

# Horner Wood Woodland Management Plan Summary 2023-2033



National  
Trust

**354.57 hectares of native  
ancient woodland in  
Somerset**

## Horner Wood Woodland Plan Summary Document - Context

This document is a summary of a more detailed woodland plan written using the Forestry Commission Template. Here, we aim to communicate the core plan actions and justify these proposals in as concise a way as is possible. If you would like a copy of the full management plan which this document summarises, or you would like more information about any of the surveys that have informed it, then please get in touch by e-mailing [Robert.Manicom@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Manicom@nationaltrust.org.uk).

The site is managed by the National Trust from the Holnicote Estate Office near Selworthy. The direction of the National Nature Reserve (NNR) is influenced by the results of ecological surveys, specialist best practice guidance and our Natural Flood Management and Catchments in Trust Project. Work programmes are prepared by the Countryside Manager who is also responsible for ensuring all the consents and grants are in place. The Countryside Team are supported by the National Trust's internal consultancy including on site Rural Surveying team and regional and national specialists.

Dunkery and Horner Wood NNR comprise 355ha of the National Trust's Holnicote Estate in Somerset. The NNR lies on the north eastern edge of Exmoor, and is included within the boundaries of Exmoor National Park. The town of Minehead lies 7 km to the east and the village of Porlock 4 km to the west. The nearest villages are Horner and Luccombe both accessed via minor roads from the A39 and Wheddon Cross to the south.

Horner Wood is hugely valuable in terms of biodiversity, and is of international importance in terms of its lichen populations. The wood also supports a great diversity of plants, fungi, birds, invertebrates and mammals. There is a wealth of survey data relating to these species and their status. These findings have informed the actions presented in this plan.

Work to date has focussed on the lichen priority zone in Horner Combe through the riparian woodland on the valley floor and has consisted of targeted removal of holly, understory shrubs and ivy which are either reducing light levels or in physical competition with lichens or existing or potential lichen trees. Alongside this there has been a wider approach to the reduction of holly understory in areas of the wood where it had become particularly dense and was compromising conditions of lichens and/or effecting veteran trees. To date this work had been undertaken on the lower slopes of Cloutsham Ball in the Cabinet Walk/East Water confluence area with targeted holly removal beginning just above Tuckers Path. Beech control has been ongoing for many years throughout the wood to increase light levels and control spread through the woodland.

The current and proposed work programme have been formulated using a broad range of survey data, including recommendations in the Lichen Survey of Western Combes (Sanderson 2013). Lichen Condition Assessment (Sanderson 2009) and the Veteran tree surveys (Smith 2003 & 2010). The management prescriptions also reflect a recent survey and report by Plantlife which focusses on the impact of ash dieback on the lichen population. This plan's aim is to maintain optimum conditions for the lichen population while continuing to support the other rich biodiversity at this site.



**3-** Some beech, holly and Ivy shading – 20% thin to halo veteran trees and reduce beech.



**8-** Some non-native trees, holly and Ivy shading – 5% thin to reduce shading and non-native trees.

**13-** Some non-native trees, holly and Ivy shading – 20% thin to halo veteran trees and reduce non-native trees.



**1-** Some non-native trees, holly and Ivy shading – 20% thin to halo veteran trees and reduce non-native trees.



**4-** Ivy shading, closed canopy – 10% thin to halo veteran trees and increase light



**2b-** 10% thin to reduce lichen shading and halo veteran trees



**5-** uniform tree species mix and structure, holly and Ivy shading – 10% thin to halo veteran trees and increase light



**10,11 and 2c-** Some small holly shading in 11. Long term retention



**12 and 6-** Ash Dieback is creating self thinning – Long Term retention



**14-** Ash Dieback and Ivy shading – 20% coppice to create glades and coppice wet woodland



**2a-** 5% coppice to create 30 30mx30m (3ha) coppice areas and pockets of open ground



**9-** Some beech, and Ash Dieback – 10% thin to halo veteran trees and reduce non-native trees.