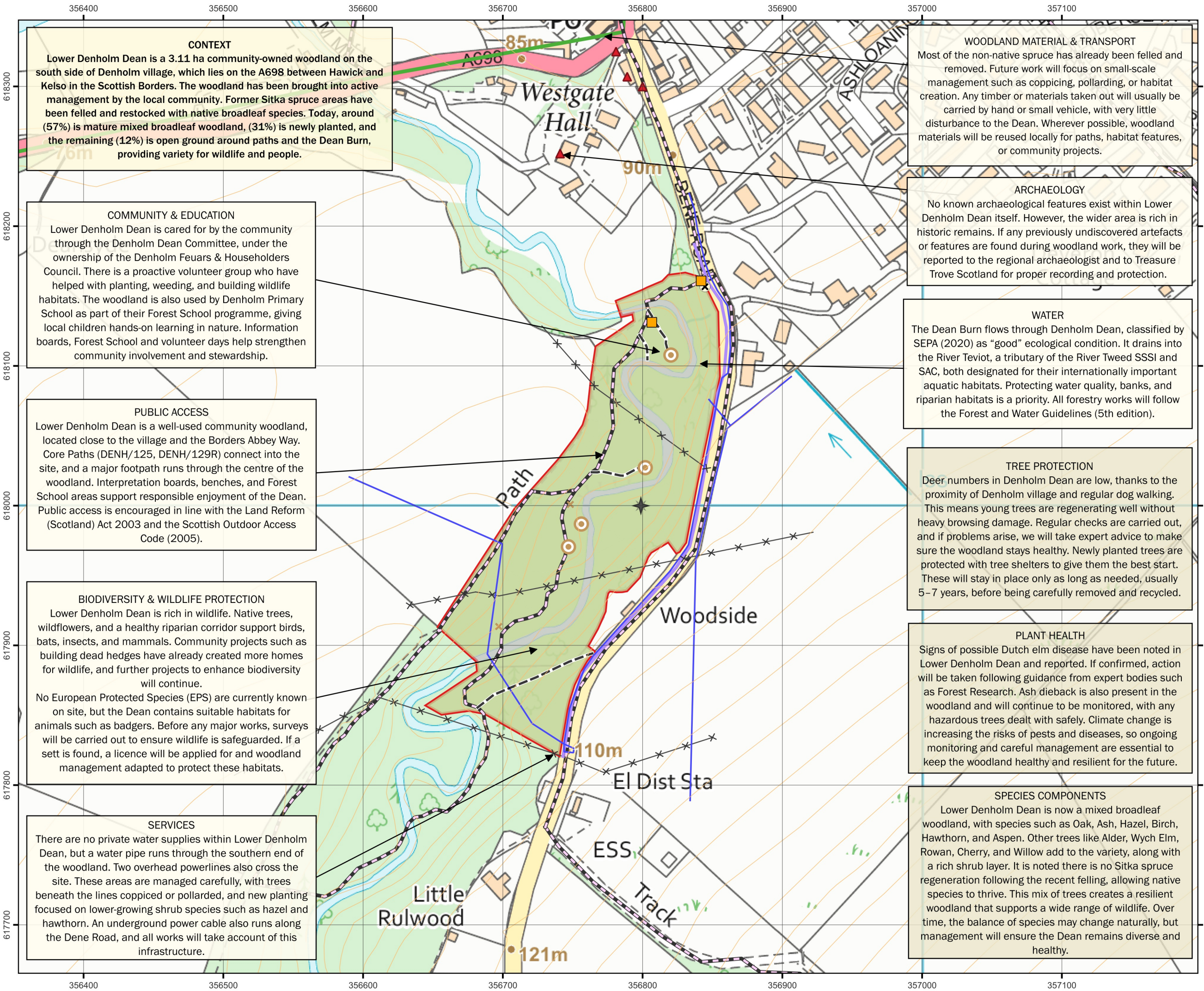




CONTEXT

Lower Denholm Dean is a 3.11 ha community-owned woodland on the south side of Denholm village, which lies on the A698 between Hawick and Kelso in the Scottish Borders. The woodland has been brought into active management by the local community. Former Sitka spruce areas have been felled and restocked with native broadleaf species. Today, around (57%) is mature mixed broadleaf woodland, (31%) is newly planted, and the remaining (12%) is open ground around paths and the Dean Burn, providing variety for wildlife and people.

COMMUNITY & EDUCATION

Lower Denholm Dean is cared for by the community through the Denholm Dean Committee, under the ownership of the Denholm Feuars & Householders Council. There is a proactive volunteer group who have helped with planting, weeding, and building wildlife habitats. The woodland is also used by Denholm Primary School as part of their Forest School programme, giving local children hands-on learning in nature. Information boards, Forest School and volunteer days help strengthen community involvement and stewardship.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Lower Denholm Dean is a well-used community woodland, located close to the village and the Borders Abbey Way. Core Paths (DENH/125, DENH/129R) connect into the site, and a major footpath runs through the centre of the woodland. Interpretation boards, benches, and Forest School areas support responsible enjoyment of the Dean. Public access is encouraged in line with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2005).

BIODIVERSITY & WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Lower Denholm Dean is rich in wildlife. Native trees, wildflowers, and a healthy riparian corridor support birds, bats, insects, and mammals. Community projects such as building dead hedges have already created more homes for wildlife, and further projects to enhance biodiversity will continue.

No European Protected Species (EPS) are currently known on site, but the Dean contains suitable habitats for animals such as badgers. Before any major works, surveys will be carried out to ensure wildlife is safeguarded. If a sett is found, a licence will be applied for and woodland management adapted to protect these habitats.

SERVICES

There are no private water supplies within Lower Denholm Dean, but a water pipe runs through the southern end of the woodland. Two overhead powerlines also cross the site. These areas are managed carefully, with trees beneath the lines coppiced or pollarded, and new planting focused on lower-growing shrub species such as hazel and hawthorn. An underground power cable also runs along the Dene Road, and all works will take account of this infrastructure.

WOODLAND MATERIAL & TRANSPORT

Most of the non-native spruce has already been felled and removed. Future work will focus on small-scale management such as coppicing, pollarding, or habitat creation. Any timber or materials taken out will usually be carried by hand or small vehicle, with very little disturbance to the Dean. Wherever possible, woodland materials will be reused locally for paths, habitat features, or community projects.

ARCHAEOLOGY

No known archaeological features exist within Lower Denholm Dean itself. However, the wider area is rich in historic remains. If any previously undiscovered artefacts or features are found during woodland work, they will be reported to the regional archaeologist and to Treasure Trove Scotland for proper recording and protection.

WATER

The Dean Burn flows through Denholm Dean, classified by SEPA (2020) as “good” ecological condition. It drains into the River Teviot, a tributary of the River Tweed SSSI and SAC, both designated for their internationally important aquatic habitats. Protecting water quality, banks, and riparian habitats is a priority. All forestry works will follow the Forest and Water Guidelines (5th edition).

TREE PROTECTION

Deer numbers in Denholm Dean are low, thanks to the proximity of Denholm village and regular dog walking. This means young trees are regenerating well without heavy browsing damage. Regular checks are carried out, and if problems arise, we will take expert advice to make sure the woodland stays healthy. Newly planted trees are protected with tree shelters to give them the best start. These will stay in place only as long as needed, usually 5–7 years, before being carefully removed and recycled.

PLANT HEALTH

Signs of possible Dutch elm disease have been noted in Lower Denholm Dean and reported. If confirmed, action will be taken following guidance from expert bodies such as Forest Research. Ash dieback is also present in the woodland and will continue to be monitored, with any hazardous trees dealt with safely. Climate change is increasing the risks of pests and diseases, so ongoing monitoring and careful management are essential to keep the woodland healthy and resilient for the future.

SPECIES COMPONENTS

Lower Denholm Dean is now a mixed broadleaf woodland, with species such as Oak, Ash, Hazel, Birch, Hawthorn, and Aspen. Other trees like Alder, Wych Elm, Rowan, Cherry, and Willow add to the variety, along with a rich shrub layer. It is noted there is no Sitka spruce regeneration following the recent felling, allowing native species to thrive. This mix of trees creates a resilient woodland that supports a wide range of wildlife. Over time, the balance of species may change naturally, but management will ensure the Dean remains diverse and healthy.

Lower Denholm Dean

Map 4: Concepts
NGR: NT 568 180

Legend

- Grid reference point
- Site boundary
- Bench
- Forest school area
- Interpretation board
- Main entrance
- Canmore points
- Agreed Timber Transport Route
- Core path
- Footpath
- Powerline
- Underground power cable
- Water pipe

Woodland

- Mixed broadleaves
- Other land



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Ordnance Survey AC0000866924

Scale at A3: 1:2,500

26/09/2025