

# Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan



The Woodland Trust  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 6LL

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018

**Re: Consultation on Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan**

**Woodland Trust response**

*Thank you very much for consulting the Woodland Trust on your neighbourhood plan for Lazonby, we very much appreciate the opportunity. Neighbourhood planning is an important mechanism for also embedding trees into local communities, as such we are very supportive of some of the policies set out in your plan.*

## A Vision and Objectives for The Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan

The Woodland Trust is pleased to see that one of your visions for Lazonby does seek to only encourage appropriate development. Also, the principle objective of your Neighbourhood Plan identifies the importance of protecting the natural environment, and seeking to protect and enhance the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Whilst the profile and description for your Neighbourhood Plan identifies the need to retain and enhance Lazonby and its largely rural character, it also acknowledges the need for development to integrate with the landscape. Given that Neighbourhood Plans are a great opportunity to think about how trees can also enhance your community and the lives of its residents, the natural environment and tree and woodland conservation in Lazonby, should also be taken into account as an objective in your Plan.

Trees are some of the most important features of the area for local people. This is being acknowledged with the Eden Local Plan Proposed Submission 2014 to 2032, which identifies ancient woodlands and trees as being valuable, both individually and collectively, as natural assets which are irreplaceable, and it also resists development resulting in the loss of woodland, hedgerows and trees. One of the objectives of Policy ENV2 (Protection and Enhancement of Landscapes and Trees) is to protect, manage and plan for the preservation of valued landscapes, such as ancient woodland and significant/veteran trees. This Local Plan policy should also be taken into account with the vision and objectives in your Neighbourhood Plan for Lazonby.

Therefore, the third objective of your Neighbourhood Plan should be amended to also seek to protect and enhance the character of Lazonby, and include the following paragraph as well:

**" 3. To protect the natural environment, such as local woodlands, *veteran trees, hedgerows and trees*, through restricting development on greenfield sites. "**

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### Landscaping and New Development

We are pleased to see that your Neighbourhood Plan for Lazonby does identify the need to conserve and enhance its landscape, and this is being acknowledged with Policy D5 (Trees), which acknowledges retention and preservation of existing mature trees and hedges on any new development site.

However, your Plan for Lazonby should also seek to ensure development must conserve mature trees and hedgerows, so there is no loss or degradation of ancient woodland in your parish. It should also support conserving and enhancing woodland and trees, such as Oak trees, with management, and also to plant more trees in appropriate locations. Increasing the amount of trees and woods in Lazonby will provide enhanced green infrastructure for your local communities, and also mitigate against the future loss of trees to disease (eg Ash dieback), with a new generation of trees both in woods, and also outside woods in streets, hedgerows and amenity sites.

Information can be found here: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.asp> and <http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/discoveries/interactivemap/>

Ancient woodland would benefit from strengthened protection building on the National Planning Policy Forum (NPPF). On 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 the Prime Minister Theresa May launched the draft revised NPPF for consultation. Paragraph 173 c states:

development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable mitigation strategy exists. Where development would involve the loss of individual aged or veteran trees that lie outside ancient woodland, it should be refused unless the need for, and benefits of, development in that location would clearly outweigh the loss;

Whilst recognising that this policy is draft, we believe it must be given due weight in the plan making process as it shows a clear direction of travel from central Government to strengthen the protection of irreplaceable ancient woodland.

Therefore, we would recommend that your all of the land use policies of your Neighbourhood Plan should include something along these lines:

***“Substantial harm to or loss of irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees, should be wholly exceptional”***

The Woodland Trust would suggest that your Neighbourhood Plan is more specific about ancient woodland protection. For example, the introduction and background to the consultation on the Kimbolton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2017) identified the importance of ancient woodland, and how it should be protected and enhanced. Also, we would like to see buffering distances set out. For example, for most types of development (i.e.

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residential), a planted buffer strip of 50m would be preferred to protect the core of the woodland in the geographical area of your Neighbourhood Plan. Standing Advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission has some useful information:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

The profile of Lazonby identifies the need to retain and enhance its rural character as a small rural settlement, and also the need for development to integrate with the landscape. Given that Neighbourhood Plans are a great opportunity to think about how trees can also enhance your community and the lives of its residents, the natural environment and tree and woodland conservation in Lazonby, should also be taken into account with a Policy in your Plan.

Therefore, we would like to see the importance of trees and woodland recognised for providing healthy living and recreation also being taken into account with your Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan. In an era of ever increasing concern about the nation's physical and mental health, the Woodland Trust strongly believes that trees and woodland can play a key role in delivering improved health & wellbeing at a local level. Whilst, at the same time, the Health & Social Care Act 2012 has passed much of the responsibility for health & wellbeing to upper-tier and unitary local authorities, and this is reinforced by the Care Act 2014. Also, each new house being built in your parish should require a new street tree, and also any car parks must have trees within them.

#### **Protection of Open Space**

Whilst open spaces are being acknowledged as being the basic amenities needed for your village, and currently Policy D6 in your Neighbourhood Plan does also seek to retain and enhance recreational and local green spaces, resist the loss of open space, whilst also ensuring the provision of some more, however, to what extent there is considered to be enough accessible space in your community also needs to be taken into account. There are Natural England and Forestry Commission standards which can be used with developers on this:

The Woodland Access Standard aspires:

- That no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size.
- That there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes.

The Woodland Trust also believes that trees and woodlands can deliver a major contribution to resolving a range of water management issues, particularly those resulting from climate change, like flooding and the water quality implications caused by extreme weather events. This is important in the area covered by your Neighbourhood Plan because trees offer opportunities to make positive water use change, whilst also contributing to other objectives, such as biodiversity, timber & green infrastructure - see the Woodland Trust publication ***Stemming the flow*** – the role of trees and woods in flood protection - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2014/05/stemming-the-flow/>.

#### **Woodland Trust Publications**

We would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the Woodland Trust's neighbourhood planning microsite: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/campaigning/neighbourhood-planning/> which may give you further ideas for your plan.

Also, the Woodland Trust have recently released a planners manual which is a multi-purpose document and is intended for policy planners, such as community groups preparing Neighbourhood Plans. Our guide can be found at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/mediafile/100820409/planning-for-ancient-woodland-planners-manual-for-ancient-woodland-and-veterandtrees.pdf?cb=8298cbf2eaa34c7da329eee3bd8d48ff>

In addition, other Woodland Trust research which may assist with taking your Neighbourhood Plan forward is a policy and practice section on our website, which provides lots of more specific evidence on more specific issues such as air quality, pollution and tree disease: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/>

Our evidence base is always expanding through vigorous programme of PhDs and partnership working. So please do check back or get in touch if you have a specific query. You may also be interested in our free community tree packs, schools and community groups can claim up to 420 free trees every planting season: <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/community-tree-pack/>

If I can be of any assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch, I would be more than happy to discuss this further with you. If you require any further information or would like to discuss specific issues please do not hesitate to contact Victoria Bankes Price – Planning Advisor

Best wishes and good luck with your plan

**Ian Lings** – Local Planning Support Volunteer

On behalf of the Woodland Trust