

Hardcastle Crags

Woodland Management Plan April 2017- March 2027



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The aim of this plan is to provide a ten year programme of woodland management will meet the Aims and Objectives of the National Trust at Hardcastle Crags in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. The detail of the plan focusses on tree thinning and felling works at the site. Detail relating to the access and built structures at the site form the content of other plans.

Background to the Woodlands at Hardcastle Crags

Most of the woodland at Hardcastle Crags was planted in the 1870s as an attractive approach to Lord Savile's shooting lodge at Walshaw. There are also small remnants of seminatural and ancient woodland and some later conifer plantations. The main appeal lies in the great diversity of tree species within the woodland. With the exclusion of livestock natural regeneration is increasing. The woodlands are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

The nature conservation value of Hardcastle Crags is high in the context of its location (on the millstone grit of the Southern Pennines) supporting a range of species which are uncommon or rare in the area. This is mainly due to the deep, humid wooded valleys which provided some shelter from the air pollution which affected the region in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The woodlands are of regional importance supporting a good range of plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals. The ground flora is typical of acid woodland with the richest areas associated with the streams and flushes. There is a low diversity of vascular plants, which is dominated by grasses with bracken in the more open parts. A number of uncommon species, mostly ferns, have been recorded. These are associated with the crags and riverside cliffs as well as man made structures such as walls and bridges. The woods are of particular interest for the bryophyte and lichen flora that thrive because of the high humidity in the deep valleys. The fungi are also of interest and have been well recorded by local naturalists with over 400 species noted.

The northern hairy wood ant dominates the invertebrate fauna of the property; their large nests are widely distributed through the woodland. At least three closely associated species are found with it, indicating a native population. The 1987 Biological Survey also found invertebrate fauna associated with relict ancient woodland or wood-pasture. A good variety of woodland birds have been recorded including many nationally scarce species. There is also a good range of mammals including bats, roe deer and badgers.

Hardcastle Crags (not just the NT ownership) is by far the largest block of woodland in the surrounding area. It lies at the heart of the Calder Ward with a population of over 12,000. National Trust holdings are open access, with approximately 25 kilometres of maintained footpath through the woodland, with approximately 2/3 of this total being statutory rights of way. An estimated 100,000 visitors a year use the site for recreation, mainly walking based activities.

The archaeology of Hardcastle Crags is predominated by industrial remains of a variety of forms and dates. The most obvious of these is Gibson Mill, a cotton mill constructed about 1800, with its associated waterworks, workmen's cottages and other domestic and service structures. Another aspect of the industrial archaeological resource is a large collection of charcoal burning platforms, spread throughout the property. These may, or may not, be associated with a third set of industrial features – evidence for iron smelting, arguably of medieval date – identified in the earlier decades of the 20th century.

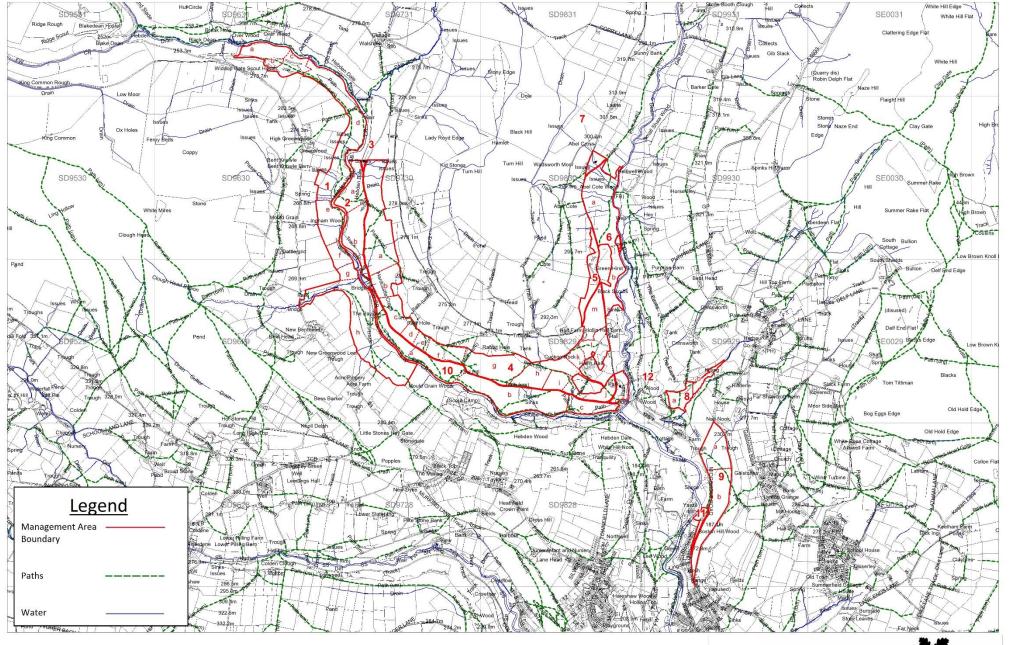


What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
Increase opportunities for our local wildlife.	Britain's woodland biodiversity is in trouble. Reports show that 60 per cent of our woodland species have decreased and 34 percent have decreased strongly over recent decades. Species decline is attributed to a lack of structural diversity in our woodlands with low management intervention and increased deer numbers resulting in uniform and aging woodlands. We want to do what we can to reverse this trend and help save Britain's natural heritage. We've identified those species listed as being of high conservation importance and have categorised them by preferred habitat type below: Well-structured woodland, broadleaved woodland, native tree species, good shrub layer rides, glades, standing & fallen deadwood, good age and species range Common Bullfinch Wood Warbler Soprano pipistrelle Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Common Cuckoo Northern Hairy Wood Ant Woodland edge, species-rich hedgerows, species-rich glades & rides, flowering scrub Moss Carder Bee Soprano pipistrelle Common Cuckoo Wood Warbler West European Hedgehog Moss Carder Bee Xanthoroe ferrugata, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet moth Areas of heathland, heathy woodland understorey and glades, short vegetation, bare ground, bracken, ruderal vegetation, woodland ponds Common Toad Common Lizard Adder Moss Carder Bee Epirrhoe galiata, Galium Carpet moth Hydraecia micacea, Rosy Rustic Moth	1/ Increase light levels to the forest floor through thinning and selective felling: This is essential if we are to see the regeneration of new native trees and native wild flowers. 2/ Plant trees where regeneration does not occur naturally. 3/ Create deadwood, both standing and fallen. Deadwood is a key component of our woodland ecosystems, providing habitat for a host of species, from fungi, to beetles, to birds. 4/ Progressively work towards the removal of invasive species, in particular Himalayan Balsam. These plants out compete our native flora and prevent tree regeneration.
	Xanthoroe ferrugata, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet moth Ecliptopera silaceata, Small Phoenix Moth	2

What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
	Following the devastating downstream flood events seen recently in the Calder Valley, we want to do everything we can to help to alleviate this problem. Natural Flood Management has been identified by the Environment Agency as a key component towards the prevention of flooding and the reduction in its impacts. Slowing the flow of water across our land has been identified as the best way of achieving this. This means making the ground rougher and more porous and slowing the passage of water through the numerous small streams and drains we have in the Crags.	5/ We will increase the roughness and porosity of the soil through promoting natural regeneration of trees and wild plants and flowers (see 1 and 2 above). 6/ We will continue to remove Himalayan Balsam. Himalayan Balsam is an invasive annual plant that suppresses all native vegetation leaving winter soils exposed and unsupported by perennial root systems. This significantly increases the potential for soil erosion and landslips. By cutting and pulling Himalayan balsam, native perennial plants and trees can regenerate restoring their function in supporting and stabilising soils. 7/ Branch wood and small tree trunks sourced from within the Crags will be used to create small dams in streams and drains to slow the flow of water though our valley.
	The Earth's temperature is warming a result of human activities. Global Warming is already having a terrible impact upon the lives of people and nature across the globe. If the global rise in temperature can be kept below 2 degrees Celsius, the negative effects of climate change can be minimised, this however will require a change in all of our carbon outputs. We therefore wish to minimise carbon outputs and sequester as much carbon as possible through natural processes.	8/Produce heat and electricity through sustainable sources. These include hydroelectric power generated by the Hebden Water and heating generated from firewood sourced on site. 9/ To undertake woodland management that promotes the growth of new trees and protects soils from erosion. This means thinning woodlands to increase light levels to a point at which new trees can grow.
Maintain the site's visual amenity and give our visitors a great experience.	The quality of experience for our visitors is of high importance. Visitor surveys have shown us that the beauty and wildness of our woodlands at Hardcastle Crags is enjoyed by all of our visitors. This plan aims to maintain this wild feel and ensure that our woodlands remain to be enjoyed by generations to come.	10/All felling will be undertaken to ensure the wild feel of the woodlands are maintained. No clearfelling of woodland is proposed as part of this plan. Thinning and selective felling will allow new trees to grow ensuring continuity of afforestation in to the future.
Protect and enhance the site's natural and cultural heritage	The site has a rich woodland and industrial heritage which we need to protect.	11/The National Trust are working with local partners to identify all areas of cultural and historical significance. These will be added to a constraints map that will be consulted prior to all operations. Significant features will be identified on the ground and protected from disturbance during operations.

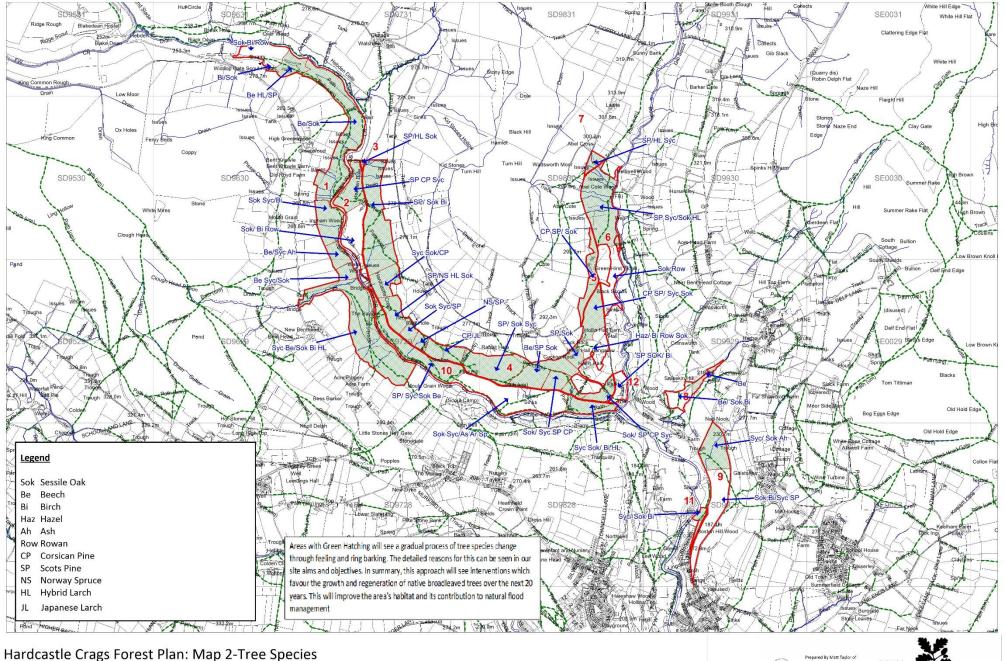
What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
Contribute to the local economy	We want our land to contribute to the quality of life for local people. One of the ways we seek to achieve this is by contributing to the local economy.	12/ Employing staff and contractors from the local area where appropriate. 13/ Where timber or other forest products cannot be used within the estate, they will be sold in to local markets where possible
To manage health and safety at the site in line with the 'Tree Safety Management in the National Trust' procedure Sep 2015	There are risks of injury to staff, volunteers and the public from falling trees and branches. There are also risks of damage to buildings, property and vehicles. The Trust has a statutory and common law duty to assess and manage these risks. The duty is established in criminal law under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and in civil law under the Occupier's Liability Act. The Trust must take all precautions as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid risks to the safety of members of the public, staff and volunteers. Therefore there is a need to inspect trees in and near public places and adjacent to buildings and working areas, to assess whether they represent a risk to life and/or property, and to take remedial action as appropriate.	14/ To follow National Trust Health and Safety procedures.
		4

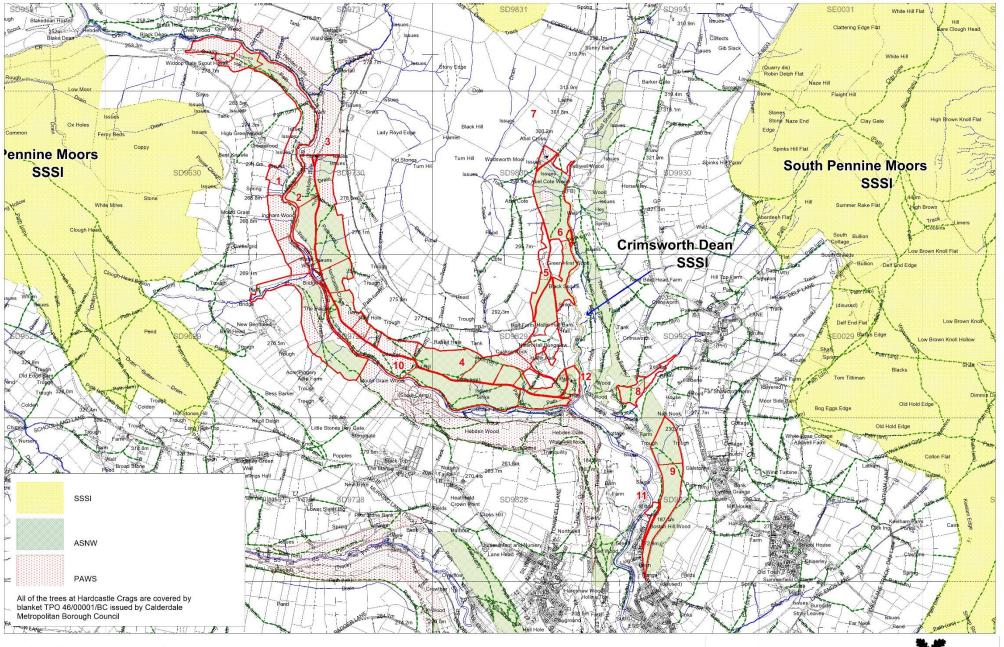


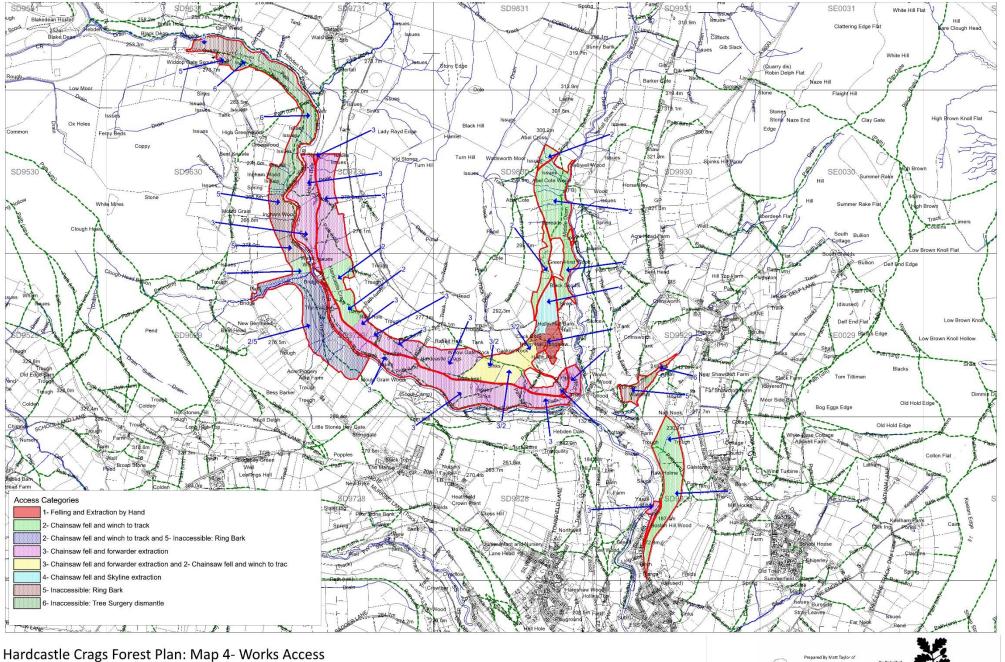


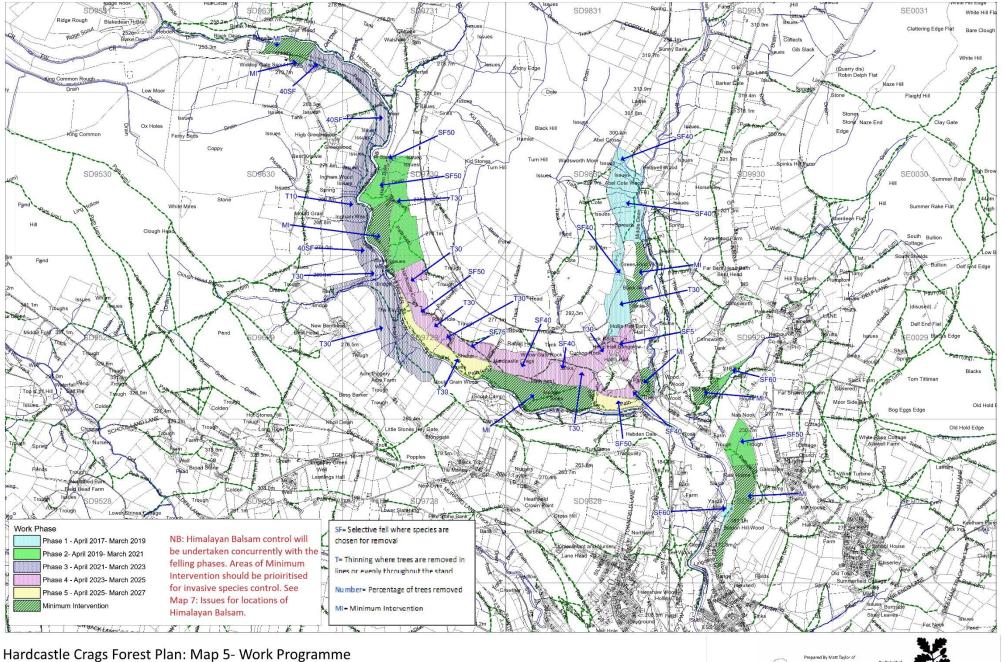
Hardcastle Crags Forest Plan: Map 1 Compartments

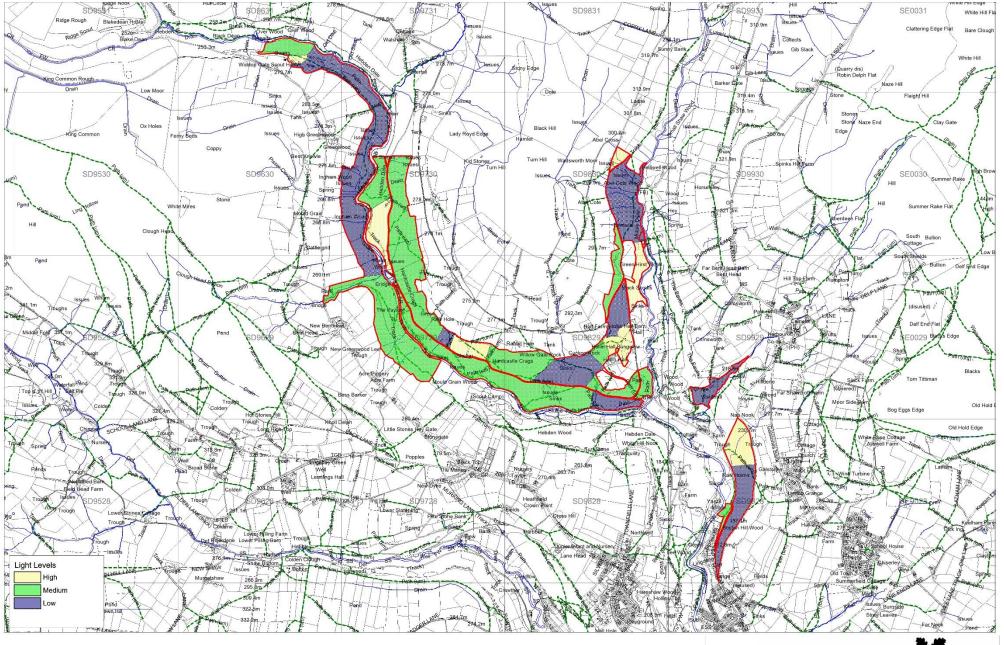


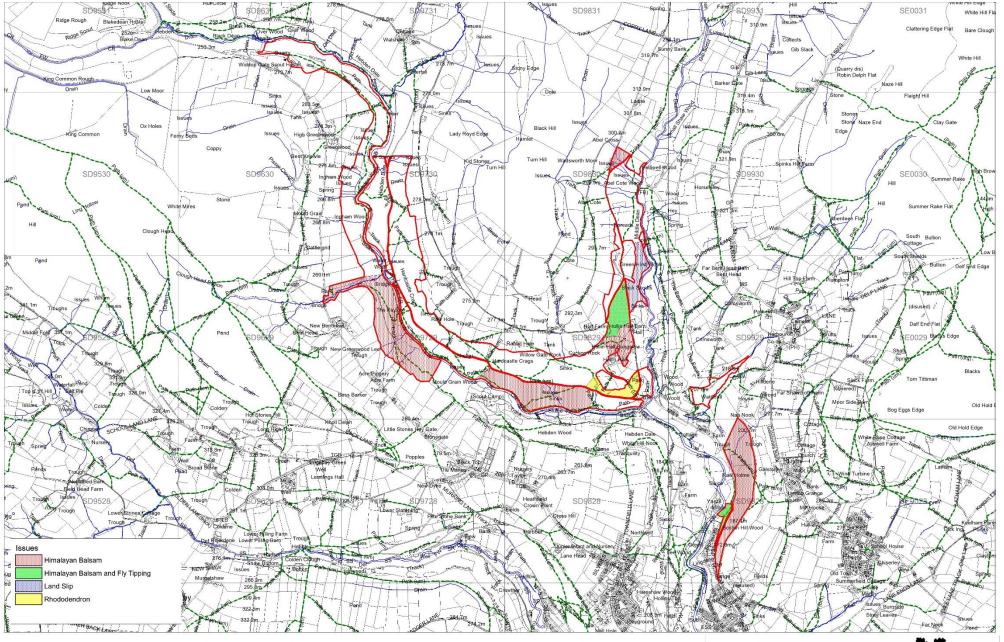


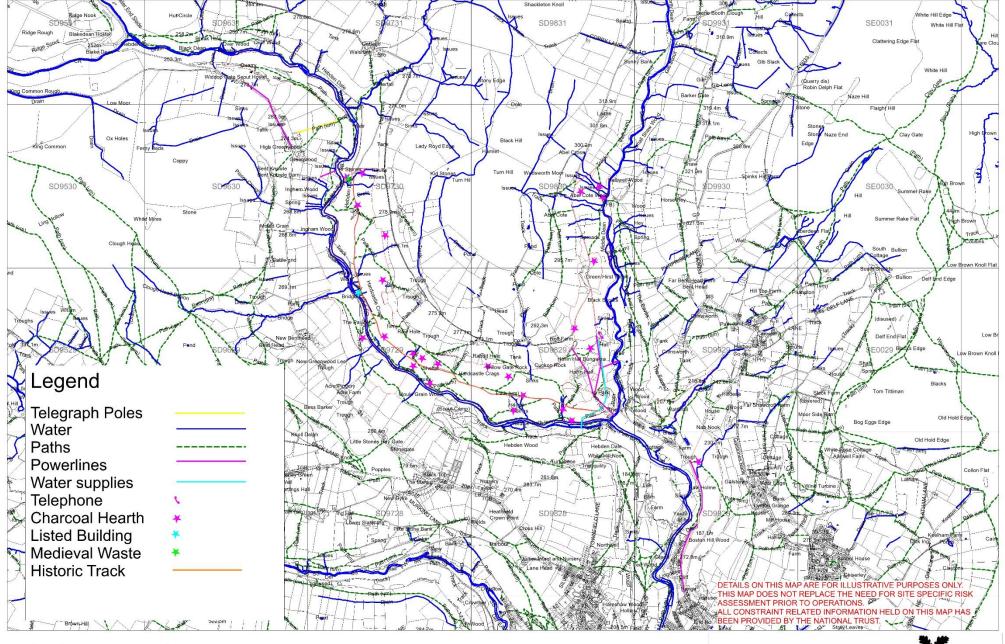






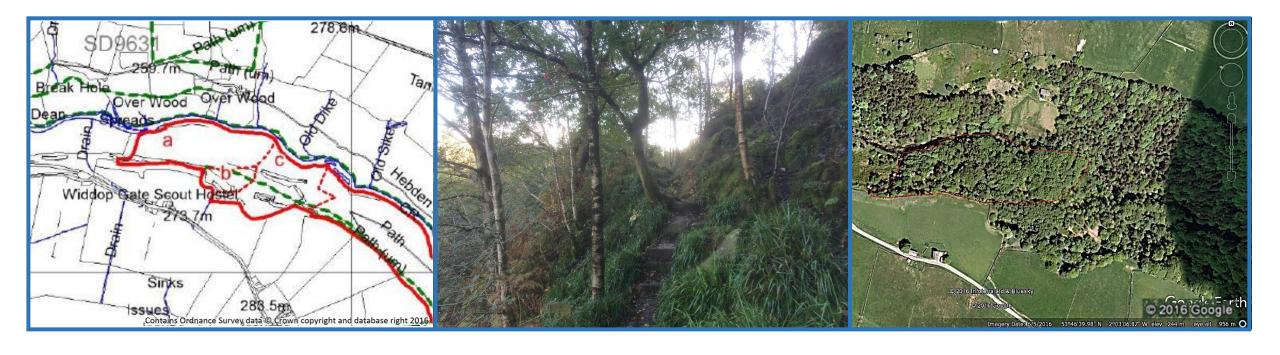






Hardcastle Crags Forest Plan: Map 8- Constraints





Compartment: 1aSpecies: Sessile Oak, Birch and Rowan

Hectares: 2.5

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Paths and Water **Light Level**: Medium

Issues: None **Intervention**: None

Description: A broadleaved woodland with mixed age structure in good ecological condition.

Aims: To maintain the good ecological condition.



Compartment: 1b Species: Sessile Oak and Birch Hectares: 0.5

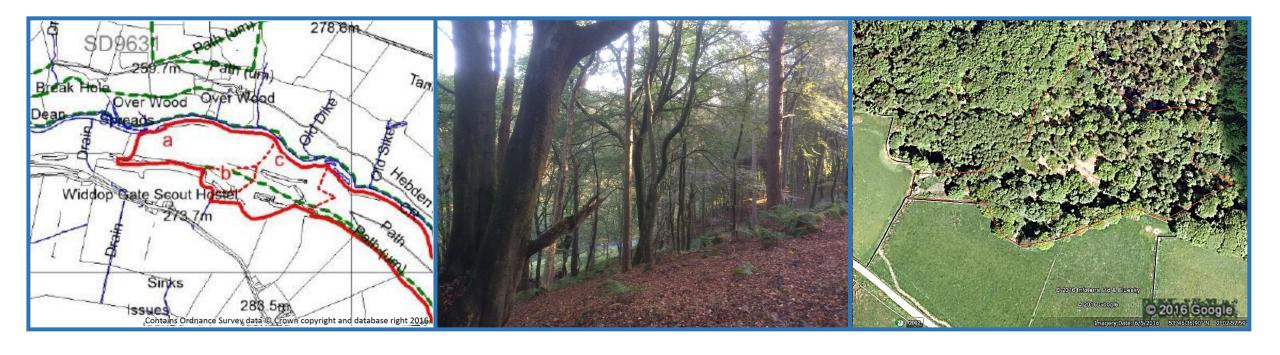
Designations: PAWS Constraints: Path Light Level: High

Intervention: Consider restocking or deer fencing to encourage tree regeneration.

Issues: Lack of understory, poor age structure.

Description: A mature birch woodland with uniform age structure on the site of an old quarry.

Aims: To diversify age structure and species mix.



Compartment: 1c Species: Beech, Hybrid Larch, Scots Pine Hectares: 2.04

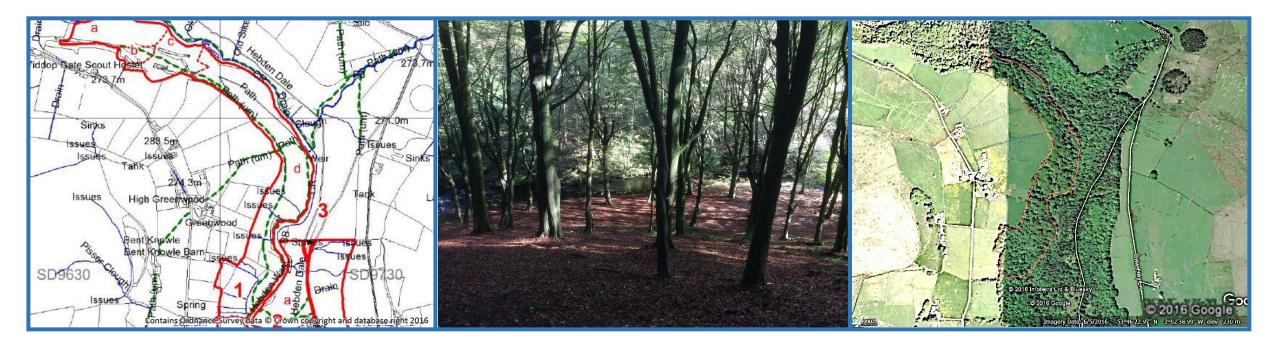
Designations: PAWS & ASNW **Constraints**: Paths, Water **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 40% selective fell Work Period: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Lack of understory, lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade, poor access, poor age structure.

Description: A mature mixed woodland with an even age structure sitting directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.

Aims: To diversify age structure, increase deadwood and species diversity, and to increase light levels.



Compartment: 1d Species: Beech, Sessile Oak Hectares: 10.65

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water, Powerlines **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 40% selective fell **Work Period**: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Lack of understory, lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade, poor age structure.

Description: An even aged area of planted non-native broadleaved woodland directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.

Aims: To diversify age structure, restore ground flora, increase proportion of native trees and increase light levels.



Compartment: 1e Species: Sessile Oak, Sycamore, Birch Hectares: 3.48

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 10% thin **Work Period**: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade.

Description: An area of mixed non-native woodland with a diverse age structure directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase deadwood component, native tree proportion, and light levels.



Compartment: 1f Species: Beech, Sycamore, Ash Hectares: 1.54

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 40% selective felling **Work Period**: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Lack of understory, lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade, poor age structure.

Description: An even aged area of primarily non-native broadleaved woodland.



Compartment: 1g Species: Beech, Sycamore, Sessile Oak Hectares: 0.98

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Low proportion of native tree species in both stand and regeneration, dense shade.

Description: An area of planted non-native broadleaved woodland with uneven age structure directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.



Compartment: 1h Species: Beech, Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Birch, Hybrid Larch Hectares: 13.11

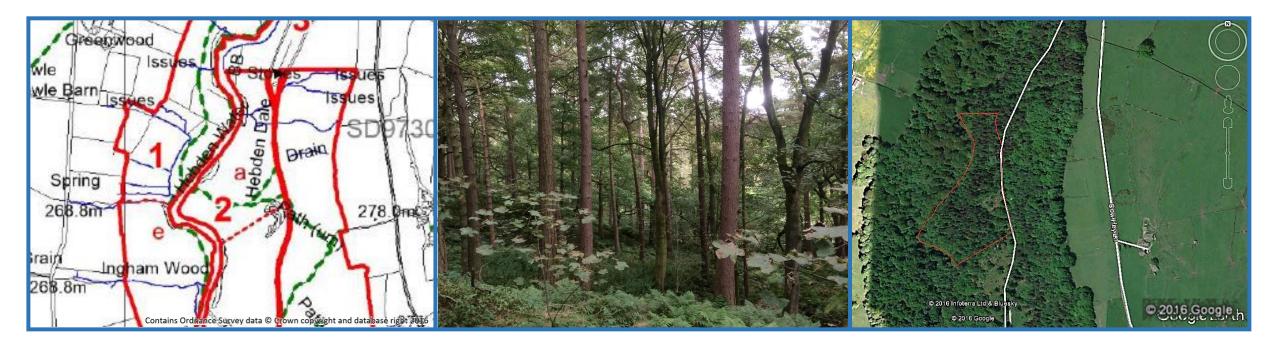
Designations: PAWS & ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2021-March 2023

Issues: Lack of understory in some areas, lack of regenerating native tree species, shade. Himalayan Balsam.

Description: An area of planted non-native broadleaved woodland with uneven age structure directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase deadwood component and light levels. Remove Balsam.



Compartment: 2a Species: Scots and Corsican Pine, Sycamore Hectares: 3.2

Designations: PAWS & ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 50% selective felling **Work Period**: April 2019-March 2021

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of planted non-native mixed woodland with uneven age structure directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.



Compartment: 2b Species: Sessile Oak, Birch, Rowan Hectares: 3.89

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: High

Intervention: Areas to be kept open to expose the 'Crags'

Issues: None

Description: An area of native broadleaved woodland with a diverse age structure directly adjacent to the Hebden Water.

Aims: To maintain diversity and varied structure and to maintain views of the 'Crags'



Compartment: 3 Species: Scots Pine Hybrid Larch and Sessile Oak Hectares: 0.1

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Paths **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 50% selective felling **Work Period**: April 2019-March 2021

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade, poor age structure.

Description: An area of mixed non-native woodland with an even age structure.



Compartment: 4a Species: Scots Pine, Sessile Oak, Birch Hectares: 9.57

Designations: PAWS & ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Archaeology

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2019-March 2021

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade, poor age structure.

Description: An area of planted mixed woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.

Light Level: Medium



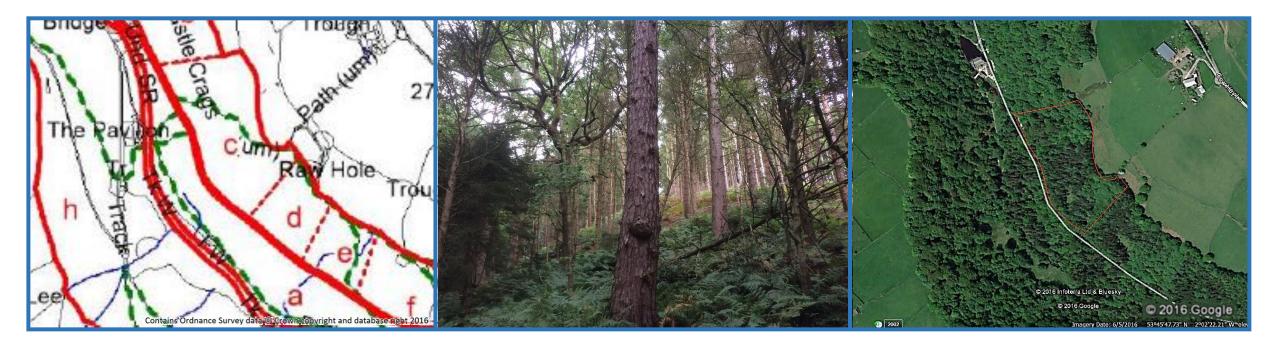
Compartment: 4b Species: Sessile Oak, Sycamore, Corsican Pine Hectares: 2.52

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of predominantly broadleaved woodland with some conifers and a diverse age structure.



Compartment: 4c Species: Scots Pine, Norway Spruce, Hybrid Larch, Sessile Oak, Hectares: 2.42

Designations: PAWS & ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology

Intervention: 50% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of tree regeneration, lack of native tree species, shade, poor age structure.

Description: An area of planted predominantly coniferous woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.

Light Level: Medium



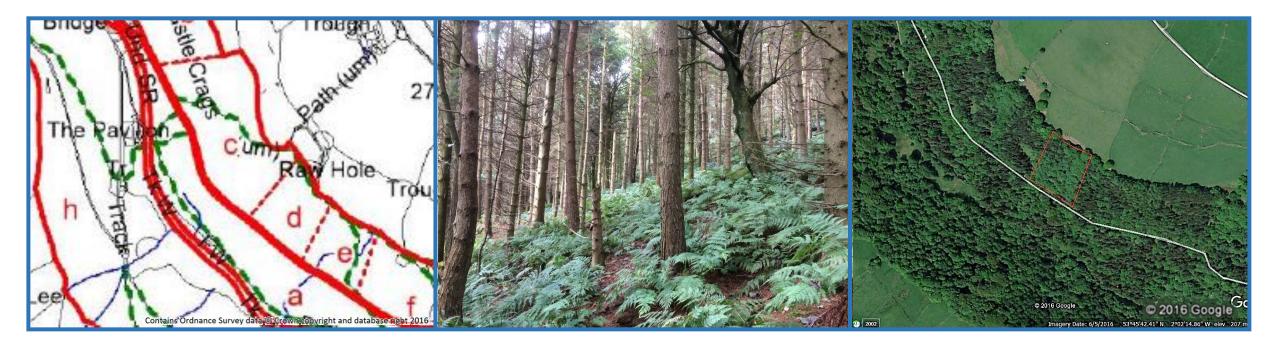
Compartment: 4d Species: Sessile Oak, Sycamore, Scots Pine Hectares: 0.89

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of non-native, predominantly broadleaved woodland with an even age structure.



Compartment: 4e Species: Norway Spruce, Scots Pine

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Poor understory, lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of conifer woodland with an even age structure

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.

Hectares: 0.81

Light Level: Low



Compartment: 4f Species: Japanese Larch, Corsican Pine Hectares: 2.26

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: High

Intervention: 75% Selective Fell Work Period: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species.

Description: An area of predominantly coniferous woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component.



Compartment: 4g Species: Scots Pine, Sessile Oak, Sycamore. Hectares: 5.53

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 40% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an even age structure.



Compartment: 4h Species: Beech, Scots Pine, Sessile Oak Hectares: 4.10

Designations: ASNW & PAWS **Constraints**: Paths **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 40% Selective fell Work Period: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of understory, Lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. Restore understory.



Compartment: 4i Species: Sessile Oak, Sycamore, Scots Pine Hectares: 1.47

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Archaeology **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade.

Description: An area of predominantly broadleaved woodland with an uneven age structure

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.



Compartment: 4j Species: Sessile Oak, Sycamore, Scots Pine, Corsican Pine Hectares: 2.17

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Water, Powerline **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 40% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Lack of understory, Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. Restore understory.



Compartment: 4k Species: Sessile Oak, Scots Pine Hectares: 1.06

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Path, Power Line, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: Poor understory, Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of planted mixed woodland with an even age structure

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. Restore ground flora.



Compartment: 4l Species: Sessile Oak, Hazel, Birch, Rowan

Designations: None **Constraints**: Path, Archaeology

Intervention: Selectively Fell 5% Work Period: April 2023-March 2025

Issues: None

Description: An area of newly planted native woodland with some mature trees remaining.

Aims: To ensure successful establishment of new woodland.

Hectares: 2.56

Light Level: High



Compartment: 4m Species: Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Scots Pine, Corsican Pine Hectares: 3.01

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Path, Himalayan Balsam, Fly-tipping **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 30% thin **Work Period**: April 2017-March 2019

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. To reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 5 Species: Sessile Oak, Scots Pine, Corsican Pine Hectares: 2.45

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Archaeology **Light Level**: Meduim

Intervention: 40% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2017-March 2019

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species, dense shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with a diverse age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.



Compartment: 6a Species: Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Scots Pine, Hybrid Larch Hectares: 8.13

Designations: ASNW & PAWS **Constraints**: Archaeology **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 40% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2017-March 2019

Issues: Poor understory, Lack of regenerating native tree species, shade.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with uneven age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels.



Compartment: 6b Species: Sessile Oak, Rowan, Hectares: 2.78

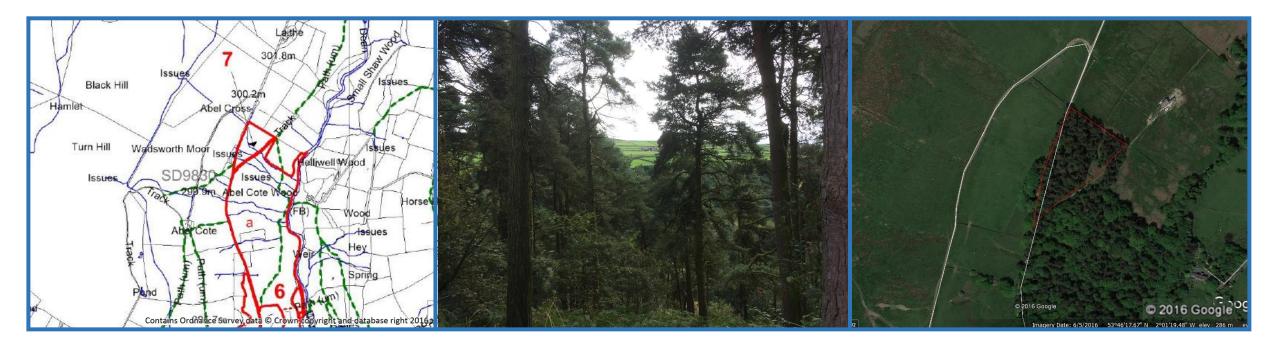
Designations: ASNW Constraints: Water **Light Level**: High

Intervention: None

Issues: Land slip

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To restore land slip.



Compartment: 7 Species: Sycamore, Scots Pine, Hybrid Larch Hectares: 0.82

Intervention: 40% Selective Fell Work Period: April 2017-March 2019

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. To reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 8a Species: Beech, Sessile Oak, Birch Hectares: 1.63

Designations: ASNW Constraints: Path Light Level: Low

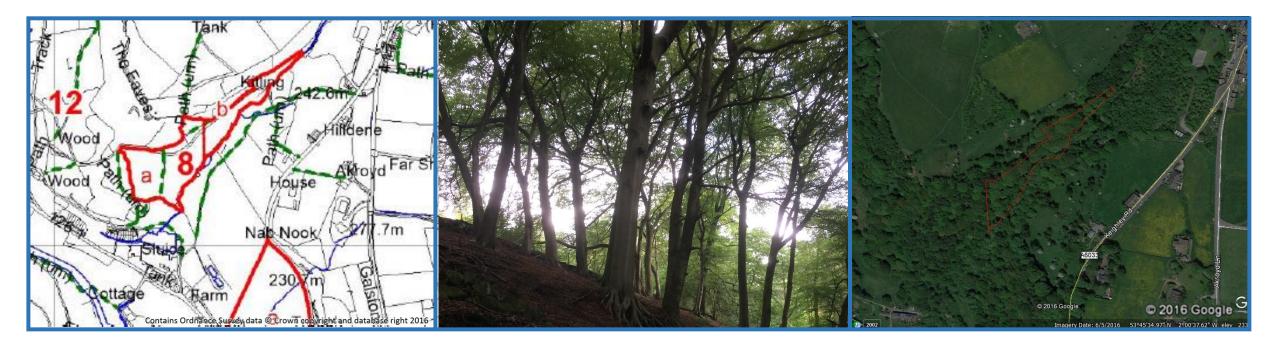
Intervention: None

Issues: None

Description: An area of mixed broadleaved woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To maintain the sites ecological and aesthetic qualities.

41



Compartment: 8b Species: Beech Hectares: 0.72

Designations: ASNW & PAWS **Constraints**: None **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: 60% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2019-March 2021

Issues: Lack of understory, lack of native tree species, dense shade. Soil erosion.

Description: An area of mixed broadleaved woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. To regenerate ground flora.



Compartment: 9a Species: Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Ash Hectares: 3.71

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Power Lines, Path **Light Level**: High

Intervention: 50% Selective Fell Work Period: April 2019-March 2021

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species. Himalayan Balsam

Description: An area of mixed broadleaved woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component and light levels. To reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 9b Species: Sessile Oak, Birch, Sycamore, Scots Pine Hectares: 5.16

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Powerlines, Path **Light Level**: Low

Intervention: None

Issues: Himalayan Balsam

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure.

Aims: To reduce Himalayan Balsam



Compartment: 10a Species: Sycamore, Scots Pine, Sessile Oak, Beech Hectares: 5.79

Designations: PAWS **Constraints**: Himalayan Balsam **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: 30% Thin **Work Period**: April 2025-March 2027

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species.

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure. Sitting on the main route to Gibson Mill.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component. To increase light and reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 10b Species: Sycamore, Scots Pine, Ash, Alder, Sessile Oak Hectares: 8.88

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Paths, Archaeology **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: None

Issues: Lack of regenerating native tree species. Himalayan Balsam

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure. Sitting on the main route to Gibson Mill.

Aims: To maintain the aesthetic qualities of the site while ensuring health and safety of staff and visitors. Reduce Himalayan Balsam



Compartment: 10c Species: Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Birch, Hybrid Larch Hectares: 2.25

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Paths **Level**: Low

Intervention: 50% Selective Fell Work Period: April 2025-March 2027

Issues: Poor understory, lack of native tree regeneration, dense shade. Himalayan Balsam

Description: An area of mixed woodland with an uneven age structure. Sitting on the main route to Gibson Mill.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component. To increase light and reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 11 Species: Sycamore, Sessile Oak, Birch Hectares: 0.65

Designations: None **Constraints**: Path **Level**: Medium

Intervention: 60% Selective Fell **Work Period**: April 2017-March 2019

Issues: Lack of native tree regeneration, shade. Himalayan Balsam, Fly Tipping

Description: An area of Broadleaved woodland with an even age structure.

Aims: To diversify age structure and increase native tree component. To increase light and reduce Himalayan Balsam.



Compartment: 12 Species: Scots Pine, Sessile Oak, Birch Hectares: 1.37

Designations: ASNW **Constraints**: Himalayan Balsam **Light Level**: Medium

Intervention: None

Issues: None.

Description: An area of mixed woodland around the main carpark with an even age structure.

Aims: To maintain the aesthetic qualities of the site while ensuring health and safety of staff and visitors.