



## Irish Forestry Unit Trust

<b>Toorlougher MU</b>
Murroe, Co. Limerick Newport, Co. Tipperary
<b>MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>2022 – 2041</b> <b>(Period 1: 2022 -2026)</b>

## 2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION, OWNERSHIP AND LANDUSE HISTORY.

Toorlougher MU comprises 16 forest blocks totalling 419.4. This forest MU is based on geographical location. Numerous adjoining forest properties are in or bounding Limerick and Tipperary. These are Toorlougher, Glenfanit, Knockanacullenagh 1 & 2, Inchadrinnagh and part of the Meentolla properties. They are also combined into one MU as they are in the same river catchment, the Mulkear River, part of the Lower Shannon River Basin.

### **Forest properties being reviewed:**

1. Toorlougher 64.67ha. Established 1989/1990. Some areas replanted in 2015.
2. Meentolla 36.87ha. Established 1991.

### **New property being added to the MU:**

3. Ballymackeogh, 6.16ha. Established 1986. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
4. Gannavane, 25.21ha. Established 1994. Sub 7 replanted 2018. Acquired in 2019 and managed by [REDACTED].
5. Glenfanit, 28.61ha. Established 1993. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
6. Gortnaskehy, 49.57ha. Established 1994. Acquired by IForUT 2018.
7. Inchadrinnagh, 31ha. Established 1995. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
8. Killeen 2, 24.8ha. Established 1997. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
9. Knockanacullenagh, 7.56ha. Established 1995. Acquired by IForUT 2021.
10. Knockencullenagh 2, 10.3ha. Established 1994. Acquired by IForUT 2022.
11. Knocknascrow, 14.38ha. Established 1996/2000. Acquired by IForUT 2015.
12. Lackamore, 11.8ha. Established 1994. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
13. Lackamore 2, 8.43ha. Established 1994 with sub 3 replanted 2022. Acquired by IForUT 2021.
14. Meentolla 2, 67.85ha. Established 1997. Acquired by IForUT 2017.
15. Meentolla 3, 16.16ha. Established 1995. Acquired by IForUT 2021.
16. Toorenbrien Upper, 15.97ha. Established 1993. Acquired by IForUT 2018.

All sites managed by [REDACTED] except Gannavane which is managed by [REDACTED] Limited (EFI).

### **Elevation**

35m to 500m

### **Statutory Land Designations**

The entire MU falls inside the Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA 004165), a European designated protection area for Hen Harriers. This is

especially important for site operations where potential disturbance during the breeding season is a factor, and location in relation to nesting site (red zone) is advised by the NPWS. Generally all significant operations are not permitted during the breeding season 1st April to 15th August. All licenced/grant operations are subject to statutory consultation with the NPWS and any other significant operations will involve consultation with the local wildlife ranger.

**Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:**

The MU is in the catchment of the Mulkear River, an important salmonoid river as well as known for its populations of Lamprey and Otter (becomes a SAC lower in the catchment, see map 4).

**Margaritifera**

Knocknascrow falls into Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009.

**Old Woodland Sites (OWS):**

In Toorlougher, an area was identified as a potential Old Woodland Site, based on symbology found on the Ordnance Survey 6inch map. This area underwent an ecological survey during March 2021 to determine status/location of OWS. It was determined that it was previously an area of LEW but currently it is of little value. There are some cultural features in the locality of this OWS, namely Vauchluce Cottage. This cottage was initially used as a hunting lodge but is now in ruins. Additional broadleaf planting will be concentrated in what was previously Old Woodland that surrounds this ruin.

**Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:**

There is a ringfort at Gannavane. There is a historic building in Toorlougher property (Vauchluce Cottage) which can be seen on the 6 inch Ordnance Survey map (Map 2). There is considerable history attached to this ruin and it must be protected from potential damage by all operations on the site. An old farmhouse/cottage is found to the north end of Meentolla, to be protected during harvesting and roading operations.

**Invasive Species:**

*Rhododendron ponticum* is extensively found throughout Meentolla and Toorlougher properties, particularly on hedgerows, banks, tracks and along roads. It is largely suppressed by forest canopy but control measures will need to be formulated once clearfelling commences. No sightings or evidence of grey squirrel.

#### 4. SOIL TYPES.

Base geology in this area at the foothills of the Slievefelim Mountains is largely Old Red Sandstone, and the main soil groups are - Deep poorly drained mineral. Derived from mainly non-calcareous parent materials.

Soil group: Surface water Gleys, Ground water Gleys.

#### 5. SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.

**Moderate Felling Impact with Moderate to High Afforestation Sensitivity** - Refer to Map 3.

Moderate Felling Impact due to location on the western to north western facing foothills of the Slieve Felim Mountains in Co. Limerick/Tipperary. These forest properties are a small component of a more extensive forested landscape which can be seen from the areas north of Murroe in Co. Limerick and south of Newport in Co. Tipperary, and from the R503 regional road in several locations.

The Clare Glens river valley is 1-2km directly to the west of the MU and this is a particularly scenic visitor attraction with many walkers and tourists visiting. The section of public road through Meentolla property is on a National Looped Walk.

Whenever felling licences are submitted, the Forest Service will correspond with relevant local and statutory bodies to investigate any potential landscape sensitivities.

To address the potential landscape impact issues caused by future clearfelling, the felling plan (Map 6) has applied a significant coupe restructuring plan to reduce clearfell size and introduce coupe separation. The long-term restructuring plan (Map 7) outlines future restructuring species which is limited to Sitka spruce based on soil types and management objectives. Biodiversity enhancement in Map 7 is focused on the creation of additional open ground and expansion of broadleaf planting. Species choice is specifically matched to soil type and exposure.

#### 6. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES.

- 1) To maximise economic output from the forest at local and national level.
- 2) To manage FMU in accordance with the principals of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and international benchmarks of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).
- 3) To manage timber production in a sustainable way.

- 4) To maintain and enhance the landscape value of the forest.
- 5) To protect existing biodiversity and where opportunities arise enhance and further promote new biodiversity.
- 6) To manage forest activities with due regard to local, regional and national stakeholder interests.
- 7) To promote continuous professional development at management level.

(IForUTs FSC licence code: FSC-C003194)

#### **14. Summary of silvicultural systems to be used.**

<b>System</b>	<b>Conifers</b>	<b>Broadleaves</b>
Clear fell	✓	
Selective fell		
Thinning to MTI (potnl)	✓	
Line thinning only		
Non thin regime	✓	
Non intervention		✓
Natural regeneration		✓
Replanting	✓	✓
Other		

**20. 5 Year Monitoring Report Summary.**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Was it achieved?</b>	<b>How this information was applied to 5 year Management Plan review?</b>
1	Economic Return	Toorlougher underwent no operations since last thinning in 2010 as this property was partially windblown by the storm in 2010.	It was previously anticipated that further economic return would be generated in 2022 pending the approval of TFL licenses at Toorlougher and Meentolla. However, TFL licences issues in late 2022 when the timber markets were depressed. These sales will not go forward in 2022 but rather in 2023. Apart from Gortnaskehy, Knockaneacullenagh and Knocknascrow, all other properties have been thinned at least in part which will improve crop quality going forward and hopefully will improve the economic prospects as crops should have a slightly bigger average tree size.
2	Certification Standards	Certification standards and IForUT systems applied over plan period. Managers working off FMM	Continue as before and update FMM as required.
3	Timber production	Some thinning has taken place during the plan period. Most stands are very productive with the exception of a couple of subs in Gortnaskehy which are a low yield class.	Most of the older properties won't be thinned again as the priority for these crops is to maintain stability. There are some younger crops which were suitable for thinning. Inchidrinagh, Gannavane and Meentolla have all been thinned in the last couple of years. At the moment, there are no plans to thin these again but that may change depending on how crops react to the latest thinning operation. There is still some minor windblow in Toorlougher. These sections were currently down for harvesting in 2018 but will carry forward to 2023 due to the delay in issuing the felling licence. The first clearfells from Meentolla are due to come out in 2023 which were again postponed due to a delay in felling licences issuing. There will be clearfelling in each year over the next five year period in various properties across the FMU. Clearfell coupes are planned to be as small as possible whilst taking into consideration site topography and logistics. There is a peak in clearfelling across the FMU in 2030 despite attempts to even out this peak by moving some fell years into 2029 and 2031. This is primarily down to the crops being similar plan years and yield classes.

4	Landscape	Two new landscape layers added to designations GIS layer. Forest Service layer taken off National Development plan for new planting and Landscape Unit appraisals based on Coillte LUs.	New landscape Map added to MP. New felling coupe design added to MP which keeps coupes separated. Mostly properties are moderate felling Impact due to location on the western to north western facing foothills of the Slieve Felim Mountains in Co. Limerick/Tipperary. In a largely forested locality.
5	Biodiversity Enhancement	In Tourlougher, Biodiversity was enhanced through deadwood on the restock sites previously.	<p>In Toorlougher, further biodiversity enhancement will be concentrated on the area by the river and around Vauchluce cottage in the previously Old Woodland area. When these areas are felled open space and mixed broadleaf areas will be created. Potential Old Woodland site in Toorlougher has not particularly changed from previous years – still no great features of note. Only 3 AWVPs (Ancient Woodland Vascular Plants) noted in the 2021 survey as opposed to 9 in the 2011 survey though this could be down to the 2021 survey taking place in March of that year as opposed to July for the first survey. There could also be an element of plants being shaded as the conifer crop is getting more mature. When the conifer crop is removed and thereby more light is provided the number of AWVP's could well increase. In 2021 it was noted that there were areas of interest where some natural regeneration is occurring and carpets of bugle were growing. Area around Vauchluce hunting lodge is mostly grassy vegetation – it remains in the same condition. In relation to the MU, biodiversity enhancement will depend on increasing areas of open space and broadleaves after clearfells. The main area where biodiversity enhancement has been carried out to date is in Lackamore 2. At this site various setbacks have been introduced by the public road, the watercourse and at the back of the shed. Additional broadleaf planting (primarily birch) has been introduced behind these areas. These areas will have to be monitored going forward in relation to browsing by deer.</p> <p>Open space and biodiversity will further increase over the next rotation due to changes in the required national standards. These standards will require increased broadleaves and openspace alongside county roads and dwelling houses at restocking stage.</p>

6	Stakeholder	Some newer issues with Neighbour regarding Sky TV reception and the proximity of trees to their property. The TFL and fell years have been brought forward to accommodate stakeholders concerns.	We are in a difficult situation with Meentolla as two stakeholders want us to do different things with the same area of forest, one wants the forest retained and the other wants it removed. After clearfell it is planned to increase setbacks from the neighbours property and leave open space and further landscape with broadleaf tree lines to enhance views. Some active turf cutting in Gortnaskehy to be aware of. Plan review involved a full stakeholder consultation - advert in Limerick and Tipperary newspapers, local community groups and local based statutory bodies.
7	Professional Development	██████████ and ██████████ managed. Ongoing development of the IForUT FMM and database over the period. Forest Managers are members of SIF and attend lectures and field days as part of continuous professional development.	Retendering of whole portfolio into regional management units in 2010 to simplify overall forest level management and Certification compliance. New centralised network server (██████████) has been introduced for managing FMM and IForUT database.
8	Forward Planning	Continue with current standards and work practices and review on a continuous basis to implement industry best practice	Carry out reviews of Forest Management Manual and new manager training and induction is being carried out.