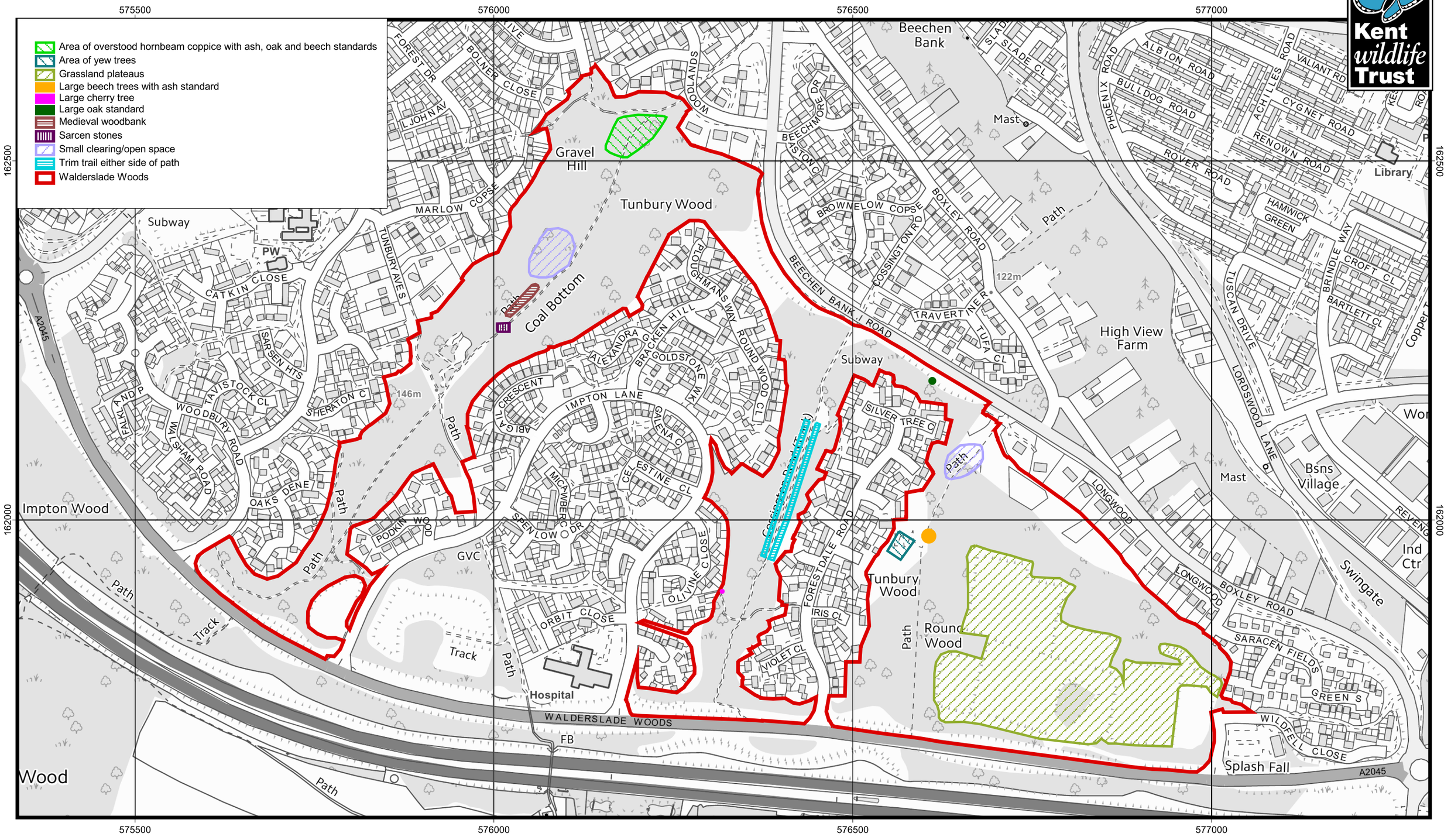


0 250 500 Meters

N

Your living landscape. Your living seas.

Walderslade Woods. Historical and Notable Features Map



0 250 500 Meters

N

Kent Wildlife Trust 2014

Your living landscape. Your living seas.