



Forestry England

For external consultation
June 14th - July 21st 2023

Dymock Woods SSSI Management Plan

2023-2033

Rachel Giles

Summer 2023



Contents	Page
Agreement and consent	3
SSSI notification	4-5
List of potentially damaging operations	6-7
Location and ownership	8
Work carried out in SSSI since previous plan was written	9
SSSI objectives 2023-33	10
Dymock Woods SSSI Action Plan	11
SSSI Management Map 1 - veteran trees marked with bat and bird boxes	12
SSSI Management Map 2 - birch coppicing in Unit 1	13
SSSI Management Map 3 - hazel and other broadleaf coppicing in Units 2 and 3	14
SSSI Management Map 4 - rideside management	15
SSSI Management Map 5 - other management	16

About this plan

Although the previously approved SSSI management plan for Dymock Woods (2019-2024) has not yet expired, it makes sense to agree a refreshed version now, so that its time frame is the same as that of the Forest Plan ie 2023-2033. Most of the objectives and actions will be carried through from the 2019 plan, with the main change being that Unit 3 - Betty Daws Wood - is no longer being managed by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, so the objectives and actions for that area are now incorporated into this plan.

Agreement and consent

Forest district	West England Forest District
Woodland or property name	Dymock Woods SSSI
Nearest town, village or locality	Newent, Gloucestershire
OS grid reference	Centre of SSSI unit 1 is at SO 6915 2895 Centre of SSSI unit 2 is at SO 6844 2881 Centre of SSSI unit 3 is at SO 6966 2833
Period of plan	2023-2033

Kevin Stannard
Forest Management Director
West England Forest District

Date

Natural England

Date

The signing of this plan by Natural England gives the necessary consent under Section 28 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended, for the management prescriptions detailed in this plan to be undertaken without necessity to consult prior to each operation during the plan.

Forestry England will keep a written record of work carried out during the period of this plan.

SSSI Notification

Notification Date: 14 May 1990

COUNTY: GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SITE NAME: DYMOCK WOODS

DISTRICT: FOREST OF DEAN

SITE REF: 15 WYT

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, Forest of Dean District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 684288, Area: 53.0 (ha.) 131.0 (ac.) SO 692290, SO 697283

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 149 1:10,000: SO 62 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): - Date of Last Revision: -

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1990 Date of Last Revision: -

Other Information: New site. Part held as a nature reserve by the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Dymock Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest is situated a few miles south-west of Dymock in north-west Gloucestershire. The site contains the best areas of mature sessile oak *Quercus petraea* plantation that remain in the larger area of woodland known as Dymock Forest. These plantations, which are on an ancient woodland site, have developed a high forest structure and show much of the character of semi-natural woodland. The site is important as a good example of sessile oak dominated woodland over both acidic and calcareous soils. Dymock Forest is also important for invertebrates, particularly moths and butterflies *Lepidoptera*.

Dymock Woods lie on freely draining acidic soils derived from Old Red Sandstone. Where streams occur they cut through the Old Red Sandstone to the underlying base-rich Silurian rocks. This gives rise to an acidic flora over most of the site with species characteristic of base-rich soils along the streams.

In the acidic areas the woodland is dominated by sessile oak with frequent silver birch *Betula pendula* and wild cherry *Prunus avium*. Wild service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* is scattered throughout the site. The understorey is dominated by hazel *Corylus avellana* with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*. The woodland along the streams is dominated by sessile oak and, locally, by alder *Alnus glutinosa*. Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* are present in these areas. The understorey here is dominated by hazel and contains calcicole (lime-loving) species such as wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*.

The ground flora is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* throughout most of the site. Many typical woodland species such as bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* occur together with calcifuge (lime-hating) species such as heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bilberry

Vaccinium myrtillus and common cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*. The ground flora along the streams is dominated by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* with species such as woodruff *Galium odoratum* and sanicle *Sanicula europaea*. Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, which carpets the woodland floor in early spring, is a particular feature of Dymock Woods. Other locally uncommon species include bitter-vetch *Lathyrus montanus*, tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum* and lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis*.

Dymock Forest is important for butterflies and moths. The nationally restricted pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne* and wood white *Leptidea sinapis* occur as well as the uncommon white admiral *Ladoga camilla*. Over 400 species of moth have been recorded including 18 nationally scarce species. These include great oak beauty *Boarmia roboraria* and satin lutestring *Tetheella fluctuosa*, the larvae of which feed on oak and birch respectively. Other scarce moths are associated with particular woodland herbs. For example, bleached pug *Eupithecia expallidata*, the larvae of which feed on golden-rod *Solidago virgaurea* and drab looper *Minoa murinata* whose larvae feed on wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*.

A nest-box scheme operates in Betty Daw's Wood where pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and nuthatch *Sitta europaea* have bred. The uncommon dormouse *Muscardinus avallonarius* has also been recorded.

List of potentially damaging operations

Ref	Type of operation	Agreed with Natural England - for the duration of the plan
2	The introduction of grazing and changes in the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).	No grazing planned during this plan period at Dymock.
3	The introduction of stock feeding and changes in stock feeding practice.	No stock feeding planned during this plan period at Dymock.
6	Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).	Glyphosate may be applied to the known patch of invasive, non-native periwinkle in Unit 2 (it has been effective at clearing it up previously) and we may need to use Asulox on bracken if it is stifling the coppice regeneration
7	Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.	No dumping, spreading or discharge planned during this plan period at Dymock (for road grading, see 21 below).
8	Burning.	No burning planned during this plan period at Dymock.
9	The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic animal*, plant or seed.	No release of animals planned during this plan period at Dymock.
10	The killing or removal of any wild animal*, other than pest control.	No removal of animals planned during this plan period at Dymock.
11	The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus and leafmould.	Patches of birch will be coppiced once or twice in the plan period. Some ridesides will be cleared and allowed to regenerate. Oak seed stand will be assessed for readiness for thinning in 2027. All the above actions will be preceded by consultation with the ecologist.
12	Changes in tree and/or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clear and selective felling, thinning, coppicing, modification of the stand or underwood, changes in species composition, cessation of management.	Thinning operations and coppicing are described in 11 above. Some locally sourced oaks may be planted to supplement the 2008 planting in Unit 1. After coppicing the areas of birch in Unit 1, we intend to plant small numbers of additional native species eg hazel, guelder rose and alder buckthorn in order to reduce the dominance of the birch regeneration.

Ref	Type of operation	Agreed with Natural England - for the duration of the plan
13b	Modification of the structure of watercourses (eg streams or ditches), including their banks and beds, as by re-alignment, re-grading and dredging.	No deliberate modifications of watercourses, but if trees fall into the stream in Unit 1, they will be left where they fall.
14	The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation (including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes).	No changing of water levels planned during this plan period at Dymock.
20	Extraction of minerals, including topsoil and subsoil.	No extraction of minerals planned during this plan period at Dymock.
21	Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.	Forest road in Unit 2 may need to be reinstated following operations in neighbouring compartments. The ecologist will be consulted.
22	Storage of materials.	No storage of materials planned for this plan period at Dymock.
23	Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.	No erection of structures or engineering works planned during this plan period at Dymock - apart from road grading - see 21 above.
26	Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest.	Machines to be used for thinning, coppicing and rideside management may include harvester, forwarder and tractor. Operations will be preceded by a consultation process which will involve the ecologist, and will minimise ground damage by being implemented at an appropriate scale and time of year.
27	Recreational or other activities likely to damage woodland habitat.	No expansion or development of recreational activities planned for this plan period at Dymock.
28	Introduction of game management and changes in game management and hunting practice.	No game management planned for this plan period at Dymock.
* 'animal' includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.		

For any operations not in this list or in the Action Plan, we will contact Natural England for consent at the time.

Location and ownership

Dymock Woods SSSI is located in the northwest corner of Gloucestershire, approximately 2.5 miles northeast of Newent (Figure 1). It sits on the eastern edge of a much larger area of woodland owned and managed by Forestry England. The SSSI is divided into three units (Figure 2).

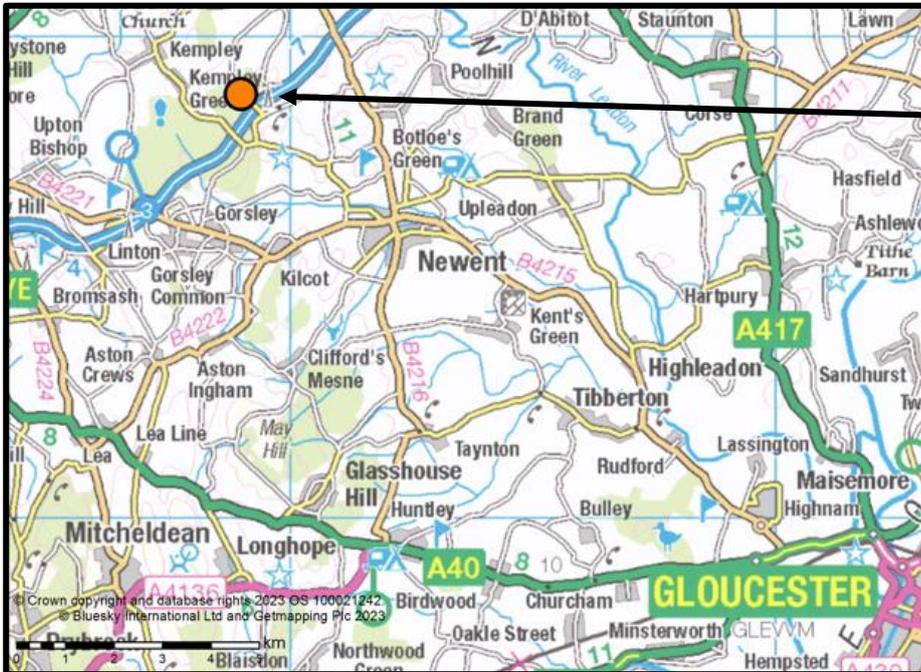
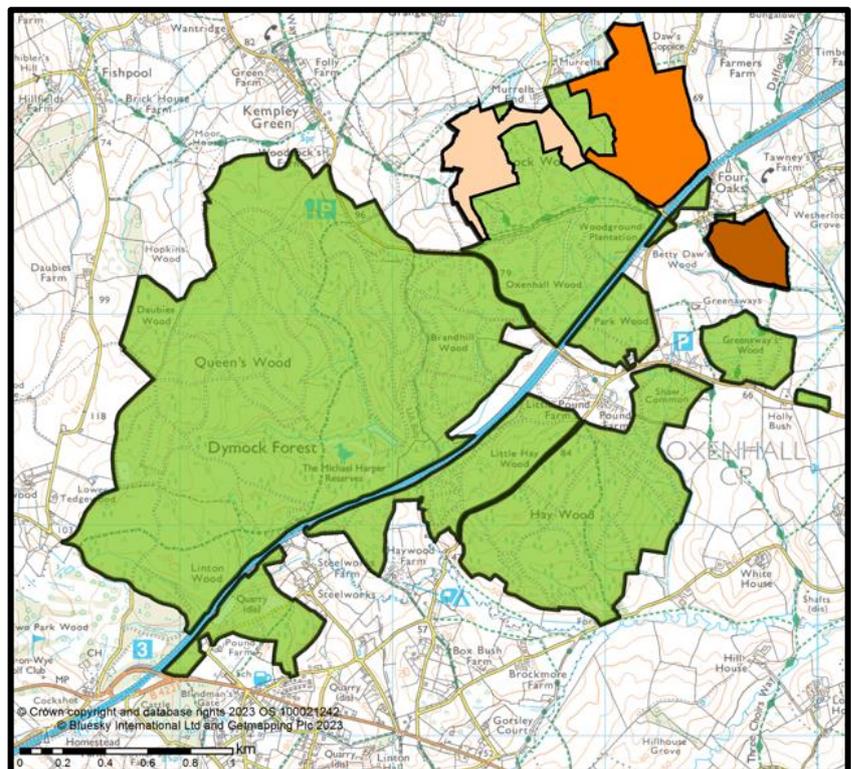


Figure 1
Location of Dymock Woods SSSI

Figure 2
The SSSI units are within the eastern edge of Forestry England’s Dymock Woods



Work carried out in SSSI since previous plan was written (2019)

Considering the fact that the SSSI plan is only four years old, a substantial amount of the proposed work has been carried out:

- Patches of conifers were felled in an earlier SSSI plan period. These were partially planted with sessile oak, and the gaps have regenerated mainly with birch, which has been coppiced periodically. Temporary fencing and brash fencing **photo (top right)** is used to protect the coppice regrowth, although deer damage is an ongoing major problem.
- A “deadwood creation zone” was mapped and several large trees have been felled and left as fallen deadwood - see **photo (centre right)**.
- The area of periwinkle in Unit 2 was sprayed effectively with Roundup in 2021.
- Non-native conifer regeneration adjacent to the stream in Unit 1 has been removed.
- Vegetation on rides and track junctions has been cut periodically and most rides are well structured.
- Bat and bird boxes have been attached to several trees to identify them as ones which will be retained as future veterans. These trees have been mapped on the conservation layer of Forester Web (GIS).
- Vegetation has been cleared from around the pond - see **photo (below right)**.
- Bird and dormouse boxes in Betty Daws Wood have been monitored by volunteers.



The one action from the previous plan that has not been implemented yet is the proposed enrichment planting under oak stands and in gaps, because it needs more careful consideration as to how the new planting would be protected from deer / squirrels.

SSSI objectives 2023-33

All three SSSI units were recorded as unfavourable-recovering in 2013 (due to “*lack of age structure, lack of veteran trees and scarce deadwood; limited open space; management activities planned but not implemented*”), so the overall aim of management is:

to restore the native broadleaved woodland habitats and associated flora and fauna of the SSSI to favourable condition

with more specific objectives:

- Protect and restore native woodland habitats and species
- Increase structural diversity
- Identify and protect future veteran trees
- Increase deadwood
- Provide temporary open space through coppicing and rideside management
- Ensure that management objectives are regularly monitored

The actions that will deliver these objectives are listed in the table below.

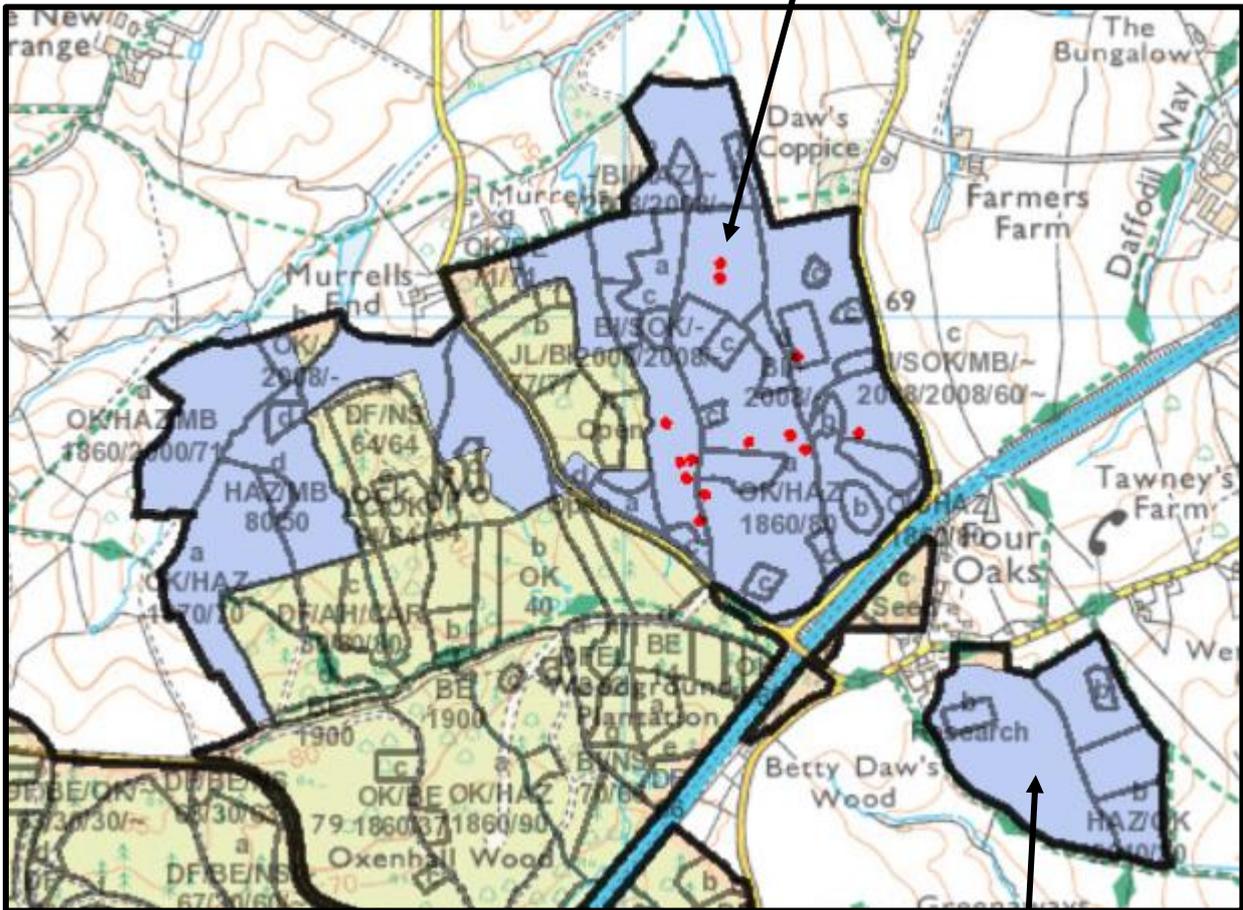
Dymock Woods SSSI Action Plan Actions - what we will do (2023-33) See also SSSI Management Maps on pages 12-16	Objectives - what we hope to achieve					Monitoring - how we will measure success **note that some of these are long-term goals - possibly not evidenced in this Forest Plan period
	Protect and restore native woodland habitats and species	Increase structural diversity	Identify and protect future veteran trees	Increase deadwood	Increase open space	
Thinning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The oak stands will be assessed for readiness for thinning in 2027 Thinning will favour the trees with the best timber potential AND those with future veteran / biodiversity potential Crownwood will be left to add to the dead and decaying wood resource A few trees (agreed between ecologist and forester) will be “pulled over” and left, creating the jagged deadwood preferred by beetles and other invertebrates (Management Map 5) In future plan periods, small groups of trees will be felled to create gaps for natural regeneration and planting (this is unlikely to be appropriate in 2023-33 due to the threat of squirrel damage, and as there are already several small areas of recent (2008) planting) 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have oaks been thinned to favour trees for timber and biodiversity? Has deadwood resource been increased? **Have gaps been created in oak canopy? **
Coppicing (Management Maps 2 and 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coppice - areas of birch in Unit 1 will be coppiced to provide material for horse jumps Coppice-with-standards - two areas of hazel in Unit 2, and a strip on the eastern edge of Unit 3 will be coppiced in the second half of the plan period - ideally by a contractor who can make use of the produce Minor species such as small leaved lime and wild service will be retained as future standards Dormouse best practice protocol will be followed with regard to scale and timings, and coppicing should ideally take place before the bird nesting season, OR be preceded by a good walk-through by the ecologist to check for nesting birds Coppice regrowth must be protected from deer (including muntjac) with temporary or semi-permanent fencing / brush piles 	✓	✓		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has coppicing been carried out as per Management Maps 2 and 3? Are minor species retained? Are dormice considered appropriately? Is coppice being adequately protected from deer damage?
Control of invasive, non-native species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periwinkle will be monitored and treated with herbicide if needed (Management Map 5) Non-native conifer regeneration will be monitored and removed before it becomes established 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are invasive, non-native species being controlled effectively?
Rideside vegetation management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridesides and the box junction will be worked in sections as per SSSI Management Maps 4 and 5 Three zone system* as described in Butterfly Conservation Guidance will be used Dormouse crossover points will be provided When planning work, dormice, flora (especially later flowering species such as devil's bit scabious) and weather / ground conditions will be considered 	✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have ridesides been worked as per Management Maps 4 and 5 and on a three zone system? Has work been carried out with due consideration of dormice, flora and conditions?
Identification and protection of future veteran trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 5 oaks per hectare will be marked with tags and / or nestboxes so that they are identified and protected during forest operations (Management Map 1) These future veterans will be marked on the conservation layer of our GIS system 			✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have enough future veterans been marked and mapped on the database?
Enrichment planting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2008 oaks will be assessed and additional trees planted if needed Tree tubes from 2008 will be removed 	✓	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have unsuccessful trees been supplemented with planting and redundant tubes removed?
Species monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nestboxes and species will be monitored across the SSSI (mostly by volunteers) Data will be recorded on our Sharepoint site for future reference 	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have nestboxes and species been monitored by volunteers and data recorded for future reference?

*zone 1 - closest to the ride centre is cut once or twice a year to facilitate access; zone 2 - the next 2-5m to the side of zone 1 is cut in sections on 3-4 year rotation; zone 3 - 5-10m strip between zone 2 and the woodland is managed as coppice on 8-20 year rotation

SSSI Management Map 1 - veteran trees marked with bat and bird boxes

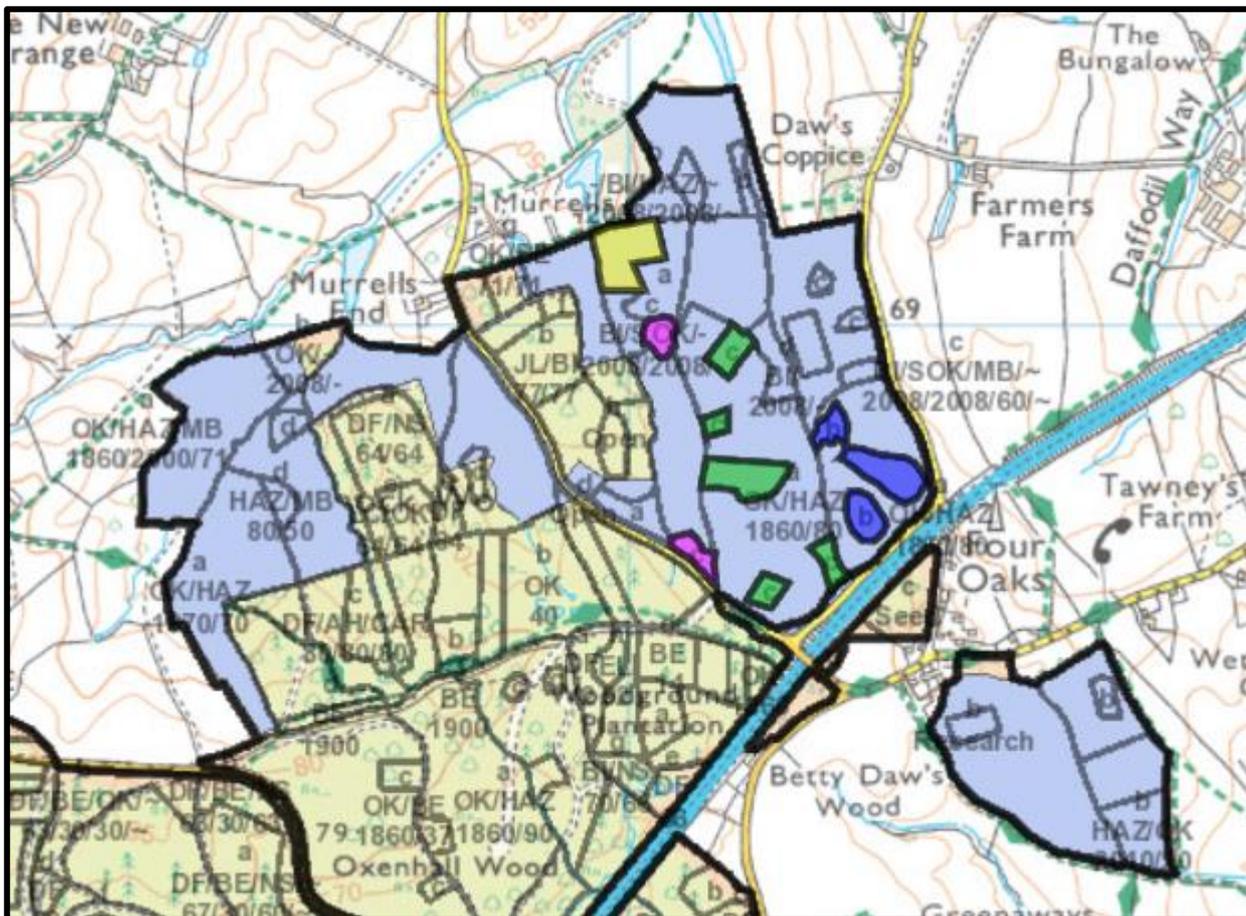
Additional bat / bird boxes will be attached to more future veterans in Units 1 and 2 over the next few years

Red spots are the location of bat / bird boxes marking future veteran trees in Unit 1



Approximately 40 bird boxes in Unit 3 are part of a long-term monitoring scheme, and do not necessarily mark future veteran trees

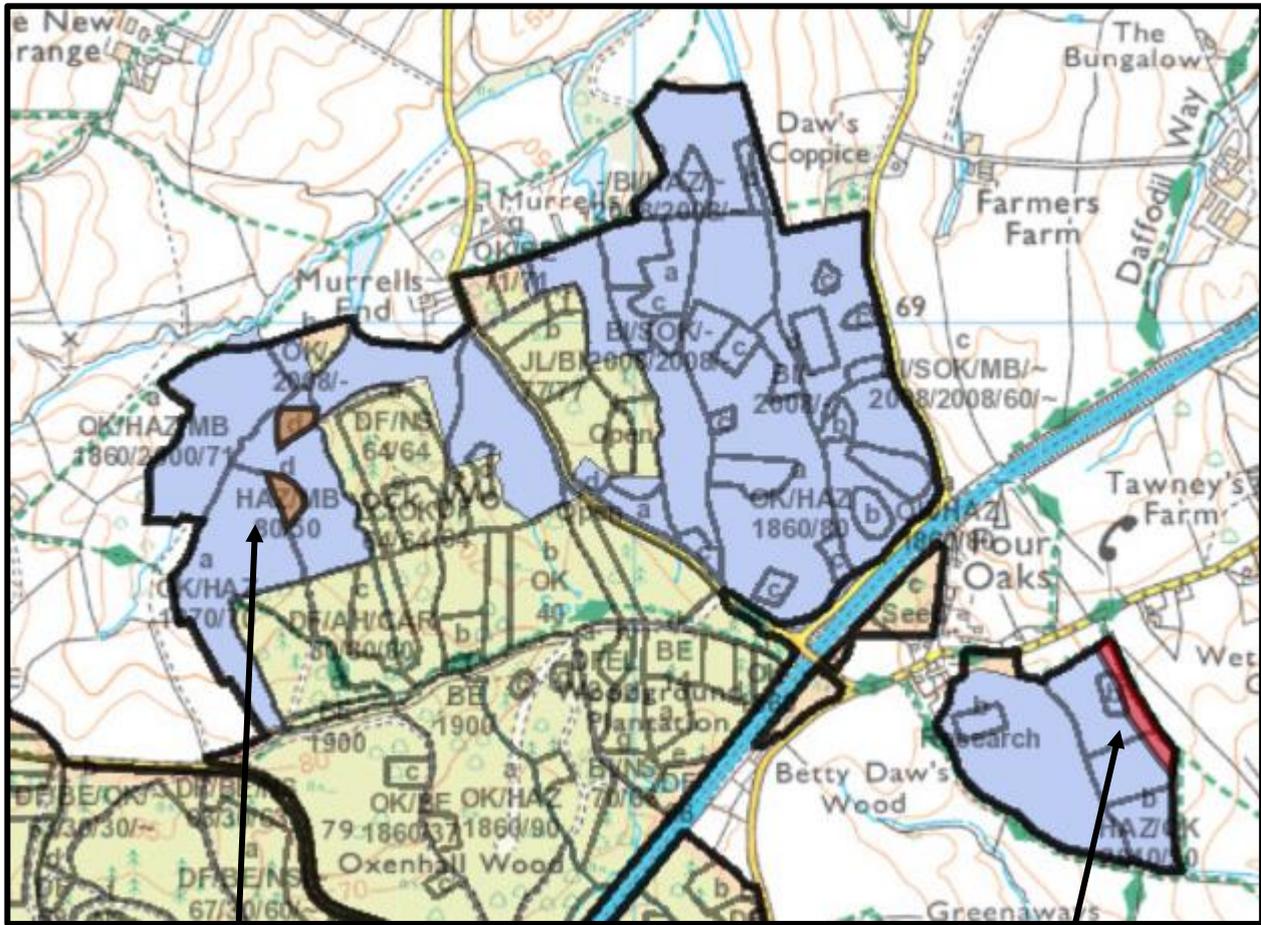
SSSI Management Map 2 - birch coppicing in Unit 1



Birch coppice coupes in Unit 1 will ideally be cut every 3 to 5 years; after cutting, small numbers of new trees (eg hazel, guelder rose, alder buckthorn) should be planted to increase species diversity

- Green coupe - 1.56ha - will be cut in 2023 and 2027
- Blue coupe - 1.24ha - will be cut in 2024 and 2028
- Pink coupe - 0.5ha - will be cut in 2025 and 2029
- Yellow coupe - 0.9ha - will be cut 2026 and 2030

SSSI Management Map 3 - hazel and other broadleaf coppicing in Units 2 and 3



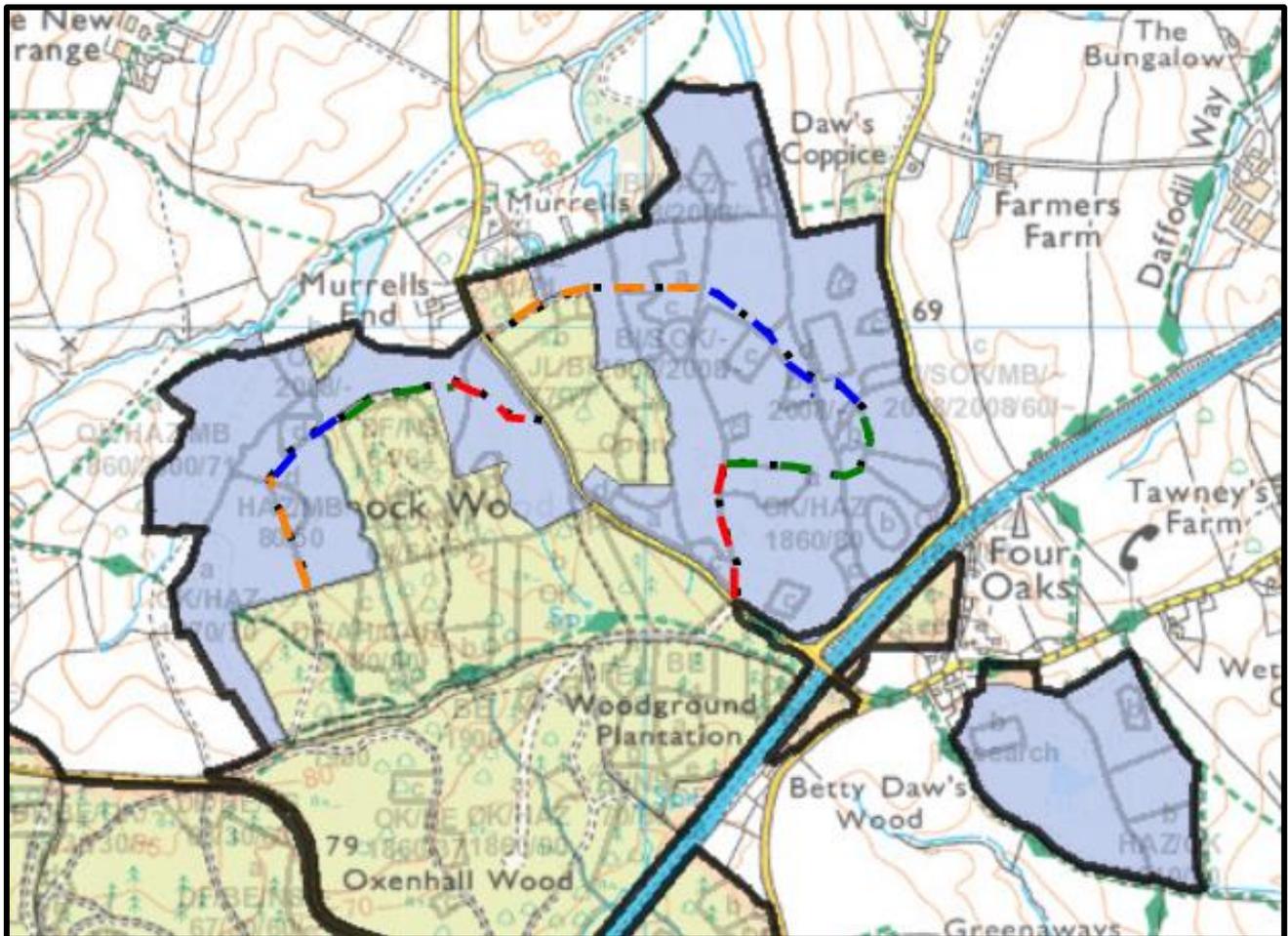
Hazel coppice coupe - two small areas totalling 0.53ha - in Unit 2 (brown) will be cut in the second half of the plan period - 2029-2032 depending on contractor availability and size / marketability of product

Coppice coupe - 0.5ha - of hazel and other broadleaves in Unit 3 (red) will be cut in the first half of the plan period - 2023-2028

Depending on contractor availability and budget for fencing this may be cut in several small coupes, or as one

Further coppicing may be carried out in Unit 3 if budget for fencing becomes available

SSSI Management Map 4 - rideside management



The central area of the main rides will be mown annually

In addition, the vegetation between the mown area and the forest behind will be coppiced on a 4 year rotation working towards the three zone system described above in the action plan

Approximately 250-300 metres of rideside in Unit 1 and 150-200 metres in Unit 2 will be worked in this way each year:

- Red sections - 2023 and 2027
- Blue sections - 2024 and 2028
- Green sections - 2025 and 2029
- Orange sections - 2026 and 2030

Note that timing of rideside management will need to be adaptive and reactive to weather and site conditions - it also needs to be done at a time of year when ground flora will not be damaged, and should only be carried out with the ecologist's approval

SSSI work plan 2023-2033

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Consider thinning the oaks					✓					
Create more deadwood	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Birch coppicing in Unit 1 as per Management Map 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coppicing on eastern edge of Unit 3					✓					
Coppicing two areas in Unit 2								✓		
Monitor the spread of periwinkle and treat with herbicide if needed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rideside coppicing as per Management Map 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Box junction coppicing in Unit 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identify more future veteran trees in Unit 1; put bird / bat boxes onto them	✓	✓								
Assess success of 2008 oak planting and add more if needed	✓	✓								
Monitor bird / bat boxes in Units 1 and 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓