Woodland Management Plan

2027 to 2037

Please refer to the Management Plan Guidance note for advice on how to complete your management plan. You must have an approved Management Plan before you can apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding.

1. Details

Management Plan Details

Management Plan Name:	Gifford Community Woodland (Speedy Wood & Fawn Wood) - Woodland Management Plan		
Business Reference Number:	257712	Main Location Code:	77/364/0042
Grid Reference: (e.g. NH 234 567)	NT 528 683	Nearest town or locality:	Gifford, East Lothian
Local Authority:		East Lothian Council	
Management Plan Area (hectares):		22	

Owner's Details

Title:	Mr	Forename:	Neville
Surname:	Kilkenny		
Organisation:	Gifford Community Land Company Ltd	Position:	Project Manager
Primary Contact Number:	07966751896	Alternative Contact Number:	
Email:	gifford.woodseh41@gmail.com		
Address:	Speedybank Station Road, Gifford, Haddington, East Lothian		
Postcode:	EH41 4QL	Country:	Scotland

Agent's Details

Title	Mr	Forename	Neville
Surname	Kilkenny		
Organisation	Shepherd's Cottage Trading	Position	Sole Trader
Primary Contact Number	07966751896	Alternative Contact Number	
Email	nev@fungi.co.uk		
Address	Shepherd's Cottage, Sheriffside, Gifford, Haddington, East Lothian		
Postcode	EH41 4PH	Country	Scotland

Access Consent - Complete if applying for thinning

You are not obliged to give us consent to enter your land, however if we are denied access to your land, and cannot carry out an assessment because of this, we may reject your application. This consent is for access to assess this application as well as monitor compliance with any subsequent approval, where applicable.

Do you give consent for Scottish Forestry to access your property?	YES	

Town and Country Planning - Complete if applying for thinning

Are any of the trees to be felled subject to a Tree Preservation Order?	YES	
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/34804/tpo_no_18_-_yester_woods_gifford		
Are any of the trees to be felled within a Conservation Area?	YES	
Gifford Conservation Area https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/24398/gifford_ca		

Declarations - Complete if applying for thinning

I hereby apply for a permission to fell the trees described in this application and I certify that:

- I am the landowner or an occupier of the land with written permission of the landowner;
- Where the landowner is a business, I am authorised to sign legal contracts on behalf of that business;
- If I am an acting on behalf of the landowner or occupier, I have been mandated to do so;
- Any necessary consents from any other person(s) if required, have been obtained;
- I have made the necessary checks with the local planning authorities regarding Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas;
- I have notified all stakeholders that may be affected by the felling in this application and sought their views prior to submitting this application;
- I hereby acknowledge that Scottish Ministers may process any of my personal data contained in or relating to this application in accordance with the terms of Scottish Forestry's Privacy Notice, a copy of which is available at https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/complaints-appeals-and-your-data
- I have read and understand this application fully and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information given in this application is complete, true, and accurate; and
- I accept that any false or misleading information provided in this application constitutes an offence and may result in any felling permission based on this application being revoked at any time.

[This application may only be signed by the owner of the land or the occupier of that land where they have written permission to do so. For land owned by a business it must be signed by someone with the authority to sign legal contracts on behalf of that business. If you are an agent signing this on behalf of the aforementioned you must append a copy of your mandate.]

Signed:	Print:	Date:

Approval - to be completed by Scottish Forestry staff:

Management Plan Reference Number	
Plan Period (ten years) (month/year)	From: To:
Operations Manager Signature	
Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	

2. Woodland Description

Give information about the following:

- past management of the woodland
- current species and ages
- statutory and non-statutory constraints (e.g. designations, archaeological interests)
- existing or potential public access
- woodland protection

Use the Land Information Search to help you complete this section. For more detailed information on the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland use the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer found on our website: forestry.gov.scot

2.1 Maps required

Provide maps to support your plan, as outlined in the guidance note. Please list all of the maps that you are including with your management plan in section 1 Management Plan Details.

1. Location Map 1:50,000
2. Boundary Map 1:10,000
3. Constraints Map 1:10,000
4. Compartment Map 1:10,000
5. Thinning Map 1:10,000

2.2 History of management

The woodland extends to 22 hectares (55 acres) in 4 major sections and 9 compartments. The woods have a wide range of species and ages. They are mainly broadleaved and have high nature conservation values. All areas, except Compartment 2 which is a stand dominated by mature Scots pine, are identified as native woodland (NWSS) and are broadly representational of NVC W6 - W11, W16, W17/18, & MG3. The Ancient Woodland Inventory indicates that Fawn Wood and the part of Speedy Wood, south of The Speedy Burn, are ancient woodland of plantation origin, whereas the rest of Speedy Wood is recognised as ancient woodland of semi-natural origin.

Originally part of Yester Estate, the woodland was managed from 1945–60s,by A. & R. Brownlie of Earlston, who ran the sawmill in Station Yard (Cpt 9) which was established early in the 1900s. The estate was sold to the Quarryford Trust in 1967.

Priority Species of fungi, flowering plants and mammals are recorded within the woodland.

The woodland is crossed from east to west by the old Edinburgh Road, the old railway line, and the Speedy Burn.

The woods have been brought back into management having been largely neglected for the last 40 years. After 9 years under the current management regime, dangerous trees have been removed, and access improved. The woodland is mainly surrounded by arable farmland. Boundary fencing has now been replaced or repaired where necessary and a two-way gate installed at the north point of Fawn Wood.

Over the last 9 years, 3 felling licences have been applied for:
1) FLA02672-CF 2018: Subcpt 8b & 8c, previously mixed conifer plantations predominantly douglas fir planted circa. 1970, much of which was dead, windblown and a fire risk, was clear felled and restocked the same year with 2400 NBL (70% SOK, 15% WCH, & 15% ROW)
2) FPA-8827-T 2022: Cpt 2, a mature mixed conifer plantation predominantly Scot's pine circa. 100yr which had suffered wind damage to Subcpt 2a from Storm Arwen in 2021 , was thinned approx. 5% as recommended by Forest Research to allow a secondary canopy to develop to mitigate the risk of further catastrophic windthrow.
3) FPA -10126-SF, FPA-10126-T 2023: Ash Dieback had affected many trees within Cpts 7 & 8, two selective felling coupes were identifed, as well as several thinning coupes which consisted of individual affected trees. The Selective felling coupes were restocked in 2024 with a stocking proposal of 80% NR, 20% BI/AR/ASP. These coupes and thinned coupes benefitted from further supplementary stocking the following year 1020 NBL (58% SOK,15% ASP, 15% AR, 6% ROW, 6% WCH).

2.3 Species and age

Much of the woodland was clear felled in the 1940s for the war effort, with only the oak trees in cpt 1 and 8, and the pines in cpt 2 remaining. A recent study by St Andrews University suggests that the average age of the oak is 175 years and the pine plantation, 96 yrs. The rest of the woodland is naturally regenerated birch, willow, ash, aspen, sycamore, and beech with an average age of 80 years for mature trees. There is much evidence of continued natural regeneration where the overstorey allows.

Soil: The soil, which is typical of the area, is classified as Humbie series/ Humbie Association. It is defined as an imperfectly drained brown forest soil, made up of till derived from Upper Old Red Sandstone and Lower Carboniferous sediments. This means that it is quite fertile with a high clay content, not too acid, capable of growing a wide range of tree and other plant species. The north part of Fawn Wood has the driest, sandiest soils. Topsoil depth varies from 10 – 60 cm, laid upon a poorly draining, deep layer of boulder clay.

Vegetation: The ground flora is diverse. Mostly it reflects base-rich soils with herb rich ground flora in places, including vascular plant ancient woodland indicator species, especially within Speedy Wood. Where there is a lot of shade, the ground flora is dominated by ferns and mosses. With a little more light, bramble, honeysuckle and light grasses are present. In Fawn Wood, there are a couple of patches of heather and blueberry indicating more acid soils in small patches. Station Yard has artificial, disturbed, enriched soil and is growing a vigorous crop of tall grasses and ruderal species. Station Yard also supports a rare MG3c grassland community.

Climate: This is a low rainfall area with less than 30” (800 mm) precipitation per year. Temperatures are equitable with a lack of severe frosts. The site class is described as “Warm - Moderately exposed – Moist” with a Wind Damage Risk Status as 1 (Moderately sheltered).

Compartment 1 Fawn Oak Wood
This wood is located on the east side of Fawn Wood. It is almost flat and now benefits from improved drainage after existing forestry ditches were re-instated. The new path network runs through this wood and the boundary fence to the east has been repaired and the fence to the north replaced. The wood is dominated by mature sessile oak with large beech and silver birch also present. These trees are spaced at around 15 metres and range in diameter from 50 to 120 cm. Timber quality is variable from poor to very good. The best oaks are the most valuable trees in the two woods. Between the dominant trees are younger beech, sycamore, rowan, and holly which form a near continuous understorey. The ground flora is shaded in places with ferns, light grasses, and mosses. Where more light is evident, honeysuckle and light bramble dominate with some tree seedlings and a rich herb layer. There are some patches of blaeberry. Whenever the canopy is opened by felling for tree safety or from storm damage, sycamore and beech are quick to take advantage of the increase in light levels. Seedlings of these invasive species should be controlled so that they do not become the dominant secondary canopy. An area of mature dead ash trees was cleared in subcpt 1a in 2025 and restocked with mixed NBL.

Compartment 2 Fawn Conifer Wood
The northern part of Fawn Wood is dominated by mature conifers, mainly Scots pine with some Douglas fir, hybrid larch and the occasional oak. The site is quite flat with repaired fences to the north and west. The new path follows the woodland perimeter and other informal desire lines traverse the compartment. A new two-way gate to the field in the north-west corner has been installed and offers access to the Eaglescairnie Farm path network to the north.
The dominant trees are spaced at around 7 metres with diameters of approx. 50 cm. They have been thinned in the past and in a commercial forestry scheme these would normally be clear felled at this point. They are approximately 100 years old and there is little age structure within the stand. The understorey consists of occasional oak, holly, rowan, and silver birch. Ground flora is dominated by broad buckler fern with herb rich areas. Wood sorrel is common. There are many seedlings, notably of oak. There is some standing and lying dead wood, which adds greatly to the biodiversity. Damage from Storm Arwen late in November 2021 resulted in the loss of approximately 40 mature trees on the north-eastern margin of the compartment. There was supplementary planting over the windthow coupe in 2023 with Scot's pine but this has not taken well due to shading from the adjacent overstorey. Following advice from Forest Research, a 5% thin of the rest of the compartment has been completed to allow more light through the primary canopy. This should enable the understorey to develop into a secondary canopy. Felled trees were removed by horse logger. Horse logging creates extraction tracts where ground cover such as ferns are uprooted, and topsoil is disturbed allowing the natural seed reserve to germinate. It is hoped that this extraction method will lead to the development of a tertiary canopy which will give the compartment a robust age structure and resilience for many years in the future. It is recommended that this thinning programme is repeated every 5 to ten years. Sale of timber from wind-blown trees and thinning has enabled the perimeter path, which also suffered from storm damage, to be repaired.

Compartment 3 Fawn Mixed Wood
The wood is flat but reasonably freely drained and will now benefit from the re-instatement of existing forestry ditches. Arable fields lie to the west and the boundary fence has been repaired where

necessary. A few trees have been blown down or felled in the past and the branches roughly cut and piled just inside the wood. Whilst this has created some useful dead wood habitat, it does block access to the interior of the wood. The new path continues around the perimeter, taking walkers back south to the old Edinburgh Road. There were three small areas with Rhododendron - these have been cut back and chemically treated. There has been no further regeneration.
Mature trees are largely missing in this part of the wood with only occasional large oak, beech, silver birch and pine. Instead, there are many pole stage trees forming a dense understorey in places. These are mainly Scots pine, beech, sycamore, and silver birch with some oak. Their spacing is from 0.5 to 2 metres and their diameters range from 5 to 20 cm. There are younger seedlings of these species in places too. Some thinning would be beneficial to improve the age structure of the wood, although a dense boundary strip should be retained to protectthe woodland from the prevailing wind. The ground flora is generally shaded and quite variable - honeysuckle & ferns or heather and blueberry or mixed herbs.
Subcpt 3a was cleared of dead standing birch and ash, squirrel damaged young beech and NR sycamore saplings and restocked in 2025 with mixed NBL.
There is an old, but newly restored forestry ditch running east to west through the compartment and a further boundary ditch along the north-western edge which has recently be cleared by hand. This flows into a field drain at the most northern point of the woodland. A mesh has been placed over the drainage outflow which should be cleaned annually.

Compartment 4/5 Fawn Wood South Dense Stand/Central Area
There are two parts to the southern half of Fawn Wood, south of the Edinburgh Road, distinguished by the tree stocking density. The part to the east and south has more, smaller trees than the more central area.
The old Edinburgh Road is dominated by lime trees, both the multi-stemmed common lime and the clear stemmed large leaved lime. Most are around 40 cm in diameter. They would have been planted at around 6 m (20 ft) spacing but there are now lots of gaps, which have been filled in with other species such as sycamore, elm, and hawthorn. The old road itself is rather a mess at this point with vehicles churning up the surface and making it difficult to walk. The surface was recently scraped to reduce the amount of mud and a gate installed at the top of Station Road to deter woodland visitors attempting to park here, rather than in the village, and walking up to the woodland.
The rest of this compartment is fairly flat, starting to fall gently to the south at the southern end. The new path cuts through the wood from the old Edinburgh Road at the north end towards the old railway cutting. There is a small informal welfare camp to the east of the path for volunteer welfare and for school groups. A designated fire site has been established which can be used for events and educational activities with permission from the woodland management team.
The principal trees are semi-mature sycamore and silver birch, forming a discontinuous canopy. They are around 30 cm in diameter and spaced at around 10 metres. Quality is varied and several sycamores that were infected by an aggressive rot fungus have been felled. Over mature birch trees have also been removed on safety grounds. There is a well-developed understorey of pole stage trees, distinguishing this wood from the central area (compartment 5). The main species are beech, ash, rowan, and holly with some elm, silver birch, oak, hawthorn, and hazel. There is a big variation in size, averaging around 5 cm diameter.
Because of shading, the understorey is sparse, consisting mainly of grasses and ferns with some honeysuckle. There is one large patch of wood rush and ample dead wood.
Compartment 5 is dominated by semi-mature sycamore and osscasional oak. Most of the sycamore is succumbing to diease and several trees have been felled for safety reasons. The clear area created, was directly sown in April 2026 with acorns collected from around the woodland the previous year -

unfortunately most of the acorns have since been dug up by grey squirrels. There area lot of beech saplings and seedling which left unchecked will become the dominant species.

Compartment 6 Railway Cutting
The old railway cutting is around 2 m below the surrounding level on the north side, 1 m on the south side. A new path has been laid to connect the path from Fawn Wood and Speedy Wood to Station Road to the east. The open ditch formed to the north side has now been filled with stone and a perforated pipe laid, with a culvert at the west end taking surface water back to the burn. The banks have become overgrown with young birch, beech, rowan, sycamore, and holly as well as older birch. The trees are shading the ground vegetation and keeping it suppressed. An informal walkers' path runs along the southern bank of the cutting and from the neighbouring property, Broadwoodside, at the west end of the cutting.

Compartment 7 Speedy Wood East
Speedy Wood is generally more poorly drained than Fawn Wood. It was previously less visited and less managed. A new path now cuts through the wood linking Station Road, through compartment 7 & 8 to the Broadwoodside Road and the railway cutting, crossing the Speedy burn in two places by newly installed bridges. Some clearances have been made behind the gardens of Tweeddale Avenue and garden material has been placed here, which appears to be the source of several introduced species. Old forestry ditches have been dug out and new ones created, which has improved drainage significantly. A natural spring either side of the path, as it passes close to Tweeddale Grove, was causing damage to the new path. A culvert, extra ditching and the installation of water bars to divert surface water have reduced surface erosion. The ditch work provided an opportunity to create a wildlife pond which is now thriving with a varied diversity of aquatic plants, some small fish, invertebrates, and amphibians. A new path has been extended to the pond and with support from the community, a memorial bench has been placed here, overlooking the pond.
The dominant tree species are silver birch, ash, and sycamore with common alder along the burn side and goat willow towards the centre, plus the occasional large oak. Average diameter size is 25 cm, spaced at around 4 m. These do not form a continuous canopy and so there is also a well-developed understorey. The main understorey trees are sycamore, beech, ash, rowan, and holly with diameters of around 5-10 cm and irregular spacing. Apart from a northern section, much of the compartment was invaded by Rhododendron ponticum which is very invasive and has killed out most of the ground flora. Almost all of the rhododendron has now been cut back by volunteers and chemically treated. Vigorous regeneration is evident and requires ongoing management and chemical treatment. The areas the rhododendron hadn't reached are biodiverse, with a rich herb layer (dog's mercury, bluebells, buttercup, water avens, etc.) plus ferns, light bramble, honeysuckle, and grasses. Where garden waste has been dumped the soil has been enriched, causing nettles and garden escapes to flourish. Mature trees have been compromised where this has happened around their base creating a risk to woodland users and neighbouring properties. There is plenty of dead wood, standing and lying. Mature rhododendron removal is now complete and any regen should be kept in check whilst the community woodland has the generous support of volunteers who are happy to tackle this issue. Priority will be given to remove unsightly piles of debris created by the destruction of these invasive shrubs, although some should remain as important wildlife habitats, particularly for nesting birds.
All the ash trees in this compartment have been affected by ash die-back (Chalara). Sixty percent of the ash trees in this compartment have now been felled and restocked with other species of broadleaved trees such as birch, aspen, alder and black poplar. Individual trees in the surrounding area have been felled at the same time. The area immediately behind Tweeddale Avenue has been restocked with smaller trees such as birch and rowan to avoid conflict with neighbours from the potential of mature

trees damaging properties if they fall. Similarly, smaller trees will not shade gardens and cause future conflict. Where paths and boundaries were not in target, ash trees have been left as standing deadwood or to allow opportunities for resilience to the disease.

Subcpt 7b Large Conifers
In the north part of Speedy Wood, on either side of Speedy Burn, stands an impressive group of 10 -12 mature conifers, mainly larch, Douglas fir and sitka spruce. Their diameters range from 1 to 1.5 m, and they stand around 10 m apart. They are a highlight of a walk through Speedy Wood and the new path leads to them. A resting point with a bench has been installed here as well as approximately every 300 m along the new path. Phaeolus rot is evident in several of these trees (larch), one has been felled for safety and others are being monitored. Another larch was felled as the prominence on which it stood was being undermined by the Speedy Burn and the root plate was showing significant movement. There is a small amount of rhododendron regeneration which will need to be mulched or require further chemical control.

Compartment 8 Speedy Wood West
The western part of Speedy Wood has a different character, being better drained and with a discontinuous canopy of mature oak trees. There was a small stand of ash to the southeast of the compartment which was also affected by ash dieback. The larger ash trees have been removed and the area restocked, although work on smaller dead standing trees is still ongoing.
The new path leads from compartment 7 to the southern corner of the woodland. There is good access to the wood at this point, off the Broadwoodside private road. A removeable parking bollard has been installed at this point to deter cars from parking on the path. The clearing (50 m diameter) here amongst the oak trees is one of the highlights of the two woods. The southern edge has an old post & wire fence with a line of barb on top, which is in need of repair. The roadside edge is unfenced but has a tall and dense hedge which is flailed from the road.
An ancient hazel coppice lies under oak standards between the roadside hedge and the boundary of the recently restocked subcpt 8b. This has been left unmanaged for some time and occasional pine, beech and sycamore have self-seeded amongst the coppice stools. Occasional Douglas fir and sitka spruce, NR from the neighbouring plantation subcpts remain. There is an opportunity to restore the coppice which could provide income for the woodland as well as a platform to retain traditional woodland management skills through educational events. A volunteer has been identified who is happy to lead on this.
The dominant oaks, which are very variable in quality, average around 45 cm in diameter with a spacing of around 8 m. They are clumped to some extent. A few have been felled in the south corner in recent years. unfortunately a large number of the subdominant mature oaks appear to be suffering from Chronic Oak Decline, and will need to be felled as they succumb to the diease. There are also some tall beech, birch, and sycamore with a scattered understorey of similar species plus rowan, hawthorn, hazel and holly. Rhododendron and laurel on the southern edge that has been cleared and chemically treated, regeneration, however, is apparent in this area. Another Rhododendron affected area is in neighbouring property north of the Speedy Burn, which has potential as a seed reserve. The ground flora is largely light grasses and bramble plus ferns and rich herb areas where the ground is damper. Wood rush increases towards the north end.

Subcpts 8b & 8c
Two strips of ground were cleared around 1970, fenced against rabbits and planted with conifers to make the woods more commercial. Until the community purchase, no management appears to have taken place. These areas have now been clear felled and replanted with native broadleaf trees (70%

oak, 15% rowan and 15% wild cherry). Restocking has been occasionally supplemented to replace anticipated losses. These trees look extremely healthy thanks to the replacement of the original supplied protective spirals with more appropriate tree guards and ongoing weeding by volunteers. Ground flora is predominantly wild raspberry and bramble with occasional ferns and mosses, although there were signs that rhododendron had been spreading into the stands again, volunteer work has now eradicated 90% of the shrub. There is good access through the wood south to the railway cutting along the newly installed path. Some sections of the old derelict rabbit fence are still evident and should be removed. There was a small stand of ash trees to the south of the bridge over the burn at the north end of the compartment which have been hand felled by volunteers and sold for firewood. A larger ash tree has been retained as a potential bat roost and should it succumb further to dieback, be assessed for continued retention as deadwood habitat for biodiversity, if possible.

Compartment 9 Station Yard
This is the area between Fawn Wood and the railway tracks which terminated at Gifford station. From the old map, it appears that one building was located centrally. A sawmill was more latterly located in the area. About 25% of the area is now under the canopy of scattered trees (willows, oak, hawthorn, and sycamore). The rest is growing tall ruderal species- nettle, meadowsweet, willow herb, bramble, wild raspberry, alexanders, and hogweed. The centre has a higher content of grasses. There are no tracks and no apparent fence to the north. The west side is unfenced. The eastern edge is defined by garden fences.

A group within the community expressed an interest in planting nine fruit trees in the centre of the compartment, screened by plantings of native broadleaved trees around the perimeter and along the path on the southern boundary of compartment 1. This project has been implemented and appears to be thriving.

2.4 Constraints and designations

Conservation Areas
Compartment 7 (south of the Speedy Burn) & Cpt 8 fall within the Gifford conservation area. Early engagement is recommended with the Local Authority, in this case East Lothian Council. These designations can be of an intimate nature and even thinning operations can have sensitivities, even if they are not on a larger scale.

Conservation Areas are designated under Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Trees often contribute significantly to the character of conservation areas. It is important to note that it is an offence for any person to cut, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy any tree in a conservation area unless six weeks' notice has been given to the local planning authority. This gives the planning authority time to consider, in case they have an objection or wish to place a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the area.

Local Nature Conservations Site
All of the compartments fall within the ‘Fawn and Speedy Woods’ Local Nature Conservation site making the East Council Biodiversity Officer a key stakeholder.

ELC TPO 18: Yester Woods
The County of East Lothian Tree Preservation Order No. 18: Yester Woods, W1 covers all of Speedy Wood from the former railway line to Tweedale Avenue, Gifford to the south; G2 covers "All the lime trees forming the Avenue leading from Gifford Railway Station to Bells Wood, on the north side of Broadwoodside Farm".

The Speedy Burn
The Speedy Burn runs from west to east crossing Speedy Wood. The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) should be included as key stakeholders and disturbance to the streen bed should be avoided.

2.5 Public access

The promoted path network through the woodland encourages the public to access the woods. Any forestry operations would be sympathetic to maintaining public access with only small sections of the path network closed temporarily and appropriate diversions put in place.

2.6 Woodland Protection

Plant Health (including tree health and invasive or noxious plants)

Plant health issues will be monitored for on routine site visits. This will be informed by current guidance. Sightings of signs and symptoms will be reported to Forest Research via TreeAlert.

Ash Dieback is endemic across the woodland with nearly all ash trees succumbing to the disease. Most trees in sensitive target areas have been felled and restocked with alternative native broadleaved species. In less sensitive areas trees have been retained to provide opportunities for disease tolerant trees to persist, and deadstanding trees have been left as habitat.

Chronic oak decline (COD) is evident in most of the oak trees in Cpt 8 as well as some in Cpt 1. Management guidance is being led by ongoing engagement with Forest Research.

Nectria Spp. related diseases are affecting many semi-mature sycamore trees in Cpts 4 & 5., as the future management goals are to restore the woodland to native broadleaved species, the affected areas will be enriched with other appropriate species as thinning and safety work dictates.

Rhododendron can be found throughout the woodland. Volunteer labour, supported by grant assistance will be used to progressively eradicate rhododendron from the woodland.

Other invasive species will be monitored for on site visits and controlled accordingly, in line with best practice guidance.

Deer, Livestock, and other mammals

The site is accessible to roe deer but is not grazed by livestock. Although grazing is no more than very light, broadleaves will be planted in tree shelters to protect them from browsing pressure from deer and rabbits. There appears to be a preference towards plantings over natural regenration.

Although deer management is not appropriate within the woodland because of extended public use, there is an ongoing preference among neighbouring landowners to keep numbers at an appropriate level.

Of the woodlands c.2.6km boundary, just over 1km borders farmland,but currently not used for livestock grazing. This bounday fence will be maintained in a stock-proof condition in co-operation with neighbours to prevent livestock incursion.

Grey Squirrels

There is significant evidence of damage from grey squrrels, particularly bark stripping on most beech trees throughout the site. Red Squrriels were last recorded in the area in 2002 (ELC Access Officer, Pers. Comm.). There is an aspiration to work alongside Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels to contribute to red squirrel conservation efforts, but the woodland lies outwith the Priority Areas for Red Squirrel Conservation (PARCs) in South Scotland, and there is little support within the community to trap grey squirrels within the woodland management plan.

Water & Soil (soil erosion, acidification of water, pollution etc.)

A single watercourse, the Speedy Burn, crosses the property west to east. Two springs arise within

the woodland, one within the site boundary in Cpt 8 which flows into the Speedy Burn, which eventually discharges into the Gifford Water. Gifford Water is currently classified as being in Poor condition.

The introduction of further broadleaves and the aspiration to practice low impact forest operations wherever possible will help protect soil and water quality during the plan period. Forest & Water Guidelines will be followed at all times.

Environment (flooding, wind damage, fire, invasive species etc.)

Climate: This is a low rainfall area with less than 30" (800 mm) precipitation per year. Temperatures are equitable with a lack of severe frosts. The site class is described as "Warm - Moderately exposed – Moist" with a Wind Damage Risk Status as 1 (Moderately sheltered). The height of many of the mature conifers in Cpt 2 means that wind damage is a risk. During Storm Arwen in 2021, some damage was sustained in Subcpt 2a. To mitigate the risk of further catastrophic windthrow, a cautious thinning strategy has been adopted in Cpt 2, informed by guidance from Forest Research.

Fire: The first priority in our woodland Fire Risk Assessment are the houses adjacent to the woodland and the potential danger to lives and property. A visit in May 2025 from Fire Scotland confirmed that this risk was covered by fire appliances accessing existing fire hydrants adjacent to the woodland. It was noted that these should be marked in a clearer manner and any vegetation obscuring them cut back and maintained. Fire Scoltand also assured us that their appliances and equipment was able to penetrate into woodland areas for a considerable distance. Although there is no suitable water availability in either Fawn or Speedy Woods, both have sufficient access points from which hoses could be run out to reach most areas. Other interventions which the woodland will adopt are appropriate fire danger signs at all entry points and at the welfare camp area. Fire beaters to be located at main entry points tot he woodland. A permenant fire pit should be constructed at the welfare area constructed from metal or stone and any combustable materials regularly cleared away from the fire pit area. An IBC (kept filled for watering trees) is located in the Community Orchard adjacent to the welfare and could be used to draw water from in case of an emergency, but a designated water supply by the fire pit should be considered in the longer term.

Flooding: Due to the property's location, the risk of river flood damage is extremely low. The likelihood is considered as being between 0.1% and 0.5 % each year only around watercourses and the railway track with the exception of the immediate areas within 1-2m of the burn having a potential annual risk of 10%, as shown on SEPA's flood maps. The majority of the woodland is not represented on the flood maps.

Invasives: Rhododendron ponticum has been a significant issue in the woodland, but now all the mature shrubs have been removed through the hard work of volunteers and the project now moves into a phase of controlling regeneration and removing any remaining regenerating stumps. Other non-native species have been identified, particularly along boundaries with neighbouring houses. The community has been made aware of this issue through various methods of engagement, and these species are being included into the adopted control of invasive species woodland plan.

Climate Change Resilience (provenance, lack of diversity, uniform structure)

The species and structural composition within Fawn and Speedy Woods requires some improvement interventions. There is an aspiration to restore native woodland, but also to diversify species and age structure further and introduce additional species to improve the forest's resilience to climate change.

3. Vision and Objectives

Tell us how you intend to manage the woodland in the long term and your goals for its development.

3.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s).

The long-term vision for Gifford Community Woodland is to manage it for the benefit of the community of Gifford. This includes restoring the nativeness of the woodland, improving the age and species structure , and continuing to maintain and improve public access. There is an aspiration to improve the habitat provision within the woodland and enhance its biodiversity. There is also an objective to continue to provide educational opportunities. This will include forest school for primary school-age children.

3.2 Management objectives

Give your objectives of management and also how you will manage the woodland sustainably. Your objectives should be specific and you should also be able to measure their outcomes.

No.	Objectives (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	Restore nativeness and diversify the woodland to enhance its resilience.
2	Enhance habitat provision within the woodland and control invasive species.
3	Maintain and improve recreational access to the woodland.
4	Provide volunteering and educational opportunities for local people.
5	Maintain economic viability of the woodland through community support, educational activities, grants, and explore potential of timber and non-timber forest products.

4. Stakeholder Engagement (if required)

Please contact any neighbours, organisations, statutory bodies, or other members of the public who may be affected by any operations you have planned for your woodland. If there is no evidence of stakeholder engagement we may request that you consult certain parties. If we feel that formal consultation is necessary due to certain constraints or designations we will carry that out. Please discuss this with your local Conservancy office.

Individual / Organisation	Date contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
Scottish Forestry	2026-04-07			
Forest Research	2026-03-26	2026-04-13	Site visit confirmed chronic oak decline (COD) in sub-dominant oaks	fell affected sub-dominant trees and thin non-native species to allow for natural regen and possibly some enrichment planting (consider Q. robur)
Gifford Community Council	2026-10-19			
Gifford Community	2026-09-06		Ongoing	The plan is overseen by an appointed board of trustees as well as a broader Steering Committee. Management updates have been presented to the community through regular well-advertised open woodland meetings in the Bowling Club and onsite woodland meetings to which we encourage all community members to attend.
East Lothian Council	2026-10-19			
Broadwoodside	2026-10-19			

Yester Estate	2026-10-19			
Neighbouring landowners	2026-10-19			
Paul Hurd, Volunteer	2026-08-27	2026-09-04	Concerns about value of horse logging, and some minor points, inc. key to tree species codes	Comments incorporated into plan where appropriate

5. Analysis and Management Strategy

Analyse the information from the previous sections and identify how to make best use of your woodland and its resources to achieve your objectives.

5.1 Constraints and Opportunities

Using the table below analyse any issues raised or relevant features within your woodland and record the constraints and opportunities.

Feature/Issue	Constraint	Opportunity
Gifford Conservation Area, TPO 18, and Local Nature Conservation Site	Operations in some compartments require engagement with ELC Planning Dept. and Biodiversity Officer in all compartemnts. Planning consents can take up to six weeks.	Engagement offers opportunities to align with ELC Tree and Woodland Strategy and Nature Networks
Continous Cover (CCF)	Interventions focussed on mature trees and poor age structure are threatened by wind damage. Felling of trees is unpopular within the community and disturbance to recreation is unwelcome.	Opportunity to engage horse logger for extraction. Timber sales from thinning and restructuring improve economic resilience of the woodland.
Rhododendron regen abundant across Speedy Wood	Community does not support the use of pesticides	Volunteering programme supports health and well being of community volunteers and minimises the use of pesticides
2.5 km All Ability Path Network	Heavy path maintenance schedule and resurfacing required approx. every 10 yrs	Good community volunteering opportunities through practical path maintenance and fund raising

Additional detail

5.2 Management Strategy

Following your analysis, provide a broad statement describing your management strategy. Consider all aspects (economics, access, biodiversity, landscape) and pay particular attention to your silvicultural strategy for meeting your management objectives.

Manage woodland as a Continuous Cover (CCF)/ Low Intervention Silviculture System(LISS), including thinning and improvement planting, to improve age and species stucture with all significant operations completed early within the plan.

6. Management Proposals

Tell us the management operations you intend to carry out over the next 10 years to help meet your management objectives for the woodland. The submission of this plan will be considered as an application for permission to thin the woodland over the 10 year plan period, subject to the completion of Table 1 and the submission of appropriate maps. If you intend to carry out other types of felling you must apply for permission separately.

6.1 Silvicultural Practice

Outline silvicultural practice and management prescriptions. Include any past management practice that is relevant and the strategies to address the issues identified in section 5.

The woodland has suffered from under management over the last four decades which has resulted in poor age and species structure, as well as allowing encroachment of several non-native species, particulalrly beech and sycamore, which are threatening the natural integrety of the woodland. More recently the woodland has been brought back into mangement, with dangerous trees in priority areas attended to, boundary fences repaired and a 2.5 km network of "all ability access" paths created, as well as improvements to drainage and the creation of a pond for biodiversity.The plan proposal is to manage as a Continous Cover/ Low Intervention Silvicultural system (LISS), with stands of mature trees thinned to allow areas for natural regen and some enrichment planting which will improve age and species structure. The path network will also be re-surfaced during the period of this plan.

6.2 Thinning Prescription

If you are applying for thinning, you must provide a map as per Appendix 2 of the Forest Plan Applicant's Guidance. The map must show all areas proposed for thinning. Provide any further details required here in reference to your map(s).

Thinning prescription of 5% mature oak & non native species(SS, DF, SY,& BE) Subcpt 8d, and 5% in Subcpt 1b , 5% of Scot's pine in Subcpt 2b. Thinning of young pole stage trees and non native species (SY, BE) to be thinned10% in Subcpt 3b.

Table 1 - Thinning
This table shows the total management plan area as well as the thinning compartments proposed for management. The felling site/compartment in this table must be shown as the same on the thinning map(s).

Method of displaying thinning regime: **Volume to be removed**

Total Plan Area:	22	hectares					
Thinning Compartment	Area (ha)	%	Species to be felled (one per row)	Age (Years)	Marking of Trees	No of Trees	Volume (m^3)
1b Old Oaks	1.43	5	MB	80		37	17
2b T2022	3.5	5	MC	100		52	85
3b	3.09	10	MB	30		39	28
8d	1.99	5	MB	80		45	52
Total Area	9.99				Total Volume m^3		182