Forestry England

Wapley Forest Plan

2026-2036

Reference OP10/19

Rachel Giles

Spring 2026

FSC
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Forestry England forests and woodlands have been certified in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)

PEFC
PEFC/16-40-1001
Promoting Sustainable Forest Management
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Application for Forest Plan approval
Wapley – Spring 2026

Forest district	West England Forest District
Woodland name	Wapley (includes Stapleton, Lingen, Wapley and Birches)
Nearest town	Presteigne
OS grid reference	Centre of the Plan area is at SO 3434 6457
Local authority	- Herefordshire Council - Stapleton Parish Council (Stapleton) - Willey Parish Council (Stapleton and Lingen) - Lingen Parish Council (Lingen) - Staunton on Arrow Parish Council (Wapley and Birches)

Plan area	259.85 hectares
Conifer felling	6.60 hectares
Broadleaf felling	0.58 hectares

1) I apply for Forest Plan approval for the property described above and in the enclosed Forest Plan.

2) I confirm that the scoping, carried out and documented in the consultation record attached, incorporated those stakeholders that the FC agreed must be included. Where it has not been possible to resolve specific issues associated with the Plan to the satisfaction of consultees, this is highlighted in the consultation record.

3) I confirm that the proposals contained in this Plan comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

4) I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

Signed: Kevin Stannard, Forest Management Director, West Forest District, Forestry England.

Date:

Signed: Forestry Commission Area Director

Date of approval…… **Date approval ends**……

Contents

About the Forest Plan

Forest plans define the long-term vision for our forests and set out how our management will move towards achieving this vision. They focus on the main features of each woodland, in particular the species and structural composition and biodiversity interests, and set out proposals for how we will manage them to increase resilience, productivity and value for wildlife and people in the future.

Forestry England vision

Forestry England is the country's largest land manager.

Our purpose is to secure and grow the social, economic and natural capital value of the nation's forests.

The foundation of our organisation is our world-class sustainable management of the nation's forests.

Our vision for wildlife…

The nation's forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

Our vision for people…

The nation's forests are a living treasure for all, deeply connected to people's lives improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Our vision for climate…

The nation's forests are resilient to climate change, increasing their value for communities by producing high-quality, sustainable timber and absorbing carbon emissions.

The above is taken from 'Growing the future: 2021-2026':
https://www.forestryengland.uk/growing-the-future

For more information about who we are and what we do, please visit:
https://www.forestryengland.uk

Our vision for Wapley…

Over the coming decades, we will increase the species and structural diversity of the woodlands in the Wapley Forest Plan area, using a variety of management methods including clearfelling and restocking, alongside low impact silvicultural systems. This diversification will ensure that the woodlands are resilient to future changes, so that they continue to generate a sustainable source of timber, while providing a wealth of other services, including space for people to enjoy, and places for biodiversity to flourish.

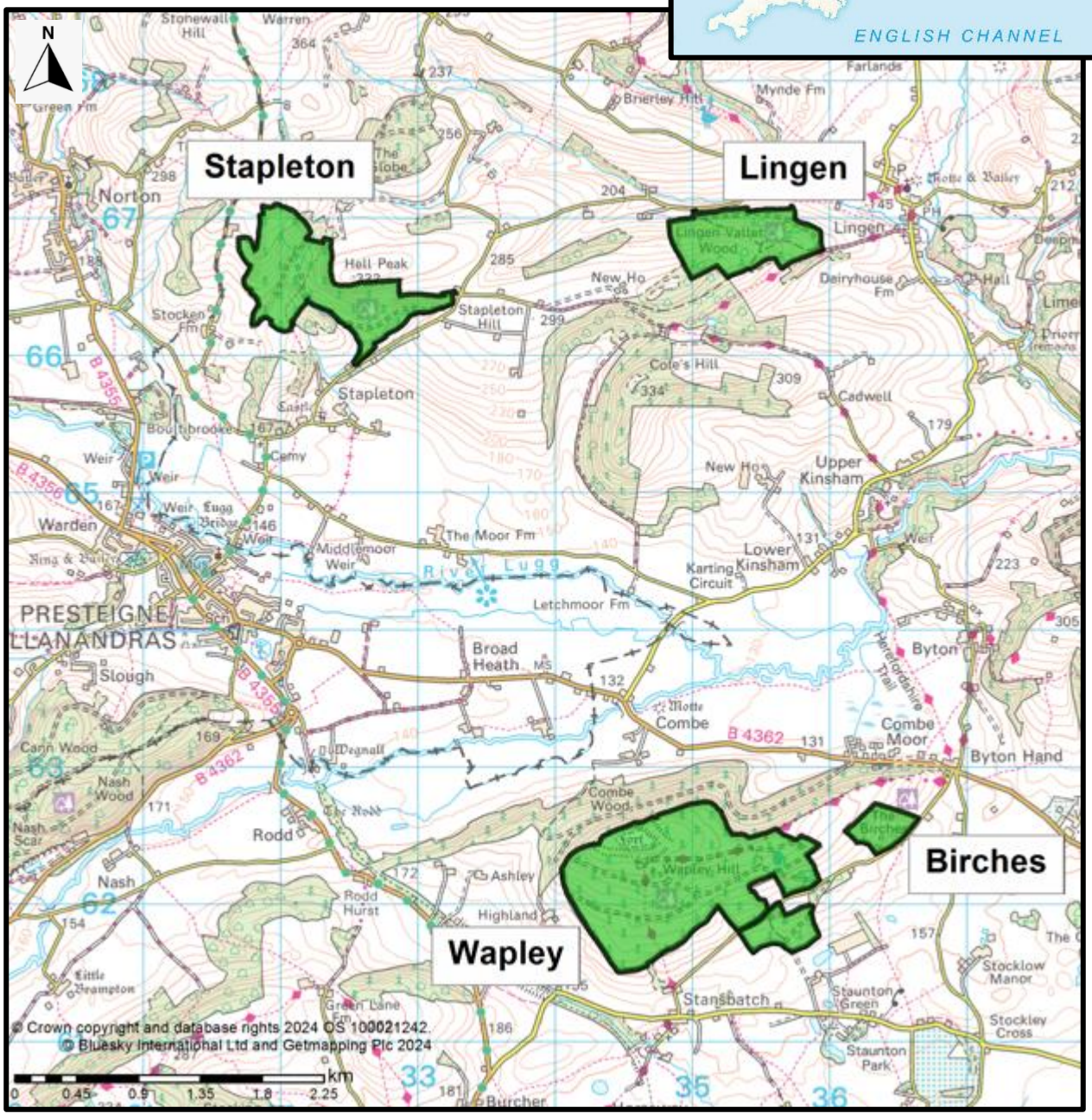
About Wapley

Location

The Wapley Forest Plan area consists of four woodlands, close to the Welsh border, in northwest Herefordshire – Stapleton, Lingen, Wapley and Birches – which together cover just under 260 hectares (**Figure 1a and 1b**).

Figure 1a
Location of the Wapley Forest Plan area

Figure 1b – Location of the four woodlands



Landscape

The Wapley Forest Plan area lies within a gently rolling mixed agricultural landscape with small woodland blocks. All four woods are sloping, which can create challenging working conditions, and Wapley and Stapleton are prominent in the local landscape.

Herefordshire Council carried out a county-wide landscape character assessment in 2023 (**Figure 2**), which allocated the Wapley area a landscape character type profile of 'wooded limestone uplands'. Many of the key characteristics of this landscape type sum up the features of our Wapley woodlands very well, including:

- Well wooded, with broadleaf woodlands and conifer plantations;
- Small streams rising in the uplands and draining into the river valleys below;
- Sparsely populated landscape with isolated farms and cottages; and
- Iron Age hillforts visible on hill tops.

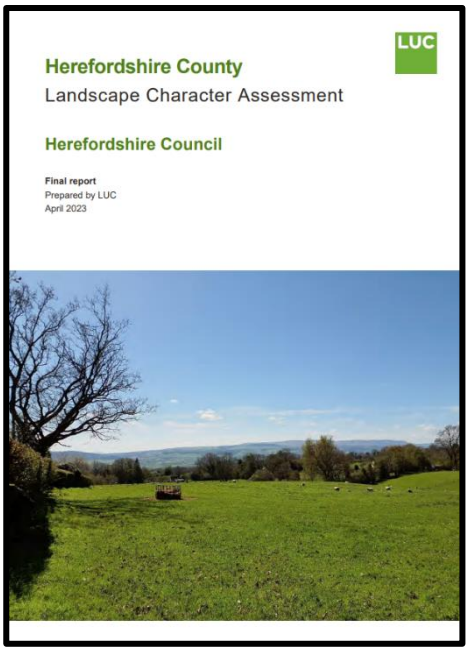


Figure 2 - Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2023)

Access

All four woodlands are designated as open access, with forest roads and rides which provide plenty of places to walk.

Wapley has a car park where visitors can park to walk to the hillfort, and enjoy the waymarked trail. The Herefordshire Trail and the Mortimer Trail long distance footpaths cross the site (Figure 3).

Figure 3 - The Mortimer Trail and The Herefordshire Trail pass through an avenue of Lawson's Cypress at Wapley

There is room for a couple of cars to park at the southern entrance to Stapleton and a public footpath runs through the centre of the site.

People can access Lingen from the public footpath that runs along the southeastern boundary, and Birches is accessible from the road.

Biodiversity

As islands of woodland in an otherwise predominantly agricultural landscape, the four woods provide a range of habitats including broadleaf and conifer stands, open space, streams and dead wood (Figure 4), and a refuge for many species of animals and birds. Sightings of species of interest, and of protected species such as goshawk, are recorded on our GIS system.

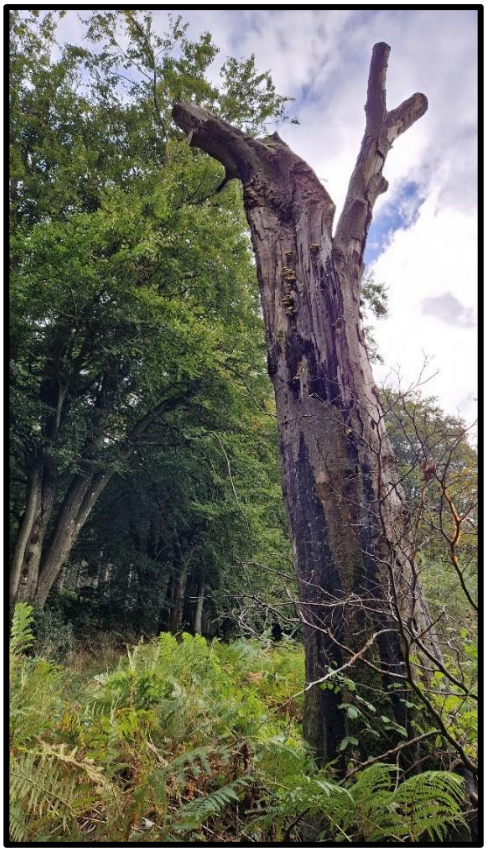


Figure 4 - Open space, stream and deadwood in the Wapley woods

Threats and challenges

Expected changes in climate may lead to an increase in the number of pests and diseases endangering UK trees and forests. Ash trees across the country, including those in Wapley, are suffering from dieback, but another disease that is significant at a national level – *Phytophthora ramorum* of larch – is not present in the area yet. Deer and grey squirrels cause damage to young and regenerating trees. Prolific bramble growth at Wapley may stifle regeneration, but may also offer some protection from deer damage.

In some areas of the country, warmer, drier weather may increase the risk of wildfires, but according to our fire risk assessment, the Wapley plan area has a low risk of fire (estimated using factors including proximity to urban areas, land use and history of previous fires).

Heritage

Wapley Iron Age Hillfort is a scheduled monument (**Figure 5**) and is of national importance for its complex system of ramps and ditches. There are also pillow mounds – artificial earthworks constructed during the medieval period for the breeding and management of rabbits.

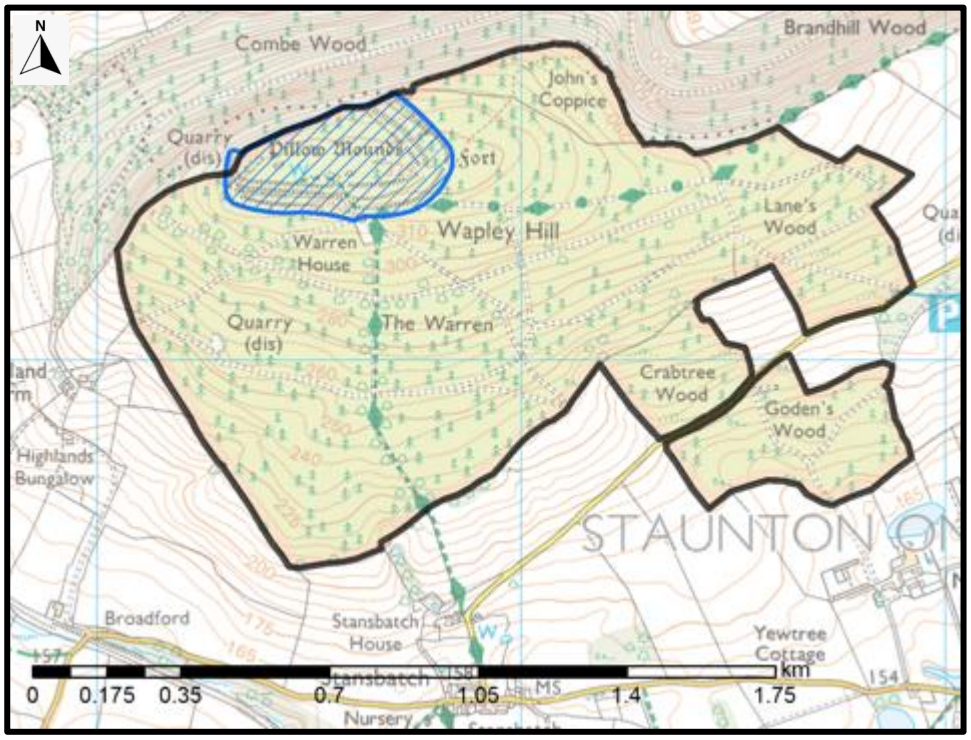


Figure 5
Left - map to show location of the scheduled monument on Wapley Hill
Below - looking west across the hillfort

In 2003, the Herefordshire Council Archaeology Team was commissioned by Forestry England (known as the Forestry Commission at the time) to survey Stapleton, Lingen and Wapley woods. They recorded more than 200 historical features within the woods, including charcoal burning platforms, woodbanks, wells and sunken tracks known as holloways.

Current tree species

Current proportions of broadleaves and conifers, as recorded in Forestry England's subcompartment database for the whole forest block (ie all four woods), are shown in Table 1 below. The line titled 'no species' includes areas that have recently been felled or are permanently open, such as Wapley hillfort.

Table 1 - Proportions of broadleaves and conifers in the plan area in autumn 2025	Area	Proportion of forest plan area
Broadleaves	61 hectares	24%
Conifers	179 hectares	69%
No species	19 hectares	7%
Total area	**259 hectares**	

Figure 6 shows the proportions of each tree species group in Wapley. The most common species, by a long way, is Douglas fir, which is present on 153 hectares – 59% of the total land area. The most common broadleaves are birch and beech, although other species dominate in particular areas, such as alder in Stapleton. The photos on page 10 show some of the types of woodland within the forest plan area.

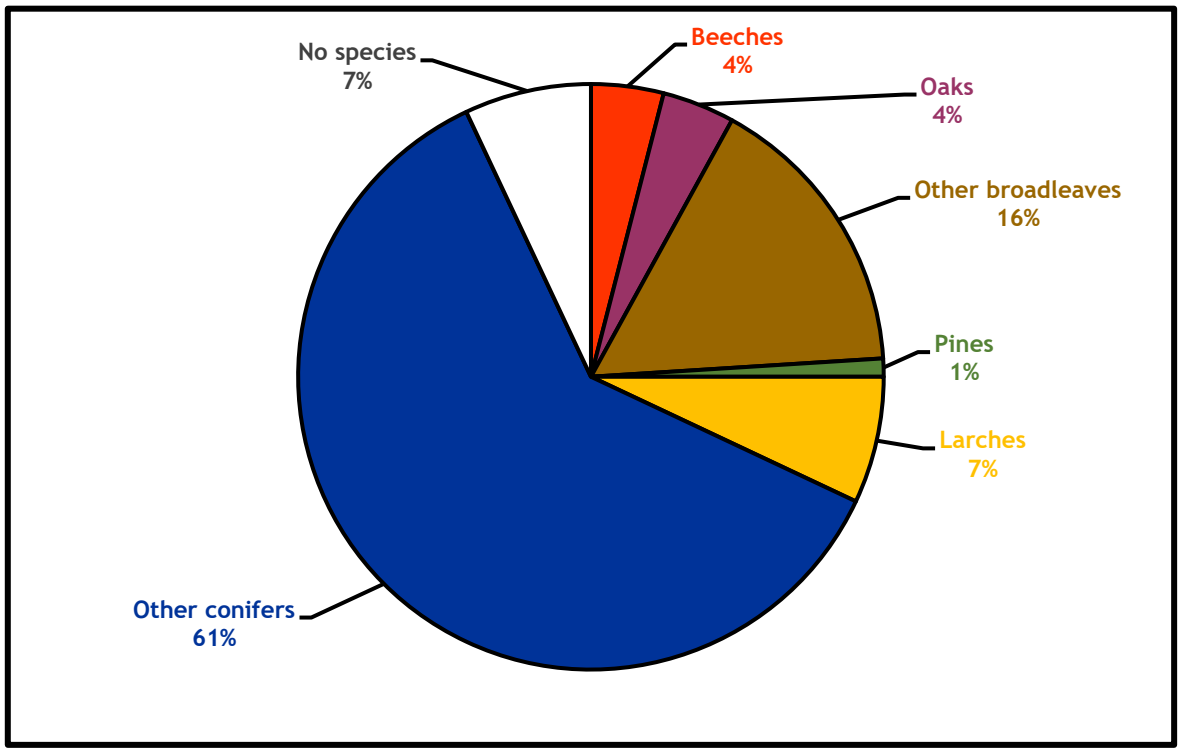


Figure 6 - Chart to show proportions of different species in the Wapley Forest Plan area

Figure 7 - Some of the types of trees and woodland in the Wapley Forest Plan area

Above - alder grows very well at Stapleton
Left - oak regeneration at Lingen

Above - beech avenue at Wapley

Above - two different types of conifer stand at Wapley - the top one is pure Douglas fir and in the lower one, a diverse understorey has been developed through careful thinning

Ancient woodland

Ancient woodland is any area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes:

- ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), which is mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration;
- plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), which are replanted with conifer or broadleaved trees, but retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi.

Secondary woodland is that which is growing on a site that has not been continuously wooded since 1600AD.

Figure 8 shows the extent of ancient woodland and PAWS in the Wapley woodlands. About two-thirds of Stapleton is either ancient woodland or PAWS. Lingen is all PAWS apart from a tiny section in the southeast corner which is recorded as ancient woodland. Wapley has some areas of PAWS at the eastern end, and Birches is all secondary woodland. In the past ten to twenty years, there has been a general movement towards PAWS restoration – that is the removal of conifers from ancient woodland sites, to facilitate an increase in proportions of native broadleaves.

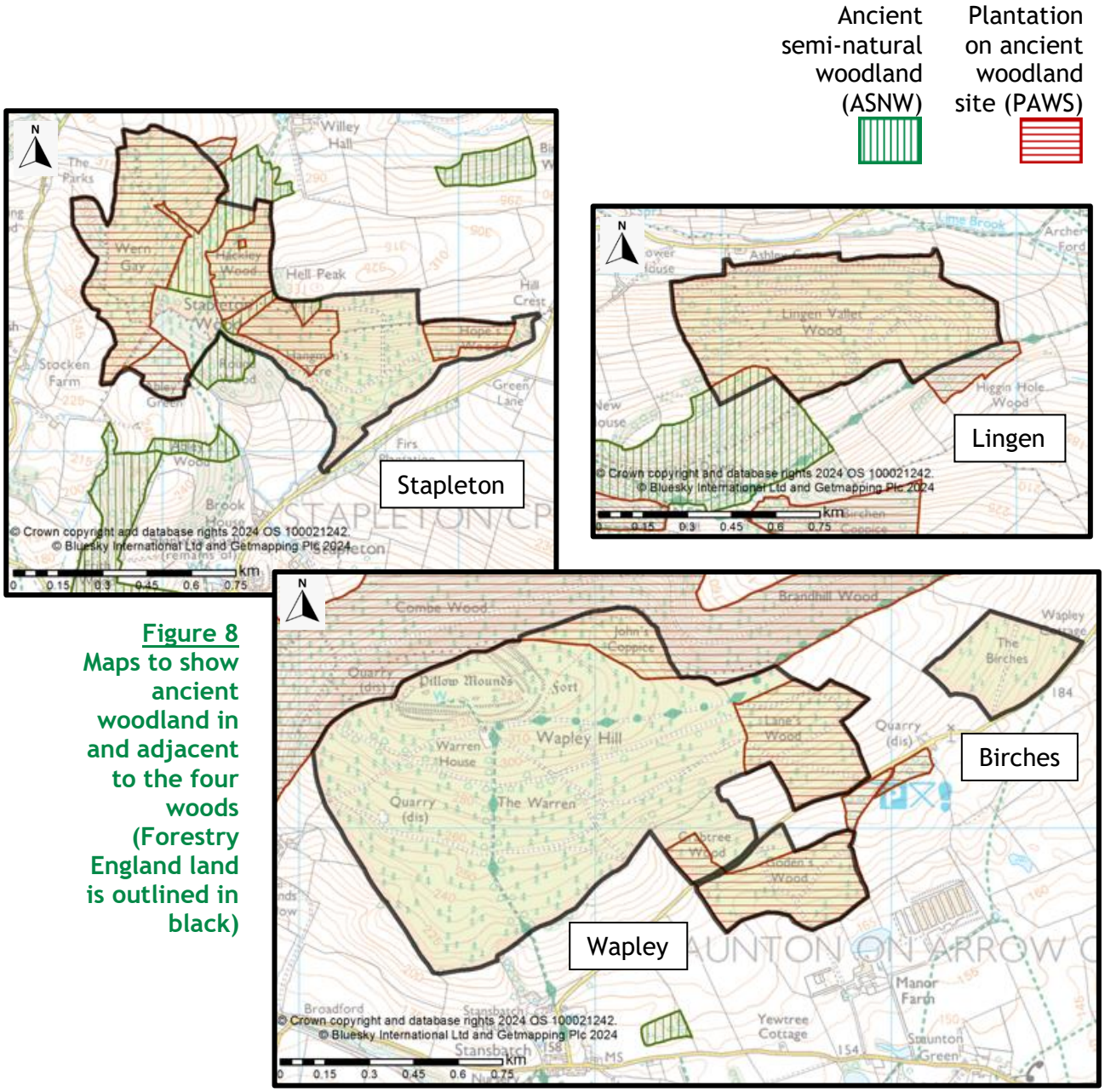


Figure 8
Maps to show ancient woodland in and adjacent to the four woods (Forestry England land is outlined in black)

Semi-natural scores

Figure 9 shows the current (autumn 2024) semi-natural scores for the woodlands in the Wapley plan area. These are a measure of how 'natural' or 'native' an area of woodland is, which is useful when prioritising which areas of PAWS need to be restored to become more native.

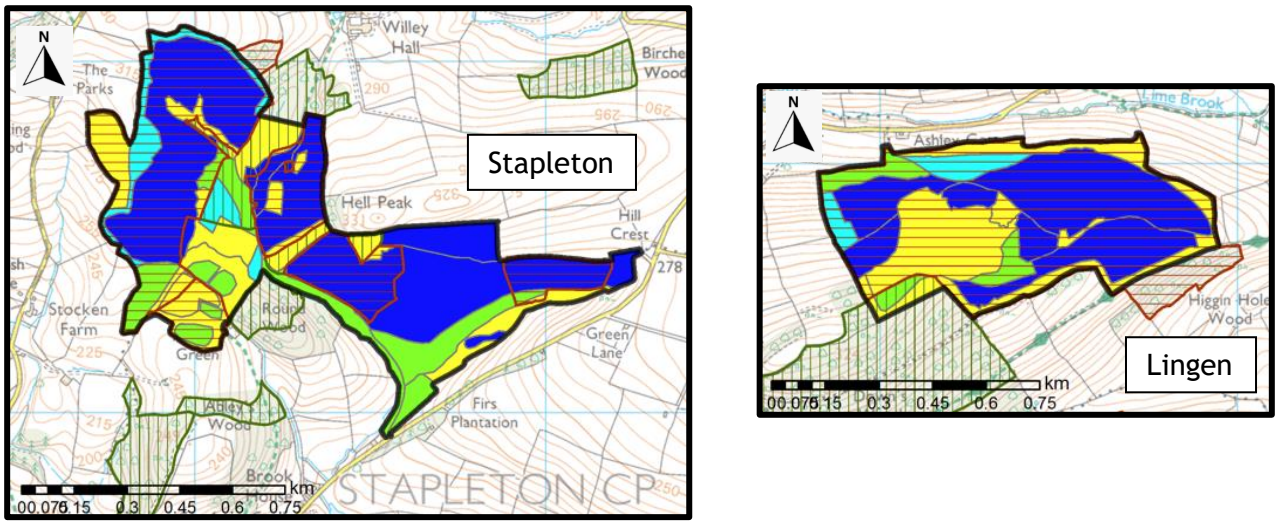
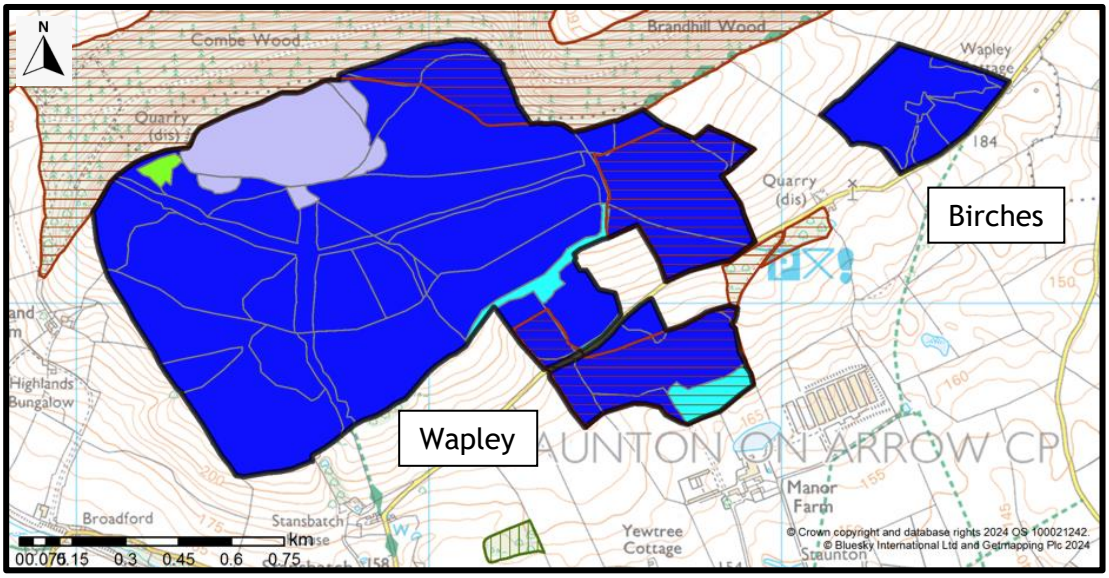


Figure 9 - Semi-natural scores in Wapley

- **Above left - Stapleton** - just under half of the area recorded as ancient woodland is already SN1 or 2 ie with more than 50% native species
- **Above right - Lingen** - the whole wood is recorded as ancient woodland - the yellow SN1 areas represent recent planting of native broadleaf species
- **Below - Wapley** - the majority of the PAWS areas are still SN4 ie dominated by non-native conifers

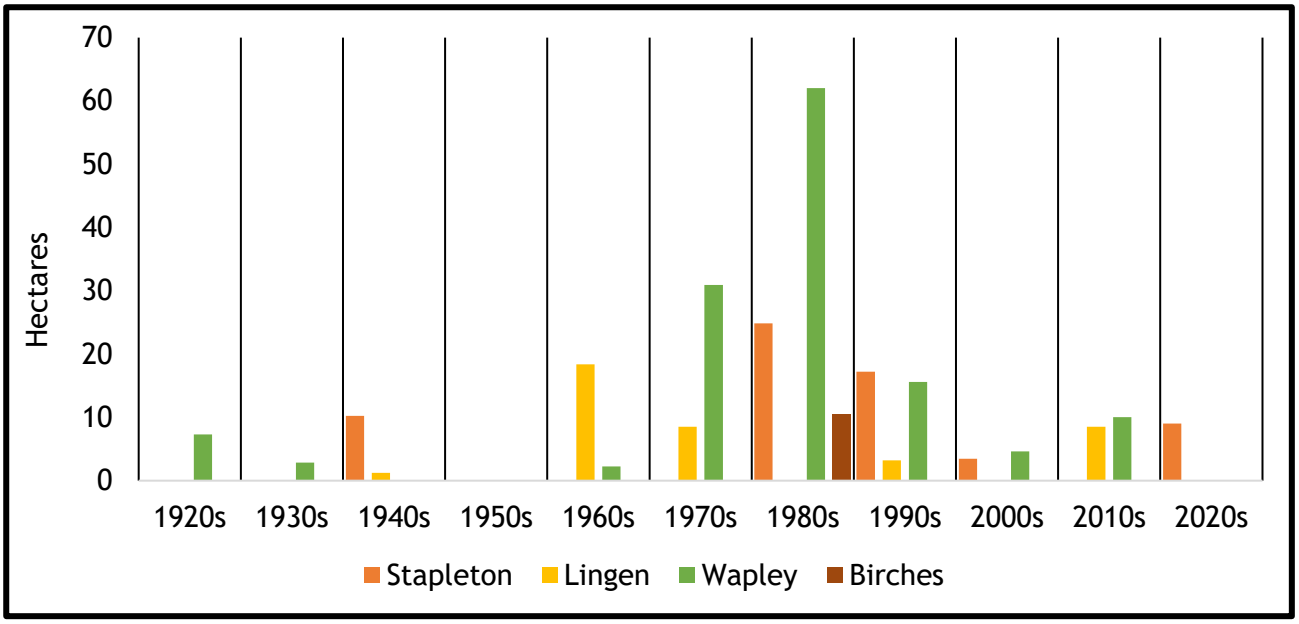


Key to semi-natural scores	
	SN1 = mostly or fully (more than 80%) native
	SN2 = 50 to 80% native
	SN3 = 20 to 50% native
	SN4 = predominantly non-native (less than 20% native)
	No trees

Current age composition

Figure 10 shows how many hectares of tree planting (or natural regeneration following coppicing or felling) took place in each of the woods in each decade. As with many Forestry England woods across the country, a great deal of planting took place between the 1960s and 1990s. Although Wapley has the widest age range of trees – with trees established during eight of the decades shown – it also has a very noticeable spike, which corresponds to the large proportion of single-age Douglas fir stands.

Figure 10 - Chart to show area (in hectares) of the Wapley Forest Plan area that was established in each decade



Old, and veteran, trees, with holes and gnarly branches and trunks provide valuable habitat for invertebrates and the species that feed upon them such as bats and birds. There are very few old trees in these woodlands – among the most notable are the beech avenues in Wapley, which were planted in the 1920s, and the sweet chestnut coppice stools in Birches (Figure 11).

Coppicing is a woodland management practice where broadleaf trees are cut at the base and allowed to regenerate with multiple new stems, which grow for a number of years and are then re-coppiced. Although the sweet chestnut in Birches Wood are dated 1985 in our database, this represents the year when they were most recently coppiced. The actual trees are much older.

Figure 11 - Old sweet chestnut coppice in Birches Wood

Wapley – what we are going to do

Summary of main activity

PAWS restoration through thinning

- Most PAWS areas will be thinned rather than clearfelled. We have agreed thinning objectives to maximise broadleaf regeneration in each stand – for example, where occasional broadleaves are growing within a conifer crop, we will thin around them to give them space to grow and for their seed to germinate, and thus increase the proportion of native species.

Timber production

- Most timber will come from thinning operations in all four woods – mainly conifer, but also some broadleaf. Further timber will be generated from the small ash clearfell in Stapleton and the Douglas fir clearfells in Wapley.

Diversification

- It is essential that we continue to increase the resilience of our woodlands to current and future threats, such as those resulting from climate change (eg pests, diseases and wildfire). The key to resilience is diversity – of species, structure and management type (**Figure 12**). All of our management is aiming to diversify in some way, whether it is clearfelling a pure Douglas fir stand and replacing it with a mixture of conifer species, or thinning to allow light into a broadleaf stand into which a lower storey can develop.

Habitats

- Open habitats have been recorded and will be managed as open / dynamic habitat.
- Main ridesides will continue to be cleared periodically.
- Deadwood will be left where possible.
- As resource allows, we will clear some trees from along the watercourses in Stapleton – previously they have been managed as minimum intervention, but it may be beneficial to heavily thin trees from alongside them to create a 50% open / 50% dappled shade habitat.
- Through the forest planning process, older trees, which can provide food and habitat for many species, have been identified and recorded on our GIS as Trees of Special Interest (TSI). Some stands, such the beech avenues in Wapley, have been identified for long-term retention to ensure that we start to create future veterans.

Figure 12 – Structural diversity in Lingen – trees of various species, ages and sizes, and open space

The next pages show the Analysis (what is there now) and Concept (what we'll do) for each of the woodlands in the plan area. **Table 2** on **page 17** is a detailed action plan for this forest plan period. This is followed by felling and restock maps.

Stapleton and Lingen – Analysis (A) and Concept (C)

A: what is there now; C: what we'll do

A: Douglas fir in the northwest of the site is PAWS, and is difficult to access – being on a steep slope and across a stream

C: We will not attempt to thin this crop, but will clearfell it in the 2040s and replace it with broadleaves

A: Some areas have been felled and left unplanted which has created temporary open space with scattered trees

C: These areas of dynamic, evolving habitat will be managed under minimum intervention for this plan period

A: The blue lines on the map show the watercourses, many parts of which are currently overshadowed by trees

C: When we are working in adjacent coupes, we will fell trees along watercourses – this will allow light in, and will create approximately 50% open: 50% dappled shade; we may also add woody debris to some of the higher reaches of the streams in order to encourage them to spill over their banks to create valuable wet woodland habitat

A: There are very few old trees in Lingen (veteran trees often have holes and cracks which provide valuable habitat for bats and invertebrates)

C: We will identify, and record on our database, the oldest trees on the site as potential future veterans

A: The predominantly Douglas fir crops at the eastern end of Lingen have quite a few large established beech and oak trees among the conifers

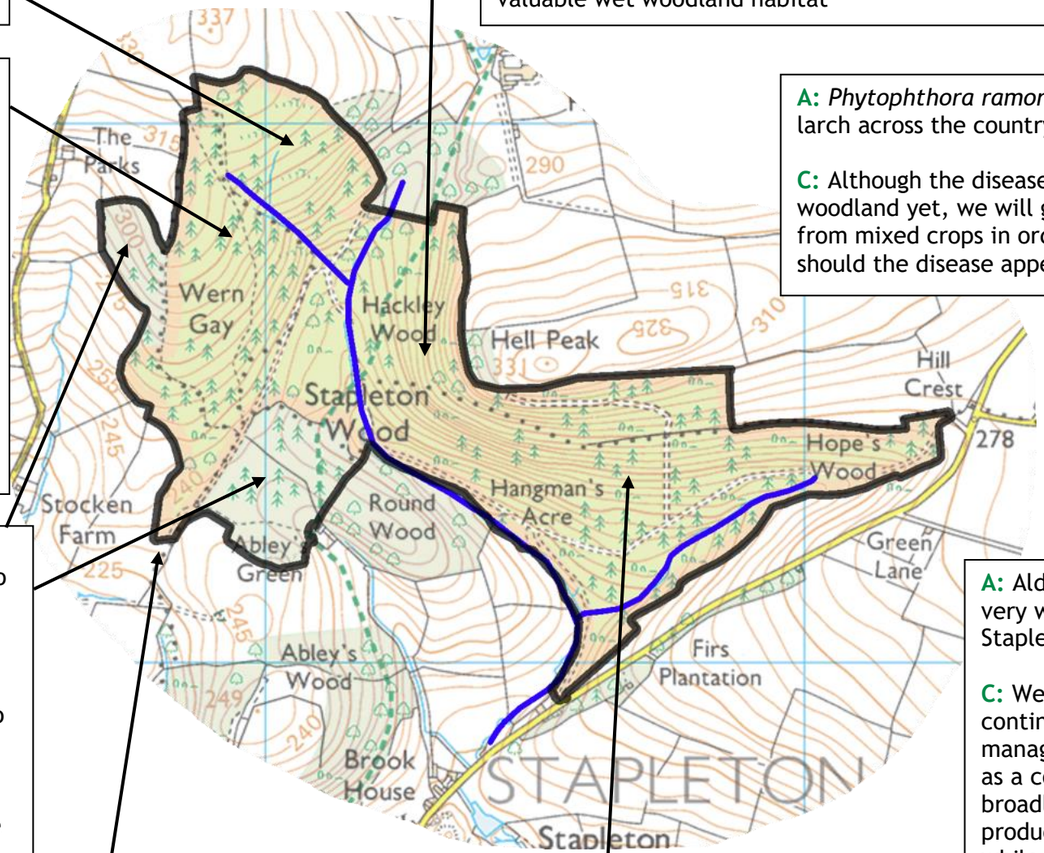
C: We will initiate PAWS restoration here through thinning – removing groups of trees from around the broadleaves to give them room to grow and regenerate into the open spaces

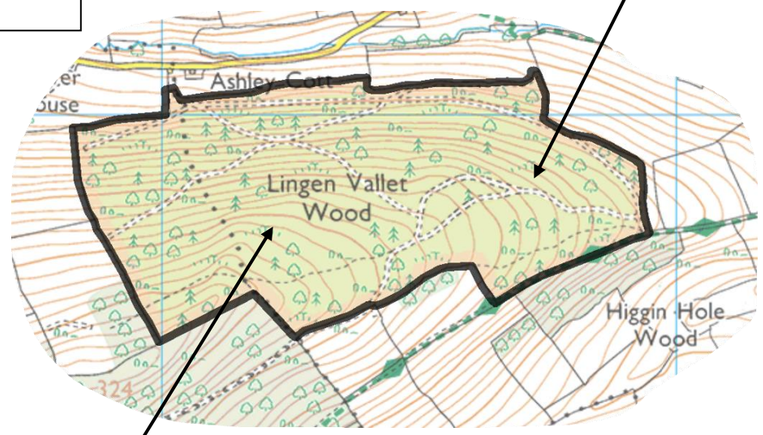
A: The other Douglas fir crop at the western end has occasional broadleaves among the conifers and areas of open space

C: We will initiate PAWS restoration here through thinning – removing groups of trees from around the broadleaves to give them room to grow and regenerate into the open spaces

A: *Phytophthora ramorum* is a disease affecting larch across the country

C: Although the disease is not present in either woodland yet, we will gradually remove larch from mixed crops in order to increase resilience should the disease appear in the local area





A: Newly acquired by Forestry England, these two areas have recently been felled and restocked with native broadleaf trees, which are either planted in tubes or fenced, in order to protect them from deer damage

C: The new planting will be monitored and the tubes removed once the trees are established

A: Alder grows very well at Stapleton

C: We will continue to manage the alder as a commercial broadleaf – producing timber while providing a native woodland habitat

A: There are 5 hectares of ash in Stapleton, all of which is suffering from dieback to varying degrees

C: We will clearfell a small area of ash in the southwest corner to remove the risk of diseased trees falling onto the access track to the neighbouring property; elsewhere, ash trees may be left (where safe to do so) to provide standing deadwood

A: Some of the coniferous woodland in the eastern half of Stapleton is PAWS and other areas are not

C: In order to increase diversity and maintain productivity from the woodland as a whole, the non-PAWS areas will eventually be felled (in the 2040s and 50s) and replaced with mixtures of species, including conifers, whereas the PAWS areas will be replaced with native broadleaves

A: Felling and restocking (2014/15) at Lingen has created a nice mixture of ages, sizes and species of trees with patches of open space in the southwestern part of Lingen; it has also increased the proportion of native broadleaves – an important objective of PAWS restoration

C: Our management of the wood will continue to increase species and structural diversity

A: There has been a fair amount of windblow (trees blowing over) at Lingen in recent years; when this happens, it creates gaps in the canopy, allowing light in to the forest floor – this means that seeds can germinate, leading to increased structural diversity

C: Our management of windblow depends on scale – for example, we often leave individual windblown trees in situ to provide deadwood, but where groups of trees have blown over, we usually need to clear them away

Wapley and Birches – Analysis (A) and Concept (C)

A: what is there now; C: what we'll do

A: Some Douglas fir stands, outside the PAWS, already have a developing understorey of mixed conifers

C: We will manage these stands as shelterwood, in order to make the most of the structural and species diversity that has already developed

A: Wapley Hillfort is a scheduled monument

C: Work will be carried out, as resource allows, in order to manage the hillfort following the approved scheduled monument plan – main objectives are to control regeneration of trees so that the area remains open, and to minimise erosion on the ramparts

A: A small area of open space has not regenerated with trees for some reason

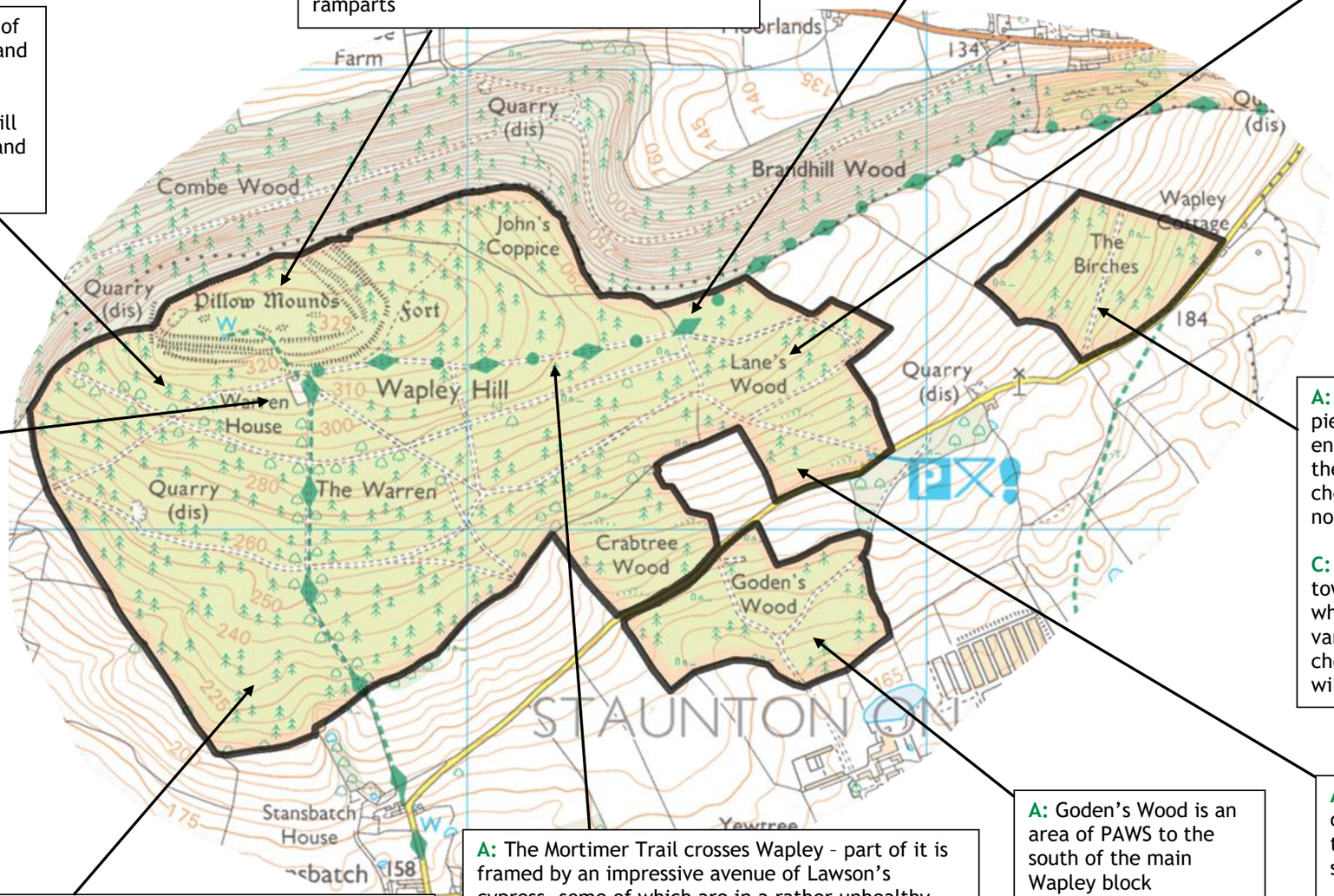
C: This will be managed as minimum intervention for this plan period, in order to create an evolving dynamic habitat

A: The eastern end of Wapley is PAWS but is currently planted with almost pure Douglas fir crops; we are reluctant to clearfell here at the moment for two reasons: the conifers are not yet approaching economic maturity, and there isn't a reliable source of broadleaf seed for natural regeneration

C: We will continue to thin these crops towards a clearfell in the 2050s; thinning will be heavier on the edges of the stands, for example along the beech avenue to the west, in the hope that the few existing broadleaves will regenerate to become the beginning of the next rotation

A: The grand fir just to the south of the hillfort is getting quite large and therefore less marketable

C: When we thin this stand, we will focus on removing the grand fir, and developing a mixed conifer understorey



A: Invasive Himalayan balsam has been a problem in the woodland close to the hillfort; after many years of treating it, we have managed to remove it from some parts of this area

C: We will continue to treat the remaining Himalayan balsam, and will thin very carefully, so as not to allow light in, which may encourage this invasive species to expand again

A: Birches Wood is a small separate piece of woodland, planted almost entirely with Douglas fir and larch; there are also a few very old sweet chestnut coppice stools on the northern edge

C: The conifer stands will be thinned towards a future clearfell date, after which the restock will include a variety of conifer species; the sweet chestnut and any other broadleaves will be retained

A: The 1926 beech avenues are an important feature of Wapley

C: We will thin the conifers behind the avenues in order to allow the beech to continue to develop

A: The stand of larch behind the car park provides a nice entrance to the wood, especially with its spring and autumn colour

C: We will continue to thin the larch, retaining the most impressive and aesthetically appealing trees

A: There is a fairly large area of monocultural Douglas fir in the southwest corner of the site

C: This will be divided into coupes to be felled over the coming decades, starting with two small areas in this plan period, which will be restocked with mixtures of conifers, leaving unplanted strips along ridesides to develop as open space / dynamic habitat

A: The Mortimer Trail crosses Wapley – part of it is framed by an impressive avenue of Lawson's cypress, some of which are in a rather unhealthy condition

C: Poor specimens will be removed, along with a row of conifers from behind the avenue, giving the remaining Lawson's cypress more room to grow; any larger gaps will be planted with new trees which will develop into an avenue for future decades

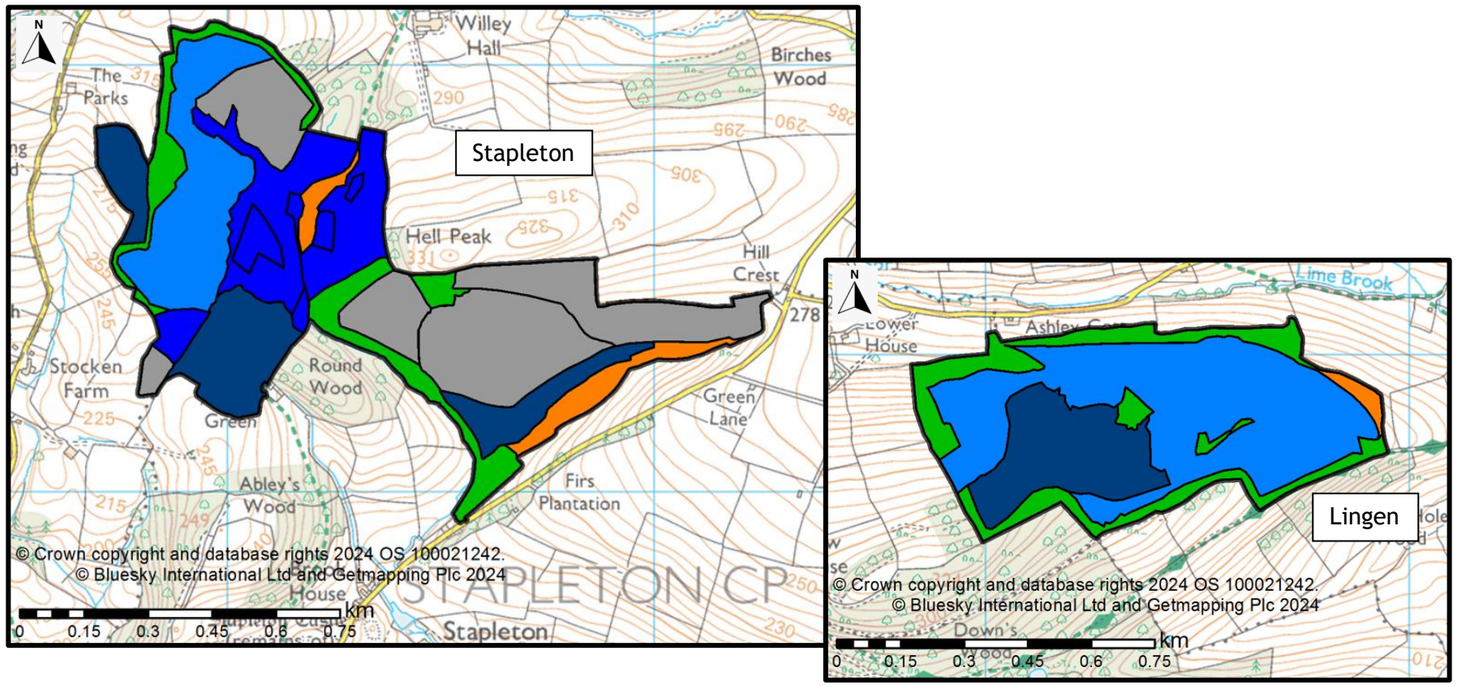
A: Goden's Wood is an area of PAWS to the south of the main Wapley block

C: Groups of conifers will be felled from around the existing broadleaves, encouraging gradual conversion to native woodland

Table 2 – Wapley – Action Plan 2026-2036

Action - what we'll do	Why we're doing it	How we will measure success
Thinning Broadleaves will be assessed for readiness for thinning every ten years and conifers every five years Each stand will have a focus for thinning which is recorded on our GIS and summarised on **page 18**	Timber production Thinning focus may be to reduce proportion of non-native species as part of PAWS restoration, or to increase species and structural diversification in order to develop resilience	Has thinning been carried out on a regular basis, producing marketable timber? Do thinning operations have a clear objective at the site planning stage? In PAWS, is the proportion of conifers / broadleaves moving in the right direction? Is management leading to species and structural diversification?
Clearfelling 9.17 hectares of conifers in Wapley and **0.58** hectares of ash in Stapleton (see **Figure 14** on **page 19**) **Restocking** Each clearfelled site will be assessed to identify appropriate species for the site, with a focus on developing resilient mixtures that will thrive under anticipated climate conditions and, where appropriate, contribute to PAWS restoration	Timber production Clearfelling provides temporary open space Removal of diseased ash (at Stapleton) Restocking provides an opportunity to plant site appropriate mixtures to increase species diversity and therefore resilience	Have clearfells been carried out as per the felling plan, producing marketable timber? Has there been an increase in species diversity following the clearfells?
Habitat enhancement / provision • Main ridesides will continue to be cleared periodically, and strips of land left unplanted along ridesides when restocking • Standing and fallen deadwood will be left where possible • Minimum intervention areas will be allowed to develop as valuable dynamic habitat • Some trees will be felled along watercourses, working towards 50% open, 50% dappled shade; some woody debris may be left in the streams	Creation / maintenance of graded edge vegetation and dynamic / open space on ridesides for the benefit of flora and invertebrates (and indirectly, birds, bats and other mammals) Provision of visually appealing, open spaces for people to walk in and enjoy Dead and decaying trees and fallen branches provide food and habitat for lichens, fungi, bryophytes, invertebrates and hole-nesting birds and mammals Removing some of the trees from along the watercourses will prevent them from becoming too shaded; woody debris will encourage the formation of valuable wet woodland	Have ridesides / open spaces been cleared / retained as open / dynamic habitat? Do the woods feel light and open? Is there an obvious deadwood resource in all of the Wapley woods? Has streamside tree cover been reduced? Has woody debris been added?
Significant and protected features Ensure that heritage features (eg woodbanks and earthworks), conservation features (eg TSIs) and protected species are marked on our GIS system and identified and included in the site planning process	Protection of features and important species during operations	Are heritage sites and conservation sites and species marked on our GIS, and noted and protected at the site planning stage and during operations?
Informal recreation Continue to manage the woods so that they are attractive and safe for visitors to enjoy	Health and wellbeing benefits for visitors	Is public access and behaviour sustainable and non-damaging?

Our management prescriptions for Wapley



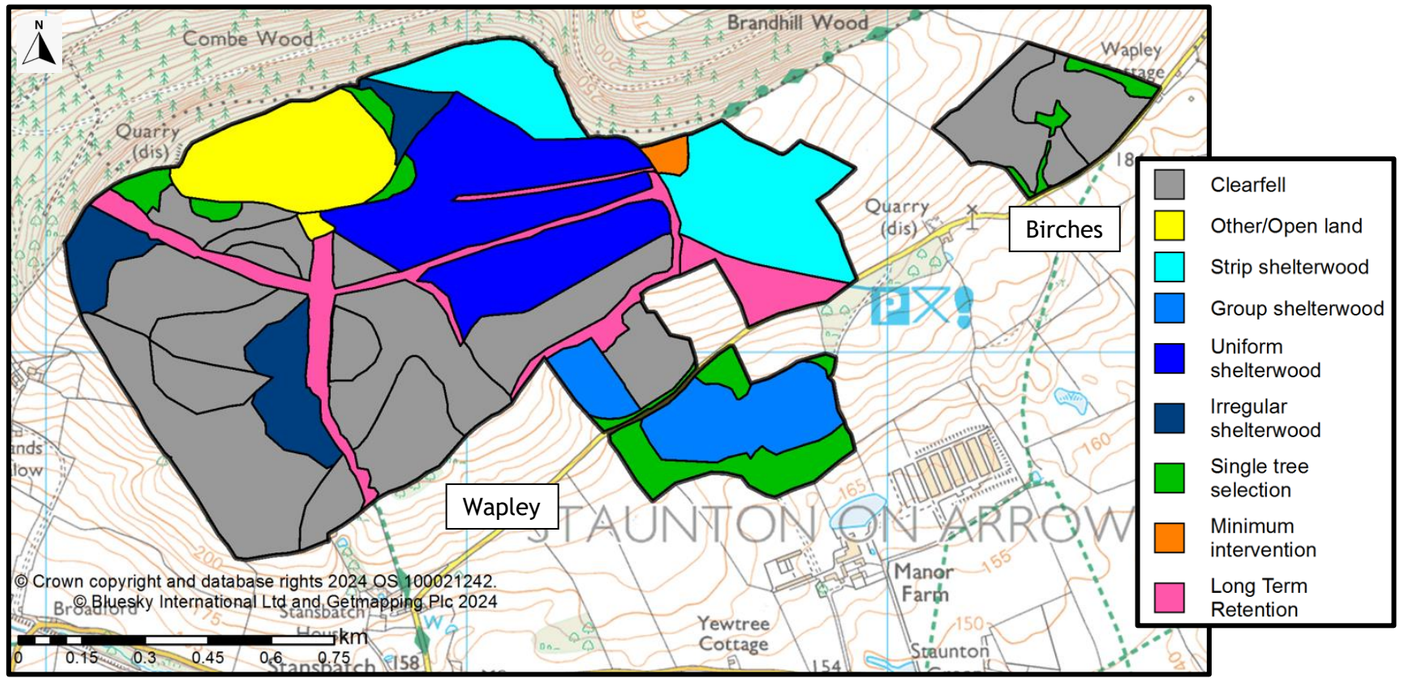


Figure 13 – Management prescriptions for Wapley

Crops will be assessed at regular intervals for readiness for thinning – broadleaves every ten years and conifers every five years. If stand density is appropriate for thinning, then selected trees will be marked for removal in order to achieve the objectives for the site, eg PAWS restoration or timber production.

Each stand in the plan area has been given a management type (**Figure 13**).

- Many of the conifer crops in Stapleton, Wapley and Birches will be **clearfelled** at, or close to, economic maturity; where these are on ancient woodland sites, broadleaf natural regeneration will be encouraged; non-PAWS sites will be restocked with resilient, diverse (mainly conifer) mixtures.

- Other crops will be managed with alternatives to clearfell, or lower impact silvicultural systems (LISS), such as shelterwood and selection systems, which maintain continuous forest cover:

    - In **shelterwood** systems thinning creates spaces between the trees, so that when the overstorey is mature enough, it provides seed and shelter for the next generation of trees.
    - In the **group shelterwood** coupes on PAWS at Stapleton and Lingen, we will fell groups (up to 0.25ha in any 2 hectare area) of conifers from around the broadleaves within the crop, providing space for their seed to germinate.
    - Similarly, the **strip shelterwood** system at Wapley will involve removing strips of conifers from around the edges of the crops, where there is already a source of broadleaf seed.
    - Young crops (broadleaves and conifers) are currently recorded as **irregular shelterwood**, but decisions will be made at first thinning as to the best way to manage these crops to maximise future diversity and resilience.

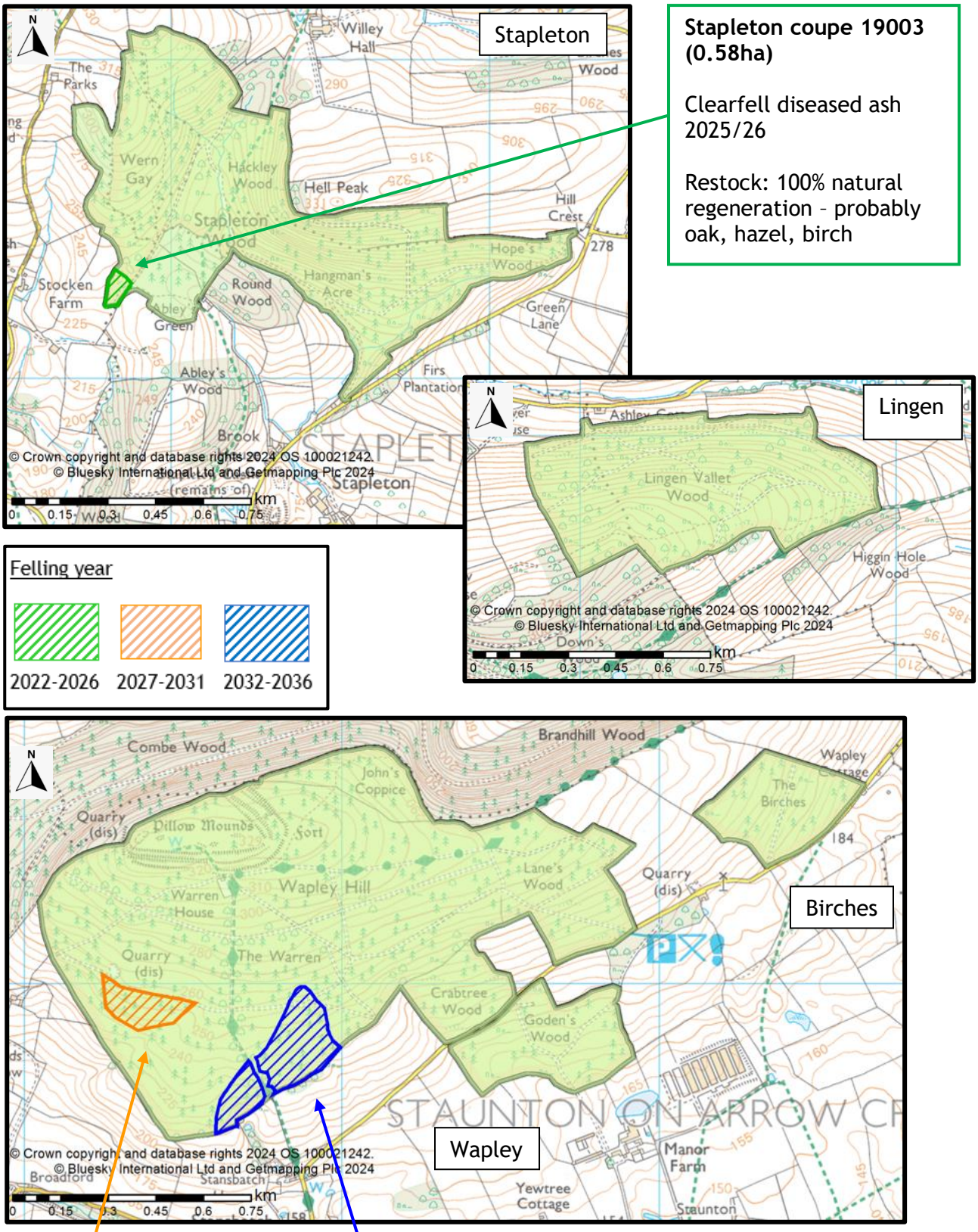
    - Mixed-age broadleaves will usually be managed as **single tree selection** systems – these stands already have some structural diversity, which is enhanced by thinning individual trees of all ages and sizes. Where these stands are around the woodland boundaries, a selection system will create attractive soft edges

- Areas of woodland that are currently open will be managed under **minimum intervention** for this plan period. Appearance of any natural regeneration will create a dynamic, evolving habitat with patches of vegetation and open space.

- In some cases, we want to retain stands or groups of trees beyond economic maturity, usually for aesthetic or biodiversity reasons – in these cases, we assign them the management type: **long term retention**. Examples include the beech avenues and the larch behind the car park at Wapley

- Wapley Hillfort is recorded as '**other / open land**'. Other areas of open space, such as those alongside the rides and junctions, are not recorded as open on the map in **Figure 13** because they are incorporated into the subcompartments as components. The same is true of areas which are temporarily open following clearfelling.

Wapley – felling plan 2026-2036 (Figure 14)



Stapleton coupe 19003 (0.58ha)

Clearfell diseased ash 2025/26

Restock: 100% natural regeneration – probably oak, hazel, birch

Wapley coupe 19030 (2.57ha)

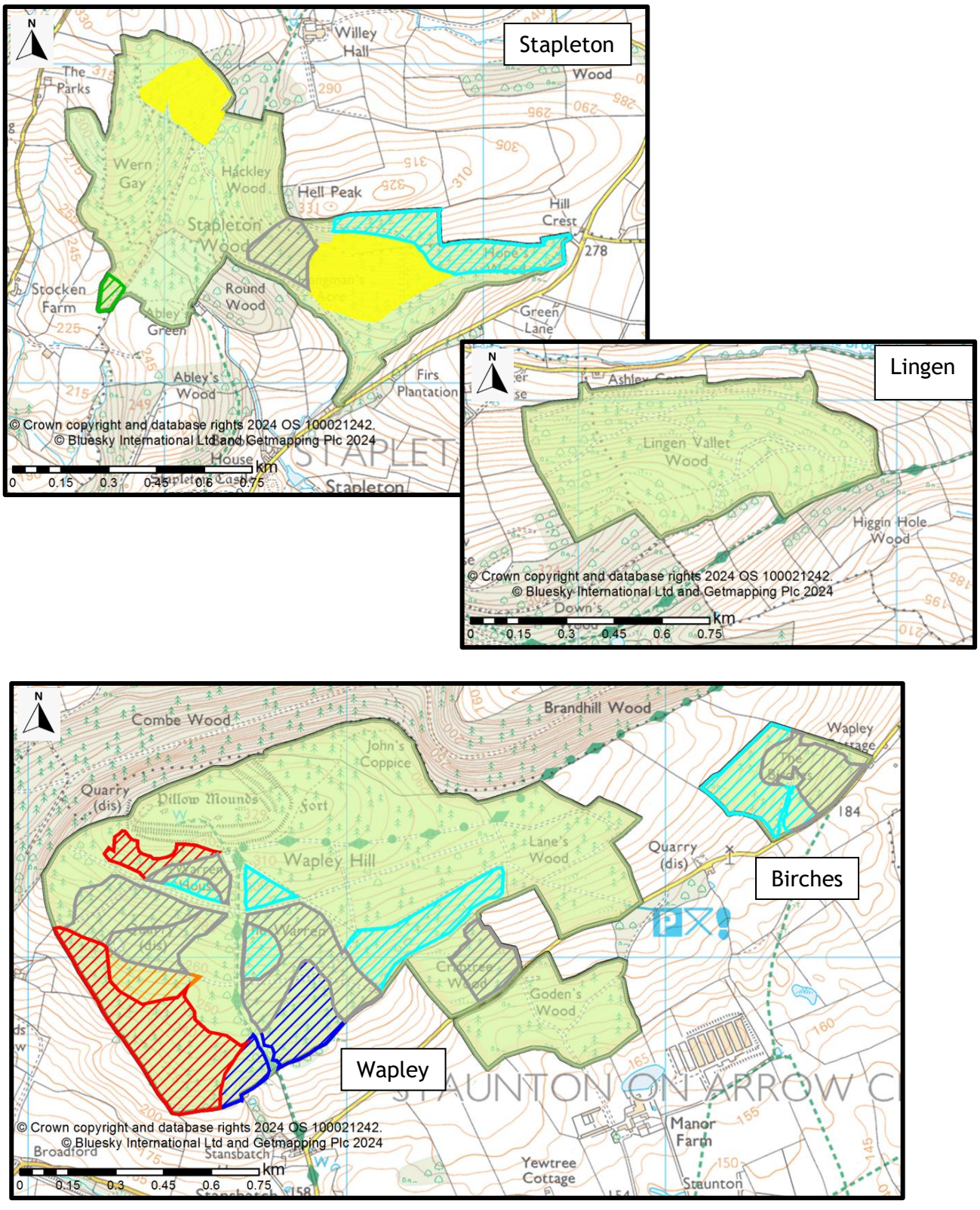
Clearfell Douglas fir (2030/31)

Wapley coupe 19031 (6.60ha)

Clearfell Douglas fir (2034/35)

Wapley coupes restock:
80% mixed conifers including western red cedar, Japanese cedar, Sitka spruce, Lawson's cypress and Douglas fir; 10% mixed broadleaf natural regeneration; 10% open (along edges and rides)

Wapley – felling plan 2026-2056 (Figure 15)



Felling year

2022-2026	2027-2031	2032-2036	2037-2041	2042-2046	2047-2051	Fell after 2052

Future habitats and species

Over the coming decades, native broadleaves will begin to dominate PAWS, and secondary woodland areas will become more species diverse. All stands will have an element of open space within them, and most conifer crops will have broadleaf edges.

Figure 16 gives a broad overview of the future species that we expect to develop in the Wapley woods. Note that the maps do not represent a specific date because crops will all reach maturity and be replaced at different times. Note also that the map doesn't show the diversity of species that we anticipate being present in the future, for example areas shown as 'oak' or 'other conifers' will actually contain many additional species.

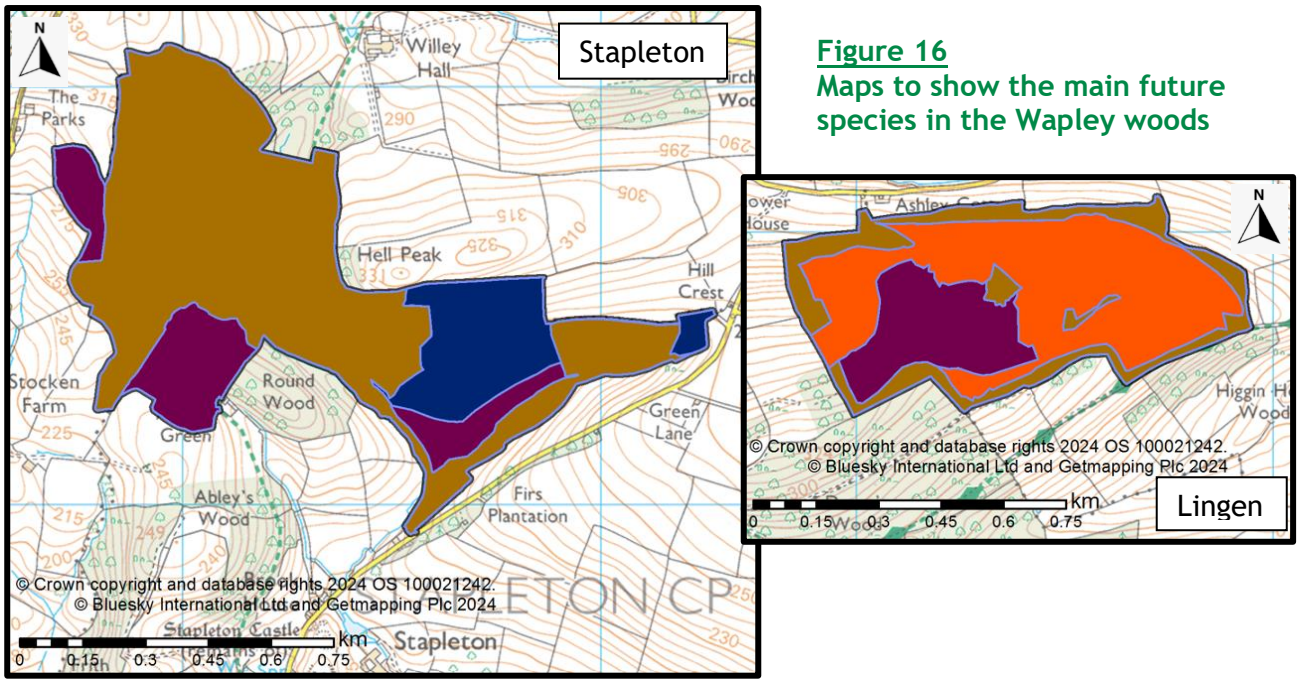
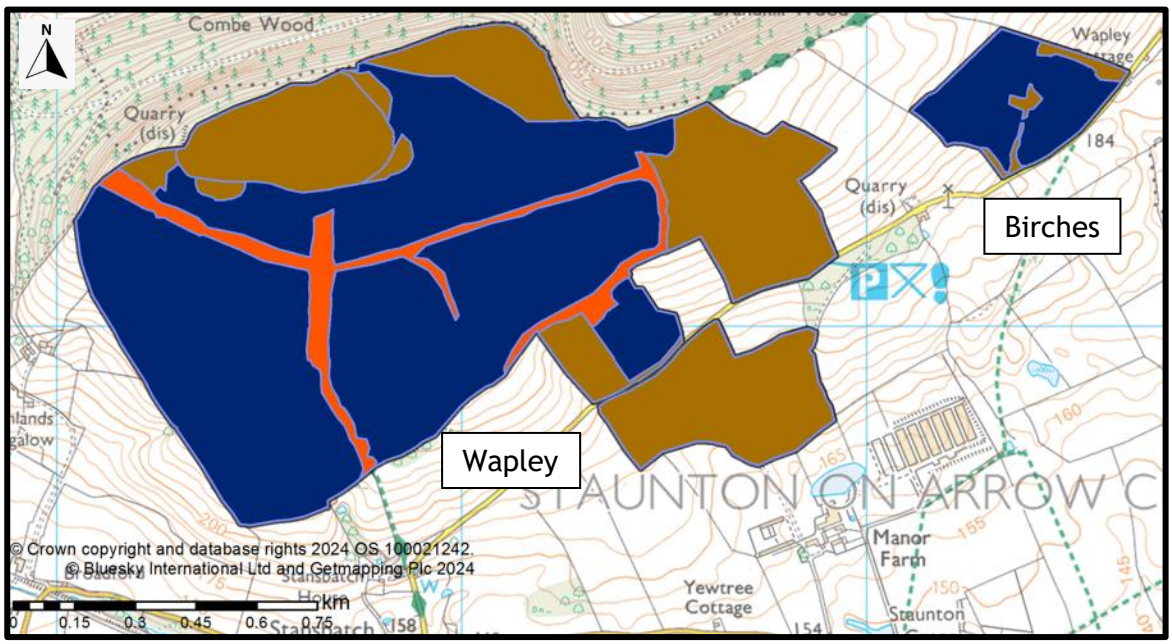


Figure 16
Maps to show the main future species in the Wapley woods

	Future species will be predominantly broadleaf
	Future species will be predominantly conifer
	These areas will likely be dominated by beech
	These areas are likely to be predominantly oak



Explanation of some of the terms used in the Forest Plan:

- **Forest plans** define the long-term vision for our forests and set out how our management will move towards achieving this vision. They focus on the main features of each woodland, in particular the species and structural composition and biodiversity interests, and set out proposals for how we will manage them to increase resilience, productivity and value for wildlife and people in the future.

- **Natural capital value** - from the soils to the trees, and all the species which live in them, the whole forest ecosystem is a resource known as **'natural capital'**. Forestry England uses a natural capital approach to help understand the value to society of the various benefits that come from the nation's forests.

- We measure the area of our land in **hectares** – one hectare (ha) is equal to one hundred metres by one hundred metres, or the equivalent of about two and a half acres.

- **Ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW)** and **plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)** are described on **page 11**.

- **Broadleaves** are trees with broad, flat leaves e.g. oak, hazel, birch. Most are deciduous (lose their leaves in winter). **Conifers** are trees with cones and needles e.g. Scots pine, Douglas fir. Most are evergreen, but not all e.g. larch is a deciduous conifer.

- The forest is divided into **coupes** – groups of trees which will be managed in the same way. Management prescriptions (**forest operations**) include:

  - **Clearfelling** – where all the trees in an area are cut down – often because they have reached economic maturity (their highest possible economic value), but sometimes due to disease; clearfelling provides temporary open space and the opportunity to **restock** (replant) with a different species which may be more appropriate for the site and its management objectives.

  - **Coppicing** – a traditional woodland management technique where broadleaf trees are cut at the base allowing new stems to sprout; sometimes the whole coupe is coppiced; sometimes, larger trees (**standards**) are left alone and allowed to continue to grow. Areas of woodland that are not coppiced are usually referred to as **high forest**.

  - **LISS** – or **low impact silvicultural systems** – provide an alternative to clearfell, involving careful thinning of the existing crop and encouragement of natural regeneration / underplanting, to maintain continuous forest cover and conditions, and to develop the next generations of trees. These include **shelterwood** and **selection** systems which are explained on **page 18**.

  - **Thinning** is where selected trees are removed, giving the remaining trees room to develop.

- **Rides** are tracks through the forest – **ridesides** are often mown or coppiced to make them light and welcoming for visitors, and to create open sunny spaces for flowering plants and insects.

- A **stand** is a group, or area, of trees that are more or less homogeneous (the same) in terms of species composition, density and age. Stands of trees may be planted deliberately (**plantation**) or arise from **natural regeneration**, where trees grow from seeds which arrived on the site through natural means, usually from the previous or adjacent crop.

- The **understorey** is made up of the trees and shrubs that grow underneath the main crop (the **overstorey**), from seeds from above, or through deliberate **underplanting** (where new trees are planted under the main crop). The understorey provides habitats for wildlife, and will often become the next crop of trees, when the overstorey is felled. The tops of the trees (the crown or leaves) is sometimes referred to as the **canopy**.

- **Veteran trees** have characteristics, such as holes, hollow trunks and fungi, that are valuable for wildlife. Sometimes they may be **halo thinned**, which is when neighbouring competing trees are removed to give the veterans more space. Standing and fallen **deadwood** also provides excellent wildlife habitat and is often left behind after forest operations.

- **Dynamic habitat** refers to areas of patchy natural regeneration and open space, where trees will be removed from time to time to create a mosaic of different ages and types of vegetation.

Consultation record

To be added after external consultation