

CITATION

PORTENCROSS WOODS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST North Ayrshire

Site code: 10262

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NS 177 500

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 63
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 341

AREA: 18.52 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Biological: Woodlands: Upland mixed ash woodland

DESCRIPTION

Portencross Woods is situated approximately 3.5km north west of West Kilbride and comprises a woodland stretching from Goldenberry in the north to Portencross in the south. This site represents one of the best examples of semi-natural coastal woodland in North Ayrshire.

The botanically-rich mixed deciduous woodland is situated on steep-sided maritime cliffs. It is predominantly ash/elm along the base, with smaller areas of oak/birch higher up and gorse/bracken on the tops of the cliffs. The nationally scarce rock whitebeam is found within the partially vegetated cliffs. There are also very small patches of alder to the south of the site, and small patches of aspen on exposed rock faces. Other dominant species in the understorey include hawthorn, elder, hazel and blackthorn occurs where the canopy is more open. The ground flora is diverse and indicative of undisturbed woodland cover. The woodland is also rich in bryophytes and lichens, including the nationally scarce lichen *Usnea wasmuthii*, and nationally scarce fungus that grows on lichens – *Sphinctrina turbinata*.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1949 Act: 1971 as part of Portencross Coast SSSI
Renotified under the 2004 Act: 20th March 2013 as Portencross Woods SSSI with a reduction in area.

Portencross Coast SSSI renotified as two separate SSSI (Portencross Woods SSSI and Southannan Sands SSSI) with an overall net reduction of approximately 200 ha.