

4. Communities and Places



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4.1 Current Provision

Clowes Wood provides considerable opportunity for the people who live and work in the surrounding area to explore the landscape, appreciate its wildlife and lead an active lifestyle. At present, visitors use the woodland for dog-walking, cycling and running.

Clowes wood car park is accessed from Radfall Road, just south of the A299, and is recognized with a threshold sign. The car park is linear in shape and runs parallel to Radfall Road. A height barrier restricts access to the car park. A squeeze gap and post and rail fencing at the northern end of the car park and earth bunds aim to prevent unauthorized access by motor vehicles. A sliding barrier controls access into the woodland. The car park has the capacity for approximately 50 cars. There is substantial opportunity to increase the size of the current car park incorporating a pay and display facility should funding become available, to enable sustainable management of the site.

In the south-west of the woodland, adjacent to a permanent pond, 'The Winding Pond', is a formal picnic site with one round, specially designed and permanently fixed picnic table and bench.

The mile of old Whitstable branch line purchased by the Forestry Commission in 1959 has been developed and absorbed into the road network within the woodland, and has provided a major recreation benefit in the form of part of the Sustrans cycle route. This route runs for approximately 1 and a half miles in the Western half of the woodland. Sustrans, in partnership with Local Authorities, provide a national network of cycle routes for use by the general public.

There are five public footpath's (CW23, 24, 25, CB22 and 23) which cross the woodland. All the footpaths were opened up in 2002 under an agreement with KCC and funded in partnership with KSCP and Interreg. To maintain the standard of these public rights-of-way continued investment will be necessary. There is also scope to improve some of these routes to produce an all-ability surface should funding become available.

Horse riding in the woodland is managed under an existing agreement with TROT (Toll Rides off-road Trust). There are also two bridleway's in the woodland.

4.2 Delivering the Brief

There are three objectives stated in the brief that the plan should address.

- There are three centres of population within five miles of the woodland boundary. The woodlands should provide an attractive backdrop to the lives of local people.

Implementation of this woodland plan will result in a more attractive and functional woodland for visitors. The widening and shaping of rides, gradual conversion to broad-leaves whilst retaining feature conifers and the continued attention to habitats and species will produce a visually pleasing and healthy place to visit and enjoy.

- Public use is high, so careful design and management will be needed to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit without compromising important habitats and species found in the wood.

The woodland design pays attention to balance and diversity. Public areas are generally open to provide a sense of security. Other areas, away from the main paths and trails, provide a quiet space for wildlife. The finer detail of forest operations and management is dealt with during the Operational Site Assessment.

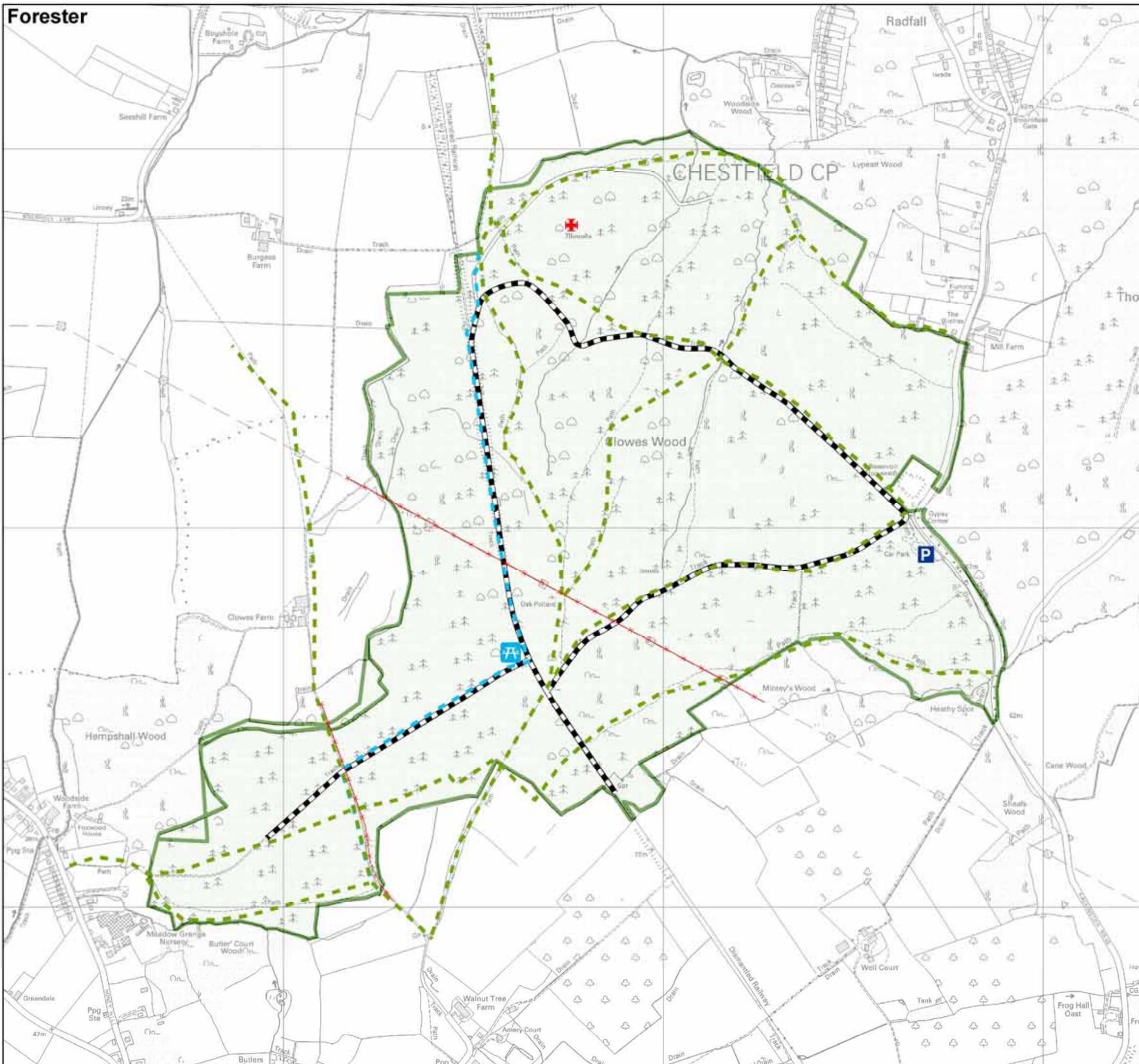
- Clowes Wood is an integral part of the vision of the Blean Partnership for the future of this fascinating woodland landscape. The plan should reflect the interests and expectations of the partners.

The Blean Initiative is a partnership of landowners, local authorities, conservation bodies and community groups working together to look after this unique landscape for both wildlife and people. It was set up in 2002 to develop an integrated approach to land management and to promote biodiversity, heritage and recreation. This FDP has the same aspirations.

South East England Clowes Wood Forest Design Plan

Recreation and Access

- Public Footpath
- Sustrans Cycle Trail
- Car Park
- Picnic Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Management Area
- Forest Road
- Forest Ride
- Overhead Powerline



Produced by the Planning Team March 2009

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4.3 Communities and Places Objectives

Forest Design Plan Objectives	Forest Design Plan Outputs At Year 10 (2018)	Monitoring
Communities and Places	The area of woodland with public access has been maintained.	Record of woodland closure under CROW Act (2000/1).
	The woodland provides high quality accessible natural greenspace and people have been encouraged to use and enjoy the woodland for leisure purposes and healthy living.	Recreation and access web pages on FC website. Facility inspection records. Permission system records. Ordnance Survey Landranger and Explorer maps show Forestry Commission public access land.