

Muchwood & Mary's 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

1. Site Details
2. Site Description
3. Long Term Policy
4. Key Features
 - 4.1 f1 Informal Public Access
 - 4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland
5. Work Programme

Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Muchwood & Mary's Wood

Location:	Ramsey	Grid reference:	TL294869	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	142
Area:	2.06 hectares (5.09 acres)							
External Designations:	N/A							
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep							

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Muchwood and Mary's Wood is a small 2-hectare wood, located on Muchwood Lane, 1.5 miles Northeast of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire. It was purchased by the Woodland Trust in December 1997 and planted as part of The Woodland Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep (WOYD) initiative in November 1998. The local community have been involved from the initial design, to fund raising and planting the wood. A small meadow with a bench in the north of the site was designed as a special feature to commemorate the Millennium. This northern third of the wood is known as Mary's Wood, and is named after Mrs K Mary Burstall, the late mother of Miss Patricia Burstall, a local resident and donor towards the site.

The site was formerly part of a large, fertile arable field, and being situated on the fenland edge, Muchwood and Mary's wood is surrounded by fairly flat farmland. The area is relatively well hedged with trees, and although there are few other woods locally, Monks Wood, Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen nature reserves are all within 10 miles of Muchwood and Mary's Wood. Bordering the western boundary there is a green burial site and from the edge of the wood there are views towards Peterborough Cathedral, eleven miles away.

Maintained footpaths provide a circular route through the woods and connect with a public footpath to the north and one to the south which leads to Ramsey village. A third entrance is from the car park off Bodsey Toll Road where there is parking for six cars.

Key Features:

Informal Public Access

Secondary Woodland

3. LONG TERM POLICY

Muchwood & Mary's Wood will become a resilient, mature broadleaved woodland composed of mainly native species, with elements of falling and standing deadwood. The species mix within the wood will consist primarily of Oak and Field Maple with a supporting cast of Ash, Willow, Alder, Crab Apple, Cherry and Horse Chestnut. Ash will still be a component of the site, but this is most likely to be providing the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer. The wood will be managed using good forestry practice to maintain a diverse species and age mixture within the wood which will also promote natural regeneration.

Shrub species within the wood will consist of Hazel, Hawthorn, Elder, Blackthorn and Dog Rose.

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The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths, signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Ramsey Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
This wood is managed for public access. A small car park is provided off Bodsey Toll Road for six vehicles, with a 2m height barrier restricting access to taller vehicles. There are over 600m of managed paths, providing a variety of short walks for local visitors. A small grass meadow in the Northwest corner, with associated bench, adds variety for the visitor. There are 2 other entrance points into the wood in addition to the car park.
Significance
The wood is a product of the local community's interest in creating an accessible woodland resource. There is very little woodland of any kind in the locality, making this an important place for local people to enjoy a woodland experience.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities: -Community support for the wood could be developed and in the future this could enable the wood to be self-managed by a local community group Constraints -Because of the size of the wood, it is only likely to be of interest to visitors living very locally -Litter build up on the road edge can be a problem, as the wood is located at a road junction
Factors Causing Change
- unauthorised access (Motorbikes, ATV's)
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. Low key public access will be maintained at the site and the paths , signs and other furniture that allows safe access for the public will be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Ramsey Parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. The wood will continue to link to the local public footpath networks and will be part of the much wider access provision in the area.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
The 860m of Paths and rides are to be managed annually , ensuring works are carried out as necessary to keep the path network open and easy to use for informal public access as detailed in EMC spec 2.01. The car park surface will be maintained as and when required through the plan period.

Meadow Management

-Meadow Cut - Cut and collect meadow annually to keep meadow open and encourage floral diversity.

-Replace bench in meadow -2025/26

Manage site safety through safety observations and inspections

Associated signage (Site name/welcome signs) to be kept in good condition and regularly maintained as detailed in EMC Spec 1.01 , with a five yearly review of access facilities by the Site Manager.

Access inspection - July 2026

-Tree Safety surveys

Zone A Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 24 months

Zone B Tree Safety Inspections to be carried out every 48 months

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Muchwood & Mary's is a small native woodland (2 hectares) which was planted in 1998. Oak and ash make up 50% of the wood, and field maple, willow, alder, hazel and crab apple the remaining 50%. Native hedgerows have been planted along most of the boundaries and there is a small meadow in the Northwest corner. The wood is set within an intensive agricultural fenland landscape, but there is a green burial site immediately to the west.

Significance

There are few woodlands in this part of Cambridgeshire, although ecologically notable ones such as Woodwalton and Monks Wood are within 10 miles. Therefore even relatively small woodlands make a positive contribution to both the landscape and as places for wildlife, dependent on such habitats for survival

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

-Locally important habitat, linked to hedgerows

Constraints:

-The small size of the wood

- adjacent intensive agricultural landscape surrounding the site

Factors Causing Change
- Ash Dieback
Long term Objective (50 years+)
<p>Muchwood & Mary's Wood will become a resilient, mature broadleaved woodland composed of mainly native species, with elements of falling and standing deadwood. The species mix within the wood will consist primarily of Oak and Field Maple with a supporting cast of Ash, Willow, Alder, Crab Apple, Cherry and Horse Chestnut. Ash will still be a component of the site, but this is most likely to be providing the important feature of, standing and fallen deadwood habitat within the wood due to Ash Dieback. The areas where the Ash have died and opened up the canopy, will provide areas for ground flora and natural regeneration to flourish, and provide an understorey layer. The wood will be managed using good forestry practice to maintain a diverse species and age mixture within the wood which will also promote natural regeneration.</p> <p>Shrub species within the wood will consist of Hazel, Hawthorn, Elder, Blackthorn and Dog Rose.</p>
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
<p>Undertake assessments of woodland health every five years, Works to be ordered through observation actions as required.</p> <p>-Woodland Health Monitoring visit - August 2026</p> <p>Woodland Management</p> <p>Selective thinning and coppicing :</p> <p>-Small scale selective thinning and coppicing of trees and shrubs where the planting is dense will open up the canopy, allowing light to reach the woodland floor and give selected trees room to develop and break through the canopy. This will promote resilience by encouraging variety of age and structure within the woodland.</p> <p>- Halo thinning will be undertaken around selected Oak trees to allow them space and light to grow and break through the canopy.</p> <p>Selective thinning operation including Halo thinning - Autumn/Winter 2026/2027</p> <p>Hedgelaying will be undertaken along the roadside hedges to reduce height and promote thickening of the hedges. this will be achieved by laying using traditional methods. Hedgelaying will also improve visibility for cars using the two roads that border the site .</p> <p>Hedge laying - Winter 2024/2025 - Winter 2025/2026</p>

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
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
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	February
2027	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

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2	Ash	1998	Min-intervention		
<p>Compartment 1 is the whole of the site which includes 1.6 ha of woodland and 0.4 ha of meadow. The woodland is a stand of trees planted in 1998 consisting of mainly oak and ash, but which also includes field maple, hazel, willow and alder.</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.

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