



Bothwell, Blantyre and Uddingston

Proposed Local Nature Reserve
Management Statement

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Introduction

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are valuable places as they combine protection of the natural heritage with opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and experience nature close to their homes. LNRs are:

- Statutory designations made under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- Special places which are rich in wildlife.
- Generally, readily accessible and suitable for people to visit and enjoy.

In declaring these sites, South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) aims to:

- Protect them from unsuitable developments.
- Manage and enhance the habitats to help biodiversity flourish.
- Improve public access.
- Help people understand and become more aware of the importance of the LNR.
- Encourage community participation and volunteering.

SLC have identified fifteen new sites as potential LNRs which encompass a range of habitats including ancient broadleaved woodland, open water, wetlands and grasslands. The site management statements are written in conjunction with the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy (2018-2022), SLC Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (2017-22), SLC Local Development Plan (2013) and SLC Core Path Plan (2012).

Vision statement

Across South Lanarkshire, Local Nature Reserves are a resource for local communities that balance excellent recreational and educational opportunities, with valuable habitats for wildlife that are rich in biodiversity.

General information

Location and site boundaries: Bothwell, Blantyre and Uddingston pLNR is surrounded by various urban settlements and post-industrial landscape, bisected by the River Clyde.

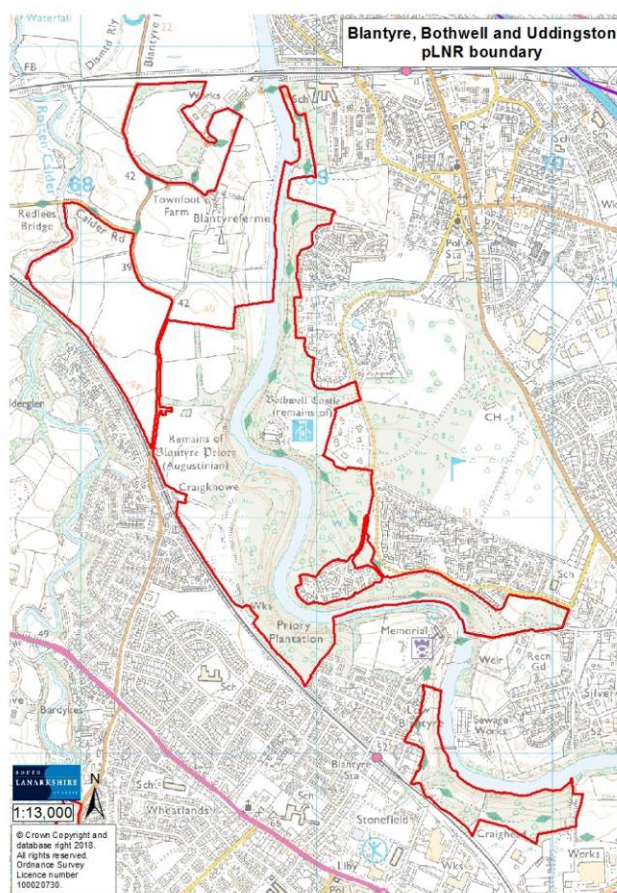
Site name: Bothwell, Blantyre and Uddingston (BBU)

Grid reference: NS 68772 59288

Site area: 168 ha

Site boundary: the boundaries of the park are based upon the extent of land owned by South Lanarkshire Council.

Site description: BBU is an extensive site consisting mainly of broadleaved woodland surrounding the Clyde river corridor, with several historical features on both sides of the corridor. The pLNR is effectively split in two by the River Clyde, with Bothwell and Uddingston on the east side of the river, and Blantyre on the west.

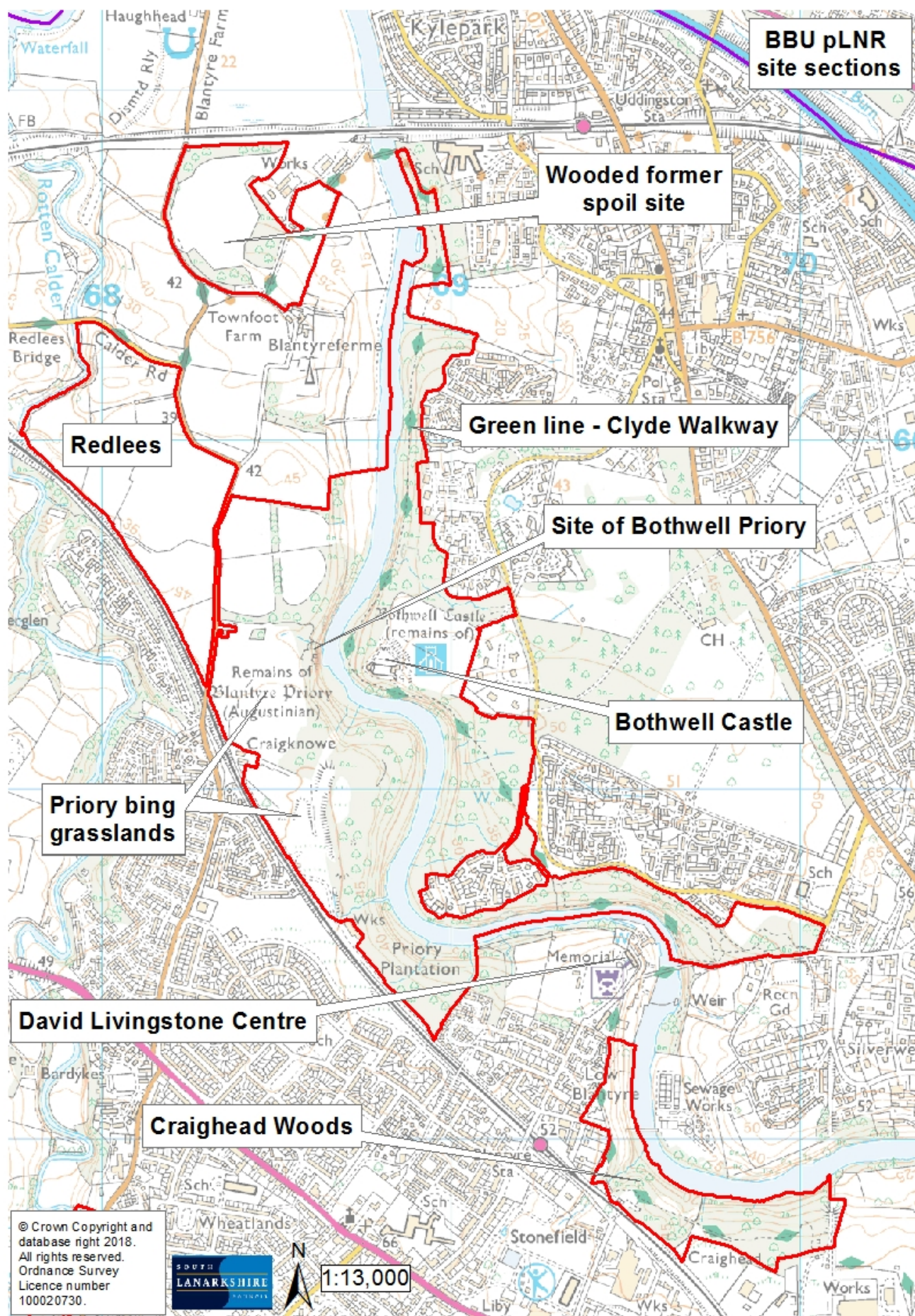


A prominent feature of the site is the Clyde Walkway, which follows the river from Partick in Glasgow all the way to New Lanark. A detailed map is available for the Clyde Walkway on the South Lanarkshire Council [website](#). Potential links to other long-distance routes make this an important link for visitors to Lanarkshire as a whole.

The northern section of the pLNR, on the western Blantyre side is a former spoil site which was planted with trees and is now used for recreation. This part of the site is bordered by NC74 cycle path, offering links to Blantyre, Uddingston and beyond.

The site of Redlees Urban Park forms part of the pLNR and is located to the north of Blantyre. This former quarry and anti-aircraft battery site has been developed by SLC and CSGNT (Central Scotland Green Network Trust) and has well-maintained paths linking the site to Blantyre and on to Uddingston and Hallside.

Priory Bing is a large area of unimproved grassland with a section used by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture as sports pitches. A few of these pitches are now unmanaged. The majority of the rest of the site consists of a broadleaved woodland SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and large areas of good quality mixed planted woodland.



Habitats, flora and fauna

Much of the habitat at BBU is broadleaved woodland, a small section of which can be seen on General Roy's maps from 1755. The ground flora in this area is diverse and includes a number of ancient woodland indicator species.

Typical woodland ground flora recorded at the site when it was surveyed in 2006 (Dowse, Central Environment Surveys) includes snowdrop, bluebell, dog's mercury, ramson, wood sedge, common enchanter's nightshade, wood avens, hedge woundwort, primrose and wood sanicle. Great wood-rush, wood anemone, wood millet, wood sorrel and wood speedwell can also be found. The site is noted for its flowering plant community. There is a range of helleborine orchids, including broad-leaved and Young's. There are also species such as pendulous sedge and tuberous comfrey which have a limited distribution in Britain.

Non-flowering plants recorded include wood horsetail, scaly male fern, hard shield fern and hart's-tongue fern. Non-native invasive species are evident: rhododendron in the woodland and Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam along the river edge.

Numerous species of fauna have been noted throughout the site including various birds, otter, roe deer, badger, common pipistrelle bats, soprano pipistrelle bats and Daubenton's bats. Annual surveys are carried out by the Countryside Rangers; data is sent to national recording schemes.



A large section of BBU pLNR is designated as a SSSI, both for its invertebrate assemblage and for upland mixed ash woodland. The SSSI citation on the Scottish Natural Heritage [Sitelink](#) states that:

"The variety of habitat conditions present within the site has created conditions favourable for an important invertebrate assemblage, especially saproxylic species associated with old or dead wood, fungi growing on dead wood and sap runs. The site supports a number of Nationally Scarce beetle and fly species, including the beetles Cerylon fagi, Hallomenus binotatus, Enicmus rugosus

Habitat	Area (ha)	%
Broadleaved woodland	85.38	50.9
Planted broadleaved woodland	17.85	10.63
Planted conifer	0.82	0.48
Amenity grassland	4.96	2.96
Semi-improved neutral grassland	7.14	4.25
Semi-improved neutral grassland and scattered scrub	3.73	2.23
Semi-improved neutral grassland and scattered trees	13.49	8.04
Open water (Redlees pond)	0.37	0.22
Improved grassland	0.12	0.07
Mixed woodland	15.23	9.07
Invasive species	0.3	0.18
River	11.39	6.8
Bothwell Castle Grounds amenity grassland	7.00	4.17
Total	167.78	100

and the flies *Brachyopa insensilis*, *Aulacigaster leucopeza* and *Periscelis* sp. Some of the adult forms of these species feed in flower-rich grassland within the site, e.g. the fungus beetle *Hallomenus binotatus*. Others, such as the weevil *Coeliodes ruber*, will also make use of the regenerating woodland areas.”

Priory Bing is a large and well used area of semi-improved neutral grassland that requires very little intervention to maintain its biodiversity value. Several areas of amenity grassland have been left unmanaged; regular surveying may be useful in the future to assess their community development. Of additional interest within the site is the range of helleborine species that have been recorded on the former colliery bing on the western bank of the River Clyde. These include broad-leaved and narrow-lipped helleborine. Future management may be required to control woodland spread from adjacent areas.



Craighead woodland, the southernmost section of the pLNR is described in the original management plan by Dowse (2006) as mixed plantation / policy woodland, with a varied native ground flora. Riparian areas of ancient woodland to the east of the site can be seen on General Roy maps from 1755. A diverse variety of tree species can be found on the site, namely ash (dominant), sycamore (abundant), grey willow, rowan, hazel, silver birch and both pedunculate and sessile oak.

Species of planted origin include common lime, Scots pine, horse chestnut and beech. As with other sections of the site as a whole, the ground flora is varied, including an abundance of typical woodland species such as wood avens, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage, hairy brome, dog's mercury, hedge woundwort and dog violet. Woodland to the west of this section is scrubby with an abundance of dense hawthorn, with a rather open structured canopy in these areas creating good habitat for birds.

Redlees supports open water in an old quarry pond that may have previously been stocked with fish. The shallow edges provide important habitat for amphibians and various species of dragonfly and damselfly. Running water throughout BBU can be found at the Rotten Calder (along the eastern edge of Redlees) at the River Clyde which bisects the majority of the site and provides a key habitat and landscape feature.

Landscape

BBU pLNR is surrounded by several fairly large settlements, with easy access from Blantyre, Cambuslang, Bothwell and Uddingston. The park itself comprises of a mosaic of riparian woodland along the River Clyde corridor which is principally broadleaf in character. Other habitats include areas of semi-improved neutral grassland, meadow and tall ruderals. The landscape to the west consists of remnant land from past industry, and farmland.

A large area of the pLNR is designated as a SSSI which extends south along the River Clyde from Uddingston through the eastern edge of Bothwell and Blantyre. The area is designated as a SSSI for “upland mixed ash woodland”. The statement on [SNH's Sitelink](#) notes the following:

“The woodland areas support a mixture of oak, ash and rowan dominated areas on the drier parts, with an alder and ash mixture on some of the flushed areas. Elm and birch also form important components of the canopy. The shrub layer is provided by grey willow, goat willow, hazel, bird cherry, elder and hawthorn. The ground flora is rich and representative of long established ancient semi-natural woodland.”

The woodland is categorised as being in an unfavourable declining condition, with pressures including the presence of invasive and non-native species, recreation and fly-tipping.

Habitat within BBU is mostly comprised of woodland, which together with nearby sites contribute significantly to the ecological network in the area. In terms of the wider greenspace network there are a number of woodlands to the west and south of the site linked by the river corridor (see following map). The majority of these are identified as pLNCS (potential Local Nature Conservation Sites) including:

- Malcolmwood (NS676573)
- Cock's Burn to Mid Lettrick Woodland (NS671570)
- Stonymeadow Cutting (NS660565)
- Rotten Calder Blantyre to Redlees (NS679607)
- Bardykes Bing / Spittal Burn (NS671588)
- Spy Wood (NS668574)
- Hallside Regeneration Woodland (NS677577)

The site is linked by broadleaved woodland to Greenhall and Milheugh pLNR (NS67525690) and Calderglen Country Park (NS659545) to the south west. Low Parks pLNR and SSSI, (NS 73339 55464) Backmuir pLNR (NS 70921 57268) and Chatelherault Country Park (NS 74047 53875) are nearby, to the south east.





Cultural Information

Cultural heritage: past land use

There are a number of archaeological features of interest recorded in the surrounding landscape, including several well-known historic buildings:

- NS 68802 59346: Bothwell Castle
- NS 68597 59382: Blantyre Priory ruins
- NS 69496 58523 : David Livingstone Centre
- NS 69608 58479 : David Livingstone Bridge
- NS 75479 50733: Site of Blantyre Farm House
- NS 71134 57706: Site of Battle of Bothwell Bridge
- NS 70378 57810: Site of Craighead House

Remnants of estate buildings and castle environs can be found throughout the site and are listed on the West of Scotland Archeology Service (WSAS) [website](#). Further information and archival information can also be viewed at the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) [website](#). There are three scheduled monuments within the pLNR area.

Ordnance Survey maps were used to assess the history of the site and the surrounding area from 1752 to 1967 (available online from the [National Library of Scotland](#)). Much of the land surrounding the site was originally used for farming until the industrial revolution. What is currently a large area of plantation woodland to the north of the site (at the current NC74 cycle track) is shown as accommodation associated with Blantyre Farm in 1842. Some sections of older planting are still visible today. By the end of the Second World War this landscape was gone and a massive colliery and slag heap had replaced it. Priory Bing was an industrial landscape, with a large slag heap and disused mine workings visible until the late 1960s.

Bothwell Castle: Bothwell Castle was originally built in the late 13th century. Begun by Walter Moray in 1242, it has been demolished and rebuilt after sieges and at various other times during its existence. The remains are in a good state of repair, and the castle is fully described, planned and illustrated in the book “Bothwell Castle Reconsidered” by Douglas Simpson (1947). This describes the castle as “among the foremost secular structures of the Middle Ages in Scotland”. Despite its ruined state, it remains one of the most imposing of Scotland's earlier medieval castles. A collection of material from the castle is in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.



Blantyre Priory: Historical sources suggest the abbey was founded by Patrick, Earl of Dunbar and his wife in the first half of the 13th century and maintained as a cell of Jedburgh Abbey. For most of its occupation, the monument served spiritual, social and economic functions. Later, when it became secularised, it served a domestic function. The priory was secularised in 1599 and passed to the Stewarts who used the buildings as a private residence. Lady Blantyre and her daughters left the priory in 1606 leaving Lord Blantyre behind. It is not clear when the priory was finally abandoned. HES states of the Priory:

“The monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of medieval monasteries, religious practice and the funding of monasteries by high status families. There is potential for relatively complex archaeology to survive which, along with analysis of the upstanding structures, can provide important information about the layout, development sequence and abandonment of the priory.”

Redlees: Previously part of the Calderglen Estate, Redlees was requisitioned by the Government during World War 2, during which time an Anti-Aircraft battery was installed within the central portion of the site. The remains of this can be seen today. A sandstone quarry existed on the site and is understood to have operated until the late 1980s. The site has been regenerated for recreational use with paths, seating and a large pond which is used for fishing.

For more historical information on these sites:

- Historic Environment Scotland [Statement of Significance](#) of Bothwell Castle
- Canmore National Record for the Historical Environment: [Bothwell Castle](#), [Blantyre Priory](#) and [rock carvings](#), [Redlees Anti Aircraft Battery](#),
- “Bothwell Castle reconsidered”. Simpson, W D. (1947). *Trans Glasgow Archaeol Soc, New*, Vol. 11, Page(s): 97-116

Craighead Woodland: This area has been used for access and recreation for many years; evidence of this can be seen on the Ordnance Survey (1888 – 1913) map of the area. Sir Walter Scott actually completed “Old Mortality” at Craighead House which was situated just adjacent to Craighead Woodland; it doesn’t take a stretch of the imagination to think that it was in some way inspired by the surroundings.



David Livingstone Centre: The David Livingstone Centre and grounds are not part of the pLNR but they form an integral part of the access network and are historically and culturally important to the local area. The centre was originally a large area of cotton mills and accommodation for workers. The David Livingstone Trust became owners of the estate in the 1930s, including the

listed building of his birth, surrounding parkland, and the 3,000 piece David Livingstone collection. In 1964 the David Livingstone centre was established as a memorial park.

Cultural heritage: present land use

BBU pLNR is extensively used for recreation, with well used walking routes throughout the site. Paths are both formal and recently created or upgraded, such as those at Redlees and along the Clyde Walkway. There are also informal but established trails. National Cycle routes 74 and 75 are very nearby and allow cyclists easy access to the site. Most of the river edge consists of paths used for walking, running and cycling.

Redlees is under the ownership of SLC and currently managed by CSGNT. Since the 1980s, various environmental and landscape improvement works have been undertaken such as bunding and woodland planting. Path works and further woodland planting were carried out in the 1990s. From 2010 to 2012, a comprehensive project involved the construction of a range of footpaths, installation of interpretation, renovation and stabilising of the World War 2 structures and construction of a car park. Currently, [Green Aspirations](#) use the site for coppicing and woodcraft activities.



Priory Bing comprises several areas of amenity and unimproved grassland and is mainly used for dog walking and recreation. Several dog walking companies use the site.

Bothwell Castle and the David Livingstone Centre are nationally, if not internationally important visitor destinations and can be very busy especially in the summer months.

Site infrastructure

The pLNR contains approximately 7.5 miles of core paths, with 1.87 miles of wider network path and a further 0.9 miles of aspirational core paths. There are numerous desire lines and links throughout the site which have been documented in a general path survey of the site. Overall the site is well linked and it is possible to walk the full site in a circular loop.

Path surfaces range in quality, with various improvements being carried out throughout the last 30 years or so. Interpretation is of mixed quality and condition, with new and up to date signage present at Redlees and at points along the Clyde Walkway. There is a lack of signage at entrance points into the SSSI woodland and the Blantyre side of the site.

Much of the metal furniture present on the site remains in reasonable condition but could benefit from some refurbishment. In 2019 a Woodlands in and around Towns (WIAT) funding application was submitted to produce a woodland management plan for an area encompassing a large part of the SSSI and several surrounding sections of the pLNR. This will direct areas of work to improve parts of the site with the aim to improve paths and signage.

Despite falling into a poor condition, with problems including large muddy areas, water erosion, encroaching vegetation and decaying timber edging, a large section of the Clyde Walkway to the south of the site was still popular with walkers and visitors alike. With funding from SNH and Paths For All, 1.3km of pathway was upgraded in 2018. This work included new drainage, signs, timber ramped steps and a ramped path to allow path users to by-pass the steps.

2018 saw the start of a £6million investment to transform the David Livingstone Centre into a leading tourist attraction appealing to visitors from across the world. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have provided £4.1m support for the project with the Scottish Government contributing £1.375million. Historic Environment Scotland has committed £575,000.

Invasive species are problematic along the river corridor, with control required as part of a more widespread, co-ordinated scheme of eradication from upstream occurrences. SLC spot treat patches that can be controlled and the Ranger Service carries out work sessions to remove rhododendron from the SSSI site adjacent to Bothwell castle.



Recreation and access

Walking and cycling (both on formal paths and informally in the Uddingston plantation) are the main recreational uses for BBU pLNR, along with fishing both at Redlees and in the River Clyde. The site is surrounded by three towns, which support roughly 50,000 (SLC, 2001) people; the park provides an important resource for the local community as well as for visitors from far and wide.

The site is easily accessed by car and is also well supplied by public transport in the form of both train and bus. Newton, Uddingston and Blantyre train stations are all within walking distance. The main settlements surrounding the site provide convenient bus links. Car parks are available at several points within the site, namely Redlees Urban Park, David Livingstone Centre, and Bothwell Castle. On-street parking is available at numerous entrances to the site, with a lot of informal access undertaken on foot from surrounding housing. Pedestrian access can be gained from various locations (refer to the location maps).



Local Community

Blantyre Community Council and Priory Residents Association have an interest in the site and are located on the eastern side. Organisations on the west side of the site include the Bothwell Community Garden and Historic Society, and Brighter Bothwell who maintain the Bothwell Nature trail linking the pLNR with the main street of the town.

Uddingston High School and several local primary schools use the site for various activities, with David Livingstone Memorial Primary School using the site to deliver Forest School. SLC Countryside and Greenspace team have organised several work days for local businesses and interested volunteers to reduce rhododendron cover in the SSSI woodland area of the pLNR.

Conclusion

It is the intention of the SLC CAG team to continue to work in partnership with the local community and partner organisations to ensure that the ecological quality of the park, especially the areas of ancient, native woodland are maintained and managed. We aim to foster an understanding and facilitate enjoyment of the natural heritage of the park and to increase public use through improved access, interpretation, education and promotion of the site.

The management statement will meet these objectives by seeking to deliver a number of practical health, environmental education and community outcomes in partnership with external organisations and the local community. A full management plan for this site will be compiled within three years of LNR designation and updated as appropriate.

Contacts

For more information on this site, or pLNRs in South Lanarkshire, please contact:
Countryside and Greenspace Service, Facilities, Waste and Ground Services, Community and Enterprise, South Lanarkshire Council, 18 Forest Street, Blantyre G72 0JP.
Email: CAG@southlanarkshie.gov.uk

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1015

Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Photographs provided by K.Thomson (CAG)

Note that maps may not be to scale.

Appendix 1: Objectives and actions

The management objectives include guidance from the Bothwell Castle Grounds SSSI Site Management Statement (site code 247).

Objective 1: Maintain, enhance and monitor the biodiversity value of the reserve.

Actions:

- To maintain and enhance the SSSI woodland by reducing the proportion of non-native species.
- Ensure woodland management maintains a diversity of species, age classes and dead wood, and that there is no loss of native woodland cover.
- To maintain and enhance habitat that supports robust populations of the various saproxylic invertebrate species for which the site is notified, including old or dead wood, fungi, sap runs and flower-rich grassland.
- Ensure appropriate management programmes improve and maintain biodiversity.
- Establish and maintain survey / monitoring regimes for indicator species.
- Survey for the presence of invasive non-native species in the non SSSI areas of the site; consider establishing a programme of monitoring and control where appropriate.
- Maintain diversity of neutral grassland at Priory Bing.
- Contribute data to national and local biological recording schemes.

Objective 2: Maintain and increase the use of the access network.

Actions:

- Identify funding opportunities.
- Maintain and improve the path network.
- Investigate the potential to establish new access links.
- Improve signage to highlight access points and routes.
- Install interpretation panels highlighting the path network and key features of the park.

Objective 3: Encourage and facilitate community involvement in the reserve.

Actions:

- Develop community involvement within the site
- Raise awareness of the site for the local community.
- Investigate possibilities of promoting the park in new and different ways, such as to specialist interest groups.
- Review the information at the site ensuring that it is current and up to date.
- Investigate the possibility of linking the site to other greenspaces and the wider network of paths in the surrounding landscape, namely Hallside.
- Investigate the need for a trails guide of the routes, path networks and points of interest within the area.
- Encourage and promote the use of the park for the local community, schools, colleges, universities, youth groups and other interest groups.
- Identify and promote opportunities for people to enjoy the wildlife of the park.

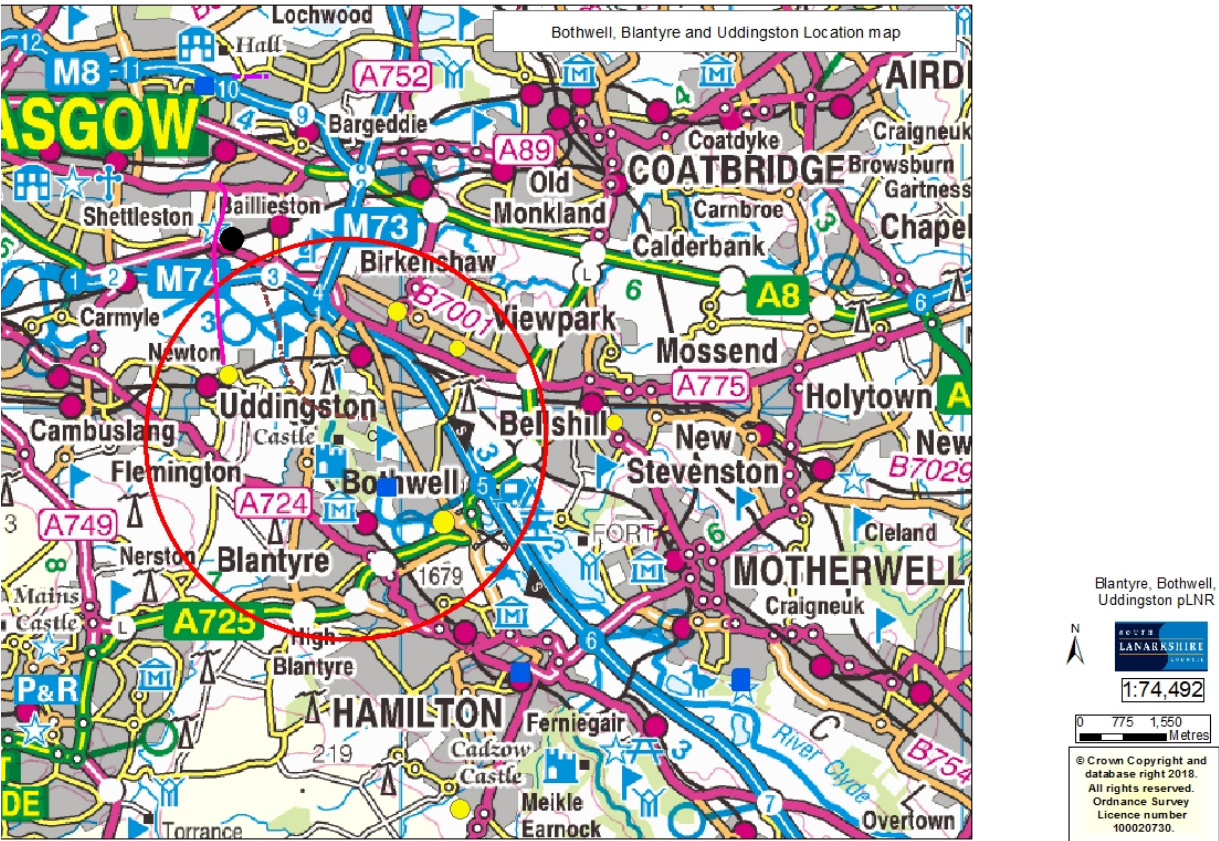
Objective 4: Maintain historical and archaeological features

Actions:

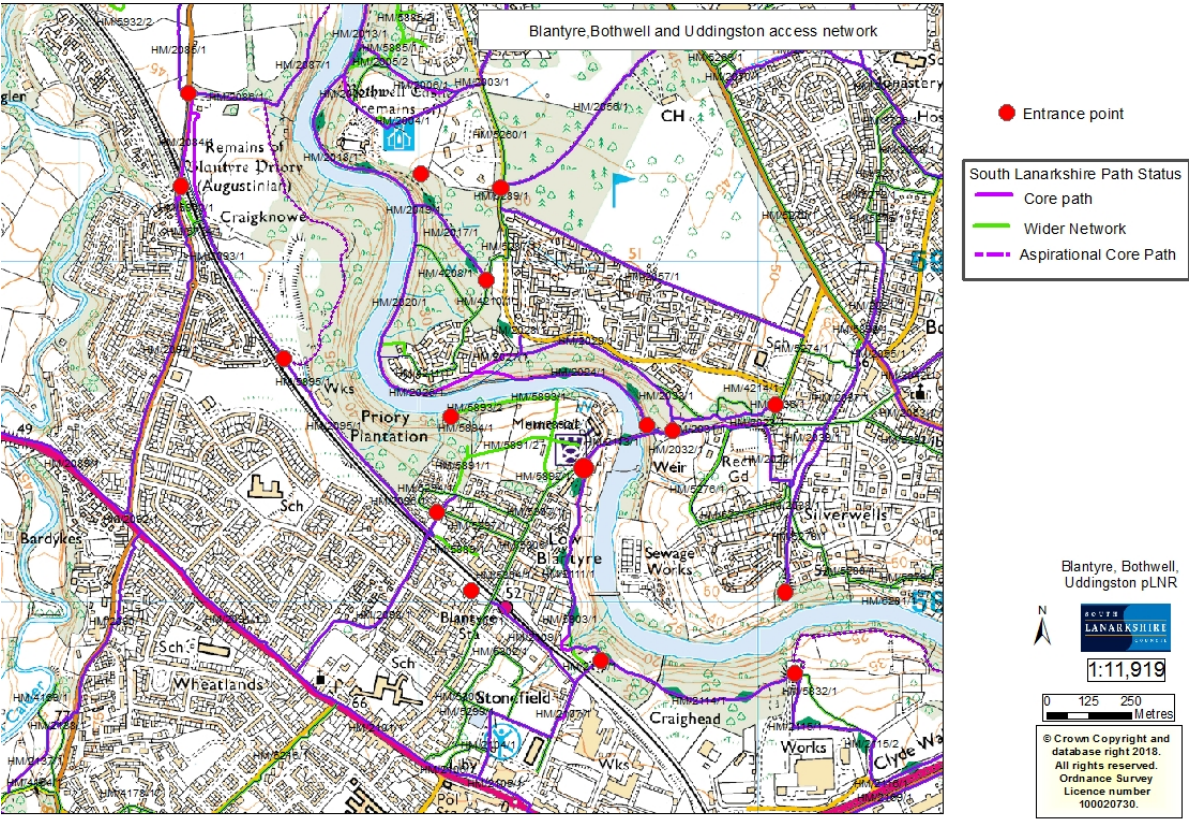
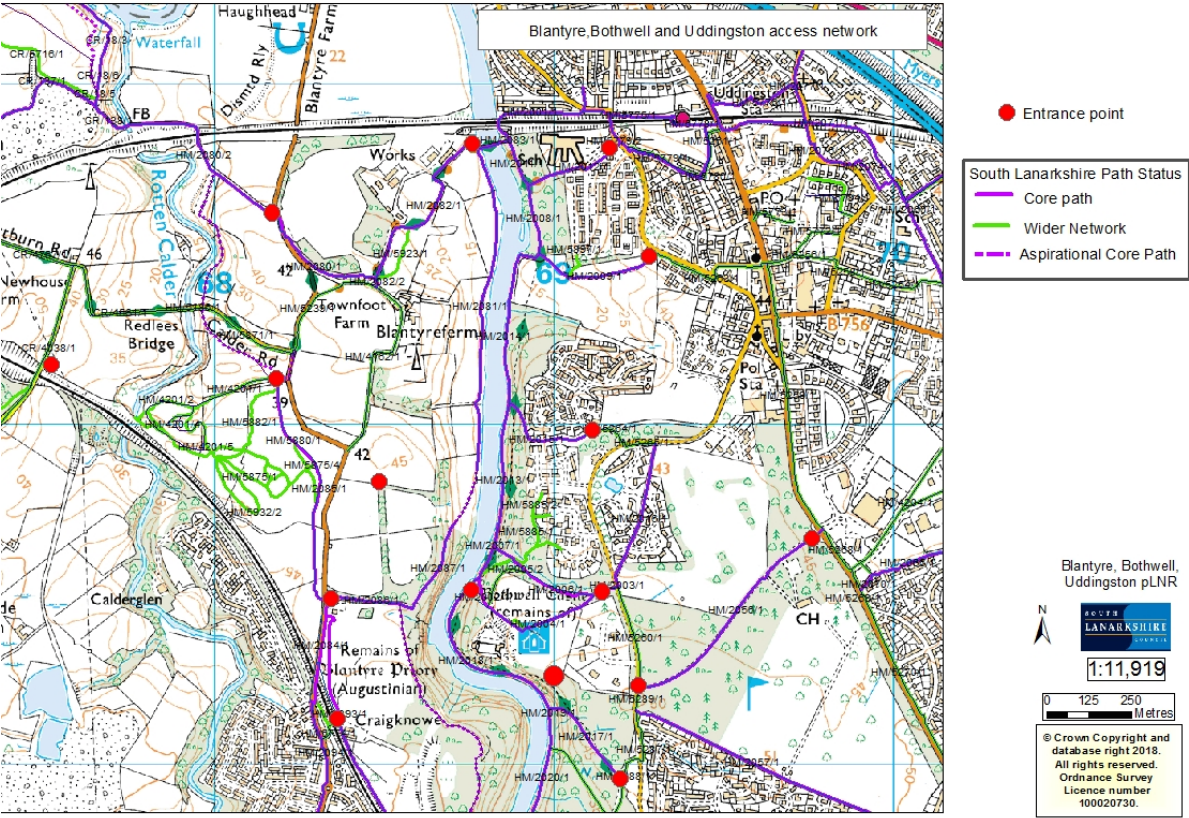
- Investigate the option of a Landscape Heritage assessment in discussion with Historic Environment Scotland
- Inform WSAS of any works being undertaken
- Build relationships with David Livingstone Centre and HES to create historic trail with leaflet and interpretation

Appendix 2: Maps

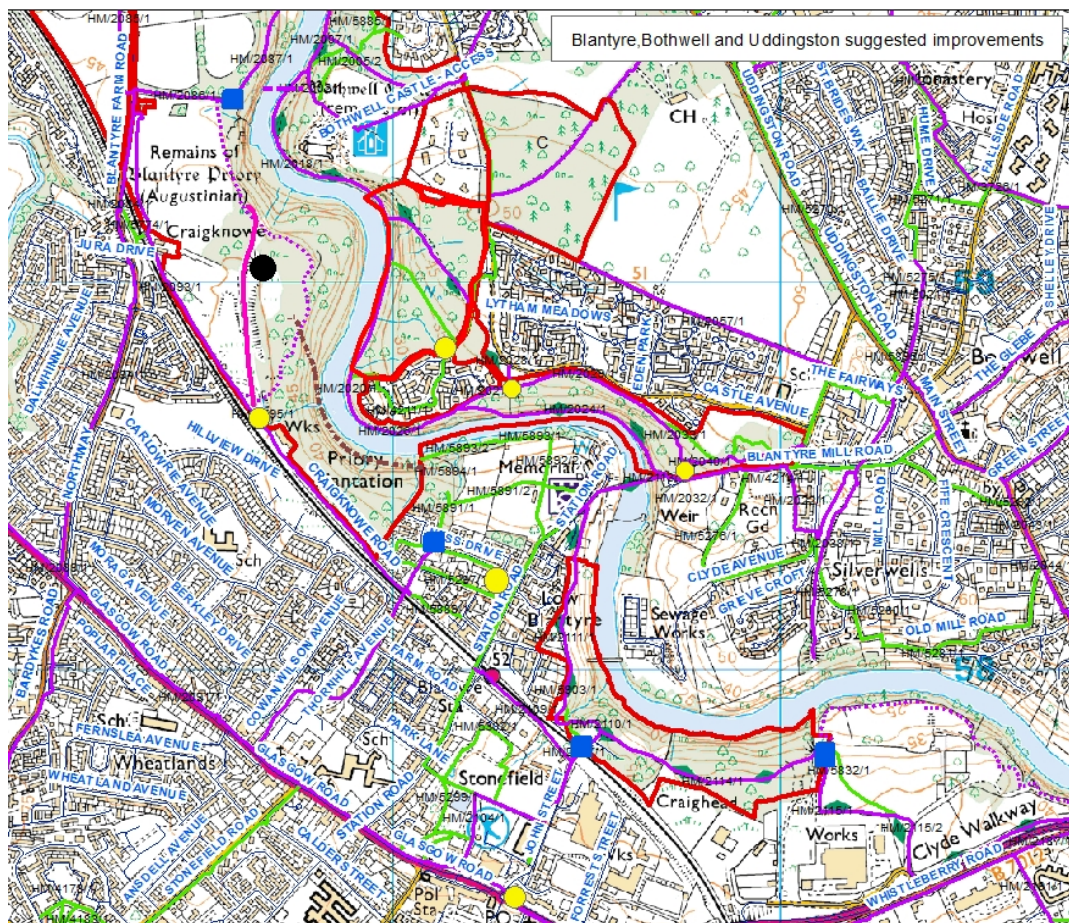
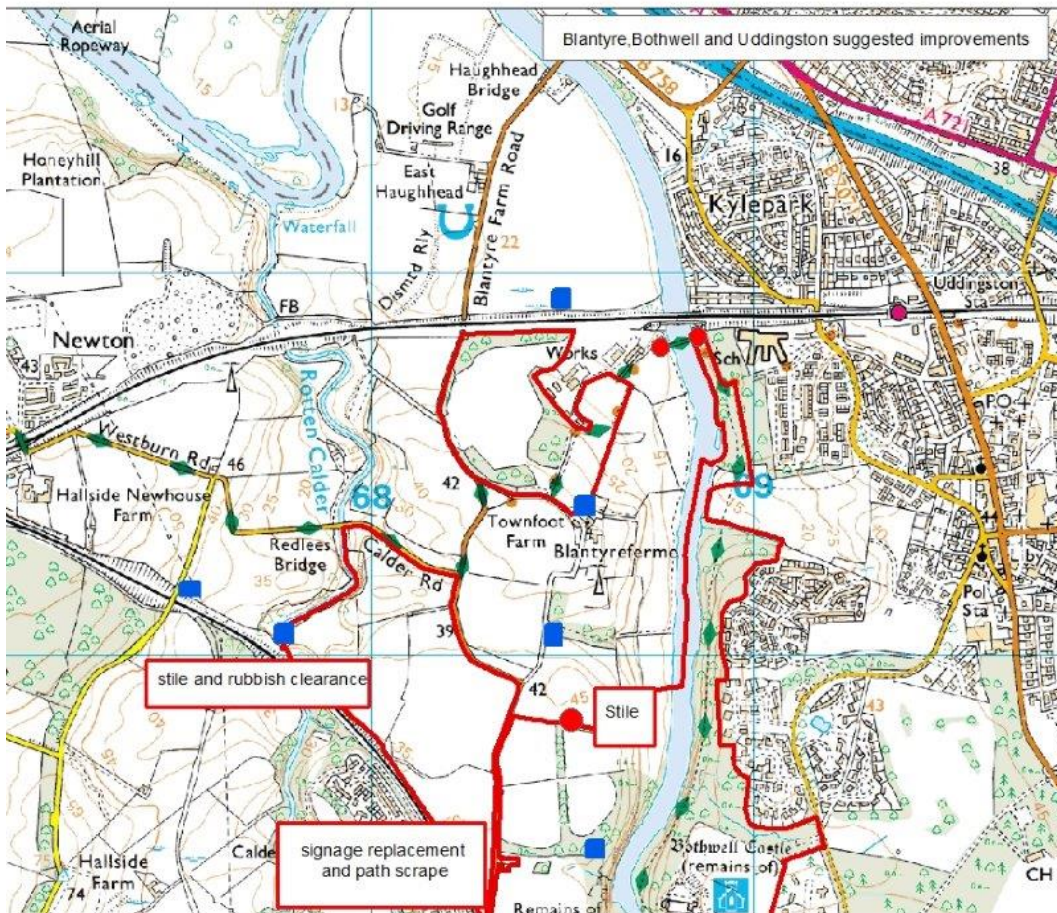
Maps 1 and 2: site location



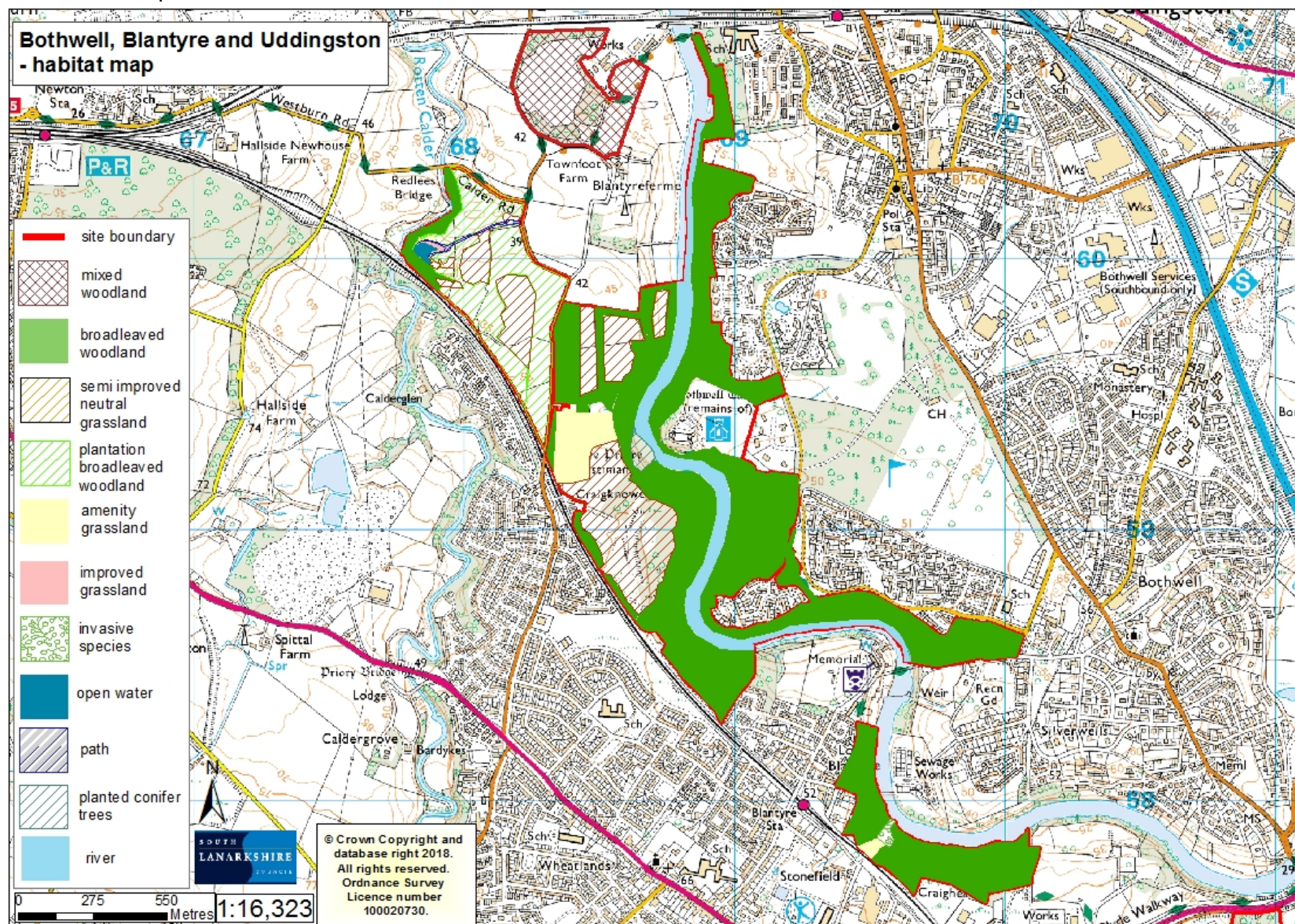
Maps 2 (north section) and 3 (south section): access network



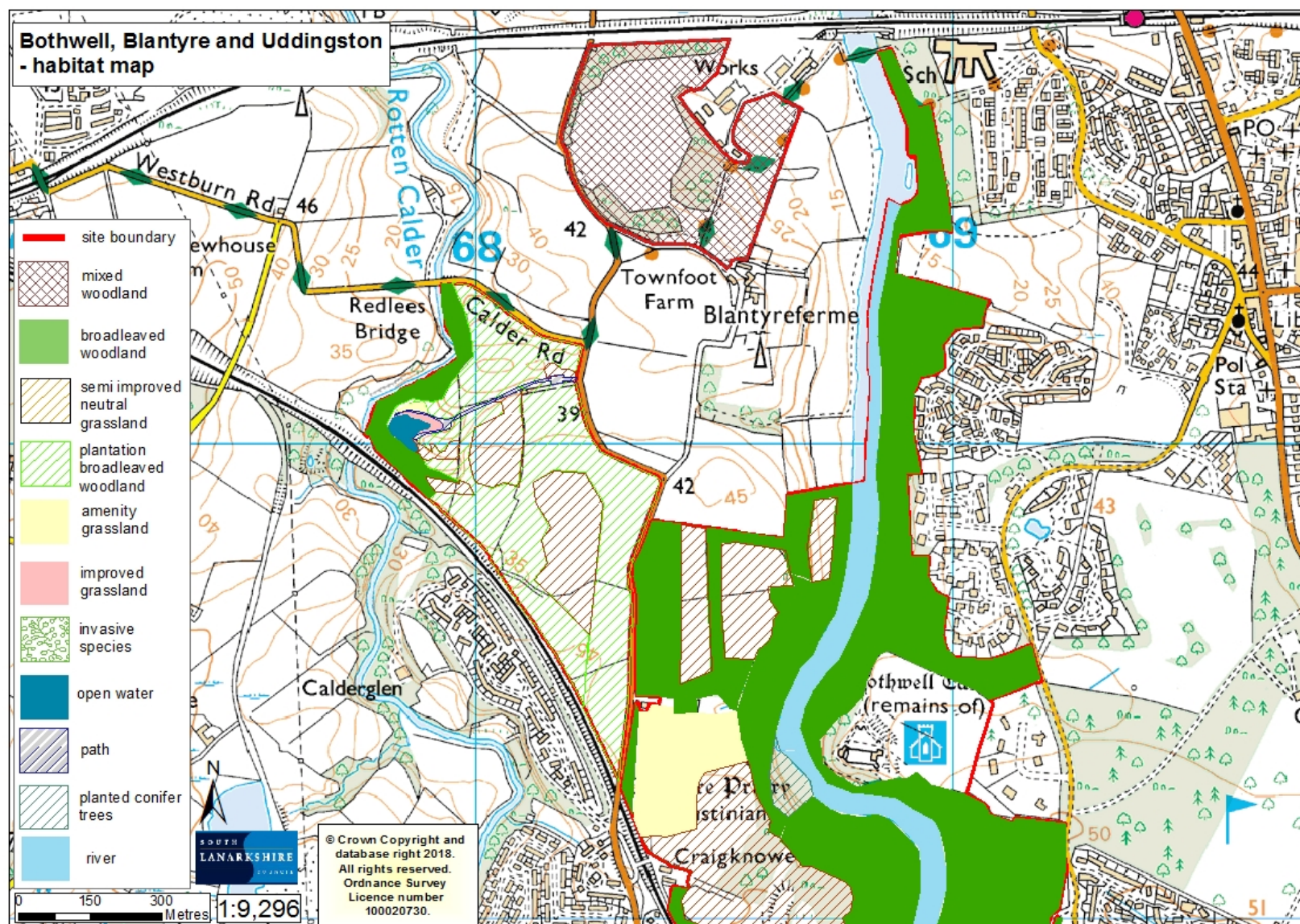
Maps 5 and 6: potential site improvements



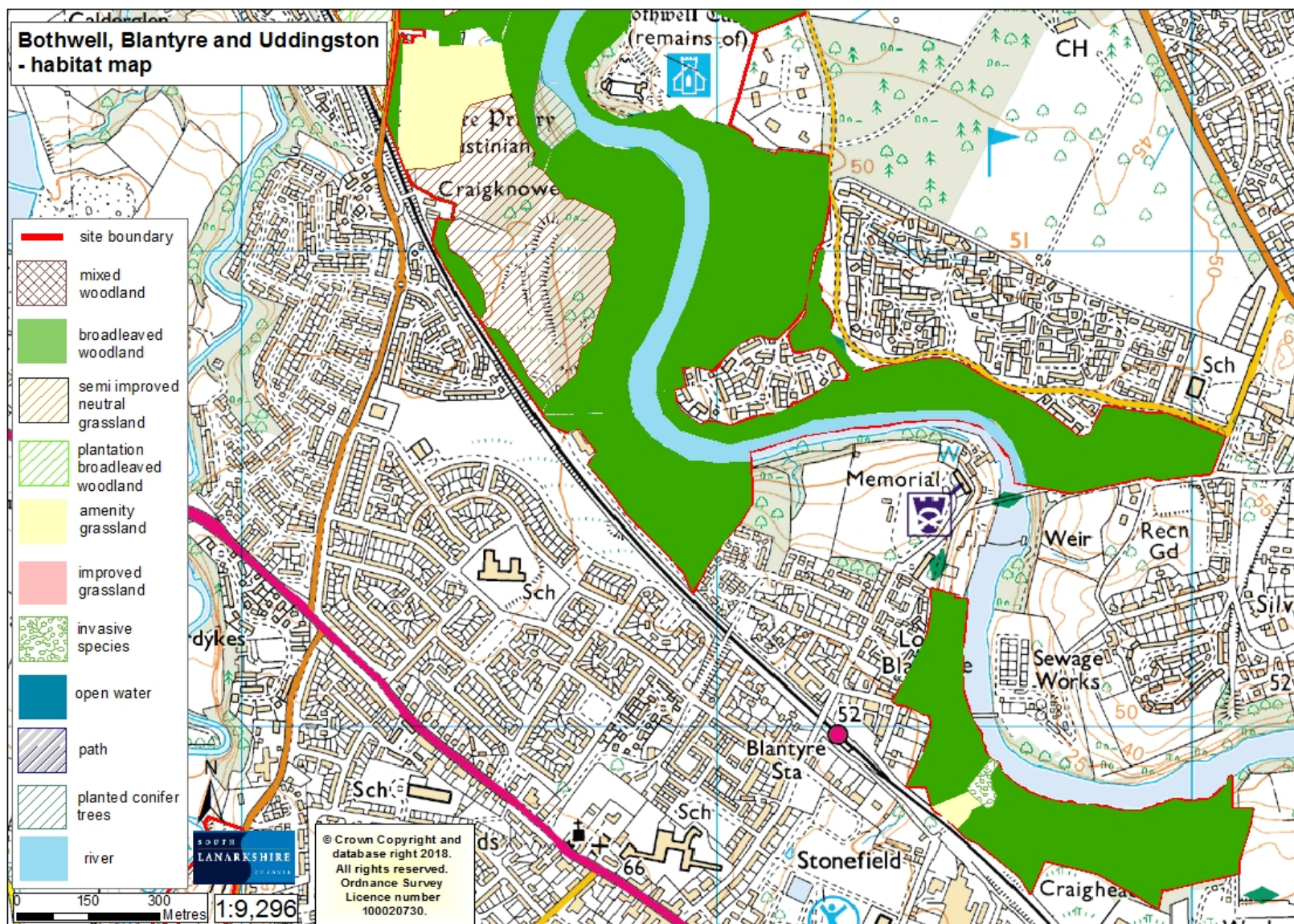
Map 7: Site habitat map




Map 8: habitat map (north section)



Map 9: Habitat map (south section)





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