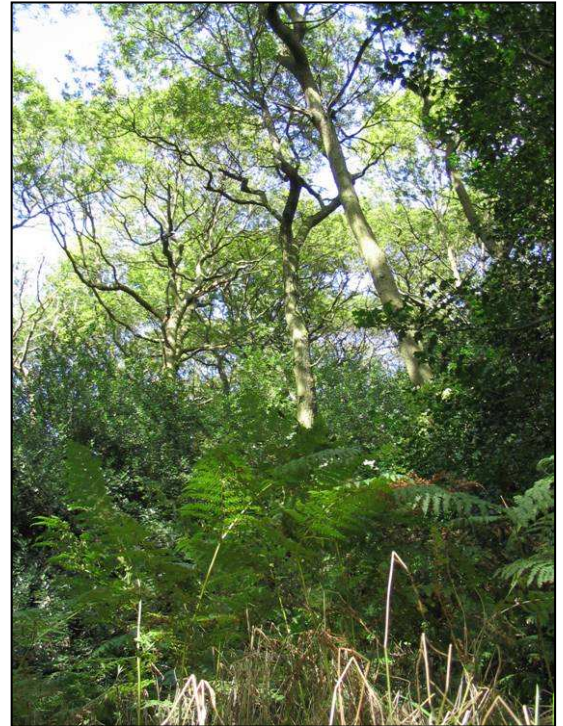


## Habitat Action Plan: Lowland Deciduous and Other Woodland

### Current status and Importance

- Lowland deciduous woodland was the dominant habitat of lowland Britain. It is now much reduced in area and severely fragmented with a consequential loss of species diversity at many sites. However, there are indications that this loss of habitat is now being reversed.
- In its semi-natural state, lowland deciduous woodland is relatively species-rich with niches for species in the canopy layer, under-storey, ground flora and epiphytic (trunk) habitats. Standing dead wood is also crucial for a range of species.
- Even so, the recent decline of woodland bird species diversity may have at least some of its roots in the increasing uniformity of woodland structure through a lack of management.
- Oak woodland is the naturally dominant woodland type within Kirklees and is the main type of lowland deciduous woodland present.
- Within Kirklees there are similarities to the upland oak woodland type with a transition taking place from lowland to upland sites (this is pertinent to climate change adaptation). However, due to climatic factors, there is likely to be greater diversity in lowland areas and, for soils to be less acidic and drier.
- Several sites of ancient woodland are still present in Kirklees, some in a semi-natural state but others may be more characteristic of plantations. A number of sites are designated as Local Sites (Sites of Scientific Interest or Sites of Wildlife Significance).
- In particular, with their higher productivity, lowland deciduous and other woodlands offer potential for supplying wood fuel. This is seen as a means of introducing much needed management of the resource, whilst providing a sustainable and replaceable source of energy.



### Species use

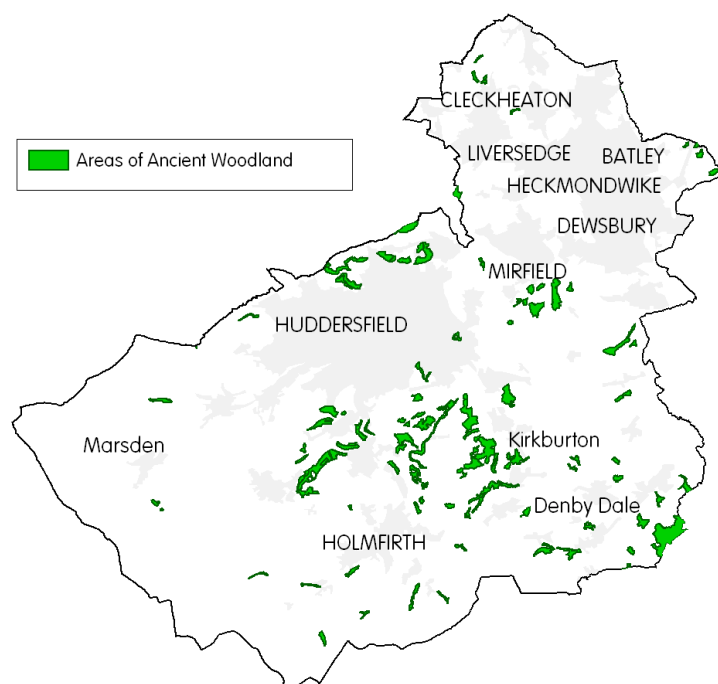
- The Common Oak *Quercus robur* and Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* are both dominant in these areas in Kirklees and both may occur with virtually all combinations of other locally native tree species.
- The bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is a particularly characteristic plant of English woodlands, often accompanied by other species indicative of ancient woodlands such as wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), ramson (*Allium ursinum*) in moist areas and common cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*) which is present at a few sites in Kirklees. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) may be dominant in some areas.
- A range of bird species are dependent upon lowland deciduous woodland. Whilst many resident species like the greater spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) and nuthatch

(*Sita europaea*) are thriving the situation is complex: other residents like the lesser spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*), willow tit (*Parus montanus*) and hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) are in severe decline. Similarly, this is the case with some migrant species such as the spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*).

- Woodland is important for a variety of mammals including a number of bat species.
- Many invertebrate species are dependent upon woodlands with a number of scarcer species being discovered within Kirklees. However, this may be more a result of past under recording than species expanding their range.
- Lowland woodlands are also a rich source of fungal species.
- Like the upland oak woodlands lichen communities have been impoverished as a result of air pollution.

## Conservation Issues

- Unsympathetic or a lack of forest management to favour important species' populations.
- Invasion by sycamore, beech and other species which are not native to woodlands within Kirklees and are of limited value to a range of species.
- Invasion by species such as rhododendron (*Rhododendron*), which shades out the ground layers and eliminates much of the conservation interest.
- Loss through development pressures, including indirect impacts such as disturbance.
- Removal of dead trees, as a public safety measure.
- Continuing air pollution especially around urban areas.



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*Ancient Woodland Areas in Kirklees*

## Objectives

- Protect existing lowland deciduous woodland from development and inappropriate use or management to prevent habitat deterioration. Maintain policies to prevent habitat loss.
- Manage existing areas of lowland deciduous woodland to create greater structural and species diversity to maximise their value for important species' populations.

- Restore areas of lowland deciduous woodland within a forest habitat or other ecological network, which includes grassland, scrub and heath where appropriate to soils, climate and existing species' communities\*.
- Reduce fragmentation of the habitat, especially considering the role of woodlands as part of an altitudinal ecological network which stretches from the lowlands to the uplands.
- Monitor the extent and quality of the habitat to gain a more accurate assessment of its status in the district.
- Exploit the role of lowland deciduous woodland as a carbon sink as part of a shift towards a low carbon economy and, also, its role in water resource management.

\*Species especially vulnerable to inappropriate development of lowland deciduous woodland are those associated with open woodland habitats such as tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citronella*) and a number of bat species .

### Target areas for habitat management and creation

- The habitat is primarily found within the Valley Slopes opportunity zone at lower altitudes. This network is particularly important for climate change adaptation and helping wildlife adapt to its impacts.
- In the Pennine Foothills, lowland deciduous woodlands form important core areas in a network which includes hedgerows, grasslands and scrub as part of a 'lattice' type habitat network.
- Some woodlands in the above categories will also fall within urban areas.
- For further information, please see the Biodiversity Opportunity Zones Map at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity)

### Targets

- To be decided.

### Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Kirklees Council, Forestry Commission.
- Management and restoration through Woodland Grant Scheme: Forestry Commission.
- Management and restoration of lowland deciduous woodland in Kirklees: Kirklees Council, White Rose Forest.
- Survey: Kirklees Wildlife and Landscape Advisory Forum, West Yorkshire Ecology.

### See Also

- [UKBAP: Lowland Deciduous Woodland](#)
- [UKBAP: Upland Oak Woodland](#)
- [UKBAP: Wet Woodland](#)
- [UK BAP Lowland Heath Habitat Action Plan](#)
- [Forestry Commission](#)
- Kirklees Species Action Plan: Twite
- Guidance for the management of Woodlands: Kirklees Council Environment Unit. (both of the above can be found at [www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity))