
Rounall Wood: Habitat restoration community consultation

Golden Hedgehogs

Rounall Wood: Support

Rounall Woods is a wonderful community asset enjoyed by local residents, the wider community, visitors to Dalbeattie and our local wildlife. Over the years various improvements have been made by committed volunteers, but ongoing restoration is required to maintain and maximise the wood's potential, for wildlife to flourish and to enhance its natural beauty.

We have engaged

- Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership
- D&G Woodlands
- South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC)
- Solway Forests Red Squirrel Network
- Dr Stephanie Johnstone*
- Common Good Sub Committee

All are involved with the woods and are supportive of our aims, approach and have offered help.

(*Has a background in conservation biology and endangered species management and over twenty years' experience of working with landowners and volunteers to achieve landscape-scale conservation outcomes.)



Rounall Wood: Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration is a progressive approach to conservation that **restores natural processes and self-sustaining ecosystems**, allowing nature to take care of itself with reduced human management. It focuses on repairing damaged ecosystems to create wilder, biodiverse landscapes, often by **reintroducing keystone species and connecting wild areas** to combat biodiversity loss and climate change.

What we have learned from data* about Rounall Wood: the **extensive tree canopy is impacting the flora and fauna diversity**, as commented by expert Recorders. Similarly the **weed congested ponds will prevent diverse wildlife** from surviving. All reinforced by the dwindling environmental data recorded in the woods.



(*Source: South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC))

Rounall Wood: Citizen Science

Citizen Science is when local people help collect information about wildlife and nature—like taking photos from fixed points, recording animals on cameras, or noting changes in woodland areas.

Across the UK, simple activities like recording wildlife have led to real change—new habitats, better land management, and stronger community action. Citizen science isn't just about collecting information—it's the first step towards improving our local environment together.

Why it matters

1. It helps us understand what's really happening locally

Your photos and observations show which species are present, where they are, and how things change over time. Without this, important changes can go unnoticed.

2. It guides better action

The information collected helps us decide *where to plant, what habitats need improving, and how to manage woodlands more effectively*—so effort isn't wasted.

3. It protects wildlife

By tracking species (like hedgehogs or birds), we can spot declines early and take action before it's too late.

4. It gives the community a real voice

Data collected locally can be used to support funding bids, influence woodland improvements / priorities, and demonstrate the value of our local green spaces.

5. It's simple, social, and rewarding

You don't need to be an expert—just curious. It's a great way to get outdoors, learn new skills, and contribute to something meaningful.

Rounall Wood: Citizen Science



We propose **providing opportunities for Citizen Science** to help collect information about wildlife and nature in Rounall Wood. Initially by taking photos from fixed points (e.g. Quarry pond, clump of oaks).

Restoring Rounall Wood's ponds brings lost habitats back: managing our woodland by making ponds healthier and more wildlife-friendly. Enjoying Citizen Science by helping to track which species return and thrive.

Pond restoration volunteer events could include:

- planting native reeds, rushes, other pond marginals and water lilies
- allowing for pond recovery
- establishing a safe haven for wildlife to return
- recording wildlife as it returns

No experience needed – just enthusiasm!



We propose providing community information (interpretation signage) and fixed photo points: **enabling you to capture what you notice**, to show how things change, as we undertake the proposed improvements.

Rounall Wood: Recorders Day

South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC) is the local environmental records centre (LERC) covering Dumfries & Galloway and Ayrshire. LERCs are not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment. LERCs support and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure information is robust, and make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers.

The Centre aims to **further the appreciation, understanding and protection of the natural environment of SW Scotland** by collecting, collating, managing and safeguarding information about the natural environment and providing a focal point through which anyone may access the information. **They hold over 4 million species records along with site and habitat data for SW Scotland.**

Since 2024, SWSEIC has run a wildlife recording group for Dumfries & Galloway and Ayrshire, **carrying out field visits throughout the region with the aim of improving local wildlife records.** These recording days cover a range of habitats and taxa, with some visits having a species or species-group focus. These surveys have been delivered throughout all parts of the SWSEIC area, often in partnership with other organisations and landowners.

SWSEIC have agreed to hold a Recorders Day (July) in Rounall Wood to record everything they can find using their volunteer expert recorders.

This will provide a **summary of the wildlife and biodiversity in Rounall Woods, as a baseline record to compare to in subsequent years**, as we improve the natural habitat with your support.

Rounall Wood: Ponds

Woodland ponds are like wildlife oases—providing water, food, and shelter for hundreds of species, many of which can't survive anywhere else.

They are biodiversity hotspots supporting insects (dragonflies, beetles), birds (for drinking and feeding), and mammals (like hedgehogs, badgers, deer and bats)

Ponds often hold **more species per square metre than surrounding woodland**. In dry or warm periods, ponds become **essential drinking source for wildlife**. A cool, damp refuge during heat, and safe shelter from predators (especially in well-vegetated ponds).

Woodland ponds connect two worlds: aquatic life (in the water) and terrestrial life (in the surrounding woodland). This “edge habitat” (where land meets water) is incredibly rich and productive.

Rounall Woods quarry pond has **significant plant infestation of Milfoil Myriophyllum** (Parrot's Feather) which is suffocating the pond. Sunlight can't reach below the surface so oxygen levels drop which makes it hard for fish, insects, and amphibians to survive. Healthy ponds need a **mix of native species**. Parrot's Feather grows so aggressively that it pushes out local plants, reduces plant diversity and offers fewer habitats for wildlife.

A healthy pond needs balance—some open water, a mix of native plants, and space for wildlife to move. **When one fast-growing plant takes over, that balance is lost.**

Rounall Wood: Parrot's Feather

Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) is an invasive non-native species (INNS) in Scotland that can be **removed from ponds through professional excavation**. The quarry pond is totally blanketed with this species, excluding native plants and animals by creating anoxic conditions and reducing light, and depriving other species of nutrients. It reproduces vegetatively from fragments which easily break away from adult plants.

Because it is a controlled waste, **strict biosecurity is required, including ensuring no fragments remain**, as they easily re-root. The plant material is considered special waste and **must be disposed of at a licensed landfill site**. It is critical to prevent fragments from drifting downstream to other water bodies.

We propose **identifying a specialist company and funding to undertake this work** and bring life back to the Quarry Pond if you agree this is important.



(Source: *Myriophyllum aquaticum* is listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a problematic alien species. Identified by Kirkcudbrightshire BSBI Botany Group 09/04/2026)



Rounall Wood: Saplings

In some areas of the woodland **sycamore and beech saplings** are growing in significant numbers and dominating the next generation of emerging canopy trees. If left unmanaged the dominance of these two species will prevent a **healthy, diverse woodland** from developing and the woodland will become uniform with fewer niches for different wildlife, so **overall biodiversity will decrease**.

Planting a diverse range of native trees will create habitat for a **richer, more wildlife-friendly woodland**.

The limited species of trees in the woods need to be more diverse to benefit wildlife. Specialists* agree we should introduce Rowan, Silver Birch, Downy Birch, Wild Cherry, Alder, Holly, and mid-layers, bramble, wild strawberry, woodland bulbs, raspberry etc. for the perfect habitat and a more beautiful woodland for our community to enjoy.

We're not just planting trees—**we're growing the next generation of wildlife habitats**.

Rounall Wood: Squirrels

The grey squirrel is considered a woodland pest* due to the damage they cause to trees. The tree species most susceptible to grey squirrel damage include: **sycamore** or maple, **beech**, **oak**, Norway spruce and Scots pine.

Grey squirrels primarily damage trees through bark stripping. This can occur anywhere from the base of the tree to the canopy. It creates structural defects that degrade the tree's quality, **increases the trees susceptibility to rot and disease and kills the tree in severe cases**. Trees between 10 and 50 years of age are most vulnerable to bark stripping. The strategic placement of new woodlands and **careful selection of tree species is significant and may help reduce grey squirrel colonisation and damage**.

Within the UK it is difficult to recommend the planting of **sycamore and beech** without good grey squirrel control. Red squirrels favour smaller seeded broadleaved species (e.g. **birch, rowan, willow, alder and ash**) and in contrast to grey squirrels' preference for larger seeds (e.g. sycamore, oak, beech, chestnut and hazel).

Control of sycamore and beech in Rounall Woods is key to providing opportunities for other native beneficial trees instead.



[*Source: Scottish Forestry]

Rounall Wood: Oak Trees

Oak trees are **one of the most valuable habitats** we have, but **only if they're given the space and time to grow**, to full maturity. A single mature oak can support hundreds of insects birds, bats, small mammals, fungi and lichens. The older and larger the tree, the more life it supports.

As oaks mature, they naturally form cavities and hollows (nesting sites), cracks and crevices (shelter for insects and bats) and deadwood (a crucial habitat in its own right). Young, crowded trees don't develop these features.

Oaks with space grow stronger and more resilient, living for hundreds of years and providing long-term habitat continuity. Crowded trees often become tall, thin, and less stable which is what's happening* in our community woodlands.

The proposal would be to **carefully identify a select number of weaker trees and remove these with specialist help from a local tree surgeon.** This would give the remaining trees the space to grow to full maturity and majesty. The felled trees would be left in situ to provide important dead wood habitat within the woodland.

(*verified by Stephanie Johnstone; local conservation botanist)





Rounall Wood: Wildlife Corridor

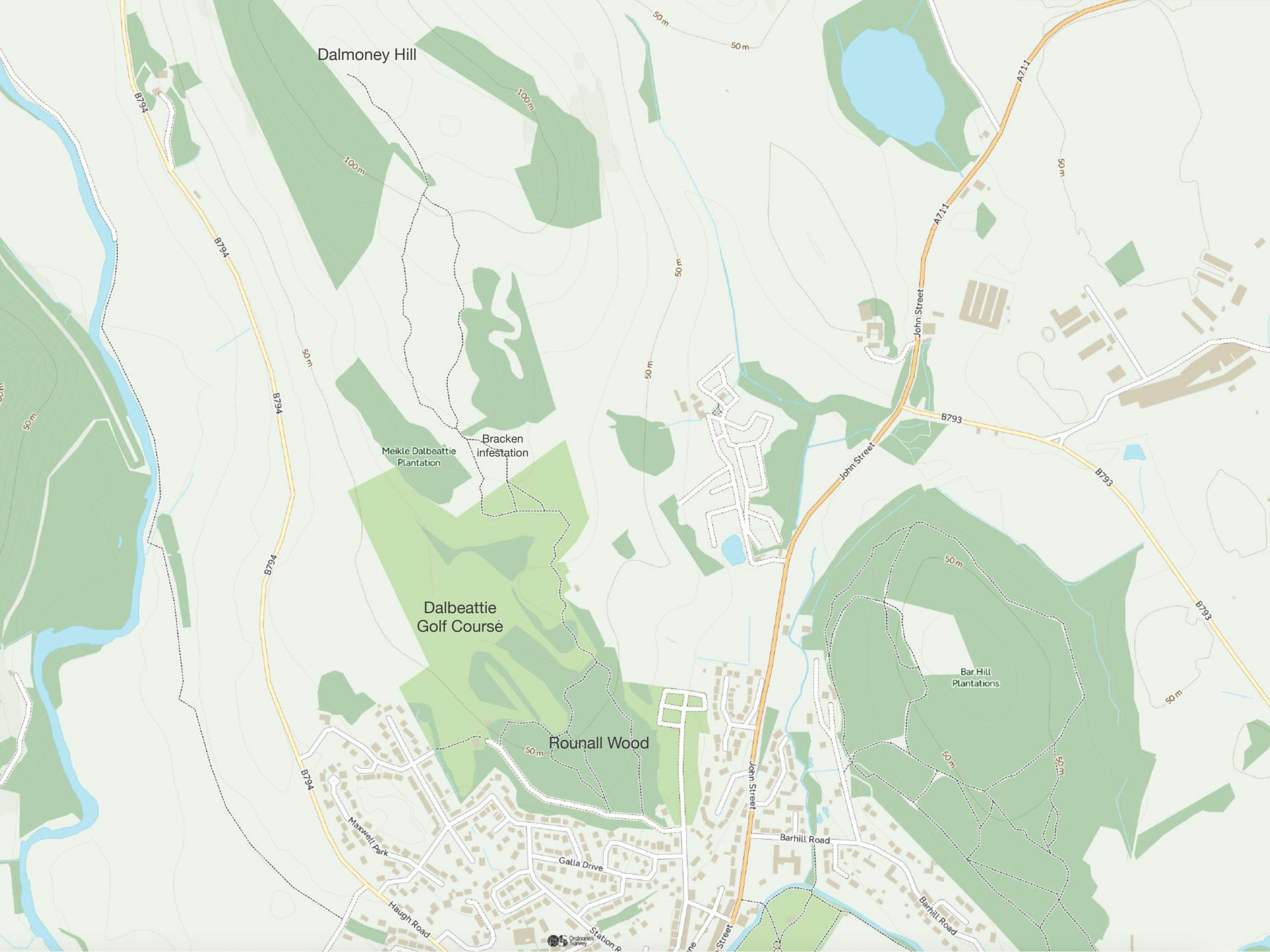
Connecting wildlife corridors: Restoring and expanding hedgerows and field margins, and planting new woodlands connects fragmented habitats and enables wildlife to move safely across the landscape to find food, shelter and mates.

Right now **Rounall Woods is an isolated woodland habitat** with a golf course and then extensive bracken infestation south of Dalmun Hill.

We propose creating wildlife corridors to reconnect the Rounall Wood with other nearby woodland. Restoring and widening hedgerows and field margins and planting new woodland strips. By joining these spaces we're stitching our landscape back together, to **help nature recover and thrive.**

Why it matters: every small action helps restore balance and working together we can:

- bring wildlife back
- improve habitat health and ecosystem resilience
- create a better space for nature and the community



Dalmoney Hill

100m

100m

50m

50m

50m

A711

John Street

B793

B793

B793

50m

50m

50m

50m

Dalbeattie
Golf Course

Meikle Dalbeattie
Plantation

Bracken
infestation

Rounall Wood

Bar Hill
Plantations

Maxwell Park

Galla Drive

Haugh Road

Station Road

Barhill Road

Barhill Road

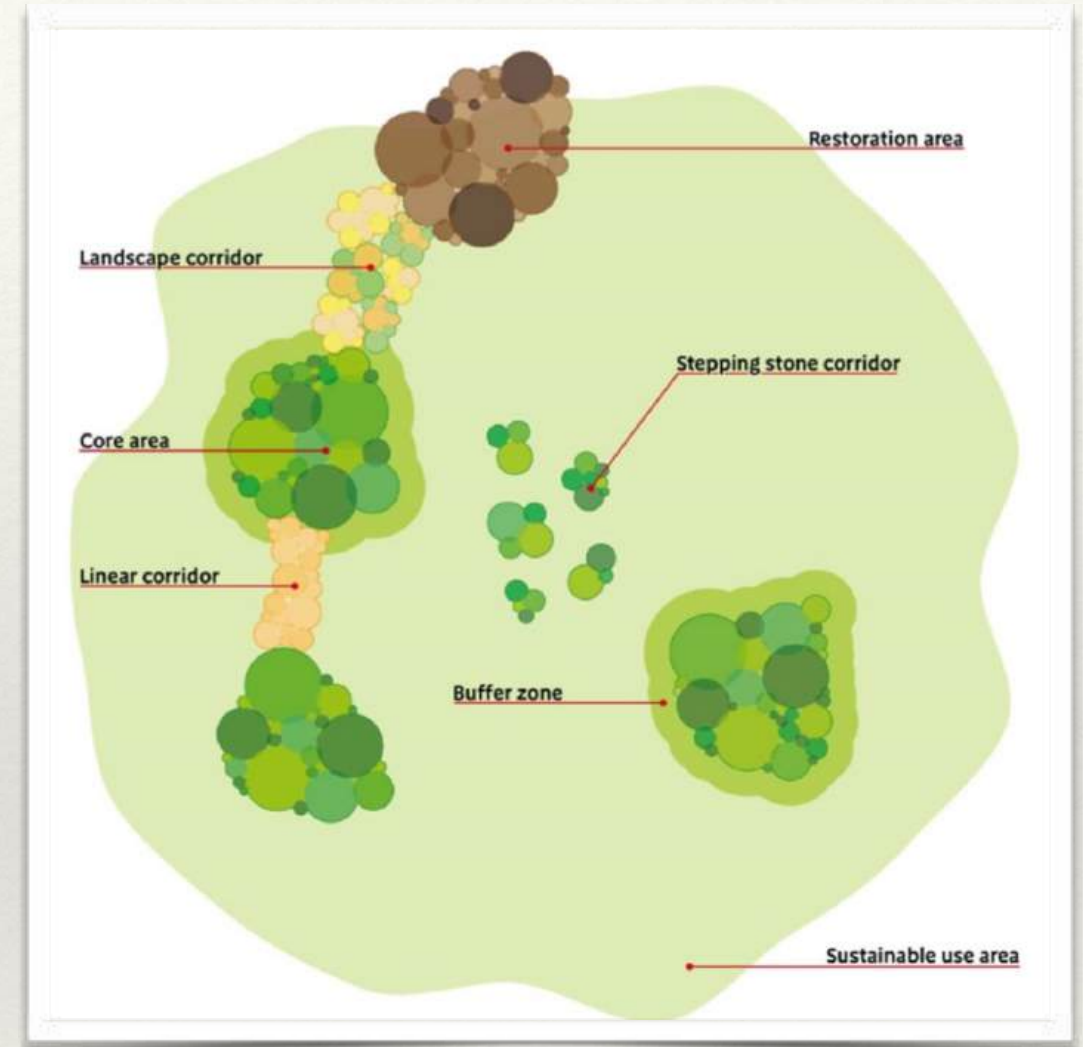
Ordnance
Survey

Rounall Wood: Network Principles

Improving ecological networks*: we need to make our network of sites bigger, better, and more joined up.

This means:

- Protecting what we have while improving its quality with better management
- Increasing the size of wildlife sites
- Enhancing connection by creating new wildlife corridors or stepping stones
- Creating new wildlife sites
- Reducing pressure on wildlife by improving the wider environment through buffering zones (e.g., trees, scrub, grassland around protected areas) to reduce the impact of harmful surrounding land use
- Rounall Woods can be improved and linked with a network of sites and corridors through the golf course and Dalmonney Hill



(*The Lawton Review (2010) reviewed how our wildlife and ecological network could be improved to help nature thrive in the face of climate change and other pressures)

Rounall Wood: Dalmun

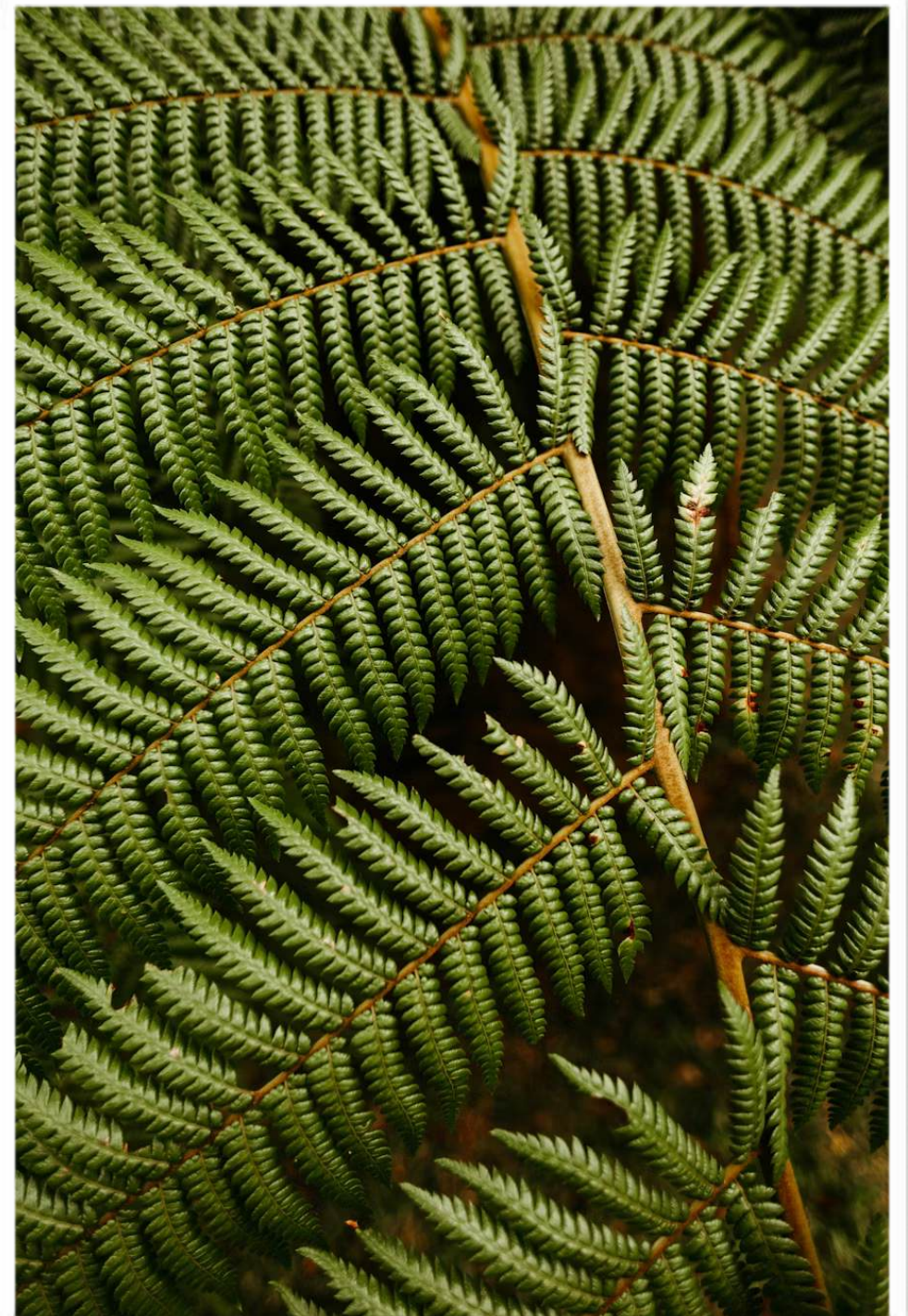
Dalmun (the local name for Dalmoney Hill) would provide a great wildlife corridor.

Bracken* might look natural, but when it takes over, it actually **reduces the amount of wildlife the land can support.**

Dense bracken makes areas hard to walk through too, reducing visibility and sense of safety, which **limits how people can use and enjoy the countryside.** It can also harbour ticks, which may cause disease in people, livestock and wildlife, adding to the risks faced by workers, walkers and their dogs.

We propose removing bracken and we can **replace it with something far more valuable : a connected wildlife corridor full of native plants.** Instead of a single dominant plant, we can create woodland rich margins, providing habitat corridors for insects and small mammals, better feeding grounds for birds and **a massive gain for biodiversity.**

This would require the consent of the landowners and a successful grant funding application.



(*Guidance from NatureScot & Fera)

Rounall Wood: Road Kill

Millions of wild animals are killed on UK roads each year, including many species of small mammal. Wildlife road casualties* can **represent a hazard to motorists**, as well as posing a threat to the long term survival of wildlife populations.

Areas associated with a **higher probability of hedgehog roadkill are throughout small towns and villages**. Roadkill risk is greater close to areas of signposted speed limit change and on flatter roads, which likely promote faster and less careful driving. High speeds mean less time for both the driver and hedgehog to respond, and mostly proves fatal for hedgehogs. **Reducing the speed to 20mph allows for both driver and hedgehog to take evasive action.**

The primary purpose of additional hedgehog signs is to reduce collisions with small animals on roads. It **warns road users of hazards due to small animals in the road ahead**, and should be **placed in areas where collision rates are highest**. While the sign features a picture of a hedgehog, it is designed to warn drivers to be careful of all small animals such as migratory toads, red squirrels and wildfowl, and large animals such as deer and livestock.

Taking this into account, and being mindful of sign clutter, an ideal place for a small animal traffic sign would be in between the speed limit signs and residential areas. This would give drivers a warning about wildlife as they drive into areas of high wildlife crossing activity.

In more rural locations, **placing the signs in close proximity to hedgerows, regardless of their position**, because of their importance as habitat in the rural landscape is most useful. **We propose to apply to the council for these signs to help wildlife cross safely.**

(*Source Hedgehog Street)

