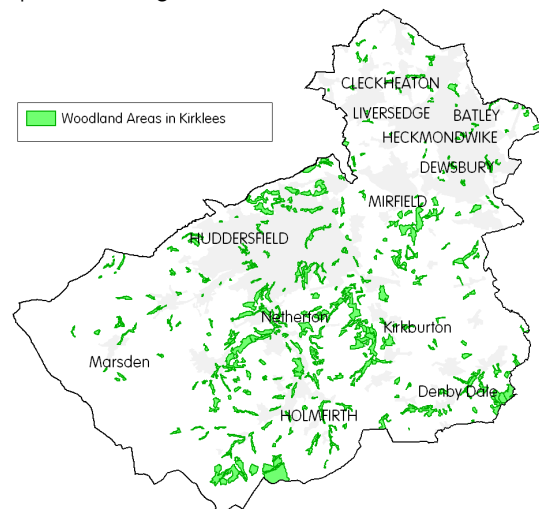


The Forest Habitat Network - Introduction

It is estimated that there are 3,720 ha of woodland cover within Kirklees (just under 10% - identified from aerial photographs and other available information). This includes upland oak and ash woodlands, ancient woodland, replanted ancient woodlands, plantations of broad-leaved and coniferous woodland and, more recently planted areas which are at various stages of developing into woodland cover.

Of this 'forest' resource 991 ha is ancient woodland, some of which is replanted. The nature of this replanting (ie with alien species, native types or mixed) is not known. Nor are there quantitative data about other categories of woodland (although it is known that at least 500 ha of woodland exists, with a component of upland oak woodland).

What these figures do not include, however, is the full extent that other habitats contribute to this forest resource: forest is much more than tree cover and includes the whole range of habitats that lead to closed canopy cover. This forest habitat mosaic – and all its constituent parts - should be the focus of biodiversity work. It will also be a component of an ecological Green Network being developed throughout the district (see Biodiversity Opportunities Map).



© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Kirklees Council, Licence Number 100019241.

Woodland cover in Kirklees

The habitats associated with that forest habitat network includes, all of the woodland types which might be expected to occur in the district: the upland oak woodland, lowland deciduous woodland, mixed ash woodland, wet woodland and, in addition, the heaths, grassland, scrub and wetlands. This section deals with the woodland types.

Although some areas of woodland are being managed - for timber, amenity, or biodiversity - significant areas are not. Consequently the woodland resource in Kirklees is not being fully utilised. For biodiversity, there is much to be gained from exploiting the resource, both in restoring ancient woodlands and increasing the species and structural diversity of mature plantations and, new planting.

Fortunately, there is now a presumption against the clearance of any broad-leaved woodland for conversion to other land uses and an ambition to maintain the ecological interest of ancient semi-natural woodland – nationally and locally.