

Earl's Lane Wood

(Plan period – 2024 to 2029)



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

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Earl's Lane Wood

Location:	Cleeve Prior Grid reference: SP082492 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 150
Area:	1.77 hectares (4.37 acres)
External Designations:	N/A
Internal Designations:	Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Formerly an area of improved pasture, Earl's Lane Wood now forms a small but important woodland creation site on the fringe of the village of Cleeve Prior. The woodland creation project here formed part of a successful nationwide scheme of 200 community woodlands planted in close proximity to peoples homes. The site which slopes gently to the South-East, was planted in the winter of 1999/2000 with the help of local volunteers and using a mixture of native broadleaved species including Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn and Crab apple.

The woods main public access point is through a kissing gate off the public highway to the north of the site. There is a sinuous linear path running in a NE-SW direction through the wood and conveniently linking to the millennium green and includes a short detour to a glade area in the north eastern corner. This path is regularly used by local children and their parents as an alternative off road route to the local school. The open glade area is maintained as a place for visitors to enjoy (as expressed by the public consultation which took part prior to creation), possibly with the view of installing an informal seat within it in the future.

Although the site is small, the fact it links into and forms part of a much larger area of land open for public enjoyment, makes the site particularly important in terms of public access.

Key features for the site are informal public access and secondary woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for the site includes the continued development of native broadleaf woodland which will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation.

Now that the initial establishment period is over, the woodland will be allowed to develop naturally as far as possible, only intervening when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes in accordance with the Woodland Trusts Management Approach (such as through ride-side coppicing and silvicultural thins). The aim is to create a diverse mature woodland with a range of native species, age ranges, well structured rides and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Gaps in the canopy will allow for floral colonisation and regeneration of all species.

Low-key public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and facilities will be minimal and only essential signage used. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Ride edge coppice work in selected locations will be undertaken to enhance visitor enjoyment, as well as structural diversity. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and tree safety inspections conducted regularly.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
The main visitor access point is from the main public highway which runs outside the western boundary of the site and through a kissing gate set back off the road. From here visitors can follow a sinuous linear route through the site. Two thirds the way along the path, it diverges to the north-east into an open glade and to the south-east where it continues to the Woodland Trust boundary and connects with the millennium green. The main path through the wood slopes gently and is clear and easy to follow as the path is maintained by an annual mowing programme. While there is no real parking provision at the site, many of the visitors including children and parents on foot, use the route through the wood and the millennium green as an off road alternative to arriving at the local school. As such the site provides both a useful means of crossing the village as well as a beautiful and interesting place to visit in order to relax or follow informal leisure pursuits.
Significance
The site provides a valuable, interesting and enjoyable place for local people in particular to visit and enjoy. In addition to this, the site also links to the village millennium green which provides an alternative off road "green route" for children and their parents to reach other parts of the village including the local school.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraints: This site lies in an area where the depth of topsoil is very shallow before reaching the bedrock. This in turn may have an effect on the speed and establishment of planted trees, and also should be considered when undertaking any estate or visitor access work as setting posts in the ground etc. is very difficult here on account of this. The size, location and layout of the site means that parking is very limited here. Opportunities: The site is well used and valued as a through route, as well as a young woodland to visit in its own right.
Factors Causing Change
Visitor numbers (potential housing development both neighbouring and outside village) Pests and diseases
Long term Objective (50 years+)

Low-key public access will be maintained in perpetuity through a managed path network, entrances and regular safety checks. Infrastructure and facilities will be minimal and only essential signage used. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Ride edge coppice work in selected locations will be undertaken to enhance visitor enjoyment, as well as structural diversity. Public safety will be assessed through infrastructure monitoring and tree safety inspections conducted regularly.

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

Objectives will be achieved by:

Regularly inspecting and maintaining the entrances to the site (4 times annually), with any repairs undertaken as necessary.

Cut all paths (within rides, glades and open areas) to a minimum width of 2 metres (twice a year) and then on the last cut of the year to their full width (including all of the open areas).

Annual cutting of blackthorn runners along rides to restrict spread and allow light to other plant communities.

Annual cutting of roadside hedge.

Tree safety inspections regularly completed, as per Woodland Trust policies.

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Formerly an area of improved pasture, The site which slopes gently to the South-East, was planted in the winter of 1999/2000 using a mixture of native broadleaved species including Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn and Crab apple and the help of local volunteers. Ground flora such as pyramidal orchids, cut-leaved cranesbill, vetch and slender trefoil can be found on ride edges and clearings.

Significance

The location of Earl's Lane Wood within a landscape regionally poor in woodland, and near an area of population means that the wood helps deliver national and regional forestry strategy goals, and the Woodland Trusts own core objectives.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

Links to a larger area of open space (the millennium green next door) and provides a short cut link to the school without the need to use the busy and narrow road on foot.

Constraints:

The relatively small size of the woodland and bedrock feature which may affect planted trees as they develop

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage

Pests and disease (e.g. Ash Dieback)

Neighbouring development

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term vision for the site includes the continued development of native broadleaf woodland which will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation.

Now that the initial establishment period is over, the woodland will be allowed to develop naturally as far as possible, only intervening when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes in accordance with the Woodland Trusts Management Approach (such as through ride-side coppicing and silvicultural thins). The aim is to create a diverse mature woodland with a range of native species, age ranges, well structured rides and with deadwood, both standing and fallen, being retained where it is safe to do so. Gaps in the canopy will allow for floral colonisation and regeneration of all species.

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

As per WCA summaries, Earl's Lane would benefit from silvicultural thinning to diversify the structure, prompt regeneration and increase deadwood levels. Mensuration of the site will determine whether it would be economically and ecologically best to conduct a 20% thin across the site and harvest and extract (2026/7) or whether to conduct halo-thinning (<5m³ per quarter), felling to waste and leaving as deadwood habitat.

To maintain small open areas for current populations of ground flora such as orchids and cranesbill, blackthorn along ride edges will be annually cut.

If deemed suitable, work with neighbouring developments to help increase biodiversity on site.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2024	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,	June
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	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
2028	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

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.84	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	
An area of native broadleaved planting at 3.1m spacing, planted in the winter of 1999/2000. Native species mix.						

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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