

Whittle Spinney

(Plan period – 2022 to 2027)



WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

The Public Management Plan

Location and Access

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities to generate income from our Estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we encourage our woods to be used for local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the Estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 F1 Secondary Woodland
 - 4.2 F2 Connecting People with woods & trees
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Whittle Spinney

Location:	Chorley	Grid	reference:	SD584225	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	102
Area:	2.42 hectares (5.98 acres)								
External Designations:	N/A								
Internal Designations:	N/A								

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Whittle Spinney is located just to the north of the village of Whittle Le Woods near the town of Chorley in Lancashire. The site is narrow and is bounded by Birch Lane, the M61 motorway, a low density housing development built around 1995, Preston Old Road and a stream beyond which lies open ground associated with a low density housing project, erected circa 2000.

Whittle Spinney occupies former wet grazing land on a clay soil; the remnant hedgerow features reflect this, with several large alder, oak and holly trees. The northern boundary is an old established hawthorn hedge adjacent to the stream, which is fed by a number of ditches within the wood.

Secondary Woodland is a key feature of the site. The tree species are typical of late 1970s amenity plantings; native species are augmented by Norway maple and larch. Scots pine is also present. There is an overall matrix of ash, oak, hazel, birch, hawthorn, cherry and alder, which reflect local woodland types. Small leaved lime and field maple are also present. There is also a small area (0.02ha) of amenity grassland.

Whittle Spinney was planted in the late 1970s by the Central Lancashire Development Corporation as part of a general plan for the Cuerden Brook area. It was acquired as a gift by the Woodland Trust as part of a package of woods in 1996. Contained within the site is a lime kiln under the management of Chorley Borough Council. This feature is associated with the Lancaster Canal whose path can be traced through the site. The kiln features in a number of local historical and walking leaflets and generates one-off visits to the site. A memorial has now been established by local historians to St Helens Well, a Catholic shrine that is held to have stood nearby under what is now the M61 motorway.

Connecting People with Woods and Trees is a key feature of the site. There is a well-used surfaced pathway, which serves to unite adjacent countryside with built up areas, attracting joggers, walkers and regular dog walkers.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Our long term intention is that Whittle Spinney will be managed as a mixed broadleaved, predominantly native high forest. The wood will continue to be composed of largely native broadleaved species such as oak, ash, beech, sycamore & birch however it is likely that the percentage of ash will decrease substantially over the next decade due to ash dieback. Despite this ash will continue to be encouraged within the species mix as some of the native stock may exhibit a degree of natural resilience. The wood will be managed so that it is as diverse as possible in terms of structure and species which will ensure that it is as resilient as possible to future changes imposed upon it such as climate change and tree diseases. Both native and non native regeneration will be accepted within the woodland. Gaps created by trees gradually reaching senescence, or by trees been felled for safety reasons will be filled by natural regeneration non native regeneration will be accepted within the woodland. Active thinning work will take place to promote long term stand stability and this work will be focussed where the woodland borders housing and the M61 Motorway. We will retain older trees of any species across the whole site as long as safety allows.

Threats to the woodland habitat will be monitored and managed if possible, the woodland will be assessed for tree diseases particularly ash die back and species composition and levels of regeneration will also be monitored via regular Woodland Condition Assessments.

Access will be maintained at its present level of 7 access points and approximately 600m of surfaced paths to ensure that the woodland continues to provide quiet informal recreational opportunities for all. Continued investment in visitor facilities will be made at the wood to ensure it is welcoming.

Local people should be informed of and involved with the site management where appropriate, especially to help understand the management needs of the wood, and the negative effect of some activities such as dumping garden rubbish, which have had a major impact in certain areas.

Statutory obligations will continue to be met with regard to managing tree safety and access.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 F1 Secondary Woodland

Description
Whittle Spinney is a small (2.4ha approx.) secondary woodland, the tree species are typical of late 1970s amenity plantings; native species are augmented by Norway maple and larch. Scots pine is also present. There is an overall matrix of ash, oak, hazel, birch, hawthorn, cherry and alder, which reflect local woodland types. Small leaved lime and field maple are also present.
Significance
Without woodland planting this part of Chorley would be dominated by housing and other urban development. Whittle Spinney and other woods break the landscape down into small areas bounded by woodland and other landscape features. It also serves a purpose as a sight and sound barrier screening the M61 motorway from the nearby housing.
Opportunities & Constraints
Whittle Spinney is typical of many new town secondary woodlands planted in the 1970/80s in the fact that it is long, thin and densely planted. This structure gives it a high landscape impact in relation to the local area. However the small size of this site and the fact that it is surrounded by buildings and roads means its value as a wildlife habitat is very limited. Unfortunately the woodland does not link with any other habitats, and there is no opportunity to extend it. However it does provide a refuge for urban wildlife.
Factors Causing Change
The close proximity of the motorway will continue to influence the size of edge trees we are able to retain along the eastern boundary. Invasive Himalayan Balsam. Ash die back.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Establishing and maintaining a mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with a continuous canopy composed of a mixture tree species, with diverse age range and succession by natural regeneration. An element of Scots Pine will also be retained to reflect the original planting mix. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, ash, birch etc. The amenity grassland area will be left to natural processes and may in time become colonised by scrub.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

Active thinning work will be undertaken in 2027 to ensure long term stand stability, this work will be focussed on areas where the site borders housing, footpaths and the M61 motorway.

A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site, key elements of which are likely to include the effects of ash disease, invasive Himalayan Balsam control and the development of natural regeneration and any future thinning requirements.

4.2 F2 Connecting People with woods & trees**Description**

Whittle Spinney has a total of seven pedestrian access points with welcome signage installed which lead onto a surfaced path network of around 600 meters in length. The entire path network is surfaced which provides year round dry access. The site is well used by local people and is a favourite for dog walkers and joggers. The Trust has given the wood an access category A designation which is the highest level, and this equates to a wood which is regularly used at all times of year, with more than 15 - 20 people using one entrance every day.

Significance

Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trusts key outcomes. Opportunities for informal recreation in an urban environment are often highly valued. The adjacent housing creates a strong demand for informal recreation, which Whittle Spinney is well positioned to fulfil.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: A lack of car parking provision at the site will always limit the amount of visors the woodland gets.

Opportunities: The sites urban location and surface path network means it can be enjoyed by large numbers of people visiting on foot all year round and there is an opportunity to encourage even more people to enjoy the woodland.

Factors Causing Change**Long term Objective (50 years+)**

Whittle Spinney should offer a high quality visitor experience in line with a category A Access designation. Access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity. There will be a well-managed network of paths around the wood which are easy and obvious to follow. Prominent signage and information will be made available at the main entrances to enable visitors to explore the site and to appreciate its inherent qualities and wildlife; the objective is that visitors should leave with some understanding of the value of woodland and this site, and a clear knowledge of The Woodland Trust. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones and inspections of access furniture.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During this plan period the main short term objectives are to provide a high quality visitor experience, which is safe and enjoyable and to enhance the welcome information at the wood. High quality path and entrance improvements have been completed (February 2017) to ensure the wood offers informal recreational opportunities and a warm welcome to local people year round. Any threats to the wood arising from public access will also be monitored and managed. Approximately 600m of paths and all 7 entrances will be monitored annually to ensure they are kept open for use as part of the Estates Maintenance Contract. All signage and information boards will remain clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate. Access provision will be monitored at least once during this plan period to ensure it is adequate and to determine the severity of any threats to the wood from public access.

We will conduct regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (e.g. the edges of the roads and main paths), to ensure Whittle Spinney is as safe as possible for visitors, neighbours and road users. Access provision is adequate and to determine the severity of any threats to the wood from public access. Measures to lessen any recorded threats will be undertaken.

We will explore opportunities to engage with local schools via Forest School activity and to use the site for key Woodland Trust initiatives such as the green schools tree planting programme.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2022	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	June
2022	WMM - Invasive Plant Control	Works associated with the on-going management of invasive plants– such a repeat cutting and control treatments	August
2023	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside routes such as paths and rides within the woodland	March
2023	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	April
2023	PE - Interpretation & Signage	Works associated with the provision of visitor signage, waymarking, interpretation features and leaflets	May
2024	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	October
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2025	SL - Safety Inspections / Reports	The provision of external consultants/contractors to provide specialist advice / inspections undertaken to assess safety and/or legal obligations of features such as bridges, walls, mineshafts and other site infrastructure	May
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	May
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	July
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2025	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2025	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2025	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Work associated with planned tree safety works alongside areas such as car parks, roadsides and boundaries	October
2025	SL - Safety Inspections / Reports	The provision of external consultants/contractors to provide specialist advice / inspections undertaken to assess safety and/or legal obligations of features such as bridges, walls, mineshafts and other site infrastructure	November
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	May
2026	SL - Safety Inspections / Reports	The provision of external consultants/contractors to provide specialist advice / inspections undertaken to assess safety and/or legal obligations of features such as bridges, walls, mineshafts and other site infrastructure	May
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	May
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	July
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	July
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September
2026	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Works associated with the maintenance of existing visitor access infrastructure and paths. Work could include items such as repairing pot-holes and path surfaces, mowing grass paths, path widening, maintaining footbridges and steps, cleaning signage etc,	September

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2026	LC - Routine Litter Picks	Planned/routine litter picks using contractors	September
2026	SL - Safety Inspections / Reports	The provision of external consultants/contractors to provide specialist advice / inspections undertaken to assess safety and/or legal obligations of features such as bridges, walls, mineshafts and other site infrastructure	November

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.43	Ash	1977	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	
<p>Compartment one consists of oak, alder, ash, cherry, Norway maple, field maple, small leaved lime, larch, sycamore, Scots pine, willow, beech, aspen, hawthorn, dogwood, spindle, and hazel planted in the late 1970s. There are remnant hedgerows with old pollard trees and associated flora. The site is bordered by roads and housing estates.</p>						

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

Registered Office:

The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales no. 294344 and in Scotland no. SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 1982873. The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.