

Byrness Woodland Management Plan

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council is working with Forestry Commission (FC) to develop and implement a Woodland Management Plan for the areas within Byrness that is the responsibility of the Parish Council.

It is understood Woodland Management Plans are long term projects and will require numerous applications for funding as this is a matter the Parish Council would not be able to fund from the precept.

The Parish Council is grateful for the expertise and guidance of the FC that will be vital as the project progresses. At this time the ideas are fairly fluid but against the overall project vision recorded below some proposals being suggested so far include:-

- Revitalise the community orchard area to improve the health of the trees as well as the productivity and repair the boundary fence.
- Remove the small number of larch in the area to avoid the disease identified in Kielder spreading
- To remove / reduce size of trees that are not healthy and potential danger to the users of the woodland and property neighbouring the area.
- To replant native, wildlife friendly trees where appropriate to increase biodiversity of the area.
- To introduce footpaths through the area with possible information boards to increase the experience for both local residents as well as visitors to the area.
- Potentially reduce the height of the trees that form the shelter belt to the village.

Byrness Woodland Management Plan vision

The Parish Council has the vision that the woodland within the Byrness community will be healthy, have improved biodiversity across the whole area as well improved access for people to explore. There will be defined footpaths through the woodland and appropriate fencing as well as gates to allow access to all.

One aspect of the plan that it is hoped should be started shortly is the planting of up to 200 native, wildlife friendly trees by The Great Northumberland Forest (GNF) on the almost constant wet area between Otterburn Green and the A68. Again this is subject to a successful funding application but would help to reduce the amount of water seepage on the land near Otterburn Green as well as help as a sound barrier the traffic noise on the A68. The trees will be planted by GNF and will ensure that there is no impact on visibility for drivers. If all goes according to plan the planting of these trees should happen between November, 2025 and February, 2026.

As a separate project Tyne Rivers Trust are due to undertake further coppicing of the willow between Otterburn Green and the A68 this winter as part of an initial three stage plan to contain the growth of the willow.

As there are developments of the Woodland Management Plan the Parish Council will provide an update.

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council