



Woodland Management Plan Discussion

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Intentions for this evening

- Share our discoveries about the ancient woodland site
- Demonstrate how we intend to care for this historic woodland
- Show an outline of the woodland management plan
- Gather your thoughts and ideas



Putting Nature first....

MISSION STATEMENT – VERT WOODS COMMUNITY WOODLAND

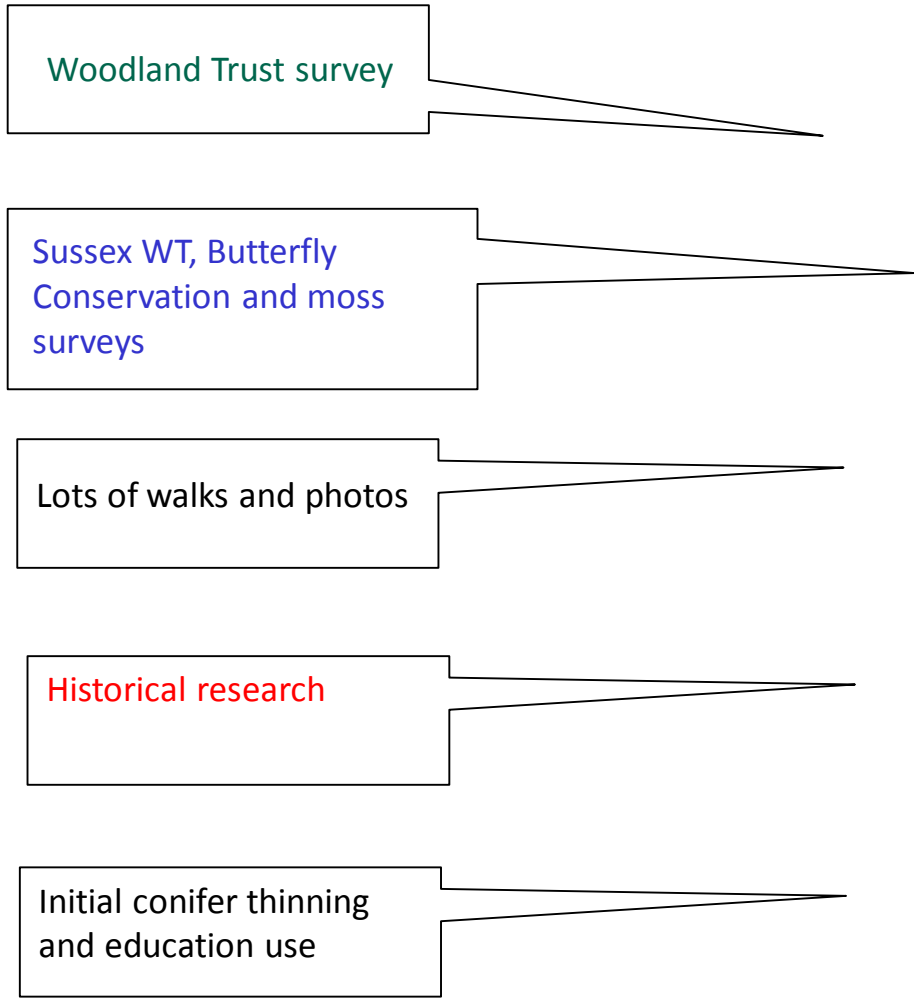
‘Our mission is to create and maintain an inspirational working Community Woodland that puts Nature at the heart of decisions. We seek to establish a self-sustaining and thriving woodland culture that connects people with the natural environment, now and into the future.’



What is a Woodland Management Plan?

- A contract between the owner or leaseholder and the government
(Forestry Commission)
- A plan for how the woodland will be managed over 10 years
- A statement of intention to meet very high ecological and environmental standards (UK Forestry Standard)
- A document, a spreadsheet and a set of maps

What has been done so far



Woodland Management Plan



Constraints:

- Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) – W10a
- Wet ground, ponds and springs
- Dormice, G-C newts
- Ancient Woodland ground flora/mosses
- Limited car parking/public access

Opportunities:

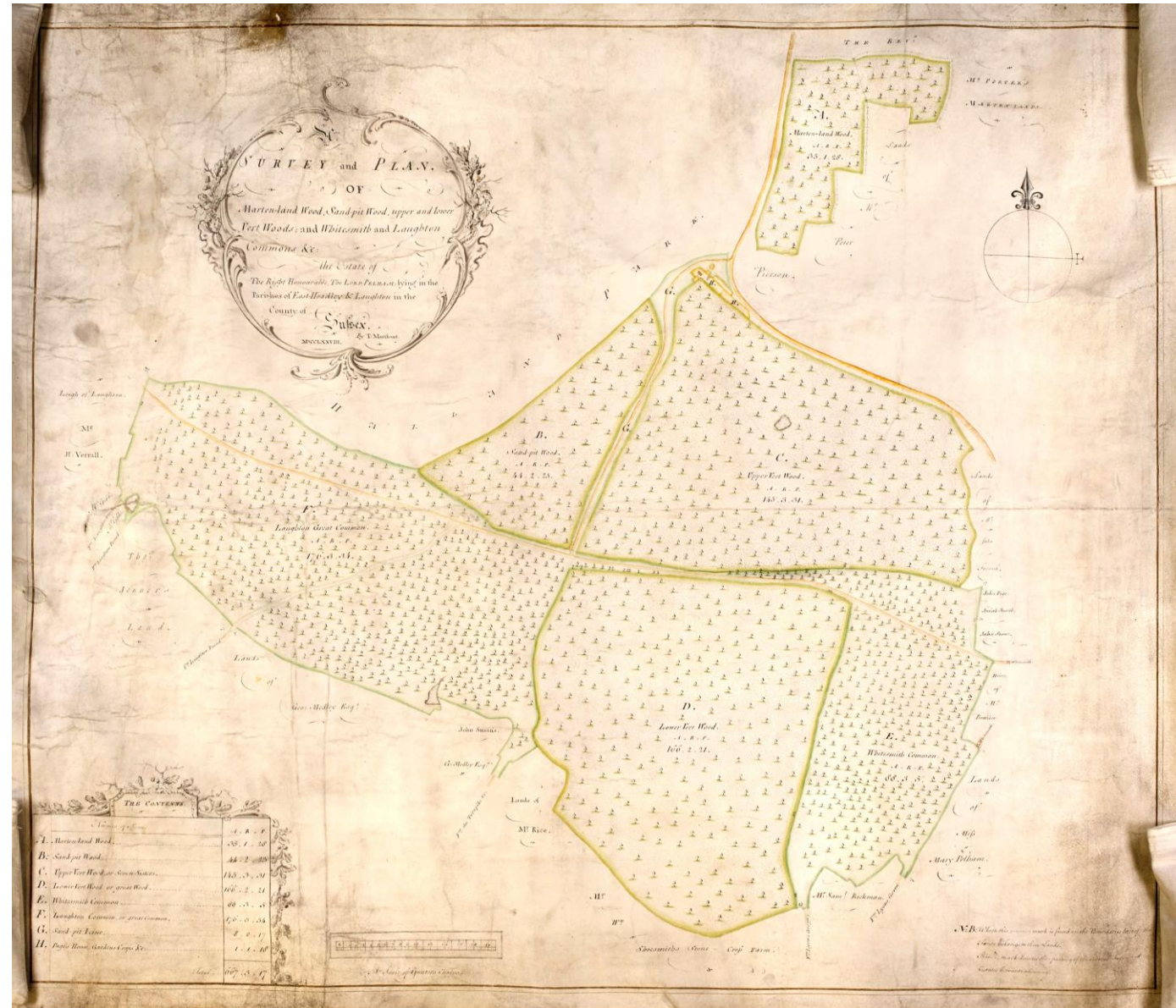
- Improve tree age and species diversity
- Improve habitats and biodiversity
- Conserve pond and springs
- Improve access
- Create timber resource for employment

Threats:

- Dominance of weak plantation pine
- No light or space for regeneration
- Excessive deer browsing
- Invasive species and disease
- Litter; fire risk and off-road drivers

Woodland History - 1

- Exists on 1610 map
- Classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
- Owned by Pelham family for centuries
- Adjacent to deer park
- Adjacent to woodland commons (Laughton and Whitesmith)
- Sold about 40 years ago – large chunks
- Overplanted with conifers twice

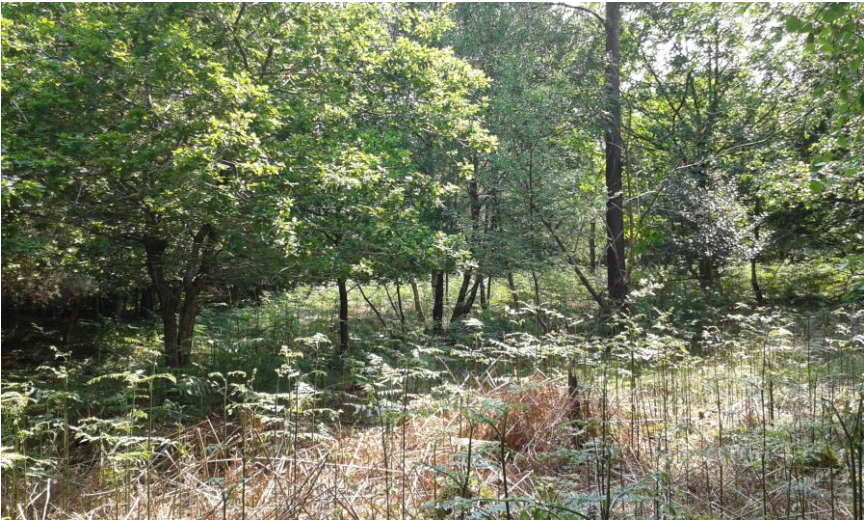


Woodland History - 2

- At least two crops of conifers
- Regular removal of small birch, oak, hornbeam, chestnut for charcoal and firewood
- More open space
- Large timber sawn for use on estate
- Railway for timber movements



Woodland summary (1)



Woodland summary (2)



So what do we plan to do?

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What does the mission statement mean for the woodland?

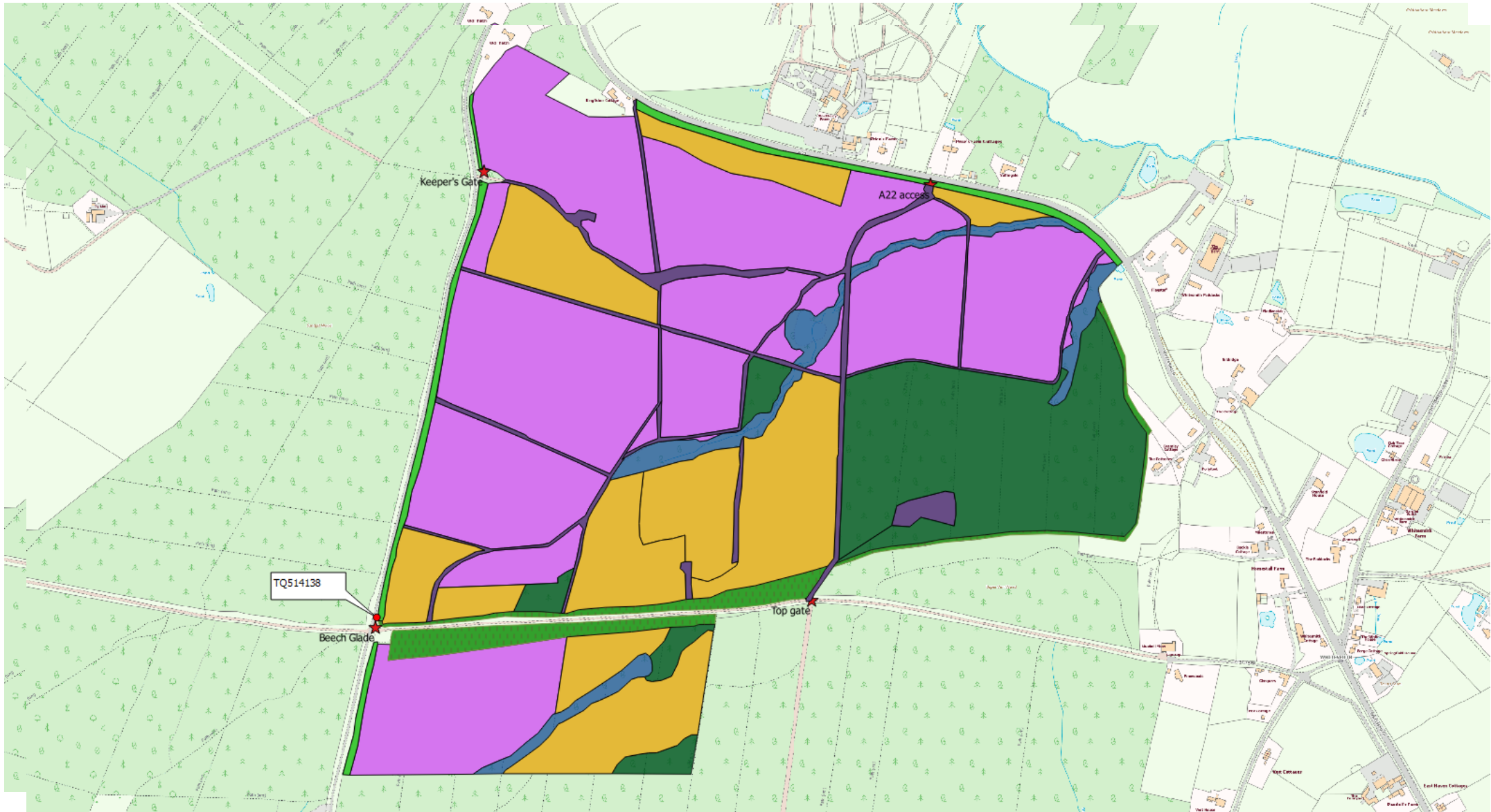
- Looking after the woodland itself is top priority
- Ancient woodlands are fragile – any changes will be gradual
- Human connection to the woodland (education, employment, amenity) will be encouraged but will not take precedence
- Some areas will always remain as wilder or secluded habitat



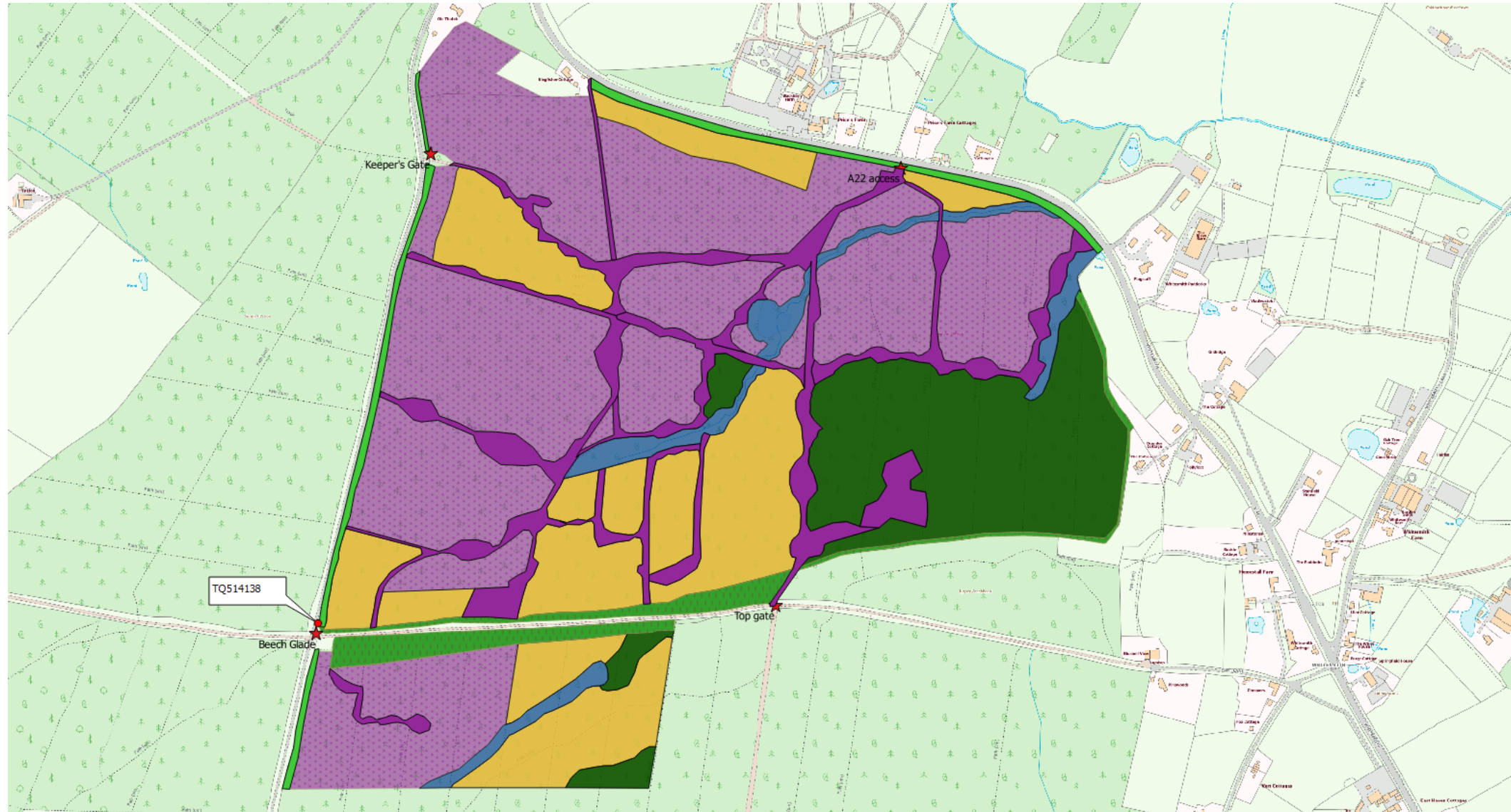
VWCW management objectives

Gradual restoration to ancient semi-natural woodland	Selective thinning of conifers at 20% every 5 years Protection against deer browsing
Improvement in tree age, structural and species mix	Pollarding and small group clear-fell Support for natural regeneration Enrichment planting of compatible species
Range of wildlife habitats to support biodiversity (rides and glades, woodbanks, wood edges)	Wider rides with glades and scallops Woodland edges restored to pollard/coppice or greater structural diversity Ground flora conservation through zone planning
Pond and stream system conservation	Light on and some clearance of main pond; Dig more ponds
Protection of dormice, G-C newts, bats, adders	Work programme arranged around life cycles
Human access	Development of path network and signage Small car park as funds/planning permit

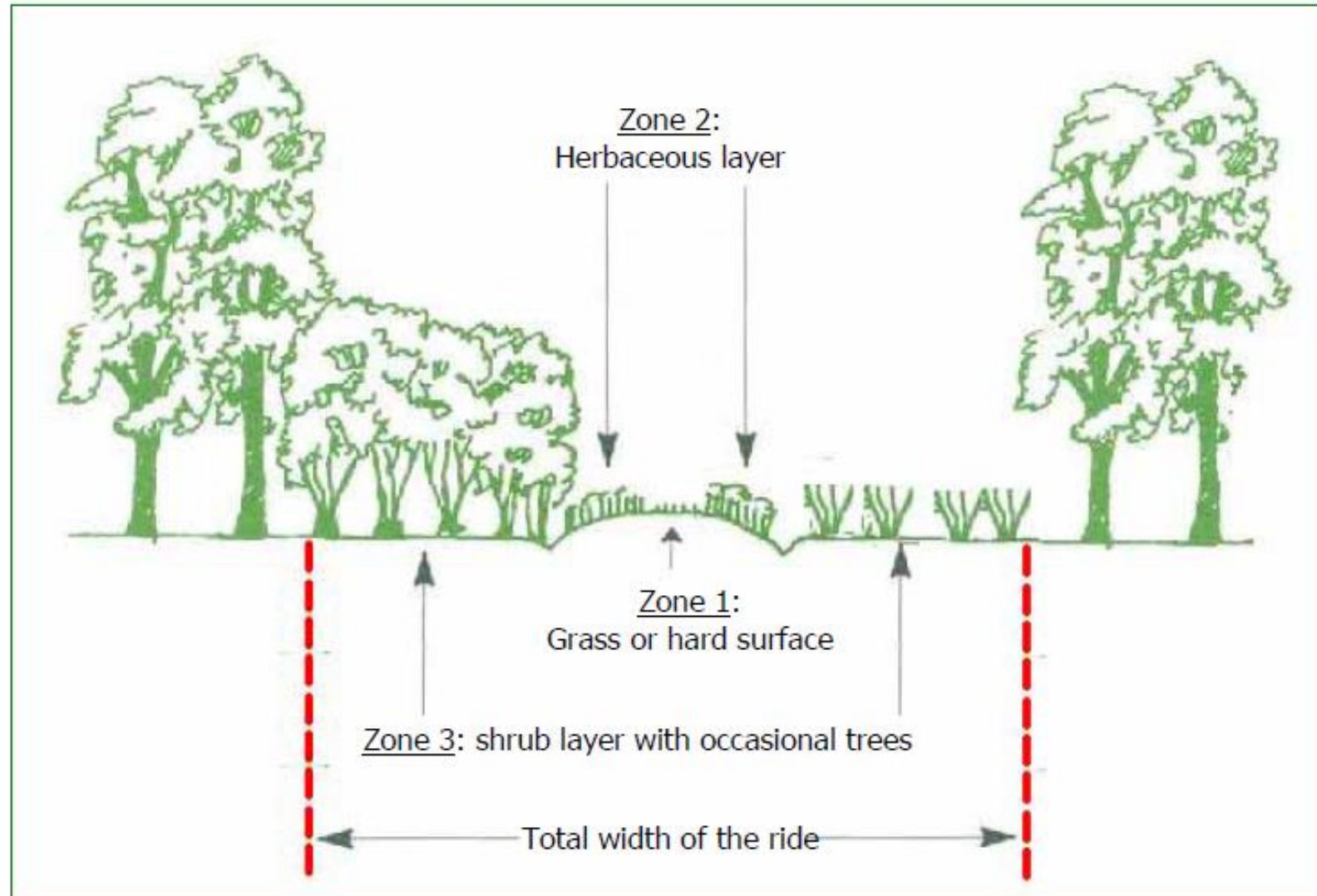
What does that look like on the ground? From this:



What does that look like on the ground? To this:



Rides for biodiversity



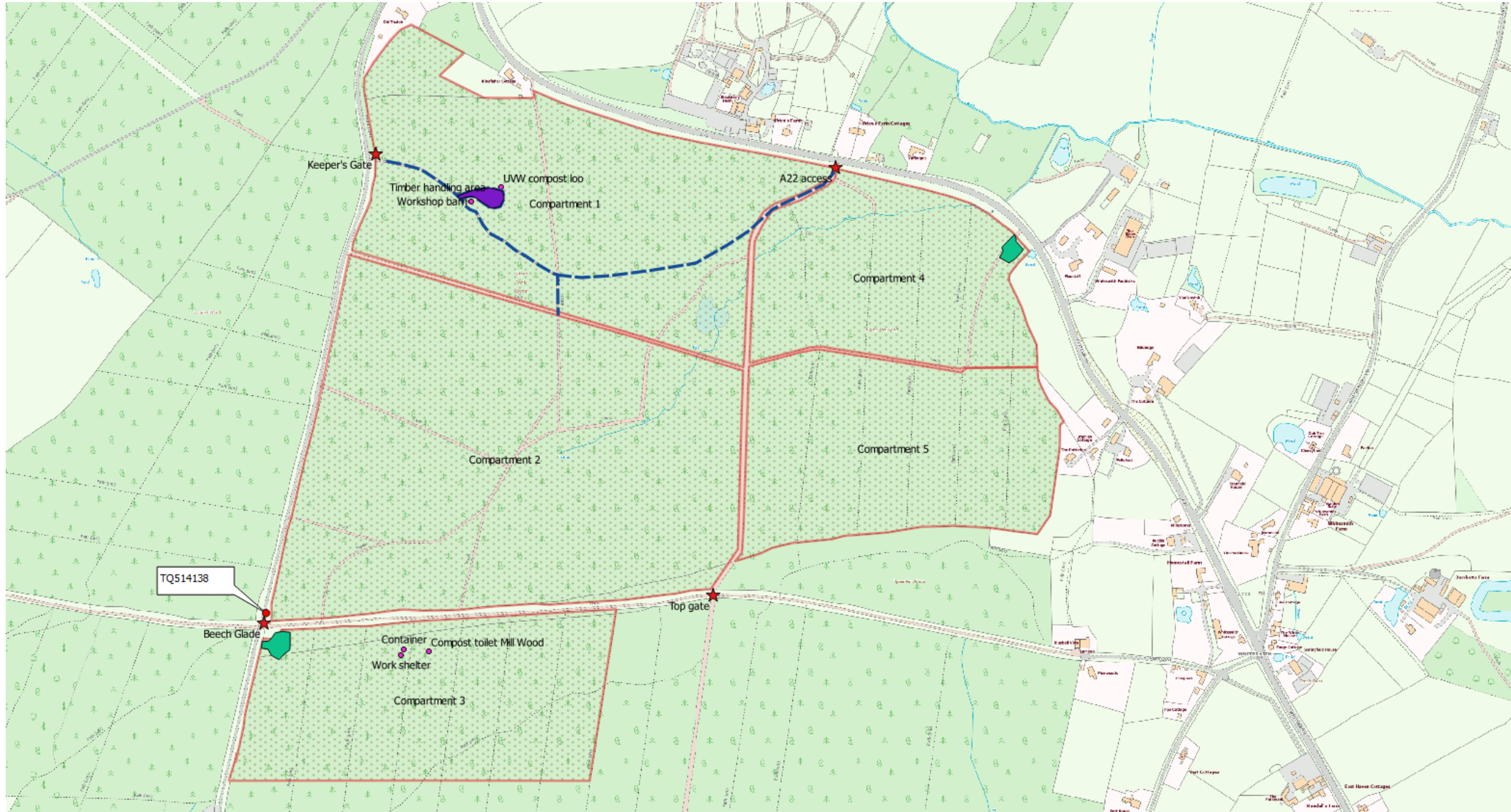
Wildlife beneficiaries from better management



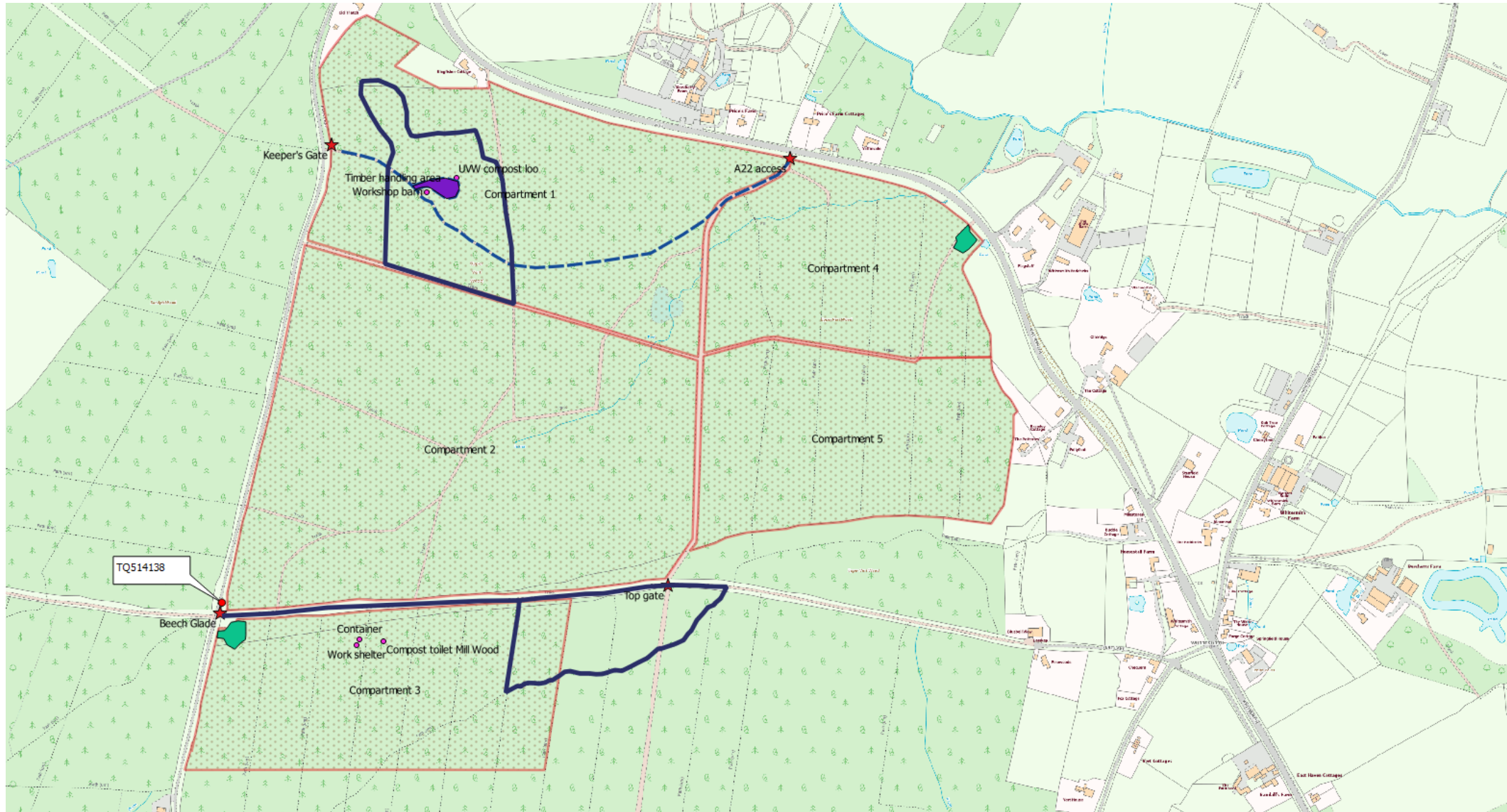
Woodland Management activities

Year	Planned work	Likely impact
Each year	<p>Light thinning of small conifer and extraction of biomass timber, gradually round whole wood</p> <p>Selective removal of small number of mature pine for product creation</p> <p>Protection of regeneration/planting</p> <p>Bracken control and glade maintenance</p>	Similar level to 2016
2017	<p>Renovation of Park Lane edge 3 stages</p> <p>Improvement of by-way wood banks</p>	A few days of road disruption. Wood available for fuel.
2018	<p>Larger harvesting operation and forest track creation</p> <p>By-way wood banks work continues</p>	30 timber lorry movements over 2 weeks
As funds permit	<p>New access on A22</p> <p>Shared use, maintained car park at Vert Lane junction</p>	<p>Very limited use</p> <p>Some loss of car space whilst created, then available, cleaned and monitored</p>

Forestry Operations infrastructure over the next 5 years



Forestry Operations infrastructure and new paths – initial ideas



VWCW Community Engagement – what do we mean? Communities of interest as well as geography

- Local community access
- General public – walkers, naturalists, photographers
- The community of those with ecological and research interests
- The community of those training to work in woods
- The community of those improving nature connection for health
- The community of those supporting and maintaining the woods



In conclusion:

From the information so far:

- What do you think?
- What further information would you like?
- Would you like to support the work – Friends of Vert Woods or Community Benefit Society member?

