

ECCLESALL WOODS MANAGEMENT PLAN GREEN FLAG APPLICATION 2012-2016



Parks and Countryside

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FOREWORD

Previous plans

The site is owned by Sheffield City Council and is managed by the Parks and Countryside Service. This management plan has been developed after a review of the previous management plan covering the period 2007-2012, and related public and other stakeholder consultation.

Purpose and presentation of the Management

The purpose of this Plan is:

- To provide a general introduction to the site and its different interests, values and benefits
- To deliver the site aims and objectives that are informed by the above
- To monitor improvements to site management & customer service in accordance with the Green Flag criteria

It is a dynamic document that guides Parks and Countryside and all those involved in achieving the vision for the site.

Those involved in preparing this plan

The production of this plan has involved considerable consultation with key stakeholders, particularly the site users, the Friends of Ecclesall Woods and Dore Village Society and Parks and Countryside personnel involved in the site's management and maintenance.

The plan was prepared by Parks and Countryside.

Member/Senior Officer Supporting Statement

Sheffield has developed a well-established infrastructure of Community Assembly Areas, engaging all of the city's 84 Councillors in 7 corporate areas. The Assembly Areas are an integral part of the Council's political management structure and are at the heart of the Council's aim to create a network of quality green spaces throughout the city.

Parks and Countryside Area Action Plans have been developed by each of the city's 7 Assembly Areas, and each panel has identified the priority themes and green space sites in their area for development and regeneration when opportunities arise.

Ecclesall Woods is a priority site within the South West Community Assembly local area action plan.

SECTION 1: SITE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

1.1 Setting the Scene

1.1.1 Site Statistics

Name of Site	ECCLESALL WOODS
Address	Abbey Lane, Millhouses, Sheffield
Location	5 km south-west of Sheffield city centre
Grid ref	SK 323 825
Size of whole site	139.9 hectares (ha)
Site Owner	Sheffield City Council
Site Management	Parks and Countryside, Directorate of PLACE
Designations	(a) Local Nature Reserve (b) Two Grade II structures – Ryecroft bridge and Wood collier’s memorial (c) Scheduled Monument – prehistoric cup and ring stone (d) Tree Preservation Order covers the woodland and tree groups within Ecclesall Woods sawmill site (e) 15 km of dedicated public rights of way (f) The whole site is designated as Green Belt within the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (g) Parks and Countryside listed as a City Site and a Heritage Site (h) The great majority of the site is ancient woodland

1.1.2 General introduction to the site

Ecclesall Woods is the premier public and largest ancient semi-natural woodland in South Yorkshire, and the “jewel in the crown” within the City Council’s 1500 hectare woodland estate.

It is situated within the southwest of the City, between the suburbs of Millhouses and Dore village, some 5 km from the City centre, and attracts around 300-400,000 visits per annum. Visitors come from across the City and adjoining areas. Refer to Figures 1.1a and 1.1b.

It is of major archaeological and historical interest, including features from pre-history through to the Middle Ages, with very extensive evidence of traditional woodland management and associated industries. The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service considers the site one of the most important woodlands in the County.

As a Local Nature Reserve the woodland is of city wide value for nature conservation, supporting several UK Biodiversity Action plan priority species, for example song thrush and white clawed crayfish, and priority habitats such as wet woodland.

Within the woodland, adjacent to Abbey Lane, is situated what was once a working sawmill site with ancillary facilities. This area is currently under redevelopment to provide a hub for visitor facilities, a retail outlet for local wood products, a base for

education, interpretation and training programmes linked to the woodland and its heritage, a location for community based environmental organisations, and wood-based businesses, who all work in partnership with the City Council.

Master planning, to move the vision forward for the old sawmill site started in 2008 and continues to this day. In September 2011, following joint fundraising efforts by the local authority and the Friends of Ecclesall Woods, a new timber built visitor centre was opened. Known as the JG Graves Woodland Discovery Centre, over 10,000 people have been through its doors during its first year of operation.

The woodland itself is divided into three main blocks by Whirlowdale Road (B6375) and Abbey Lane (B6068). For management purposes this division is used to refer to the site as three main blocks: Wood 1, north of Whirlowdale Road, extending to Parkhead; Wood 2, south of Whirlowdale Road and bounded to the west by Abbey Lane; and Wood 3, lying between Dore and Abbey Lane.

1.1.3 Brief compartment descriptions

Ecclesall Woods is split into 3 main management compartments, reflecting its division by bisecting highways, and its entry in the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme (Wood 1 is represented as Compartment 115; Wood 2 as Compartment 114; and Wood 3, including the sawmill site, as Compartment 116). These in turn are broken into sub-compartments on the basis of dominant tree species, woodland age structure and the presence of other facilities or habitats. Please refer to Figure 1.2.

The sub-compartments are summarised below:

Sub-Compartment	Area (hectares)	Planting Year	Dominant Species	Other facilities / habitats
114a	15.3	Pre-1900	Oak/Birch	
114b	6.4	Pre-1900	Beech	
114c	2.9	Pre-1900	Oak/Birch	
115a	24.0	Pre-1900	Oak/Birch/SChestnut	
115b	0.6	Pre-1900	Beech	
115c	6.7	Pre-1900	SY/MB	
115d	0.6	Mixed	MB	Coppice
115e	1.4	60-70	MB	
115f	3.1	Pre-1900	Mixed	
116a	3.7	60-70	Mixed	Includes picnic area
116b	0.8	Pre-1900	MB	
116c	1.6	60-70	Mixed	
116d	17.0	Pre-1900	MB	Bird Sanctuary
116e	1.2	60-70	Mixed	Sawmill Site
116f	34.2	Pre-1900	Oak	
116g	3.2	Pre-1900	Beech	
116h	1.1			meadow
116i	0.7	70-80	MB	

Sub-Compartment	Area (hectares)	Planting Year	Dominant Species	Other facilities / habitats
116j	2.6	Pre-1900	MB	
116k	9.1	Pre-1900	Mixed	
116L	0.7	40-60	MB	Ryecroft mill site
116m	3.0	40-60	SY	
TOTAL	139.9			

SY – Sycamore

MB – Mixed Broadleaves

Mixed – mixture of conifers (mainly Scots Pine and European Larch) and broadleaves (Oak, S Chestnut, Sycamore generally)

Detailed compartment descriptions are provided in Appendix 1.

1.1.4 Management Structure for the site

Ecclesall Woods is managed by Parks and Countryside (P&C), part of the Directorate of Place within Sheffield City Council.

Within P&C, management of the site is overseen by the Trees and Woodlands Section with input from other Sections of the Service, the wider Council and external partners and stakeholders. Refer to Figure 1.3.

Day to day management of the site is co-ordinated principally through the Woodlands Officer for the South of the City (responsible for responding to day to day enquiries, for example tree nuisance issues, as well site maintenance and management), supported by another Woodlands Officer (focusing on education and interpretative projects and initiatives). In addition, a specific Woodlands Project Officer leads the on-going regeneration of the sawmill site, and manages a Facilities Co-ordinator of the sawmill site. The Woodlands Manager oversees the strategic management of the site and wider woodland estate.

The Ranger Team undertake a range of small-scale practical management and maintenance projects within the site under the direction of the Trees and Woodlands Section, as well as delivering a programme of events and educational activities on site.

The formal parking bays alongside Abbey Lane are also managed and maintained by Amey (Highway Contractors). The majority of the highway verges around the site are the responsibility of Highway Services. The public rights of way within the site are the responsibility of the Public Rights of Way Section, Highway Services. However, as the client Service, Parks and Countryside undertake most of maintenance of the rights of way network.

Other parts of Place and other Directorates within the Council are involved in the care and management of the woodland as required, particularly the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service based with Development Services, who provide advice on archaeological issues.

The Friends of Ecclesall Woods are the primary grassroots community group associated with the site. Other key stakeholder groups include the Dore Village

Society, Sheffield University, Hallam University, Freeman College (Ruskin Mill Educational Trust), Working Woodlands Ltd, Sheffield Beekeepers' Association and the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership.

A number of businesses are based at the sawmill site, through tenancy's at will. These are Handspring Design, Hector and Cedric Ltd, Tinsley Tree Project, Lorraine Botterill, HN Trees Ltd and the Working Woodlands Trust.

Further information on some of the above stakeholders can be found at the following web-links:

<http://www.dorevillage.co.uk/>

<http://www.syforest.co.uk/>

<http://www.ruskin-mill.org.uk/>

<http://www.sheffieldbeekeepers.org.uk/>

<http://www.handspringdesign.co.uk/>

<http://www.hectorandcedric.com/>

<http://www.lbsculpture.co.uk/>

<http://www.tinsleytreeproject.co.uk/>

1.1.5 Relevant Strategies and Policies

Site Categorisation Strategy (2000)

The Site Categorisation Strategy for Sheffield's parks and green spaces identifies Ecclesall Woods as a City Site.

City Sites play a major role in making Sheffield a City to be proud of, consistent with meeting the needs of the residents of Sheffield, and contribute to the quality of visitor's experience of the City.

Further information regarding this strategy and its methodology, can be found on our website:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/green-and-open-space-strategy/resources/site-categorisation-strategy.html>

Sheffield Green & Open Space Strategy 2010 -2020 (SGOSS)

This key green space strategy for Sheffield was approved by the authority in 2012 having been developed over the previous 3 years, following extensive consultation internally and externally.

The **Vision** for SGOSS is:

Sheffield's Great Outdoors

“Sheffield is the greenest city in Britain, proud of its rich variety of open spaces.

Our strategy will ensure that every area of the City has green and open spaces of exceptional quality for current and future generations to use and enjoy.”

Four strategic themes have been identified to help focus delivery of this vision. These are:

People:

- Promoting health and activity
- Supporting education and learning
- Encouraging diversity and Inclusion
- Ensuring safety and security
- Greater Community involvement
- Promoting fun and enjoyment

Making connections for people and wildlife **Places:**

- Making sites accessible and safe
- Achieving quality by design
- Valuing local character & heritage
- Realising economic value

Environment & Sustainability:

- Minimising climate change
- Sustaining quality in our environment
- Managing for nature & biodiversity

Quality Management:

- Developing Quality Standards
- Improving skills and competencies
- Securing funding and investment
- Providing leadership
- Achieving more with partners

Tree and Woodland Strategy (2001)

Although currently under review, this provides specific policies relating to the overall strategic vision and management of the Sheffield’s tree and woodland resource.

Further information regarding this strategy can be found on our Website:

<http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/trees--woodlands>

Sheffield Environment Strategy (2003)

In 2001, the City Council set up a Local Strategic Partnership, with responsibility for ensuring that the social, economic and environmental well being of the city is delivered in an integrated way. The Sheffield First for Environment partnership produced an environmental strategy for the city, in 2003, which sets out a vision of what the city wants to achieve, based on community involvement and covers six

key challenges. This strategy is currently under review and consultation. A new strategy will be produced during 2007.

Local Agenda 21(1998)

In 2001 the City Council set up a Local Strategic Partnership, with responsibility for ensuring that the social, economic and environmental well being of the city is delivered in an integrated way. The Sheffield First for Environment partnership have now produced a final draft environmental strategy for the city which sets out a vision of what the city wants to achieve, based on community involvement.

Sheffield Development Framework (LDF)

This document guides future planning and developments across the city. The Local Development Framework for Sheffield was produced during 2008 and agreed in 2010. Further details are available via the Development Services website:

<http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/planning-documents/sdf>

Standing up for Sheffield: Corporate Plan 2011-14

Our new corporate Plan, called “Standing up for Sheffield”, was approved by Cabinet on 9th November 2011.

This new plan replaces “A City of Opportunity” 2010-2013 and sets out the Councils strategic direction and priorities for the next three years and how we will go about achieving them.

The Corporate Plan also describes the Councils contribution to delivering the City strategy.

Other important City Council, regional and national policy strategies have also informed the development of the plan:

- Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (Sheffield City Council, 1991)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (HMSO, 1995)
- Coal Measures Natural Area Profile (English Nature, 1997)
- UK Forestry Standard: The Government’s Approach to Sustainable Forestry (Forestry Commission, 1998)
- England Forestry Strategy (Forestry Commission, 1999)
- Sheffield Countryside Strategy (Sheffield City Council, 1999)
- Sheffield Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Sheffield Biodiversity Steering Group, 2001)
- Working with the grain of nature: A biodiversity strategy for England (DEFRA, 2002)
- Sheffield Cultural Strategy (Sheffield City Council, 2005)
- The value of Trees in our Changing Region: The Regional Forestry Strategy for Yorkshire and The Humber Region (Forestry Commission, 2005)
- Natural England Strategic Direction 2006-2009 (Natural England, 2006)

1.1.6 Statutory designations and other constraints

- Ecclesall Woods and the sawmill site are designated Green Belt

- The majority of the site (with the exception of the sawmill site) is a Local Nature Reserve, and most of the site is classed as an Area of Natural History Interest as defined by the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan.
- One archaeological monument has Scheduled Monument status, the prehistoric cup and ring stone (SAM number 29932) in Wood 1. A further prehistoric cup and ring stone was discovered in Wood 3 in August 2010 but as yet not scheduled.
There are two Grade II Listed Buildings within the site – a stone bridge over the Rycroft Brook in Wood 3, and the wood collier’s memorial in Wood 2.
- A Tree Preservation Order (808/338) covers the small woodland and tree groups within the old sawmill site
- The site is crossed by 15km of public rights of way, including six public footpaths (nos. 244, 247, 248, 249, 281, 282 and 283) in Wood 1; two public footpaths (nos. 250 and 252) and two public bridleways (nos. 240 and 241) in Wood 2; and five public footpaths (nos. 253 254, 255, 256 and 466) and three public bridleways (nos. 245, 246 and 252) in Wood 3. A number of other routes are managed as de facto definitive routes
- The majority of the site is included within the Nature Conservancy Council Ancient Woodland Inventory (1986). Square Plantation and much of the woodland on the Dore side of the Limb Brook dates from the nineteenth century onwards and is not ancient
- 17 hectares of Wood 3 is designated as a bird sanctuary, but also forms a general wildlife sanctuary where public access is not encouraged and a minimal intervention approach is taken
- The site falls within the Coal Measures Natural Area as defined by English Nature (1996) and the Countryside Commission's Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe Character Area (1998)
- The site is included on Natural England’s Invertebrate Site Register
- The site also forms part of the Sheffield Round Walk, a circular route covering various parks, woodlands and other open spaces in west Sheffield

1.1.7 Byelaws

Ecclesall Woods is covered by the SCC byelaws, which cover many of Sheffield’s parks and open spaces. See appendix 4. The existing byelaws were made in 1966 (amended in 1971) and relate to the powers in the Public Health Act 1875 and Open Spaces Act 1906. A variety of powers do exist to protect the public and the environment from possible conflicts of interest, misuse and abuse. The byelaws cover such things as vehicular use, cycling, ball games, events, picking flowers and many others. It is widely recognised that some of the existing byelaws are now irrelevant in today's society and consequently some byelaws are no longer enforced. However, overhauling the existing byelaws is a considerable and expensive legal task and until such a time that the relevant byelaws are fully reviewed and amended the existing powers remain in place and are enforced as and when appropriate.

A copy of the byelaws can be found on our website at:

<http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/all-about-us/byelaws>

1.1.8 Leases, wayleaves and covenants

Tenancy at wills

Tenancy's at will's cover six businesses based at the old sawmill:

- Handspring Design Ltd
- Hector and Cedric Ltd
- Tinsley Tree Project
- Working Woodlands Ltd
- Lorraine Botterill
- HN Trees Ltd

Wayleaves

A Yorkshire Water main sewer passes through the site from Whirlow Park Road, through the old sawmill site, and onto Abbey Lane, whilst another skirts the southern edge of Whirlowdale Road along the woodland boundary. The bridleway from Limb Lane is followed by a main sewer, which then runs south down the bridleway adjoining the Limb Brook all the way to Abbeydale Road South.

A Yorkshire Electricity sub-station is present at the north-western entrance from Abbey Lane (SK 319835) in Wood 1, with links to the main network on Abbey Lane. A British Gas sub-station is present off Abbey Lane (SK 322837) in Wood 3 with various links to the main network on Abbey Lane. A British Gas pipeline skirts the south-western boundary of Wood 3. Refer to Figure 1.4.

Covenants

The following conditions are taken from the purchase deeds (No. 3692 Ecclesall Woods).

- Free passage and drainage for water and soil coming from any property of the vendor (Fitzwilliam-Wentworth estate) adjoining or near to the lands sold.
- Without the written consent of the vendor, not to use the lands for any purpose other than for new streets, street improvement works, public parks, pleasure grounds, sports grounds and open spaces.
- Without the written consent of the vendor, not to erect any buildings except public buildings, park keepers and gate keepers houses, conveniences, and pavilions, etc connected with sport and the use of lands as stated above.
- To erect and maintain all the boundaries where they adjoin other property of the vendor.

1.2 Cultural Value

1.2.1 Land use history (a summarised chronology is available in Appendix 2)

The early history of the area is unclear, but archaeological evidence strongly suggests that by at least the Romano-British period, the area now known as Ecclesall Woods was predominantly agricultural, with woodland perhaps restricted to wetter ground and streams sides. At some time later, perhaps in the Dark Ages, the agricultural land was abandoned and reverted to woodland (Rotherham, 2006), and by the time of the Domesday Survey, 1086, the local area was dominated by *wood-pasture* like much of the Sheffield and Rotherham area (Jones 1993).

The Limb Brook in Wood 3 historically formed the boundary between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, and later Derbyshire and Yorkshire.

The post-Domesday history of Ecclesall Woods is uncertain, but it was part of the manor of the de Ecclesall family by the fourteenth century. In 1317, Robert de Ecclesall was granted a licence to impark and Ecclesall Woods may have been part of this park. Certainly, adjoining place names like Park Head, at the northern point of the woods amongst others, suggest the location of a Park on the northern limits of the site. In the eighteenth century one of the compartments within the site was named as Warren Wood (rabbit warrens were often created in deer parks), and in the seventeenth and eighteenth century there were two *launds* on the western side of the woodland and one within the south of the wood, *laund* being a name for a clearing or pasture within a woodland.

By at least 1587, Ecclesall Woods was under *coppice with standards* management (Jones 1993), used to provide the raw materials to make a great variety of products, particularly charcoal for iron smelting, and “whitecoal” as a fuel in lead smelting. The woods were acquired in the early seventeenth century by the Bright family, passing to the Rockingham family in 1752. From then until the early nineteenth century the woodland continued to be managed as coppice with standards. The eighteenth century records show coppice cycles varying from 14 - 43 years; the longer cycles suggesting that Oak timber for building projects was important, with Oak underwood providing pit timber, and bark for use in tanning leather (Jones and Walker, 1997). The woodland continued to be let as herbage (*agistment*) into the eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth century Ecclesall Woods comprised separate, named woods that changed gradually over the centuries. Refer to Figure 1.5.

From the early nineteenth century, the woodland was gradually transformed into a high forest as coppice management was abandoned. Introduced species, particularly Sweet Chestnut and Beech were planted extensively (from 1824 until 1899), as well as Scots Pine, European Larch, and Sycamore, amongst others. Figure 1.6 depicts the woodland extent in the 1850s.

The planting actively reflects the gradual transition from coppice-with-standards to high forest management (Jones and Walker 1997), when it is suggested that three processes were taking place simultaneously:

- Planting of gaps at the end of the coppice cycle with both conifers and broadleaves;
- Natural regeneration;

- Storing of coppice.

'Falls' of wood from coppice management stopped after 1859. In 1848, the first *timber* sale was recorded, and from 1853 until 1900-01 took place almost continuously. After this, active timber management ceased until very recently.

In 1920, Whirlowdale Road was cut through the eastern half of the site, and proposals were prepared to develop most of the site for residential homes. However, in 1927, Ecclesall Woods was purchased from the Earl Fitzwilliam for £45,000; £10,000 coming from Alderman Graves, and the remainder from the City Corporation (Deed no 3692). The site was officially opened as a public open space by Her Royal Highness Princess Mary on 23rd August 1928. In 1929, an area of 17 hectares was reserved as a bird sanctuary, maintained to the present day. Ryecroft Glen was gifted by J G Graves to the Council in 1937.

During the twentieth century the woodland has become almost surrounded by urban development, with the exception of areas opposite Limb Lane (Whirlow playing field), and significant areas of the post-medieval woodland have been lost particularly along the north-eastern boundary.

The major storm damage in 1962 led to the development of Ecclesall Woods Sawmill.

1.2.2 Archaeology



Cup and Ring Rock Art

Ecclesall Woods contains a tremendous wealth of archaeological features with over 1000 individual features recorded.

This includes a small number of pre-medieval sites and exceptional coverage of medieval to post-medieval features mainly associated with woodland use and management. As such the woods are considered a regionally to nationally important archaeological landscape not only because of the number, range and density of features, but also because of the associations between them and the related documentary record. Figure 1.7 depicts the key areas and features of interest. In addition, a GIS database of all the archaeological features recorded from the site was developed in 2001, with the help of Sheffield Hallam University

and is held by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) as part of the County Sites and Monuments Register (SMR). (An example will be brought along for inspection during the GF/GH field visit, as advised by the Civic Trust).

Archaeological fieldwork since the early 1990's has greatly contributed to the knowledge base for the site, and this was collated and analysed in 2001 (Bevan). The Friends of Ecclesall Woods have undertaken considerable survey work since 2003, through two concurrent Local Heritage Initiative grants.

The City Council is advised by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service on all aspects of archaeology and regularly consults with them in relation to management proposals, interpretation, specific survey work, etc.

Sites with Statutory Protection

A prehistoric cup and ring-marked stone in Wood 1 (at SK 326831) is a Scheduled Monument, and is dated to the late Neolithic or Bronze Age periods (2800-500 BC). It is the first prehistoric carving to be discovered in the eastern foothills of the South Pennines, and is therefore very rare. A 2m boundary around the feature is also protected (English Heritage, 1998). Whilst a public footpath runs close to the feature it has fallen into disuse and has not been actively promoted at the request of the SYAS. A further cup and ring-marked stone was discovered in Wood 3 in 2010. It is situated well away from the public footpath network in a quiet area of woodland and has been recorded and mapped by South Yorkshire Archaeological Service.

A stone bridge over the Ryecroft Brook (Wood 3), and a charcoal burner's memorial stone dated 1786 (Wood 2) are Grade II Listed Buildings, and as such can be considered of regional importance.

All three features are in reasonable to good condition, are monitored regularly, and action taken as necessary. No specific change in current management practices is required.

Other Sites

There are potentially other sites within the wood of national significance (Bevan, 2001) utilising the criteria for scheduling ancient monuments (Policy Planning Guidance Note PPG16: Archaeology and Planning DoE 1990):

- A hill-top enclosure on the north-western edge of the bird sanctuary, which is considered to be Iron Age or Romano-British in origin (ASE, 2002)
- An extensive nearby irregular field system within the bird sanctuary dated to the same period (ASE, 2002)

Two known mill sites, Ryecroft Mill and dam, and Whirlow Wheel, provide examples of the local exploitation of water-power and through their associations with lead smelting and grinding are particularly illustrative of local industries. The surviving remains of the mills themselves and their associated water features can be considered to be of regional importance.

In addition, a bank and ditch traced alongside the Limb Brook, if a remnant of the medieval deer park boundary, could be considered of regional importance.

Other sites identified are mostly Q or whitecoal pits (over 100 in number) and charcoal hearths (over 200 in number), extractive sites or sites associated with stone quarrying, coal extraction and linear earthworks which include trackways, 150 “grips” and possible woodland compartment boundaries. In general terms, most of these sites can be considered to be of local importance, although some examples may be of greater significance.

Recommendations for further archaeological survey

Whilst considerable new information on the archaeology has been gathered since 2000, there remain several types of descriptive and investigative work:

- Filling in blank areas within the existing surveys;
- More detailed surveys of features recorded in the existing surveys; and
- In exceptional circumstance, more explorative investigation of selected features.

Sheffield Hallam University, who have a longstanding interest in the site, are focusing on filling in the blank areas within the existing survey, to be added to the GIS database periodically.

The following priorities for detailed investigative work remain:

- A probable field system present to the east of the Limb Brook, in Wood 3 which is potentially prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval.
- Enclosures north of Whirlowdale Road, West of Cow Lane, in Wood 1, of unknown origin
- A sample of woodland compartment boundaries to record their construction
- Rycroft Mill and dam have not been systematically surveyed. This would be worthwhile to assess its current condition and any related conservation issues. Whirlow Wheel is in a fragile condition structurally, and options for its future are currently being considered. A photographic survey in 2006 (ARCUS) has provided considerable new information on the site that could be useful for future interpretation.

Explorative investigation of selected features is limited to exceptional circumstances, as advised by SYAS. Work of this kind in the last five years has included excavation of part of a stone “tramway” prior to bridleway improvements in Wood 3 (ARCUS, 2004), and excavation of two Q-pits to better determine how they operated (ASE, 2007).

Other management issues

The GIS database, together with the SMR provide a very valuable management and reference tool for Parks and Countryside when planning proposed site works. Major works or those in sensitive areas are always complimented with a site visit with SYAS (and as appropriate Sheffield Hallam University), to inform project development and implementation.

A self-guided Archaeological Trail has been produced, and the site-based interpretative information and events programmes help to interpret elements of the site’s rich heritage. However there is great scope for more public interpretation of the archaeological resource. At the same time, continuing the strong “community archaeology” projects initiated since 2001 would be very worthwhile.

Copies of most of the archaeological reports referred to above are available to view at the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service, based at Sheffield City Council, Howden House, Union Street, Sheffield by appointment.

1.2.3 Landscape value

Ecclesall Woods lie within the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe Character Area as defined by the Countryside Commission (1998) and is situated on the south-western suburbs of the City, rising gently from Abbeydale Road South northward. Much of this Countryside Area is characterised by urban influences, with a close conjunction of large-scale industry, urban areas and transport routes with open countryside. Urban development is confined mainly by valleys creating a dramatic interplay of views between settlements and the surrounding, frequently wooded, hillsides. Overall the impression is of a well-wooded landscape even though tree cover is relatively sparse. This broad description is fairly typical of the area around Ecclesall Woods.

Much of the landscape surrounding the woodland is urban, although other woodland is frequent along the river Sheaf to the south-east, for example, Poynton Wood, Ladies Spring Wood and Hutcliffe Wood, which all lie on the north-west facing scarp slopes, whilst the western side of the site merges into open countryside, with the boundary of the Peak National Park lying only one and a half kilometres away. These other woodlands and nearby open spaces like Beauchief Golf course offer impressive views over the canopy of Ecclesall Woods, whilst from Limb Lane and Whirlow playing fields, the importance of the woodland within the landscape is also very high.

For those using the main roads crossing/adjoining the site i.e. Abbeydale Road South, Abbey Lane, and Whirlowdale Road, the woodland provides a very attractive backdrop, whilst enhancing the amenity of the adjoining residential properties.

The "landscape" within the woodland is also important. The presence of very large, mature Sweet Chestnut, and scattered mature Pine and Larch contribute greatly to the amenity of the site, whilst the various blocks of over-mature, large spreading Beech are of particular aesthetic appeal, and unique to this part of Sheffield. Whilst these species are introductions, the retention and replacement of a proportion of these species and character types is important for both aesthetic and historic reasons.

1.2.4 Buildings and other facilities

The primary buildings on the site are those located within the former sawmill site including (refer to Figure 1.8):

- The JG Graves Woodland Discovery Centre (c.2010)
- A new (c.2008) timber framed building “Hectors House” currently runs as a bookable space which hosts events, craft sales, meetings and workshops.
- Two privately rented workshops(c.1970). The first (workshop 1) is a brick built structure, which also includes a small mess room and staff/business toilet, and is adjoined by an open-sided barn. The second (workshop 2), is a metal portal frame, which includes a disused wood-drying kiln, together with a further open-sided barn
- Two office portacabins
- Five metal storage portacabins
- A timber drying dehumidifier (within a metal container)
- A compost toilet for the use of staff/site-based businesses
- Small concrete hardstanding used as visitor, staff and tenants car parking area
- A public toilet

These buildings and portacabins are occupied by local authority staff, volunteers or tenants at will.

Site boundaries

The majority of the site boundaries are residential and dominated by garden fencing, as well as remnant stone walling (and hedging) in places. Those adjoining highways are predominantly open (except for occasional sections of recent post and rail fencing) whilst those along the western edge of the site are demarcated by stone walls, (hedgerows and metal railings) and are in generally reasonable repair.

Bridges and steps

A number of wooden, stone and concrete bridges are present within the site, crossing over the Limb Brook and other streams and drainage channels. A stone bridge over the Ryecroft Brook in Wood 3 is a Grade II Listed Building.

The majority are in a reasonable state of repair. Several small sections of steps are present in the site within Wood 3. All are in a good state of repair. Maintenance of all the structures is overseen by Premises and Assets, within DEL.

Maintenance and risk assessment of buildings and other infrastructure

An annual inspection and risk assessment of all structures and other infrastructure within the woodland is undertaken by Parks and Countryside, and associated work then actioned. A fire risk assessment, portable appliance test and site risk assessment of Discovery Centre is undertaken with Premises and Assets. This assessment also looks at general maintenance issues with the buildings, etc at the former sawmill site and identified works are then actioned. In addition all main buildings are alarmed and linked to a central control with a 20 minute response time.

1.2.5 Use of the site

Ecclesall Woods provides a wide variety of opportunities for informal and formal recreation. This value rises when placed within the context of adjacent public sites such as Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet and Millhouses Park.

A visitor survey (Hallam Environmental Consultants, 2006) undertaken in autumn 2006 within Ecclesall Woods informs much of the following discussion. A full copy of the survey results can be viewed in Appendices 8A and 8B.

(i) Assessment of the current usage

Walking, often with a dog, is the commonest informal activity within the site, often related to “fresh air and exercise”. Horse riding and mountain biking are also popular together with a range of other recreation like natural history study, jogging, orienteering, and collecting chestnuts and mushrooms, to simply picking up school children.

Nearly a third of visitors come every day, and tend to be in the woods alone or in pairs. A greater proportion of visitors appear to be female than male. The 25-59 age group is the most common one recorded, whilst the great majority of visitors are of White British ethnicity. On the whole, most visitors have visited the woods before and feel that they had always known about the woods. The most common length of visit is for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Most visitors come from the nearby districts of Millhouses, Ecclesall and Dore, but visitors do come from across the City and outside. Despite the local origin of most visitors, more than half travel by car to the site.

Abbey Lane is the most popular entrance point although Whirlowdale Road is almost as popular. Although all three woods appear to be equally popular in terms of regular use almost twice as many people in the 2006 survey had never visited Woods 1 and 2 as had never visited Wood 3.

The greatest attraction to the woods appears to be their locality.

(ii) Evaluation of the current recreational facilities

Access points

The majority of the access points into the woodland provide “access to all” and comply with Disability Discrimination Act guidelines. Most are defined by structures such as wide squeeze stiles, sometimes with wooden gates allowing access for management and emergency vehicles. Refer to the table below and Figure 1.9:

Access point	Current infrastructure
1	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
2	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
3	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
4	Bridleway entrance. Collapsible bollard
5	Footpath entrance. Stone steps and hand rail
6	Bridleway entrance. No access controls
7	Footpath entrance. Collapsible bollard
8	Footpath entrance. Collapsible bollard
9	Bridleway entrance. Collapsible bollard
10	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
11	Bridleway entrance. Collapsible bollard
12	Bridleway entrance. Collapsible bollard
13	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile
14	Bridleway entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
15	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile
16	Footpath entrance. No access controls
17	Footpath entrance. No access controls
18	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
19	Entrance to old sawmill site. Metal gallows gate
20	Footpath entrance. No access controls
21	Footpath entrance. No access controls
22	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile
23	Bridleway entrance. Wooden gate
24	Footpath entrance. No access controls
25	Bridleway entrance. Squeeze stile and wooden gate
26	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and steps
27	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile
28	Footpath entrance. Squeeze stile and metal gate
29	Bridleway entrance. No access controls
30	Informal entrance. No access controls
31	Footpath access. Stone squeeze stile
32	Footpath access. No access controls

Public rights of way and other routes

Ecclesall Woods is crossed by 15km of public rights of way (refer to Figure 1.10), of which around 40% are bridleways and the rest footpaths. A number of other recognised permissive routes are also present, plus other informal paths.

In general, the definitive and permissive routes within the woodland are either flat or lie on gentle slopes providing on the whole, good access opportunities for a wide range of people with mixed abilities.

During the implementation of the preceding management plan there were considerable additions to the network as a number of major desire lines, particularly those for horse-riders, were recognised formally, surfaced and signposted. Overall, this has helped to provide more circular routes and complete gaps in the network. In addition, many routes have either been surfaced for the first time or re-surfaced after many years, generally with recycled crushed brick, whilst all the signposting within the woodland was renewed and extended as required in 2004.

Further minor improvements and continual maintenance are required, but the major improvements proposed in the previous management plan have been delivered.

The Sheffield Round Walk, established in the 1970's, also crosses the site running adjacent to the Limb Brook in Wood 3. The Round Walk has been inspected/audited in 2012 with a new leaflet being launched in 2013.

Problems with anti-social behaviour such as motor biking or fly-tipping are extremely rare, but conflicts can occur occasionally when horse-riders or mountain bikers stray off the bridleway network onto footpaths. Horse-riders and dogs can also come into conflict.

Use by the disabled

An "Easy Going Trail", a route specially surfaced for those in wheelchairs and the less able-bodied was completed through Wood 1 and 2 in 1999, as designated by the Public Rights of Way Unit. Because the woodland lies on gently sloping ground for the most part, all primary access points are DDA compliant, and the public right of way network is generally surfaced, wheel chair users and those using mobility scooters do access much of the woodland, especially Woods 1 and 2

Old sawmill site

The sawmill site returned to City Council management in early 2006, after 12 years under lease to a private business.

Apart from providing a setting for various wood-based businesses, this area now provides the basic functions of a visitor information point through the associated retail outlet/visitor centre, as well as an ideal location for hosting and/or starting community events, activities and training, and delivering projects with schools and other education work. A pedestrian link between the old sawmill site and the woodland was completed in 2006, and a disabled toilet installed. However, at present, use of the toilet facilities is limited generally to the opening times of the retail outlet and centre.

A feasibility study considering the future use of the site was completed in 2004 following in-depth consultation with key stakeholder groups. This was reviewed in 2007 and a more detailed masterplan for the sawmill site finalised in 2008.

The aims of the regeneration of the sawmill site are as follows:

- To provide visitors with facilities expected of a City site, including toilets and refreshments
- To provide a showcase for the sustainable use of wood and woodlands

- To improve associated interpretation, education, training and life-long learning related to wood, Ecclesall Woods and Sheffield's wider woodland heritage
- To support complementary businesses on site by providing them with a practical working environment
- To encourage appropriate income and resource generating initiatives that will contribute to the site's financial sustainability
- To promote regeneration of the sawmill site in a way that is complimentary to the woodland and demonstrates environmental best practice

Realising the vision will be one of the Key aspirations for the management plan over the next five years. Funding is currently being secured for the "Woodland Gateway Centre" shown in the masterplan, a multi-purpose building which will provide improved visitor facilities, as well as a base for education, interpretation and training programmes related to wood, and woodlands.

Seating

Woodland benches are present throughout the woodland having been increased substantially since 2001, partly through donations for memorial benches

Car parking and highway crossings

Formal car parking is available on the western edge of Abbey Lane, within the sawmill site and at Limb Lane picnic site. Abbey Lane is the most popular place for visitors to park. Refer to Figures 1.1b and 1.9. Many visitors also park on Whirlowdale Road, dividing Woods 1 and 2, and to a lesser extent on Abbeydale Road South and Ryecroft Glen Road, to access Wood 3. All the parking facilities are in good condition, except those at the sawmill site that require an upgrade.

There is no specific parking provision for the disabled. However, the ease of parking close to main access points is considered to meet the needs of all members of the community.

Finally, with the woodland bisected by highways, road crossing by site users can be an issue. A formalised crossing is present between Woods 1 and 2, and a proper pedestrian crossing is present on Abbey Lane, a little below the woods, and can be used to cross between Woods 2 and 3. However, its position is a little inconvenient, and it is clear from the 2006 visitor survey that the crossing of Abbey Lane between Woods 2 and 3 is a serious concern for users. Parks and Countryside takes these concerns seriously, and will encourage Highway Services to address this issue as a matter of priority.

(iii) Perceptions of the site by the community

The five main things that attracted visitors to the woodland in the 2006 survey were:

- it's a good place to walk the dog;
- it's local / convenient;
- nature / wildlife;
- peace and quiet;
- and the woodland's beauty

Almost all of those surveyed responded that they had used the signed paths and trails within the woods and almost three quarters of these felt that the route marking was good or very good. In addition to this over three quarters felt that the trail surfacing was good or very good. Generally those interviewed were pleased with the facilities and services however many felt that Abbey Lane was very dangerous and required a crossing. There was also a strong demand for dog waste bins and a reasonable demand for more benches and improvements to information boards and signs. Other improvements suggested were continued path maintenance and enforcement of the bridleway and footpath regulations.

Most of those surveyed were aware of work that had been carried out in the last five years and many commented on path and tree maintenance, and to a lesser extent the improved signage. Visitors were also relatively aware of the important wildlife and heritage aspects of the woods. The bird sanctuary was most commonly mentioned but the woods' charcoal industry history was also well known. The majority of respondents rated the management of Ecclesall Woods as very good or good.

Just over half of those surveyed were aware of the work of the Friends of Ecclesall Woods, and were aware of the plans to regenerate the sawmill site on Abbey Lane.

The high number of local responses, and similarity of those surveyed in terms of ethnicity, age and reasons for visiting the woods may be linked to the survey period being late in the year (October-November) when visitor numbers are likely to be more restricted. A spring or summer survey may gather responses from visitors from further a-field and gather a wider range of responses.

Further survey during the spring is recommended during the life-time of this plan.

- (iv) Interpretation, educational and training provision.

Interpretation

Site signage is present at all primary site entrances and many of the secondary ones, with ownership and contact details. Six interpretative panels are strategically placed around the woodland at the primary site entrances, with associated notice boards used to advertise forthcoming events, etc

The bird sanctuary is clearly marked around its boundaries, whilst the Wood Colliers memorial in Wood 2, and several other archaeological features in this part of the woodland are promoted through the Archaeological Trail leaflet and associated signage. A leaflet entitled "A seasonal walk through Ecclesall Woods" is also available. Refer to Section 1.6 for more detail on these.

Education, events and training



Local School Visit

Ecclesall Woods has a long history in providing a setting for interpretation and education. See appendix 5 Events Policy.

The woodland provided the focus for a national conference on ancient woodlands in 1992 by Sheffield Hallam University, and was used by the Small Woodlands Association as part of their national conference in 1999. It is used regularly by the two Sheffield Universities, local colleges and Losehill Hall - the Peak District National Park Study Centre at Castleton - for education and training purposes. As such the woodland has been visited by or is known about by many within the countryside and woodland profession nationally.

Parks and Countryside provide an annual programme of community events and activities, and deliver targeted work with schools from across Sheffield in the woodland. In addition, an education pack for local schools is also available (refer to Section 1.6 for more information). In addition, the woodland is used weekly for health walks by the Ranger Service.

(v) Alternatives and enhancement measures

Based on the above, the following key improvements are proposed for the next five years:

- Aspire to achieve the full vision for the old sawmill site, particularly the aspirations for site based staff, expanded visitor facilities (including toilet facilities open every day), and related interpretative information. Greater effort is also needed to raise awareness of the developing project here, through an associated programme of community events, open days, training courses; greater publicity; and continuing public and stakeholder consultation in the associated redevelopment of the site.
- To maintain and where necessary extend the improvements to the rights of way network and associated signage achieved over the last five years
- To provide dog bins at primary site entrances
- To provide more benches where needed
- To vigorously advocate a pedestrian crossing between Woods 2 and 3, in liaison with Highway Services
- To update interpretative information and materials as appropriate

- To raise greater awareness of the role and activities of the Friends of Ecclesall Woods and the Working Woodlands Trust through more regular joint publicity with the City Council and others; greater support for events, etc; increased use of the developing visitor facilities in the old sawmill site to improve marketing of the group; development of a FEW web page, etc
- To provide educational events and activities that will reduce conflict between walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, supported by appropriate policing of the site byelaws by the City Council

1.2.6 Community involvement

The local and wider community have long been involved in the care and management of Ecclesall Woods.

In 1993, the Friends of Ecclesall Woods (FEW) was inaugurated. It currently has a membership of around 160 mainly local people and produces a newsletter four times a year. The Friends provide a focal point for communicating the local community's concerns and interests about the woodland to the Council, with regular liaison through site visits, telephone conversations, attendance by Officers at FEW committee meetings as necessary, and attendance at the FEW AGM. The Dore Village Society (established in the 1960's registered as a charity in 1993, with 1100 members) also has a keen interest in the area, particularly Wood 3.

FEW regularly undertake ecological survey and archaeological survey, and help greatly in the on-going programme of path maintenance and improvements, amongst many other things. FEW have also been increasingly successful in attracting both City Council and other funding, particularly through the Lottery funded Local Heritage Initiative.

Parks and Countryside is very keen to promote the further development and success of FEW and will continue to support it and other community groups in as many ways as possible. The community are kept informed of all proposed major or potentially contentious management work, as well as events, etc through the provision of appropriate site notices, press releases, and individual letters to residents, and contributions to the FEW newsletter and "Dore to Dore", newsletter of the Dore Village Society, circulated to thousands of local residents several times a year

Many other natural history groups use the site regularly for study and monitoring, for example, the Sorby Natural History Society and Sheffield Bird Study Group. The woodland has long been used for research and study by local schools, and universities, particularly Sheffield Hallam, who has gathered considerable information on the ecological, social and historic interest of the area.

1.3 **Environmental Value**

1.3.1 Physical

The following sub-sections are mostly taken from Avison and Rotherham (1998).

(a) Hydrology

Drainage is generally in an east-south-east direction, with the Limb Brook forming a permanent stream feature in Wood 3. Figure 1.12 indicates

Streams, and drainage ditches within the site, which all ultimately feed into the River Sheaf.

Changes in the local water balance have occurred as a result of changes in surrounding land-use, through urbanisation in the last 100 years, as well as increased drainage within the woodland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is thought that the reduction in water input that has occurred is unlikely to have had a significant impact upon the woodland ecology along the Limb Brook corridor (Griffith 1996).

However, away from public rights of way, etc some of the internal drains have been allowed to backfill and the woodland may be becoming increasingly re-wetted in limited places. Several drains, particularly those near the woodland's boundaries are maintained on a regular basis to prevent flooding of adjoining properties, and indeed several were repaired and their capacity increased in 1999 and 2007 to reduce flooding along Abbeydale Road.

Data provided by the Environment Agency (1999), who monitor the Limb Brook on a regular basis, indicates that short-lived pollution incidents occur during periods of heavy rainfall, probably from storm water overflows discharging into the Limb Brook and from field run-off and other farming origins. Ochreous deposits are found in the Limb Brook and its feeder streams. These emanate from the surrounding bedrock and the former Dore Colliery. The Coal Authority is currently assessing the level of pollution associated with this and formulating approaches to reducing it

The water quality in other streams within the wood is thought to be generally good.

(b) Topography

From a height of around 110 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) along the eastern edge of the woodland adjoining Abbeydale Road South, ground levels rise to over c175 m AOD at the bird sanctuary in the south-west and by the entrance from Cow Lane in the north-west. The rising ground is punctuated by the channels and valleys of a series of streams flowing into the River Sheaf. The largest of these streams is the Limb Brook, whose valley forms steep high slopes below the south-west sides of the bird sanctuary. To the west of the bird sanctuary, Ryecroft Glen rises to a height of around 200 m AOD by the A625 Hathersage Road. The Ryecroft Brook, a tributary of the Limb Brook, runs from a western arm of the woodland which rises to a height of around 200 m AOD by the entrance from Limb Lane (Arrowsmith, 1999).

(c) Geology, geomorphology and hydro-geology

The solid geology consists of strata belonging to the Lower Coal Measures Series (Westphalian A series) of the Silesian stage of the Upper Carboniferous period. These strata comprise conformable beds of greenish-brown sandstones, blue-grey mudstones and black shales with coal seams and their attendant seat-earth beneath them. The strata dip gently towards the south-east at an angle of about 5 degrees.

Figure 1.13 depicts the underlying geology across the site.

(d) Pedology

During the 16th and 17th centuries the soils within the woodland are believed to have been substantially disrupted by the stripping of topsoil for charcoal and white coal production.

The large areas of markedly acid soils of around pH 3.2 that are found throughout the woodland typically have a very thin 'A' horizon or top layer of approximately 2-4 cm presumably because of this disruption. Soil nutrient levels for plants tend to be very low. In the few remaining wet areas, where disruption appears not to have occurred to any degree, neutral to slightly base rich soils (averaging around pH 7) have developed into deeper, brown earths, typically with an 'A' or surface horizon of approximately 4 - 15 cm in depth and increased available soil nutrient levels for plants.

(e) Climate

The following data is from the Weston Park weather station, Sheffield, the nearest meteorological station to the site. The figures are based on 30 year averages.

Temperature Average (Celsius)	January 4.0	July 16.6
Rainfall Average (mm)	88	51

1.3.2 Biodiversity



White-clawed Crayfish

Overview

This section summarises the most significant animals and plants recorded from Ecclesall Woods. A full list of plant species recorded is included within Appendix 3.

Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Reports 1 and 2 (DETR, 1995) have set the priorities for species and habitat protection for the foreseeable future. The species included are sub-divided into three lists – long, middle and short – with the latter two of most importance. The Steering Group advise that specific management recommendations for species focus on those included in the short and middle list,

whilst noting the presence of those in the long list and directing more general management prescriptions towards their conservation.

At the local level, the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (SCC, 1991) highlights both Priority Habitats and Critical Wildlife Species in either Grade A or B local Red Data Book lists. However, this has now been partially superseded by the Sheffield Local Biodiversity Action Plan, 2001 (LBAP)

The following UK and Sheffield BAP species and habitats have been recorded at the site:

Priority Type	Species	Habitat
UK BAP Priorities (short and middle lists)	White-clawed Crayfish Song Thrush Bullfinch Spotted Flycatcher Pipistrelle Bat Water Vole	Wet woodland
Sheffield LBAP Priorities	Bluebell Liverwort <i>Lejeunea lamacerina</i> Common Frog, Common Toad, Grass Snake Over 20 bird species Daubenton's, Noctule, Whiskered/Brandts, Soprano Bats, Badger Hedgehog, Common and Pygmy Shrew	Wet woodland Ancient woodland Veteran Trees Scrub Rivers and Streams Standing Water
Local Red Data lists	Climbing Corydalis Alder Buckthorn Toothwort Wild Daffodil Yellow Rattle Sanicle Early Dog Violet Fungi <i>Hericium cirrhatum</i>	

Specific management for these species is included in Sections 3 and 4.

(a) *Fungi*

Over 171 species have been recorded from Ecclesall Woods, found in a variety of habitats including deadwood, leaf litter, and the various tree and shrub species present within the site (Lyon, 1997). All are of local importance with the exception of one red data list species the Tiered Tooth *Hericium cirrhatum* found on an old beech stump in wood 2 in 2008. It's a relatively rare species close to the limit of its northern distribution.

(b) *Flowering plants and ferns*

The flowering plants of Ecclesall Woods have been comprehensively recorded over many decades. To date, 421 species have been recorded.

In general, the majority of the site can be provisionally assigned to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) community W10 *Quercus robur* – *Pteridium aquilinum* - *Rubus fruticosus* and to a lesser extent, W16 *Quercus* spp - *Betula* spp - *Deschampsia flexuosa* woodland (Rodwell 1991). Refer to Figure 1.14.

Where W10 is dominant, the canopy comprises a varied mix of mature Oak, both Sessile and hybrids with Pedunculate, as well as localised concentrations of Sweet Chestnut, European Larch and Scots Pine, over a varied open shrub layer characterised by mature Holly some of which is hybridised to Highclere Holly (*Ilex x altaclerensis*). Major storm damage in 1962 opened up the canopy, allowing for natural regeneration of Silver Birch and Oak in particular, typically with Rowan and Sweet Chestnut.

The field layer is generally species poor, typically comprising Bluebell, Soft Creeping-grass, Honeysuckle, Bramble, Broad Buckler Fern and Bracken, with localised concentrations of other herbs like Wood Anemone, Yellow Archangel and Greater Stitchwort on richer damper soils

More acid soils, particularly those on steep-ground or perhaps most affected by human activities, are characterised by W16 communities, where Wavy Hair-grass, and occasionally Heather, Bilberry and Great Woodrush are typical. Bare ground can be frequent in these areas.

The frequent flush lines, streams and drainage ditches crossing the woodland are characterised by narrow belts of Common Alder, with Ash and Sycamore, as well as frequent Hazel. These support a diverse field layer dominated by Lesser Celandine, with a wide range of associated herbs like Wood Anemone, Red Campion, Yellow Pimpernel, Meadowsweet, Bugle, Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage, and Tufted Hair-grass. More unusual plants like Common Valerian, Pendulous Sedge, Sanicle, Remote Sedge and Floating Sweet-grass are present in places in these stands. These areas form a mosaic of the NVC communities W7 *Alnus glutinosa* - *Fraxinus excelsior* - *Lysimachia nemorum* and W8 *Fraxinus excelsior* - *Acer campestre* - *Mercurialis perennis* woodland. W7 woodland is classed as “wet woodland” within the UK BAP and a Key Habitat.

The best marginal aquatic flora within the site is found in the silted-up Ryecroft Mill pond, with species including Water Forget-me-not, Skullcap and Common Valerian (Firkins, 1987).

Where Beech forms extensive, dense stands, the original Oak-birch communities have been modified into NVC W15 Fagus sylvatica - Deschampsia flexuosa woodland, where bare ground and a sparse shrub layer can be prevalent.

A small area of rank neutral grassland with scrub and young trees is present just north of the bird sanctuary.

A range of garden escapes and other deliberately planted ornamental species are present within the site, particularly along the woodland margins, like Snowberry. More invasive species like Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are present in localised concentrations along watercourses and in damp areas, whilst Rhododendron is occasional around the bird sanctuary and elsewhere, and Cherry Laurel is present in small quantities, mainly in Wood 1.

Overall, the woodland supports a large number of ancient woodland plant indicators (Peterken, 1993).

Nine common ferns have been recorded from the woodland, with Bracken (and Broad Buckler Fern) the most frequent.

(c) *Bryophytes and lichens*

Sixteen liverworts and forty-two mosses have been recorded (Rotherham and Jones, 1997). In general, the bryophyte flora is poor. Those that do occur are found predominantly in damp ditches, on gritstone boulders/walls, or rotting wood, fallen trees and tree bases, with the richest communities found in and along the streams and stream banks.

Several of the species present may be relicts of the ancient woodland: the Lejeunea - Heterocladium - Homalis community of streamside rocks is not common locally, and is sensitive to disturbance, especially loss of tree cover, suggesting its presence at Ecclesall Woods is relictual. The presence of Leptodontium flexifolium is also unusual. Its characteristic habitat is well-drained peaty soil. Dicranum montanum remains rare in N England (this is its only record from SW Yorkshire). It was recorded as an epiphyte on Birch.

A baseline survey of lichens of Ecclesall Woods was undertaken by Gilbert in 1993 (Rotherham and Jones, 1997) and forty-two species were recorded although many in only very small amounts. Lichens are generally distributed throughout the wood, but wetter areas are distinctly richer due to the wider range of tree species they support. A few pollution-tolerant species are abundant, but the majority are rare or very rare. These included Cladonia caespiticia, found on a single tree stump, which has only three records from Derbyshire, and was not previously known from South Yorkshire. This record is from the southern half of Wood 1. In 2010 Graphis scripta was found in Wood 3 on the trunk of an old rowan, probably a first for Sheffield.

Overall, the epiphytic lichen flora of Ecclesall Woods is still severely impoverished by sulphur dioxide air pollution, which continues to halt the spread of intolerant species.

(d) *Invertebrates*

420 species (including 11 bugs, 14 beetles, 15 butterflies, 220 moths, 2 crane flies, 38 hoverflies, 23 other flies, and over 100 spider species) have been recorded from

Ecclesall Woods (Sorby Invertebrate Database, 2006). As such, the site is included on English Nature's Invertebrate Site Register. The following species are Regionally Notable (NB):

The crab spider Philodromus praedatus (1980), found on the lower branches of large Oaks near woodland edges; the fly Suillia dumicala (1970, 1980), found on woodland and open moorland, which probably develops in fungi; the hoverfly Sphegina verecunda, (1980-93), found in shaded areas near streams and probably living in deadwood, the hoverfly Didea fasciata (1989); and the moth Angle-striped Sallow (1965-91) which occurs in mature Birch woodland, the larva feeding on Birch.

A wide variety of species which are Local in the UK have also been recorded, and highlight the value of deadwood, damp areas, open glades and rides and species rich, graded woodland margins.

The three hoverflies Brachypalporides lenta, Criorhina berberina and C.floccosa are all considered ancient woodland indicators (Stubbs, 1982). All three depend on dead and rotting wood (Whiteley, pers-comm, 1999).

Important characteristics for this large group include a varied woodland structure, glades, standing and fallen deadwood, graded woodland edges, wet ditches, flushes and streams, and gradation into other semi-natural habitats like unimproved grassland. Nectar sources such as Blackthorn, Bramble, Hawthorn, Rose and Willow are all valuable (Kirby, 1992).

(e) *Amphibians, fish and reptiles*

Common Toad, Common Frog and Grass Snake have all been recorded from Ecclesall Woods, with Grass Snake thought to breed in the old sawmill site.

(f) *Crustaceans*

White-clawed Crayfish, a globally threatened species included in Annex II and V of the EC Habitats Directive, has been recorded in the Limb Brook (Ecology Unit, 2006).

It lives in holes in the waterside banks or beneath large stones. Excessive disturbance from recreational use of waterside areas may affect the species.

Survey work is needed to assess its full status at the site, and to develop associated management recommendations.

(f) *Birds*

The bird population of Ecclesall Woods has been recorded over many decades and continues to be regularly monitored by the Sheffield Bird Study Group. At present, around 42 species are resident, of which 21 are breeding, whilst 14 migrants are regularly recorded, of which 4 breed (Medforth and Rotherham 1990).

Overall, the bird life is fairly typical of mature broad-leaved woodland on the Coal Measures: The majority of the woodland is mature and as such supports breeding, populations of Sparrowhawk, Great and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Blue and Great Tit, Nuthatch, Jay and Chiffchaff. More unusual, and

with exception of the first, non-breeding, are records for Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and Wood Warbler, particularly from the mature Oak stands to the north-west of the Bird sanctuary.

The dense bramble found within many parts of the site is important nesting habitat for Wren, Long-tailed Tit, Willow Tit, Dunnock, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Song Thrush, Willow Warbler and Robin, especially along woodland edges. The wet, marshy ground along the streams, ditches and around the abandoned Ryecroft Mill is probably attractive to Willow Tit and Woodcock, and in the case of the disused millpond, Mallard, Heron, (and Kingfisher). The areas of mature Beech, provide autumn feed for birds like Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Brambling, whilst the scattered Scots Pine and European Larch are of value to Coal Tit and Goldcrest.

A Bird Sanctuary, covering 17 hectares, was established within Wood 3 in 1929 and is surrounded by a post and wire fence. Since inception the area has been managed under a minimal intervention policy and is not open to the public. Since 2002 a small heronry has developed in the sanctuary, with seven pairs nesting in 2006.

An annual Common Bird Census of the bird sanctuary and Wood 2 has been undertaken since 2000.

(g) *Mammals*

Nineteen species have been recorded since 1980, including Water Vole along the Limb Brook, together with Pipistrelle Bat, Whiskered/Brandts Bat, Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule Bat, Badger, Hedgehog, Roe and Red Deer, as well as Wood Mouse, Bank Vole, Rabbit, Grey Squirrel, Brown Rat, Common and Pygmy Shrew, Mole and Fox. Water Shrew is thought to be present (Rotherham, pers.comm, 2000).

The present status of Water Vole at the site is unclear and re-survey is recommended.

A growing number of badger setts are found within the site. The setts are regularly monitored by the South Yorkshire Badger Group. At present no specific habitat management is needed to improve the site for this species, and no special protection measures are required as persecution is not an issue (South Yorkshire Badger Group, pers.comm, 2006).

1.3.3 Silvicultural assessment, evaluation and management options

Introduction

Ecclesall Woods is predominantly ancient Oak-birch woodland, although greatly modified from the nineteenth century by planting of introduced species like Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Larch. The woodland around Limb Lane car park and Whirlow playing fields is characterised by recent mixed plantations established since the 1960's, whilst Square Plantation and much of the woodland to the west of the Limb Brook originates from nineteenth century planting on open ground.

The majority of Ecclesall Woods can be assigned to the National Vegetation Classification types W10, with areas of W16 on the more acid soils.

In the national context, the obvious feature of the field layer of W10 woodland is its general species poverty, with Bluebell, Bracken, Bramble and Honeysuckle representing the dominant species. Lush swards of Creeping Soft-grass are also characteristic (Rodwell, 1991). In common parlance, these are "Bluebell woods" with Bluebell forming the commonest vernal dominant. In the latter, Wavy Hair-grass and Bracken is predominant, whilst Heather (and Bilberry) can occur on the most acid sites, as within parts of Ecclesall Woods. However, this simplified picture is blurred within Ecclesall Woods by intensive management for charcoal and whitecoal, which through the use of turves in the production process has altered the woodland soils and drastically impoverished the ground vegetation as a result.

The traditional management of NVC W10 oakwoods has been coppicing and extensive records for this practice survive for Ecclesall Woods. Nationally, it is clear that where silvicultural management has ceased, these woodland types have become progressively shadier with the loss of distinctive post-coppice floras, associated with NVC W10 in particular (Rodwell 1991), and certain characteristic fauna.

The present day Ecclesall Woods is not characterised by any extensive abandoned coppice. Coppicing was already in decline by the early nineteenth century, and the woodland was slowly being transformed through the planting of generally introduced species and the singling of old coppice stools, promoting a radical change to high forest. Later, the woodland was seriously affected by storm damage in 1962, resulting in the windthrow of blocks of mature trees throughout. Many of these areas have now filled with Birch - dominated natural regeneration. As such, the present woodland structure is a mixture of singled old coppice stools, mature planted trees, coppice "standards" retained beyond their original rotation and recent natural regeneration.

Whilst the reinstatement of coppicing on an extensive scale is considered unrealistic and inappropriate (English Nature 1997), other methods of felling and regenerating mature woodland, for example, thinning and group-felling, can mimic the effects of coppicing on the woodland flora and produce a structurally diverse woodland, with knock-on benefits for wildlife (Peterken 1993). However, providing a suitable, small area that demonstrates traditional coppice management is worthwhile for interpretation, and as such, coppice with standards management was re-introduced to a small part on Wood 1 in the early 1990's.

Additional interest is created by base rich flushes, drainage ditches and streamsides along the Limb Brook and elsewhere which typically support a mix of both the NVC type W7 and W8 woodland, characterised by Ash, Alder, (and Wych Elm), Hazel, (and Guelder Rose), and a more diverse field layer. Sycamore is now frequent within many of these areas.

In accordance with national woodland policies (Forestry Commission, 1998; UKWAS, 2006) the introduction of further non-native species is not recommended, as this will only serve to further dilute the historic meaning and wildlife value of this ancient woodland. In the long-term, the proportions of introduced species should be reduced, whilst bearing in mind that many of the introduced species are long established and form part of the cultural history and aesthetic appeal of the woodland. Long-term removal should not be the goal, but rather a gradual shift to a greater semi-natural character where required and practical.

Recent silvicultural management

Following the 1962 storm and the resulting windthrown damage, a number of small plantations were established within the openings created, including a wide variety of species, for example, Sitka Spruce and Beech. Only a few signs of these plantations survive and their impact on the woodland has been limited. Most of the areas windthrow have now filled with dense Birch-dominated pole-stage natural regeneration.

In 1982 an experimental glade was created in Wood 2 as part of a research project by the University of Sheffield (Gilbert 1982). This has now infilled with dense Birch and Oak regeneration.

During the previous management plan, active silvicultural management was re-introduced to the woodland after an absence of 100 years. Beech dominated stands within Wood 3 (Compartment 116g) was thinned, helping to diversify the structure, kick-start the regeneration process and encouraged the recovery of the severely impoverished ground layer, with knock-on benefits for wildlife. The other areas of beech woodland (Compartments 114b and 115b) have been affected by safety related tree works, helping to open the canopy and encourage extensive regeneration of predominantly native trees, and some recovery of the ground layer, especially in compartment 115b. Parts of the Sessile Oak-birch stands in Wood 2 (Compartment 115a) were also thinned to favour the development of the better trees, and reduce the proportion of Sycamore, whilst the recent plantations at Limb Lane (Compartment 116a) and Whirlow playing fields (Compartment 116b) were thinned for the first time.

In 1994, an experimental coppice with standards area was developed in Wood 1 (Compartment 115d), but follow-up management was intermittent. During the previous management plan the area was brought back into active management through the planting of additional shrubs/coppice and the periodic manual control of bracken and bramble. Continued control of competing vegetation will be needed over this plan period to allow the developing coppice to become properly established, and gradually shade out the bramble, etc. In the next 10 years, a reduction in the number of standards would be useful, to allow more light to reach the coppice and field layers.

Tree work related to health and safety is an on-going part of the site's maintenance programme and in the last two decades has helped to develop an impressive standing and fallen deadwood resource for a variety of wildlife, whilst generally adding to the amenity of the site.

Future Management Options

- Neutral Sessile Oak - Birch woodland

Much of Ecclesall Woods (Compartments 114a, 114c, 115a, 115e, and 116f) is dominated by the above stand type (NVC W10), although affected to different degrees by planting. Mature Oak is characteristic, with a frequently well-developed sub-canopy of pole-stage, 30-40 year old Birch dominated regeneration which has developed following the 1962 storm. Where storm damage was more extensive, the pole-stage trees form the canopy. Small amounts of advance regeneration are present in places.

In terms of future management, thinning of the denser areas of pole-stage trees would be beneficial to promote healthy crown development, timber potential and a desired mix of species, at the same time favouring shrub (and field) layer species. This would continue the work started in compartment 114a in the previous management plans. Some selective thinning of the mature canopy, especially around large-crowned locally native trees would encourage their longevity, seed production and the further development of advance regeneration, but this should be limited as many of the mature Oak trees are remnants of the coppice with standards management system prevalent until the mid-nineteenth century, and are of high ecological and heritage value.

- Acid Sessile Oak-Birch woodland

A large stand of acid Oak-Birch woodland (Compartment 116j) is present along a steep, west-facing scarp in Wood 3, characterised by NVC type W16, but possibly grading into W17 (upland Oak wood). This area appears to have been little affected by plantation forestry, containing very few introduced species and a great variety of shape and form. It may have derived directly from abandoned coppice.

Light thinning around the larger crowned Oak and other native species may promote the development of advance regeneration, which could then be favoured by gradual group-felling.

Mixed coniferous/broadleaved woodland

Within Compartments 114f and 116f Scots (and Corsican) Pine, and European Larch form co-dominant parts of the canopy with Oak, Sycamore, and other occasional broadleaved species, giving these stands a unique character within Ecclesall Woods. Pole-stage regeneration of Birch, etc is occasional, whilst natural regeneration is generally rare.

Whilst not all ancient woodland, management of these areas should favour a gradual shift to a more semi-natural composition to help promote the wider wildlife value of the overall site. However, in general a pragmatic approach that involves thinning to the best-formed trees and releasing any developing regeneration would be appropriate bearing the above in mind.

Mature Beech woodland

Compartments 114b, 115b, and 116g are dominated by mature Beech with very large, well-crowned over-mature Beech particularly characteristic of compartment 114b. Overall, these stands are of very high amenity value. However, under-management until the mid-1990's had left these areas with an increasingly closed, shady canopy of mostly mature trees, with frequent bare earth and very limited structural diversity.

Within Compartment 114b tree safety felling and reduction over the last 10 years has allowed good patches of mixed broadleaved natural regeneration to develop, and the localised re-colonisation of a field layer. Safety work within Compartment 115 during 2005 started the same process here. In addition further thinning within compartment 115 funded by FC Bird WIG grant has taken place.

For these compartments the continuing gradual natural decline of the mature Beech and Sweet chestnut will necessitate periodic tree safety works,

simultaneously encouraging the gradual re-structuring of these stands, and is considered an appropriate way to achieve this without the need for formal thinning regimes. Areas of dense regenerating woodland should be respaced as necessary to encourage an appropriate mix of species. For compartment 116, the tree-thinning operations of 2002 will be followed by further light thinning in 2014 again grant aided by the FC Bird WIG, to release the developing regeneration.

Whilst Beech is not native within this part of Britain, it has formed part of the woodland's character for well over a century, and its form, shape and colour is greatly valued by visitors. However, as previously discussed the proportion of Beech should be gradually reduced within these stands by encouraging mixed broadleaved regeneration more typical of the semi-natural vegetation communities of the local area such as Oak and Birch.

Ash and Sycamore woodland

Compartments 115c, 116L, and 116m are characterised by remnants of greatly modified wet woodland, with Sycamore predominant in an intimate mixture with Ash, Hazel, and occasional Alder. These areas support some of the richest plant communities within the site, including a good variety of ancient woodland species, as well as being of most importance within the woodland for bryophytes, and of generally high value for invertebrates.

Whilst Sycamore and the scattered conifers are not a particular threat to the nature conservation value of these areas, it would be preferable to encourage a greater proportion of locally native trees and shrubs such as Ash, Alder, Crack Willow, Hazel and Guelder Rose as appropriate to increase opportunities for associated wildlife, whilst accepting that Sycamore is here to stay in these areas. Occasional thinning would help promote structural diversity, and could be used to encourage the native species present here, whilst maintaining reasonable light levels to the rich ground flora.

Young mixed plantations

Thinning of the 30-40 year old mixed plantations around the Limb Lane picnic area and Whirlow playing fields (compartments 116a and 116c) should continue on a 5-7 year cycle, to favour the best-formed trees. Thinning and coppicing the 10-20 year old ash in compartment 116h (Donkey Field) should continue on a 5-7 year cycle to help promote structural diversity. To maintain the diversity of the glade a programme of cutting during September/October will be introduced. The mown areas will arrest the progression from grassland to scrub. Encroaching scrub will be contained by periodic cutting back.

1.4. Health and Safety

Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

- The Corporate Health and Safety Policy for 2007 can be found on the City Council internal intranet site at <http://sheffield.net/managers/health-safety> (Please note that this Internal link is only available to staff)
- An A4 summary document has been produced and included in Appendix 5A.

- Sheffield City Council has a pro-active, defensible approach to the management of its tree stock's health and safety. All trees close to primary definitive and recognised routes and formal access points undergo a risk assessment every three years, and those next to secondary routes every five years. Trees next to the highway are inspected annually. Associated remedial work is undertaken as identified. A risk assessment of other structures, etc within the woodland is undertaken annually
- During routine visits by Parks and Countryside staff any maintenance or problems identified such as damaged access structures, etc are dealt with promptly. Associated problems and incidents, like fallen trees, reported by members of the public are logged in the CONFIRM system and dealt with as appropriate. There is also a SCC Corporate public comments, complaints and feedback procedure which is adhered to as appropriate (refer to Appendix 5B)
- A procedure for dealing with anti-social behaviour has been produced for staff and includes guidelines for dealing with motor bikes, distressed members of the public etc. The procedure can be found in appendix 5C
- Should discarded syringes be found in the site, staff should follow the 'PC Safe System of Work for the removal of needles and syringes' guidelines which can be found in appendix 5D

A Healthy, Safe and Secure Site

- First Aid and Emergency Information

First aid facilities are provided at the old sawmill site, within the shop and the workshops.

The majority of Parks and Countryside staff working at the site is trained in 'First Aid at Work'.

Accident reporting procedures are detailed on the relevant accident form (employees accident, violence to staff or public accident). A copy is kept at the main Parks and Countryside headquarters at Meersbrook Park and the original sent to the DEL Health and Safety Officer.

The majority of Parks and Countryside staff (for example Rangers) working at the site wear a recognizable uniform, with the SCC logo and can be approached by the public for information or assistance.

- Site Monitoring

The woodland is regularly visited and monitored by the Trees and Woodlands Section, Ranger Team and Volunteers. Should a member of the public report an incident / damage in the woodland to a member of staff/Volunteer this is recorded on the P&C CONFIRM system. In addition all main buildings within the old sawmill site are alarmed and linked to a central control with a 20 minute call out response time.

- Physical Improvements to Improve Safety

Much of the on-going management and maintenance undertaken across the woodland has improved safety in the woodland and the perception of safety. This will be reinforced during the implementation of this plan.

- Provision of other basic facilities

A public toilet, suitable for the disabled, was installed at the Discovery Centre, (formally the sawmill) in 2006. However, its opening hours are linked to when the associated retail outlet/gallery is open which is currently six days a week and when Parks and Countryside are running events, etc from the site. Public toilets are also available 7 days a week, at nearby Parks and Countryside sites Whirlow Brook Park and Millhouses Park. This information is included on the site-based interpretative panels.

There is no public telephone available on site, but information on the location of the nearest one should be made available.

Personal Security in the Site

- Staff Security

All staff have access to or carries their own mobile telephone, and have been trained to be aware of the risks when working on-site, sometimes alone. Written risk assessments are prepared for all project work, event, etc undertaken by staff on site.

- Public safety

Ecclesall Woods has a very good record on public safety, with very low numbers of reported or serious incidents, as evidenced by the visitor survey in 2006 (refer to Appendix 8A). The situation will continue to be monitored and review and action taken as appropriate

Dogs

- Policies

Dog walkers are some of the most frequent visitors to Ecclesall Woods and Sheffield City Council welcomes and actively promotes responsible dog ownership.

It is pleasing to report that the majority of dog owners in Sheffield do act responsibly. Nevertheless, the 2006 visitor questionnaire and other recent consultation have highlighted a demand for strategically places dog bins at several primary entrances. A further bin was installed along Whirlowdale Road in 2010. However we do not envisage that any further dog bins will be installed for the duration of this plan (2012-16).

SCC Animal Wardens have provided polite notices at primary entrances to encourage responsible dog walking. They will also patrol the woodland where a specific dog issue has arisen and enforce the bye-law.

The situation with regard to dog-fouling in the woodland is monitored during routine visits and will be reviewed as appropriate.

1.5 Sustainability

Environmental sustainability



Sawmill Compost Toilet

Environmental sustainability is a key driver influencing management of the site.

In terms of wider sustainable management, the current Sheffield City Council Environmental Policy will be adhered to (refer to Appendix 6A). This builds on policies related to the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme; EMAS (refer to Appendix 6B). Parks and Countryside staffs were given training on EMAS in 2000. P and C was EMAS audited in 2002, scoring well, but with some room for improvement. The latter is currently under investigation and development.

Local Agenda 21 and the Sheffield Environment Strategy are covered in Section 1.1.5 above.

All Sheffield City Council woodlands, included this site, are certified as meeting Forest Stewardship Council standards of sustainable woodland management.

Finally, all of the tenants based at the old sawmill work place sustainability at the heart of their business, utilising locally grown timber and other resources.

Pesticide, peat use and other materials used on site

Pesticide use within Ecclesall Woods is very limited, only occurring for maintenance reasons within Limb Lane car park. Herbicide is used to kill the cut stumps of Rhododendron and Japanese Knotweed, as part of removal regimes. All use follows the Forestry Commission's Use of Herbicides in the Forest Field Book (1995). At all times, use of such chemicals is kept to a minimum, and in keeping with the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and other associated legislation and best practice guidance. Please refer to Appendix 6C for P and C's overall policy approach to pesticide use.

It is Sheffield City Council policy not to buy or use peat based products (refer to Appendix 6D).

Where possible, woodland benches erected within the woodland are sourced from locally grown timber, usually from approved felling works within the woodland itself. Other wooden materials required for bridge repairs (sleepers), waymarking posts, wooden gates, etc is purchased from sustainably managed sources, ideally meeting Forest Stewardship Council certification standards.

Path repairs are implemented using clean crushed brick and brick dust supplied by local demolition companies, following guidance from the Public Rights of Way Unit, Highway Services, reducing pressure on the local landscape by reducing demand for raw materials from local quarries.

Subject to planning and other permissions, the first major stage of the old sawmill site regeneration – the provision of the Discovery Centre for education, training and interpretation, has been completed in spring 2012. As part of the development there is a drainage strategy to implement a sustainable urban drainage scheme. There are a number of measures designed to support this;

- Use rain water to create ponds which over spill into a surface drainage system. It will act as a new educational resource for activities such as pond dipping.
- Have open gullies gathering rain water linking to a series of wetland/soak-aways.
- Harvest rain water for some of the buildings functions e.g. flushing toilets.

Waste minimisation

Very little waste is produced from the management of Ecclesall Woods, with the possible exception of tree-related maintenance and management. During routine small-scale tree-maintenance operations arisings are normally cut into small lengths, stacked neatly and allowed to rot down as wildlife habitat. However, where considerable health and safety work is required the material is either chipped and spread on site away from sensitive vegetation, etc or in the case of large volumes of chips, removed to the sawmill site for composting and then sold to the public.

During major thinning and felling operations, harvestable timber will be sold and removed to help off-set the costs of operations and to make good use of this renewable resource. A percentage of the wood will also be used to heat the buildings and provide hot water at the Discovery Centre. At the same time, standing and fallen deadwood is deliberately retained and created during associated operations.

1.6 Marketing

The SCC Media Team supports the marketing and promotion of Ecclesall Woods. An officer within that team deals with all media and public relations relating to the whole Parks and Countryside Service. Ecclesall Woods are also marketed through the Corporate public relations team and the city tourist venues as one of Sheffield's top attractions.

- The Outdoor Events Team manage all large events on an individual basis. Smaller events are managed by the Trees and Woodlands Section with the Ranger Service, and partners such as the Friends group.
- Events are advertised and updated regularly on the Parks and Countryside Service web page

The following is just a few examples of information used to promote the site:

- Website Links

Examples:

Sheffield City Council Ecclesall Woods website

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/trees--woodlands/woodland-sites-and-projects/ecclesall-woods.html>

South Yorkshire Forest Partnership

<http://www.syforest.co.uk/>

- Printed materials

Two leaflets on the site – A Seasonal Walk Around Ecclesall Woods, and a self-guided Archaeological Trail are available from visitor centre at the old sawmill site. In addition, they can be picked up from the P&C Head Office at Meersbrook Park.

Both are also available as downloads through the City Council Ecclesall Woods website (listed above)

In addition, the Friends of Ecclesall Woods produce a newsletter for its members 3-4 times a year, whilst the Dore Village Society's newsletters "Dore to Dore" and the "Bradway Bugle" regularly carry articles concerning the woodland and sawmill from Parks. Both are distributed to thousands of households in the Dore and Beauchief area.

In 2006 an education pack was developed for the site by FEW with help from the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership and Parks and Countryside. This is available at:

<http://www.heritagewoodsonline.co.uk/1.Introduction.and.History.pdf>

FEW published Ecclesall Woods, Sheffield: a Flora, in 2006. This is available through FEW, at the visitor centre and the Meersbrook Park head office.

Sheffield Hallam University have published various books and conference proceedings either on or related to Ecclesall Woods.

- Site Management

All major or potentially contentious management works and projects are promoted through site information notices, public meetings, press and radio coverage, letters to Ward Members, the Area Panel and local residents, and through local newsletters, as appropriate. FEW and the Dore Village Society are also kept informed either verbally or in writing. Nevertheless, all major works are discussed with these groups prior to implementation. Obviously preparation of this management plan has created a large amount of additional promotion for the woodland and allowed users to have a much greater say in how it is cared and managed for.

- Council staff and contractors

The Tree and Woodlands team undertake a range of maintenance and management projects across the site as well as delivering events, etc. Together with Rangers is the most frequent SCC presence within the woodland. All staff has an identifiable uniform and vehicles, and have been provided training on how to answer and respond constructively to enquiries from site users about associated issues.

All SCC staff involved in maintaining the site is aware of the Council's Corporate Code of Conduct which details a constructive approach to comments, complaints and feedback from visitors (refer to Appendix 7 for more detail).

Similarly, contractors employed by Parks and Countryside to deliver management projects are provided guidance, prior to the start of works, on how to respond positively to enquiries from visitors and local residents.

SECTION 2: VISION

The following vision for Ecclesall Woods has been agreed:

“To conserve and encourage the recreational, landscape, spiritual, environmental and heritage value of Ecclesall Woods, whilst promoting its sustainable use, understanding and enjoyment by the local and wider community”

SECTION 3: MANAGEMENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims and Objectives of management

Based on the above site based information and its evaluation, together with City Council, regional and national policy (Section 1.1.5) the Aims and Objectives for Ecclesall Woods are set out below (Section 4 contains detailed annual maintenance works and annual work programmes which flow from these).

Aim 1 Recreation and Access

To provide for safe, welcoming, co-ordinated and sustainable public access, leisure and tourism

Objectives

- To continue to regenerate the old sawmill site to provide improved visitor facilities, a centre for sustainable timber industries and a “gateway” for education, interpretative and training programmes associated with the woodland and its heritage in keeping with the themes developed in the 2004 feasibility study and 2008 masterplan
- To continue to gradually improve and maintain the definitive rights of way network, including associated access structures, signposting, and associated trails like the Sheffield Round Walk and Easy Going Trail, complying with the Disability Discrimination Act regulations
- To implement the proposed additions to the definitive network within the woodland, subject to proper assessment and consideration of the impact on site heritage interests
- In conjunction with Highway Services to improve the pedestrian links between the old sawmill site and the woodland, and across Abbey Lane between Woods 2 and 3
- To discourage informal paths where they are seriously compromising the woodlands’ heritage interests
- To maintain and where necessary improve the seating facilities
- To provide improved car parking facilities within the Discovery Centre
- To provide full-time public toilet facilities at the Discovery Centre

- To remove fly-tipping as soon as possible, and to undertake regular litter clearances along the woodland roadside margins and elsewhere as required
- To patrol and monitor the woodland as resources allow
- To undertake an annual risk assessment of all structures, buildings, etc
- To undertake a risk assessment of all trees close to primary definitive and recognised routes and formal access points every three years, and those next to secondary routes every five years. Trees next to the highway will be inspected annually. Associated remedial work will undertaken as identified
- To respond positively and quickly to public complaints and enquiries, and ensure that the City Council's public complaints and feedback procedure is adhered to as appropriate
- To continue to market Ecclesall Woods and its developing facilities as a major visitor destination in Sheffield
- To maintain Green Flag status for Ecclesall Woods

Aim 2 Biodiversity

To conserve and encourage the semi-natural characteristics of the varied habitats found within the site and their associated wildlife in accordance with the UK and Sheffield Biodiversity Action Plans, maintaining or increasing populations of Key species, and the extent and quality of Key Habitats

Objectives

- To encourage the predominantly semi-natural vegetation communities present during all habitat management, in turn benefiting associated flora and fauna
- To implement as appropriate specific management to maintain or increase populations of the UK BAP Short and Middle-listed species, and Local BAP species recorded at the site in the last 20 years
- To implement as appropriate, specific management to maintain or increase the extent and quality of the UK BAP priority habitat "wet woodland".
- To protect and encourage the resident Badger population in partnership with the South Yorkshire Badger Group and in accordance with best practice as outlined in Forests Operations and Badger Setts (Forestry Commission, 1996)
- To retain standing and fallen deadwood wherever possible, including representatives of each of the species found on the site if possible, promoting associated fungi, invertebrates, hole-nesting birds, and bats
- To organise bat surveys of all areas where mature tree-felling is proposed, to ensure that no roosts are destroyed and that the interests of bats are incorporated into all management implementation, in liaison with Sheffield Bat Group

- To continue the conservation management approach to the management of the small meadow to the immediate north-west of the bird sanctuary (Compartment 116h), through a programme of annual grass cutting during September/October. Some limited scrub control will be undertaken to keep it open. However, it is important that a variety of grassland conditions are maintained, particularly for specialist invertebrates requiring rank, grassy tussocks. As such, a proportion of the grassland will be left permanently uncut.
- To maintain the bird sanctuary as a quiet haven for wildlife where public access is discouraged and management is minimal.
- To continue an annual Common Bird Census across the bird sanctuary and Wood 2 allowing comparison with areas where recreation is and is not encouraged, and to help monitoring the general health of the site's bird population.
- To maintain support for local naturalists and the wider community who visit and record the nature conservation interest of the site
- To continue to control and reduce the extent of the invasive introduced species Rhododendron, Cherry Laurel, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed
- To maintain and protect the site's Local Nature Reserve status
- To monitor the effects of all habitat management whenever possible, reviewing and revising management strategies as appropriate.

Additional guidance

Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Spotted Flycatcher, Pipistrelle Bat, White-clawed Crayfish and Water Vole are all UK BAP Key priority species recorded from the woodland. The following specific management work is planned:

Song Thrush - proposed silvicultural management will increase the amount of ephemeral open space within the site, and promote greater structural and shrub species diversity, benefiting this species. *Bullfinch* will also benefit from these proposals.

Spotted Flycatcher- prefers open canopy, mature woodland, with open glades and tree falls. The proposed thinning works within mature stands will benefit this species.

Pipistrelle Bat- favours the glades within the woodland, as well as woodland edges. The proposed thinning works and coppice management will provide a continued supply of new glades, whilst the rough grassland and scrub to the north-west of the bird sanctuary and along the western margins of the site, as well as adjoining residential gardens, will continue to provide the important feeding zones.

White-clawed Crayfish- require proper survey to assess better its presence and distribution, and associated management recommendations.

Water Vole may still be present within the site, but its status is unclear. A field survey will be undertaken to assess its status, with associated recommendations.

Grass Snake is included in the Sheffield BAP, and is present at the old sawmill site. Work will be undertaken to assess the size of the grass snake population and take appropriate action to protect and encourage it further

Rhododendron (and *Cherry Laurel*) is currently restricted primarily to parts of the bird sanctuary, where extensive areas are present. A 10 year programme of removal is programmed through a combination of cutting and herbicide stump treatment. Replacement vegetation will be encouraged through natural processes rather than planting.

Himalayan Balsam will continue to be reduced by annual hand pulling, whilst areas of *Japanese Knotweed* will be removed through herbicide use.

Aim 3 Archaeological and historic interest

To protect and conserve features of archaeological and historic interest, and provide appropriate interpretation

Objectives

- To preserve and to take account of all known archaeological and historic features during management and maintenance operations. Where necessary, this may include archaeological investigation of features to assess the archaeological implications of proposals
- To undertake appropriate management where necessary to protect known features from damage associated with recreational use, tree growth, etc.
- To facilitate further research into, and understanding of, the woodland's archaeological and historic interest in partnership with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service and the wider community
- To assess the levels of significance of particular monument types, identifying the most important examples, and consider these for Scheduling as appropriate
- To develop additional associated interpretative materials, and more strongly incorporate the cultural heritage of the woodland into education, interpretation and training programmes, as well as continuing and expanding community archaeology projects

Additional guidance

- (a) Prior to all major management activities, for example thinning or path improvements, consultation and/or a site visit with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) will be undertaken as required to pinpoint features of interest and determine any necessary precautions. In all cases the GIS database of the site's archaeological interest and the County Sites and Monument Register will be referred to as a baseline management tool.
- (b) Where archaeological interest is suspected but unconfirmed, appropriate archaeological fieldwork will be undertaken during or in advance of management works following consultation with SYAS, and operations reviewed and re-considered as necessary.

- (c) Management activities will be planned and executed to avoid disturbance to archaeological features. Felling of trees, particularly mature individuals, directly onto areas of archaeological interest will be avoided whenever possible, and all extraction routes will be kept away from features of interest. If trees on an archaeological feature are being felled damage will be minimised by techniques such as brash matting and working in dry conditions. Prior to major management works, sites of interest within the immediate vicinity of/close to the work area will be marked out with hazard warning tape, etc as appropriate, and all those involved in the operations informed of areas/features of archaeological importance.
- (d) Where necessary, trees felled on or close to features of importance will be winched from the immediate area to reduce vehicular damage, whilst the use of draught horses will be considered in the most sensitive cases
- (e) Scheduled and other significant archaeological sites will be regularly monitored to observe any management problems that may arise. This will be organised in consultation with SYAS.
- (f) Appropriate archaeological training of Council staff, particularly Rangers, with constant involvement at the site will be continued, to improve their ability to recognise archaeological features they come across in the course of their work, to help inform management works and reduce the potential for damage and disturbance, whilst increasing their interpretative knowledge.
- (g) Two types of further descriptive and investigative work are also proposed:
 - Filling in blank areas within the existing surveys
 - More detailed surveys of features recorded in the existing surveys

There is substantial opportunity for members of the community to participate in the above through “community archaeology” projects, led by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist, and undertaken and monitored in consultation with SYAS.

Aim 4 Woodland Management

Through appropriate management, to promote a diverse high-forest woodland structure characterised predominantly by semi-natural vegetation communities, whilst recognising the value of introduced species such as Beech and Sweet Chestnut.

Objectives

- To manage the majority of the mixed Oak, Beech and Sweet Chestnut woodland of Ecclesall Woods by small-scale, piecemeal light thinning on a rotation of at least 150 years, promoting uneven-aged woodland and a diversity of species, structure and habitats.
- To manage the areas of recent plantations around the Limb Lane picnic area and Whirlow playing fields by periodic thinning, encouraging native species where possible

- To continue to promote coppice-with standards management to the demonstration area off Cow Lane, Wood 1
- In general, to favour native tree and shrub species typical of the ancient semi-natural communities found within the site during all operations. However, where introduced species now form a characteristic part of the woodland amenity, a proportion will also be promoted
- To promote and utilise natural regeneration whenever possible in providing new trees maintaining the genetic integrity of native species, so far as is practicable. Otherwise to use plants of local provenance and preferably from semi-natural parent trees
- To protect and maintain minimum intervention areas including the bird sanctuary, wet flushes, areas adjoining streamsides, and drainage ditches.
- To employ operational methods which avoid excessive disturbance to the site
- To identify opportunities for enlarging the existing area of woodland, especially where this would provide links to other nearby ancient woodlands, as long as this would not compromise other interests, for example, where it would result in the loss of other valuable semi-natural habitats

Additional guidance

- (a) Where possible all thinning operations will be positioned where advance regeneration capable of responding to increased light levels is already present.

Natural regeneration will be the main method of providing new trees. Planting will only be considered if natural regeneration fails to appear some 3-5 years after canopy opening, and then only using plants of local provenance, preferably from semi-natural parent trees

Areas of regeneration will require periodic respacing to ensure that an appropriate mix of species is encouraged and to promote healthy crown development.

All operations will favour the locally native tree and shrub species present within the existing stands and will in general, encourage a greater proportion of native species in the long-term. However, it is recognised that various introduced species form a characteristic or important element of many parts of the woodland, in particular Beech, and Sweet Chestnut, and in such situations, a proportion will be encouraged during thinning and respacing works. In the long-term, a greater mix of native and introduced species will be retained where the latter is currently dominant.

All thinning operations will retain representatives of all the species of locally native trees and shrubs present within the particular stand, use variation of thinning intensity to maintain varied conditions, and maintain and encourage an understorey and shrub layer in more mature stands, and use low impact methods for timber harvesting and avoid excessive disturbance and compaction. Small-scale working will be the norm.

- (b) Apart from providing wildlife habitat, old trees and deadwood can have considerable intrinsic appeal and add diversity to the woodland structure.

For these reasons, a proportion of trees will be retained indefinitely throughout the site and allowed to develop to over-maturity and natural senescence. Similarly, a proportion of mis-shapen trees will be retained during all silvicultural operations. The trees chosen will generally be away from definitive routes and well-used, casual paths and formal access points.

Where possible, deadwood, both standing and fallen, will be left where it is to undergo natural decay processes. Large diameter timber is particularly valuable and will be left uncut where possible. If possible, representatives of each of the native species found in the woodlands will be utilised.

A proportion of timber arising from agreed silvicultural operations will be left in-situ for similar reasons.

- (c) Climate change predictions and the suggested impact on woodlands will inform on-going management of the site, with reference to the latest research and guidance from the Forestry Commission and others.

Aim 5 Landscape

To maintain and protect the landscape value of the woodland

Objectives

- To promote predominantly native broadleaved tree and shrub species typical of the Coal Measures Natural Area during all silvicultural operations, whilst recognising the contribution of species introduced to the site amenity.
- To minimise the landscape impact of felling and regeneration works.
- To maintain screening of obtrusive features crossing and adjoining the site, for example, Abbeydale Road South.

Additional guidance

Management proposals include thinning and small-scale coppicing. The effects of these operations will be visible from some locations outside the woodland but the visual impact will be low.

Some changes in the visual appearance of the woodland, especially from within, will occur as a result of thinning proposals. However, as generally only relatively small parts of the woodland will be affected at any one time, the impact of management operations will be minimised. Thinning works will be positioned so that, where possible, they are secluded from main views within and from outside the woodland.

Aim 6 Community involvement and participation in site management

To encourage community involvement in the management of the site and to facilitate community use of the woodland and its facilities

Objectives

- To consult and involve the local community, the South West Area Panel, specialist interest and stakeholder groups during the implementation of the management plan
- To continue to support stakeholder groups such as the Friends of Ecclesall Woods, Working Woodlands Ltd, and Ruskin Mill Educational Trust and strengthen related partnerships. To encourage opportunities for joint working and projects wherever possible
- To continue to support the Friends of Ecclesall Woods and other community groups and partners undertaking activities / events / meetings within the woodland and old sawmill site
- To facilitate management advisory and subgroups to inform and improve management of the site and its facilities
- To regularly review and monitor visitor perceptions of the site and its management, and take on board associated recommendations as appropriate
- To increase volunteer involvement in the site's management through an annual programme developed and delivered by the Woodlands Team, Ranger Service and other partners
- To continue to encourage the local community and other site visitors to report any concerns or problems at the site, acting as the "eyes and ears" of the Council.

Aim 7 Education, interpretation and training

To maximise the educational, interpretative and training potential of the woodland and old sawmill site

Objectives

- To maintain a wide-ranging programme of environmental, cultural and interpretative events and activities through the Ranger Service and others
- To maintain and update as necessary the site based leaflets, education pack and other interpretative materials
- To provide support and facilitate a range of partnership / community led events that use the site facilities and landscape
- To support and facilitate educational, interpretative and training potential for the wider community where appropriate
- To review the current interpretation panels and develop and install improved interpretation over the plan period, particularly with regard to heritage interests
- To continue to support research opportunities within and centred-on the woodland

- To continue to advocate for the development of a site-dedicated, site-based Ranger Team to help deliver both management and interpretation and education projects and programmes
- To aspire to promote Ecclesall Woods as an annual classroom based Key Stage 2 topic for five schools, mixed or combined with a sustainable programme of Key Stage 2 visits to Ecclesall Woods for one year group from each of five schools
- To promote increasing use of the woodland and Discovery Centre for associated training and personal development

Aim 8 Maximising Resources and Revenue Generation

To maximise income generation to offset expenditure without compromising the community use and heritage value of the woodland.

Objectives

- To foster and support the retail outlet for wood products at the former sawmill site (Discovery Centre)
- To further develop partnership working with the businesses based at the Discovery Centre, including proposals to replace the existing workshop spaces with purpose built facilities
- To manage the tenancy at wills at the former sawmill site and the licence agreement according to good practice, with the support of Legal and Governance
- To take appropriate opportunities to produce utilisable timber and maximise income from the sale of produce resulting from agreed silvicultural operations, subject to the other site interests
- To investigate and develop a range of appropriate revenue generating opportunities in keeping with the woodland's public use, and heritage value, and the growing role of the old sawmill site as a location for wood-based businesses
- To maximise sources of internal and external funding and other resources in partnership with stakeholders
- To base all revenue and other resource management and generation upon sound business planning
- To maintain and manage the site as an example of sustainability in action, by ensuring that the social and environmental impact of all operations are considered alongside the economic

SECTION 4: MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Please refer to Figure 4.1

4.1 Annual maintenance work programme (Years 20012-16)

Key:

TW - Trees and Woodlands Section, Park and Countryside Service

SW - SWEEP, Woodlands Section, Park and Countryside Service

PA - Premises and Assets, DEL

RT - Ranger Team,

PC - Parks and Countryside Section, Parks and Countryside Service

A - Amey Highway Contractor

Risk Assessment

- (1) Annual written risk assessment of all site infrastructure and all trees adjoining the highway. Associated action to be taken as necessary.

Autumn/TW/A

Access

- (2) Clean out all cross-drains on paths

Spring and Autumn/RT

- (3) Remove all large debris (logs etc.) out of the Limb Brook, from Abbeydale Road South up to where Bridleway 246 crosses

Autumn/TW/SW

Litter Management

- (3) Remove all litter from Limb Lane car park, litter bin and surrounding amenity grassland (prior to cutting).

Weekly/A and PC

- (4) Sweep car parking bays on Abbey Lane and remove any associated litter.

Twelve-weekly cycle/A

- (5) Other woodland boundaries.

Every two months and as required/A and SW

- (6) Along recognised woodland paths, access points

As required or every two months/SW and RT

- (7) Litter sweep around old sawmill site

Every week or as required/TW

Public Toilet

- (8) Clean Public Toilet

Every day or as required/TW

Dog Bins

- (9) Empty 10 dog bins

Twice a week or as required/PC

Grassland Management

- (10) Mow amenity grassland at Limb Lane car park site (compartment 116a)

Every two weeks from the last week of March-first week April to the last week of September-first week of October/PC

Vegetation Management

- (11) Assess which public paths and other recognised routes require strimming and cutting back of encroaching vegetation like bramble and undertake associated work

May and July/TW and SW

Graffiti

Any graffiti of an offensive nature will be removed as soon as possible, and in other instances within as short a period as possible. All incidents will be logged on the CONFIRM system.

Vandalism

Checks will be made for vandalism as part of routine visits, although vandalism is rare within the site. Unsafe structures, etc will be removed or made safe as soon as possible and repairs made soon afterwards. . All incidents will be logged on the CONFIRM

4.2 Annual management work programme (Years 2012-17)

Key:

TW - Trees and Woodlands Section, Park and Countryside Service

SW - SWEEP, Woodlands Section, Park and Countryside Service

RT – Ranger Team, Activity Sheffield

PC – Parks and Countryside Section, Parks and Countryside Service

A – Amey Highway Contractor

SYAS – South Yorkshire Archaeology Service

YEAR 2012

Recreation and Access

- (1) Re-surface 400m approximately of the eroded bridleway (245) in Wood 3 from Abbeydale Road South to the Bird Sanctuary

Summer/Winter /SW/Contractor

- (2) Construct new bridge along the Limb Brook bridleway (246) below the concrete bridge

Summer/SW

- (3) Install 6 new woodland benches at the Discovery Centre and in Wood 3.

Summer/SW

- (4) Install wooden removable bollard along path (248) at the Dobroft Road entrance in Wood 1

Winter/SW

- (5) Undertake site interpretation planning with associated consultation, to move forward the vision for the Woodland and Discovery Centre

All Year/TW/Key stakeholders/Consultant

- (6) Liaise with Highway Services to promote better crossings over Abbey Lane, between Woods 2 and 3

All Year/TW/Highway Services

Biodiversity

- (7) Carryout surveys of the wildlife ponds led by the Ecology Unit

Spring-Summer/TW

Archaeology

- (8) Verify the status of the suggested prehistoric rock art within the bird sanctuary

Autumn/Winter/SYAS/English Heritage

Woodland Management

- (9) Thin the mature woodland west of the coppiced area in Wood 1 Compartment 115c and d (1.0ha), funded by FC Bird WIG

Autumn/TW/Contractor

- (10) Re-space denser areas of pole-stage Ash, etc within margins of Donkey Field Wood 3, Compartment 116h (0.1ha)

Autumn/SW/Volunteers

Education, interpretation and training

- (11) Delivery of Primary School education offer based at the Discovery Centre

Spring-Summer/TW/Contractor

Maximising Resources and Revenue Generation

- (12) Lease out firewood, woodchip and Christmas tree sales at the Discovery Centre.

Summer/HN Woodland Management/TW

YEAR 2013

Recreation and Access

- (1) Surface 200m approximately of bridleway (246) and clear adjacent drainage channel from "Keepers Cottage" into Wood 3

Summer/SW/Contractor

- (2) Replace piped bridge in Wood 1 path (244) leading to the coppiced area

Summer/Contractor

- (3) Provide parking space markings for the car park at the Discovery Centre

Spring/Contractor

Biodiversity

- (8) Undertake a targeted bat survey in cpt 115c within the recently coppiced area.

Summer/Ecology Unit/Contractor

- (9) Undertake amphibian survey focussing on “Colliers” pond and the Discovery Centre pond

Spring/Summer/Ecology Unit/Contractor

Archaeology and historic interest

- (10) Meet with SYAS and develop and implement erosion control approach to bridleway crossing Iron Age Hillfort in Wood 3

Spring-Autumn/TW/SYAS

Woodland Management

- (12) Thin dense areas of pole-stage Oak-Birch woodland with Compartment 115a (approx. 2ha)

Autumn/Contractor

- (13) Coppice small area of hazel within Compartment 115 0.25ha

Autumn/SW/RT

Community involvement and participation in site management

- (15) To undertake a new on-site visitor survey

Spring-Summer/Contractor

YEAR 2014

Recreation and Access

- (1) Re-surface (new top surface) the main footpath (300m) from the Abbeydale Road South feeding bridleway 246

TW/Contractor

- (4) Investigate measures to improve drainage of footpath 461 (which partly runs through the woodland from Ryecroft Glen)

Spring-Summer/TW/SYAS

Biodiversity

- (7) Undertake surveys targeting reptiles (grass snake) focussing in Wood 3.

Summer/Ecology Unit/Contractor

- (8) Undertake surveys targeting deadwood invertebrates.

Summer/Autumn/Ecology Unit/contractor

Woodland Management

- (10) Thin the mature woodland in Wood Compartments 116a and b (2.0ha), funded by FC Bird WIG

Winter/Ranger

- (11) Continue Rhododendron and Laurel control in the Bird Sanctuary, Compartment 116d (0.5.ha)

Winter/SW/RT

Archaeology

- (3) Commission a topographic survey of the probable field system present to the east of the Limb Brook, in Wood 3 which is potentially prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval

Winter/SYAS/FEW archaeologist section

YEAR 2015

Recreation and Access

- (1) Re-surface (new top surface) the footpath adjacent to wildlife pond, Wood 2 (200m)

Summer/Contractor

- (2) Replace 2 foot bridges in wood 3 along footpath 255 and bridleway 252

Summer/RT

- (3) Re-surface (new top surface) the footpath 244, Wood 1 (700m)

Summer/Contractor

Biodiversity

- (4) Undertake targeted moth survey in the Limb Lane Picnic site and Donkey Field in Wood 3 and the coppiced area in Wood 1

Autumn/Ecology Unit/Contractor

Archaeology

- (5) Commission a topographic survey of the enclosures north of Whirlowdale Road/west of Cow Lane, in Wood 1

Winter/SYAS/Archaeological contractor

Woodland Management

- (6) Thin mixed broadleaves and conifers within compartment 115 (2.ha) to favour best-formed, native species where present

Winter/Contractor

YEAR 2016

Recreation and Access

- (1) Re-surface (new top surface) tracks and , Woods 1&3 (000m)

Summer/Contractor

Biodiversity

- (2) Undertake small mammal survey

Spring-Summer/Ecology Unit/Contractor

Woodland Management

- (4) Continue thinning of the 1970's plantation of mixed broadleaves and conifers within compartment 116a (1.0ha) to favour best-formed, native species where present.

Winter/Contractor

4.3 Recurring annual management tasks

Biodiversity

- (1) Commission Common Bird Census of "Bird Sanctuary" and Wood 2

Spring/Contractor

- (2) Cut glade in compartment "Donkey Field" 116h including rake off and remove.

Sept-Oct/RT

- (3) Control, removal and gradual eradication of Himalayan Balsalm, Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron across the whole site.

Spring-Autumn/RT/Contractors

Woodland management

- (4) Monitor coppice demonstration area (compartment 115c), cutting back encroaching vegetation, etc as necessary

Summer-Autumn/RT-TW

- (4) Monitor coppice area (compartment 116h), cutting back encroaching vegetation, etc as necessary

Summer-Autumn/RT-TW

Community Involvement and Participation

- (5) Consult and inform the local community and other Key stakeholders of major management works or proposals

As required/TW and key stakeholders

- (6) Develop and deliver an annual programme of work/projects to encourage regular volunteer involvement in the site such as SWEEP and Discovery Centre Ambassadors, in addition involving and supporting the Friends of Ecclesall Woods and other partners from the voluntary sector wherever possible

All Year/TW-RT and key stakeholders

Education, interpretation and training

- (7) Develop and deliver an annual programme of recreation, education, interpretative activities and events, including associated marketing

All Year/TW-RT and key stakeholders

SECTION 5: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

5.1 Financial forecast 2007-2011

5.1.1 Anticipated Revenue Expenditure

It should be noted that these figures do not include the potential costs of fully regenerating the old sawmill site as the process toward achieving this is at an early stage. As this process progresses, further detail will be added to this document, assuming the associated resources can be secured.

Proposed Activity	Year 1 2012-3	Year 2 2013-4	Year 3 2014-15	Year 4 2015-16	Year 5 2016-17
Recreation and Access					
Sawmill site master plan/site improvements	2000	3000	5000	2000	2000
Rights of way improvements	3000	2000	3000	5000	6000
Boundary/access point improvements	2500				
Install new benches	500	500	500	500	500
Car park improvements at sawmill		2500			
Biodiversity					
Specialist species surveys	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Annual Common Bird Census	300	300	300	300	300
Control of invasive species	400	400	400	400	400
Archaeology					
Specific feature survey and assessment		1000	3000		4000
Assessment of feature significance			1500		
Upgrade "Archaeological walk" interpretative leaflet		3000			
Woodland Management					
Thinning	2000	3000	1200	1200	1200
Coppice management		1000	1000	1000	1000
Community Involvement					
Volunteer management training/expenses	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Commission visitor survey		3000			3000
Education and Interpretation					
Upgrade Interpretative signage	2000	2000			
Upgrade "Seasonal walk" interpretative leaflet		1500			
Provide annual programme of educational and interpretative events, etc	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000

Proposed Activity	Year 1 2012-3	Year 2 2013-4	Year 3 2014-15	Year 4 2015-16	Year 5 2016-17
Maximising Resources and Revenue					
Discovery Centre compound improvement	600	500			
Pre-planned maintenance					
Pre-planned Maintenance costs (litter collection, grassland management, path clearance etc)	4500	4500	4500	4500	4500
TOTALS					

5.1.2 Anticipated external revenue income

Source	Year 1 2012-3	Year 2 2013-4	Year 3 2014-15	Year 4 2015-16	Year 5 2016-17
Forestry Commission EWGS Woodland Management Grant	4200	4200	4200	4200	4200
Forestry Commission EWGS Bird WIG					
Timber income	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Grant Income (Access to Nature and HLF)	3000	3000			
Rentals and income from sawmill site	28000	32000	35000	35000	38000
TOTALS					

5.1.3 Anticipated capital expenditure

Proposed Activity	Year 1 2012-3	Year 2 2013-4	Year 3 2014-15	Year 4 2015-16	Year 5 2016-17
Construct JG Graves Woodland Discovery Centre	500,000				
TOTALS					

5.1.4 Anticipated capital income

Source (proposed)	Year 1 2012-3	Year 2 2013-4	Year 3 2014-15	Year 4 2015-16	Year 5 2016-17
JG Graves Charitable Trust	250,000				
Landfill Tax credits	140,000				
SCC Capital Receipts	100,000				
Section 106 monies	10,000				
TOTALS	500,000				

5.2 Current and future sources of funding

Parks and Countryside have a long and successful history of using a partnership approach to help develop and develop projects. The growing partnerships at Ecclesall Woods, particularly those associated with the old sawmill site, the Friends of Ecclesall Woods and Dore Village Society and South Yorkshire Forest Partnership present a range of opportunities to meet the aspirations for the site and the communities it serves. Currently it's difficult to determine the effect of the public sector spring review. However, as Sheffield's premier woodland the site will remain a budget priority for the Parks & Countryside Service.

- *Forestry Commission England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)*

Ecclesall Woods was entered into the new EWGS for Woodland Management Grant in 2007, and funding is secured for five years. These monies contribute toward the management and maintenance costs of access, recreation, and biodiversity.

Further applications for Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG) towards proposed path improvements, the control of invasive species, etc will be made in due course.

- *Natural England*

Natural England brings together English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service, and was established in 2006.

Parks and Countryside is currently investigating the potential for 'Access to Nature' funding to support its education and associated programs at Ecclesall Woods and other sites.

- *Lottery Funds*

Ecclesall Woods is a valuable site for biodiversity, and its archaeology interest in particular. The Heritage Lottery Fund have visited the woodland and demonstrated a clear positive interest. However, HLF monies nationally have been reduced in recently because of pressures elsewhere, and a more targeted approach is being taken. In the medium term, a HLF bid for aspects of the benefits provided by the site will be considered.

Other potential sources of associated grant aid include the Big Lottery Fund, which offers much potential for the old sawmill site itself. The strong social enterprise nature of the project here provides a strong "hook" for related bids.

- *European Regional Development Funding (ERDF)*

European Union Objective 1 was a source of major European funding aimed at the social and economic regeneration of disadvantaged areas, and led to a woodland based funding package overseen by the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership between 2001-2008 of over £4 million, which brought major benefits to Ecclesall Woods and the project at the sawmill site in particular.

This has now been superseded by ERDF (overseen by Yorkshire Forward), and the Service is currently preparing a funding bid to ERDF to help resource the proposed purpose built workshops for wood-based businesses at the old sawmill site.

- *South Yorkshire Forest Partnership*

The South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (SYFP) is a major partner in the developing old sawmill site project, and has helped Parks and Countryside access considerable funding for both this and the woodland since 2001. Parks and Countryside will continue to work closely with SYFP to explore future related funding packages and opportunities.

- *Section 106 monies*

The woodland has benefited from considerable allocations of Section 106 monies since 2001, especially towards access improvements. Parks and Countryside will continue to work closely with the South West Community Assembly to maximise the related benefits to the woodland.

- *Other Funding*

Other sources of funding will be explored wherever possible. For example, the Friends of Ecclesall Woods are currently applying for “Landfill Tax” monies to fund planned path improvements.

SECTION 6: RESEARCH, MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 Research

A considerable amount of research into various aspects of Ecclesall Woods has been undertaken by a variety of organisations and individuals. Where possible, research into the many values of the woodland will be encouraged and supported, although, priority will be given to those initiatives which help in monitoring the progress of the management plan implementation programme, and answer other critical issues which need to be addressed, and so inform future management requirements. Broad areas for further research of particular benefit to the site's management include:

- The perceptions of the site by the community through continuing visitor surveys;
- Investigation and assessment of known or suspected archaeological features in accordance with Bevan (2001), and assessment of their significance against English Heritage criteria;
- The effects of habitat management; and
- species distribution of Key fauna and flora, particularly those included in the UK BAP short-list of priority species.

6.2 Monitoring

To effectively assess the planned benefits of the various management works proposed, a monitoring programme is proposed:

Habitat Management

- A “before” and “after” photographic record will be kept during all major management works.
- As required, flora and fauna surveys of these areas where management works are concentrated will be undertaken, again to help to quantify/identify the proposed benefits.
- An annual Common Bird Census will continue within the bird sanctuary (minimal intervention) and Wood 2 where a modest programme of management is proposed over the plan period. As birds are “keystone” biodiversity indicators, the census will provide valuable broad information on the effects on the management proposals.

Archaeology

Monitoring of archaeological features is comprehensively covered in the additional guidance for Aim 3, in Section 3.

Health and Safety

The safety of trees and other structures within the site will be assessed as outlined in the objectives of Aim 1, in Section 3

Other Matters

Routine visits will inevitably identify unpredictable issues and concerns that need addressing as they arise, such as litter, vandalism, the unrecorded presence of new species of importance etc. This information will be fed into the CONFIRM system and maintenance and management work programmes as appropriate.

6.3 Review

This Management Plan forms an active agenda for managers and employees to implement appropriate management techniques and methods to ensure the continued success and sustainable future for Ecclesall Woods

This management plan is not intended to be inflexible. It will be appropriately adapted to accommodate any new information, altering circumstances, pressures, trends and processes whenever they arise.

Progress will be kept under active review throughout the course of each year of implementation via regular monitoring at meetings and discussions within Parks and Countryside and with other deliverers and stakeholders. The progress of the plan will be reviewed at the beginning of each successive financial year and adjustments made to the coming year's work programme as required. Overall, this approach will ensure that the woodland and the benefits it provide continue to meet users needs whilst ensuring protection and where appropriate enhancement of the woodland's rich heritage.

The development of the plan will be fully reviewed at the end of the current five-year period in 2016.

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