



Butcher's Wood

Management Plan 2012-2017

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

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) through independent audit. In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, 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.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on 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 heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential 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 allow our woods to be used to support 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. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Butcher's Wood
Location:	Hassocks
Grid reference:	TQ303149, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 198
Area:	7.03 hectares (17.37 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Butcher's Wood lies in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ancient oak woodland is complimented by hazel, bluebells and other flora. A good network of paths gives easy access, although the site is prone to seasonal water-logging

2.2 Extended Description

Butcher's Wood is a small (7.12ha) ancient semi-natural woodland situated between the South Downs and the village of Hassocks in West Sussex. It is just within the South Downs National Park.

To the north of the wood is the residential area of Hassocks. To the east runs a stream, with grazing beyond. To the west is a public footpath running beside the London to Brighton railway line. To the south-west is a meadow separating the wood from Lag Wood. To the south-east is Woodbine Cottage which includes a small part of the wood. The site is bounded on three sides by a chain-link fence (within the Trust's ownership) and to the north by garden fencing. The wood was originally part of the Danny Estate and was acquired by the Trust in December 1988, with funding coming from Mid Sussex District Council, The West Sussex Gazette, Clayton Parish Council and Hassocks Amenity Society.

The wood is level on heavy Gault Clay and is prone to seasonal water logging. It has a two-storey, high forest structure with oak as the main canopy tree and hazel as the main under storey species. There is a typically rich ancient woodland ground flora including extensive bluebells. Much of the hazel under storey has been coppiced in recent years by the Butcher's Wood Volunteers and in 1998, 2001 & 2003 a programme of selective thinning of the oak canopy was carried out.

The wood is accessible from public footpaths to the west and south and there is a good network of paths and rides allowing access to all parts of the site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General location:

Butcher's Wood is situated south of the village of Hassocks. It can be reached from the village centre by the public footpath that runs alongside the railway, approx 400m. The wood can also be reached from Clayton to the south via 2 public footpaths.

General overview of paths & entrances:

There are 2 kissing gates off the public footpath on the west side of the wood. There is also a stile on the southern boundary. The wood has many rides and smaller paths throughout. They are all unsurfaced and are very muddy after wet weather. The site is level.

Parking:

There is no car park at the wood. There is limited on-street parking in the residential area to the north of the wood.

Public Transport:

Nearest train station: Hassocks, approx 400m from the wood.

Nearest bus stop: Keymer Road, Hassocks, approx 400m from the wood via the public footpath. There are regular services throughout the day. Further information on public transport can be obtained from Traveline: www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk or tel: 0870 608 2 608).

Public Toilets:

Nearest public toilets are at Adastra Park, Hassocks, approx ½ mile away. There are disabled facilities accessible with a RADAR key. Information obtained from Mid Sussex DC website on 5/2/2007 (www.midsussex.gov.uk).

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

At Butcher's Wood the Woodland Trusts' core aims can be met in the following way:

To protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future

It is anticipated that in the long-term the wood will have a more mixed composition with ash becoming more abundant due to its frequent seeding (compared to oak) and being much less prone to squirrel damage than other species. Whilst not currently an issue the impact of deer and rabbits may need to be addressed in the long term if regeneration is being threatened.

The variety of structure and vegetation in Butcher's Wood is best maintained throughout the majority of the site by a policy of minimum intervention, other than regular tree safety work and coppicing of the hazel by the volunteers. Dead or dying trees will only be felled if they pose a safety risk, otherwise they will be left to provide a valuable deadwood habitat. The Woodland Trusts ownership and management in perpetuity should remove the threat of the loss of this ancient woodland.

To inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

By maintaining the excellent existing network of permissive paths people will be encouraged to visit the wood. Entrances, boundary fences, and countryside furniture will be maintained as necessary and the access provision will be monitored to ensure it is suitable for the level of use. Continued support will be given to the volunteer group to encourage the local community to get involved with caring for Butchers Wood.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Butcher's Wood is a small fragment of ancient woodland, typical of woods on heavy clay in the Low Weald of Sussex. It has a diverse tree, shrub and ground flora including many woodland specialist plants. The wood has probably been heavily modified by historic management including the planting of pedunculate oak approx 100 years ago and the move away from coppice with standards management. This has led to a significant part of the wood (particularly the eastern part) having a high forest structure with many tall oaks with small crowns. Under this canopy there still remains an understorey of predominantly hazel. In other parts of the wood the canopy also includes overstood ash and hornbeam coppice as well as frequent aspen and birch and a few remaining large pines (Corsican and Scots). The understorey also contains field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, privet, spindle and goat willow.

The ground flora includes abundant bluebells along with wood anemones, yellow archangel, early purple orchid, moschatel, enchanter's nightshade and various woodland sedges.

The wood appears to have lost some of its area in modern times to the housing to the north and the railway to the west (part of the wood still exists to the west of the railway). There is a woodbank along the boundary between the wood and the small meadow/secondary wood to the east (subcpt 1b).

Significance

The amount of ASNW left in Britain has been drastically reduced over the last century. Approximately 40% of England's ASNW is found in the South East. ASNW is very important due to the continuity of woodland cover over hundreds of years which allows for a diverse range of wildlife and vegetation to develop over time that cannot be found in new woodland creation sites.

Broadleaved woodland is the most extensive semi-natural habitat in Sussex. Much of this woodland is, like Butcher's Wood, ancient in origin and thus of high nature conservation value. Butcher's forms a natural barrier against further building development and part of a link for wildlife and people to the countryside and the South Downs beyond the clay vale. Butcher's Wood is locally renowned for its show of bluebells in spring. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and the prevention of its loss is one of the main aims of the Trust.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: silvicultural management is restricted by the wet clay soils, long-extraction route, small site area and high visitor numbers.

Opportunities: to continue to manage the wood by small-scale operations that produce hazel coppice products using local volunteers.

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel Damage, Natural regeneration of oak, ash hornbeam etc

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To encourage the process of natural succession and create a diverse age structure no silvicultural intervention will take place within the body of the wood other than small scale coppicing of the hazel understorey.

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

An area of approximately 0.25 hectares to be coppiced by the volunteers will be agreed annually. Regrowth of the coppiced understorey should be up to 1.5m in height within 3 years.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

A good network of rides and paths exists allowing visitor access to all parts of the wood. These can be muddy and waterlogged during and following wet weather. The number of paths has increased over the years as visitors have made additional routes to avoid the worst of the wet areas. The site can be accessed by 2 kissing gates on the public footpath to the west and by the management gate and stile to the south. The public footpath links Hassocks railway station to the South Downs.

The site is WT access category A (15-20 visitors per weekday using one entrance). Although it is a small site the dense understorey allows high visitor numbers without detracting from its natural appeal.

Significance

It has been proven that access to woodland provides an improved quality of life with benefits to both mental and physical health. Butcher's Wood provides the local community with an easily accessible site, fantastic spring flowers and very good wildlife habitat. Increasing public enjoyment of woodland is one of the main aims of the Trust and allowing free access is crucial to this.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: wet ground conditions will lead to some damage to paths and ground flora due to trampling.

Opportunities: to provide a well-maintained example of managed ancient woodland close to a local resident population with links to public transport and the wider public rights of way network.

Factors Causing Change

Growth of rideside coppice

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A well-maintained network of rides and paths throughout the site with a variety of rideside habitats. Visitor numbers should be at similar levels to current usage.

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

During this plan period, the short term objective is to continue to provide public access at Butcher's Wood which is safe and enjoyable. This will be achieved by:

Annual ride/path cutting, entrance maintenance.

Tree safety surveys and remedial work

Annual site risk assessment survey to include all structures.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
2012	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone B	Tree safety works & gate repair	30/04/12
2012	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Cut path: strim all paths marked on map to full width. Strim/mow meadow area.	28/08/12
2013	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Cut path: strim all paths marked on map to full width. Strim/mow meadow area.	28/08/13
2013	SL - Tree Safety Works - Zone A	Undertake tree safety works as directed	20/12/13
2014	SL - Tree Safety Emergency Work	Clear windblown trees following storm - 1 ash limb requires climbing - 2 man days	14/02/14
2014	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Cut path: strim all paths marked on map to full width. Strim/mow meadow area.	28/08/14
2014	AW - Management Access Maintenance	Replace Field gate hanging post.	31/08/14
2015	SL - Tree Safety Silviculture Work	Coppice hazel along boundary with Bonnywood Road. Aprox 10 man days	28/02/15
2015	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Cut path: strim all paths marked on map to full width. Strim/mow meadow area.	28/08/15
2016	AW - Visitor Access Maintenance	Cut path: strim all paths marked on map to full width. Strim/mow meadow area.	28/08/16

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	6.65	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), National Park
ASNW. Predominantly oak (P1900) over hazel. Other species include coppiced ash, hornbeam and field maple with aspen and birch.							
1b	0.40					Informal Public Access	Area of Landscape Value, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), National Park
Secondary woodland with oak and ash and open ground. Stream-side with mature oak, alder and ash.							

GLOSSARY

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. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

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