

Brakey Wood

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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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

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2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
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5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Brakey Wood

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------|----------|----|----------|-------|-----|-----|
| Location: | Hoxne | Grid | reference: | TM187769 | OS | 1:50,000 | Sheet | No. | 156 |
| Area: | 6.28 hectares (15.52 acres) | | | | | | | | |
| External Designations: | N/A | | | | | | | | |
| Internal Designations: | Woods on Your Doorstep | | | | | | | | |

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Brakey wood is 6.3 hectare mixed broadleaf secondary woodland that was planted in 1999 as part of the Woodland Trusts woodland at your doorstep millennium project. Prior to the creation of the woodland the site was an arable field. A remnant field boundary ran east west through the centre of the woodland with two mature oaks being the only remaining significant trees. Running through length of the wood within the northern boundary is the Chickering Beck, which is a stream that has been extensively re-profiled by the local internal drainage board. The land to the south and east of the wood is in arable production, to the west there are sewage works and a thin ditch also within WT ownership. On the northern boundary there is privately owned mixed woodland that is slightly older and of similar native broadleaf dominant species mixture. To celebrate the creation of the woodland a millennium feature in the guise of five Wellingtonias were planted. Four of these majestic trees have survived for generations to enjoy. Ten black poplars were also planted in the early 2000's as part of a recolonisation program for these declining native trees. As the trees have matured the canopy has now reached closure, and the next period of plans should include sympathetic silvicultural interventions to address this.

A circular grassy path was created around the wood with it also linking into a footpath at the western end of the wood which links to the local village of Hoxne. A small meadow/open ground habitat was created in the centre of the site close to the southern boundary to provide open space for the public once the wood has developed. As part of the Mid Suffolk District Council's 'hearts of oak project' a large sculpture of the Hoxne caveman was placed within the wood. It is now a much loved and prominent feature of the site.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for Brakey Wood is to develop a diverse age and varied species structure with abundant natural regeneration, deadwood habitat, and open rides/meadow. This will be achieved by continuing to sympathetically break up the even aged plantation structure through low impact silvicultural interventions, promoting the development and regeneration of the other planted native tree species. Deadwood will be increased by retaining declining ash where safe to do so, allowing natural processes to occur. Over time the upper canopies are expected to be dominated by oak and hornbeam in the drier areas, with a hazel and field maple understorey. Whilst in the wetter areas, willow and alder will dominate. The meadow will be maintained as an area of open ground adding further diversity and public open space to the site.

Public access

The long-term intention is to maintain a sustainable level of use by maintaining the access features and internal infrastructure appropriately. The long-term management will concentrate on maintaining the current paths and internal structures, such as entrances, benches, and sculptures to a safe useable standard.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

| |
|--|
| Description |
| Brakey wood is locally important to the village of Hoxne and the surrounding area. A circular unsurfaced grassy path approximately 1km in length has been created around the site leading from the car park in the east to the public footpath connection leading to Hoxne village. A small meadow is situated on the southern edge of the wood and is cut annually with arising's removed annually. Whilst not of particularly high botanical interest due to previous land use and high nutrient levels, the meadow does contain species such as knapweed and cowslips. Close to the meadow a much-appreciated wooden statue of Hoxne caveman and a dedicated bench has been placed. |
| Significance |
| Given the level of local community involvement that there was with the creation of Brakey wood it is important to maintain good access for the local community within the local area. |
| Opportunities & Constraints |
| The wet nature of the ground in the west may inhibit access for the less able at certain times of the year. Vegetation along the riverbank prevents access and views of the river at certain times of the year. |
| Factors Causing Change |
| Vegetation encroaching on the rides. |
| Long term Objective (50 years+) |
| Maintain the permissive pedestrian path system and all internal structures to a high standard so that visitors to the site enjoy the experience at Brakey wood |
| Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years) |
| To maintain site as an area of public open access, with ride system cut to a minimum of 1.5 m to allow unhindered access for the public. Maintain all public access structures in a safe usable condition. Retain continuity within existing meadow as an area of open space. Cut meadow after seeding (August). Work plan: Path cut - May undertake path cut 1.5 metre width. Path Cut – June undertake path cut 1.5 metre width. Path cut – July undertake path cut 1.5 metre width. |

Path Cut – August (including meadow cut)

4.2 f2 New Native Woodland

Description

In the main body of the woodland the following species have been planted: Common alder, white willow, common ash, pedunculate oak, field maple, hornbeam, small-leaved lime, common hazel, common hawthorn, and blackthorn. The alder, willow and some of the common ash have been concentrated on the wetter ground to the west to create a wet woodland area. To the south of the stream pedunculate oak and common ash have been planted to gap up the existing scrubby area. Four Wellingtonia trees were planted on the higher ground as a local landscape feature, whilst a number of black poplars have been planted by the local volunteers in the wetter parts of the wood as part of a local black poplar preservation scheme. Ash dieback has developed through the woodland, although due to the diversity of the range of species the impact of the common ash declining has been mitigated.

Significance

Brakey Wood has now established itself as a well developed woodland which will help to increase the area of native woodland in a predominantly agricultural landscape of Suffolk. On a local level it is a significant habitat for wildlife and a feature in the landscape, linking in with a similar sized block of woodland adjacent to the north of Chickering Beck.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities - to engage with local contractors to help manage the woodland for conservation.

Constraints -The woodland is quite isolated due to the narrow lane access and low weight tonnage bridge; this could make future thinning operations and extraction of timber difficult or impracticable.

Levels of browsing from deer may prevent regeneration.

Factors Causing Change

Deer are present in high numbers within the local landscape and may potentially hinder the development of any developing regeneration.

Ash Dieback is present within, but common ash is a relatively small percentage of the original planting mix, so has not overly affected the woodland structure

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To allow the woodland to develop into native dominant high forest with trees and shrubs of varying age classes and species types. In the drier areas expected dominant canopy species would be oak, hornbeam and lime, with hazel and field maple understorey. The wetter areas will develop into willow and alder dominated mixed structures habitats. The

woodland will reach this state largely through light thinning interventions in the oak/hornbeam areas, with more natural processes management being allowed to develop in the willow/alder areas. Woodland Condition Assessments and Herbivore Impact Assessments will inform management going into the future, interventions only taking place if highlighted as necessary by the outcomes; the aim being to ensure the long-term resilience of the woodland in perpetuity.

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

Undertake up to 30% silvicultural thinning operation throughout the native mixed broadleaf woodland to open canopy and increase light levels to stimulate development of existing stored natural regeneration and remaining suppressed shrubs/understorey. Retain ash that is showing signs of tolerance and retain the planted black poplars that are planted on the edges of the rides and the wellingtonias. Coppice ride edges to a depth of 2 metres to maintain scrub edge habitat. Within wet woodland areas undertake lighter thin of no more than 25% to maintain stand stability due to the higher risk of windblow.

24-month tree safety inspection by site manager to check woodland health and tree safety inspection. Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.

Work Programme.

Silvicultural thinning operation (30% canopy Thin) within the mixed broadleaf areas to lighten canopy and stimulate stored natural regeneration to begin to develop a multi age structured woodland – September 2024 - 2027.

Silvicultural thinning operation (25% canopy Thin) within the wet woodland area to lighten canopy and stimulate stored natural regeneration to begin to develop a multi age structured woodland – September 2024 - 2027.

Coppice ride edges to depth of 2 metres to maintain a thick scrub verge. Place brush on stools to protect them from deer browsing. Retain Black poplars, Wellingtonias and also trees of good form within ride edge coppice zone - September 2024 - 2027.

Carry out HIA assessment 2023/24 to assess browsing impact.

24 monthly Zone B tree safety and woodland health assessment.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type Of Work | Description | Due Date |
|------|------------------------------|--|----------|
| 2023 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |
| 2024 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |
| 2025 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |
| 2026 | WMM - Secondary Silviculture | Works associated with silvicultural operations within secondary woods to meet our primary aims of conserving woodlands and encouraging public enjoyment– such as the removal of non-natives, thinning and promotion of native trees and shrubs, creating and managing view points and providing welcoming sites for visitors | December |

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No. | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Designations |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1a | 6.31 | Mixed native broadleaves | 1999 | Min-intervention | | |
| <p>The following species have been planted: Common alder, white willow, common ash, pedunculate oak, field maple, hornbeam, small-leaved lime, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. The alder, willow and some of the ash have been concentrated on the wetter ground to the west. A rabbit fence has been erected along the south-western boundary and along the western boundary to protect the neighbouring arable fields. The small strip to the north of the Stream the Trust added to the existing natural regeneration by planting common ash and pedunculate oak to infill the gaps.</p> <p>The ash have slowly declined and gradually removed where required.</p> | | | | | | |
| 1b | 0.76 | Alder species | 1999 | Min-intervention | | |
| <p>A linear strip north of the stream containing riparian alder and willow species with associated wetland flora. There are a few notable sized oak trees as well . The boundary to the neighbouring woodland to the north is marked by a boundary fence.</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:

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