WOODLAND TRUST

Great Ridings Wood

Management Plan 2019-2024

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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®) under licence FSC-C009406 and 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:	Great Ridings Wood
Location:	East Horsley
Grid reference:	TQ105539, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 187
Area:	28.51 hectares (70.45 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Situated between East Horsley and Effingham, Great Ridings Wood is dominated by maturing oak forest with a strong component of hornbeam and is known to be one of the last refuges for the hawfinch in Surrey.

2.2 Extended Description

Great Ridings Wood extends to an area of 28.51 ha (70.45 acres). The wood was purchased in 1996 with funds raised by public appeal and supplemented by generous donations from local councils. The freehold was placed with East Horsley Parish Council and leased to the Woodland Trust to manage for the next millennium.

Great Ridings Wood sits in the heart of a more extensive woodland spanning around 150 hectares of Greenbelt between East Horsley and Effingham and is bordered by Greatlee and Littlelee Wood to the north and Garden Grove and Park Wood to the south. Most of the surrounding woodland is in private ownership with limited public access. Administratively the wood lies within the Borough of Guildford Borough and is split between the parishes of East Horsley and Effingham.

The wood is made up of ancient woodland (Ridings Wood), a number of old plantations (Leewood Field Plantation, Great Ridings Plantation, and Orestan Plantation), shaws and former fields that have reverted to woodland over the past century or so. There are many old banks and ditches within the woodland which demarcate these historic field/woodland boundaries. Only Ridings Wood to the west of the Old London Road and some small parcels along the edges and within subcompartment 2b are designated as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW). Ridings Wood is also designed as a County Wildlife Site (SNCI). The whole of Great Ridings Wood lies within Thames Basin Lowlands National Landscape Area (NCA 114).

The woodland soils are slowly permeable, seasonally wet and slightly acidic but with base-rich loamy and clayey soils derived from the underlying London Clay. As a result, Great Ridings Wood is a rich woodland dominated by oak, ash and hornbeam with a smaller component of birch and other mixed broadleaves, and an understorey of holly and hazel. A scattering of mixed conifers can also be found which may hint at a past, more formal, historic use. Over the last decade, an extensive programme of removal of non-native invasive species has eradicated the large, dense stands of rhododendron that once dominated parts of the wood.

Although Great Ridings has no statutory designated archaeological sites, the wood nevertheless contains some interesting historical features. The wood is dissected by the Old London Road trackway which was an ancient packhorse route connecting the Tillingbourne Valley to London and is believed to have been used to transport products such as ironwork, gunpowder and banknote paper. The trackway itself is not under the management of the Trust but splits the wood east/west between compartments 1 and 2. Another feature of interest which runs alongside the Old London Road is the Old ‘hundred’ earth bank which marks the parish boundary. The bank is six feet high in places and historically marked the division between the Woking and Copthorn Hundreds. A hundred was an Anglo-Saxon land unit containing a hundred hides, a hide being the area of land required to support one household.

Great Ridings wood has a good network of permissive and public footpaths some of which are incorporated into a circular waymarked route and one public bridleway on the Old London Road, which is not owned by the Trust. The Horsley Diamond Jubilee trail also passes through the wood as does a Surrey County Council greenway cycle route linking East Horsley to Effingham. The wood is very popular with local residents for dog-walking and informal recreation. The main management site access is from the High Park Avenue entrance with access also possible from the Orestan lane entrance.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Great Ridings can be accessed on foot from the nearby villages of Effingham and East Horsley. From the north, the wood can be reached from Effingham Common using the Old London Road (Bridleway 131); from Effingham to the east, via Orestan Lane; and from the south, Dirtham Lane leads directly into the wood. From East Horsley to the west, public footpaths lead through private roads from High Park Avenue (FP565 a/b), Norrels Drive (FP565), and Woodland Drive (FP565) to connect with public footpaths running through Ridings Wood (FP601 & FP602). As well as the formal public rights of way, there are also many informal unsurfaced paths criss-crossing the wood

Information boards are available at three of the entrances - Orestan Lane, High Park Avenue and at the north end of the Old London Road where it enters Great Ridings wood. There is also a waymarked trail to help visitors explore the wood and several signposts placed at strategic points within the wood. Most of the paths throughout the woodland are unsurfaced and can be muddy, especially in winter. At drier times of the year the London Road bridleway is potentially useable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Pushchairs can also access through the kissing gate at the High Park Avenue entrance. Bikes can use the greenway cycle route and Old London Road Lane bridleway. The Old London Road is the only route permitted for horse riding.

There is no public carpark close to the wood. Limited roadside parking is available along Orestan Lane, and there is room for 1 or 2 cars at the end of High Park Avenue (which is a private road). The nearest railway station is at Horsley, which is approximately 20minutes walk away along Cobham Way and Norrels Drive.

A bus is available from the station, but it is unlikely to save much time. The nearest bus stop is approximately 10 minutes walk away on Forest Road which connects with an infrequent bus service (No 478). To reach the wood, alight at Norrels Drive or High Park Avenue and follow either road till you reach the pedestrian entrance into the wood at the top of High Park Avenue.

The rail station has public toilets which are only open during peak times, but further public toilets can be at the East Horsley Village Hall on Kingston Avenue.

For further information on public transport routes please consult Traveline www.traveline.org.uk.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The areas of secondary and ancient woodland within Great Ridings Wood will mostly be left to develop under the influences of natural processes, except where intervention is required to address issues caused by pests and diseases and to control invasive non-native species. The loss of ash from the canopy – caused by ash dieback – will temporarily increase deadwood across the site and open up gaps in an otherwise closed canopy (specifically subcompartment 1a, 1b, and 2a). Species such as hornbeam, oak, and birch are likely species to fill these gaps. In the younger secondary woodland area of subcompartment 2b, where ash is a dominant feature of the canopy, the species composition change may appear more drastic with sycamore likely to take its place.
Intervention to protect ancient woodland features such as woodland specialist ground flora, precursor and veteran trees, deadwood, and archaeological features may be required from time to time; particularly to control invasives and non-natives such as rhododendron and laurel.

Management of tree safety hazards and threats brought on by pests and diseases will be required in high risk areas next to the path network and along boundaries shared with residential housing. Whilst trees showing resistance to ash dieback will be retained as a seed source to create future resistant generations of ash, ride-side management will remove dangerous ash trees. This work will widen rides, enhancing the biodiversity and visual interest of the wood.

The Trust will ensure the public can continue to enjoy open access to Great Ridings Wood by maintaining the entrances, providing an appropriate level of signage, and supporting waymarkers for the local long-distance walk initiatives (like the Horsley Diamond Jubilee trail). An annual path cut will help maintain the public and permissive footpaths throughout the wood and annual inspections will check that paths and visitor infrastructure such as gates and benches remain safe and enjoyable for all visitors to the site.

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

The majority of the surrounding woodland within the wider woodland complex of Greatlee Wood, Garden Grove and Parkwood is designated ASNW. The Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) records just 4.53 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) within the Woodland Trust holdings of Great Ridings Wood. The largest area occurs within Subcompartment 1a which is an area of ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by oak dating from around 1900 with a substantial component of hornbeam, other scattered mixed broadleaves and a sparse understorey of hazel and holly. Specialist woodland flora indicator species such as bluebells occur in patches. A few non-native conifer species such as Scots pine, monkey puzzles and western red cedars are also present but account for less than 1% of the canopy.

There are also small areas of ASNW within Subcompartment 2b; at the northern edge of the compartment (0.5ha) and a narrow shaw along the southern and south-eastern boundaries (0.4ha). Both areas were originally shelter belt woodlands between the former agricultural fields and appear on maps at least as far back as 1767.However, on the ground, both areas appear similar in age and structure to a secondary woodland. An intimate mix of ash and oak dominate the canopy and there is a covering of bluebells in the spring, which is particularly heavy in the 0.5ha ASNW. Something distinctive about these areas is a complete lack of mature hornbeam.

Extensive clearance of rhododendron took place between 2012 and 2017 in order to protect and encourage recolonization of the ancient woodland flora. The rhododendron is now under control, but regeneration of these areas is minimal at present.

Significance

The amount of ancient woodland left in Britain has been drastically reduced over the last century. Approximately 40% of England's ancient woodland is found in the South East. Ancient woodland 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. In a heavily wooded area where woodland has become fragmented, larger areas of woodland are able to withstand external pressures such as climate change much better. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and the prevention of its loss is one of the main aims of the Trust.

Locally, the areas of ancient woodland within Great Ridings Wood provide a beneficial habitat diversity and contribute to the overall ecological resilience of the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
- Use tree safety interventions to help create natural glades or open up rides to increase light levels and encourage the development and spread of ancient woodland species especially where bare ground is dominant due to low light levels in hornbeam dominated areas.

Constraints:
-Safety issues from decline/death in ash trees along internal paths and around the woodland perimeter adjacent to properties due to ash dieback disease.

Factors Causing Change

-Squirrel damage on younger hornbeam and some deer browsing slowing natural regeneration
-Spread of coarse species such as bramble and bracken outcompeting woodland specialist species.
-Pest & diseases resulting in loss or damage to trees. Ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) is likely to have a significant impact on the population of ash trees within Great Ridings over the next decade and the wood is also at risk from chronic & acute oak decline and spread of oak processionary moth (OPM).
- Climate change - greater increase in extreme events has the potential to cause woodland restructuring (i.e. windblow during storm events).
- Path creep and development of a network of unofficial trails and paths throughout the woodland compacting soil and damaging ground flora.
- Reluctance of adjacent landowners to control invasive non-native species such as rhododendron and laurel in adjacent woodland means that these species will continue to threaten Great Ridings and on-going monitoring and control will be necessary.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective will be to support structurally diverse robust ancient woodland, comprising predominately native broadleaf species. Ancient woodland components will continue to be evident and lower storeys secured by natural regeneration. The understory will comprise of native shrubs with a ground layer of specialist woodland plants and ancient woodland indicator species. The ash trees that are lost from the upper canopy and the regeneration of the areas where rhododendron control took place will help encourage this diversification of the lower storeys. The few remaining mixed conifers which are non-invasive will be left to mature and follow their natural life cycle. Good deadwood habitat will be present through standing and fallen dead trees and ancient living trees. Veteran trees of the future will be developing in character. Archaeological features such as earth banks will be preserved and protected as part of the general woodland monitoring programme.

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

In the next 5 years' the main objective for the ancient woodland areas is to retain the varied composition and structural diversity of the ancient woodland areas. This can mostly be achieved through a programme of minimal intervention, except for the following management activities:

- Annually monitoring for tree safety in garden boundary trees (Zone A in subcpt 1a) and every two years along formal footpaths (Zone B in subcpt 1a and 2b); address any concerns as required. Intervention will be focused on trees impacted of ash die back (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus), but surveys will look at all trees/species within Zone A and B.

- Maintain the success of the programme of rhododendron/laurel removal by monitoring and treating any regrowth in approx. 0.4ha area in the north of subcompartment 1a.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The majority of Great Ridings wood is secondary woodland derived from both plantation establishment and natural regeneration. The older stands appear to date from around 1900 (subcpt 2a) with further woodland development on former agricultural field in the 1930's (subcpt 2b). There are many old banks and ditches which indicate how the area was formerly divided up into fields and plantations.

The woodland is generally dominated by pendunculate oak although ash is more dominant towards the southern and eastern edge of the wood and mature hornbeam is notable throughout large parts of the woodland. In localised areas, the dense canopy shade created by the hornbeam is suppressing the development of the ground flora, particularly in subcompartment 2a. Although there are still areas of dog's mercury, wood anemone, common spotted orchid, honeysuckle, nettle, bluebells and various mosses. In subcompartment 2b where the ash was thinned in 2005 and along more open rides there is generally a more developed ground layer than the rest of the wood. Whilst there are areas where the ground flora is dominated by bramble and bracken with clumps of pendulous sedge, Timothy and other grass species, dock, cleavers, nettle and buttercup are also present. The woodland is a particular stronghold for hawfinch in Surrey, which likes to feed among hornbeam and ash. A seasonal pond and ditch in the south-west sector of the wood along with wet flushes along the eastern slope often colonised by pendulous sedge helps to add to the habitat diversity within the secondary woodland.

A few non-native conifer species such as Sitka spruce, Japanese cedar and western red cedars are also present in localised areas but account for less than 1% of the canopy and are not regenerating. Many of the conifer stems are in poor condition due to over shading or disease and are likely to collapse or die out naturally.

An extensive programme of non-native invasive control started in 2013 has successfully eradicated dense stands of rhododendron and laurel from the wood. However, these species are still thriving in the adjacent woodland right up to the Trust's boundary. This is particularly true for laurel expanding into subcompartment 2a from the Old London Road. The area affected is roughly from the southern boundary north to the pond. This encroachment is creating extensive shading, affecting the ground flora and causing extensive path creep in this area due to the waterlogged paths in wetter conditions.

Significance

The stands of secondary woodland are important because they are largely native woodland and long established. These areas thus contain features normally be found in ancient woodland, such as large swathes of bluebells. Large areas of the secondary woodland have developed naturally from scrub and the composition and structure is therefore very natural and supportive of a good diversity of wildlife, including the hawfinch which is on the UK red list for conservation concern.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
- Where opportunity arises, use tree safety interventions to help create natural glades or rides to increase light levels and encourage the development and spread of woodland species especially where bare ground is dominant due to low light levels in hornbeam dominated areas.
- Carry out pond maintenance/vegetation clearance to maintain/increase habitat diversity and interest of the pond.

Constraints:
- Safety issues from decline/death in ash trees along internal paths and around the woodland perimeter adjacent to properties due to ash dieback disease.

Factors Causing Change

- Squirrel damage on younger hornbeam and some deer browsing slowing natural regeneration
-Pest & diseases resulting in loss or damage to trees. Ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) is likely to have a significant impact on the population of ash trees within Great Ridings over the next decade and the wood is also at risk from chronic & acute oak decline and spread of oak processionary moth (OPM).
- Climate change - greater increase in extreme events has the potential to cause woodland restructuring (i.e. windblow during storm events).
- Path creep and development of a network of unofficial trails and paths throughout the woodland compacting soil and damaging ground flora.
-Reluctance of adjacent landowners to control invasive non-native species such as rhododendron and laurel in adjacent woodland means that these species will continue to spread into Great Ridings and on-going monitoring and control will be necessary.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The secondary woodland of Great Ridings will be left to mature as native broadleaf woodland. The areas of healthy understory, specifically in subcompartment 2b, and the drifts of specialist woodland flora throughout will be encouraged through strategic ride management, mostly dictated by the need for intervention to deal with tree disease and other safety factors. Areas of heavily shading hornbeam (subcpt 2a) will be left to self-thin, which will create gaps in the canopy for subsequent natural regeneration. Except where public safety along the path network requires intervention, the younger secondary woodland (subcpt 2b) which has a heavy component of ash, will be left to transition to a new species composition naturally. Sycamore, oak, and hornbeam may make up a larger proportion of the species mix as a result.

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

The short term objective is to contribute towards the maintenance of a structurally diverse woodland, aiming to increase woodland resilience, particularly in the face of tree disease. In the next 5 year plan period work will concentrate on dealing with the effects of ash dieback:

- Annually monitoring for tree safety in garden boundary trees (Zone A in subcpt 1b) and every two years along formal footpaths (Zone B in subcpt 2a, 2b); address any concerns as required. Intervention will be focused on trees impacted by ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus), but surveys will look at all trees species within Zones A and B.

- Widen 125m of east-west ride in subcompartment 2b by removing significantly diseased ash (>30% dieback) within falling distance of the path in 2020/21. Retain all ash specimens showing resistance to ash dieback.

- Maintain the species-rich wide ride (200m from SE maintenance gate) by cutting 3m wide path annually and rotationally cutting scallops of scrub at the woodland edge every 5 years.

- Maintain the success of the 1.4ha programme of rhododendron/laurel removal in subcpt 1b and 2a by monitoring and treating any regrowth.

- In partnership with the parish council, cut back encroaching laurel near the southern boundary of subcompartment 2a (175m), near to the Old London Road.

5.3 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

The whole of the Trust's holdings at Great Ridings Wood (28.5 ha) is open to the public for quiet informal recreation and is rated with a WT access category A (a maintained site with high regular usage at all times of the year). The woodland connects the parishes of East Horsley and Effingham through a series of formal public rights of way used for walking, cycling and horse riding. West Horsley is also within walking distance. Together the three parishes support a population of around 10,000 people. Urban centres such as Guildford, Great Bookham, Fetcham and Leatherhead are within easy travelling distance of the wood by train, bus or car.

To help visitors enjoy the site, there are information boards at three of the main entrances to the wood - in the west (High Park Avenue), north (Old London Road) and east (Orestan Lane) and a 3km circular waymarked trail. Three public footpaths (nos. 565, 601 & 602) and one public bridleway (no. 131) cross the site together with a network of informal paths. Although Bridleway 131 (Old London Road) dissects the wood, the curtilage of the right of way lies outside the Trust's ownership and management responsibility. The footpaths within the wood form part of the Horsley Diamond Jubilee Trail which is a 14.5km circular walk exploring the woodlands and open spaces of East and West Horsley and Effingham. There are two dedicated benches on site – one in the north and one in the south near to the pond.

Most of the paths throughout the woodland are unsurfaced and can be muddy, particularly in the winter. At drier times of the year the London Road bridleway is potentially useable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Pushchairs can also access through the kissing gate at the High Park Avenue entrance. Bikes can use the greenway cycle route and Old London Road Lane bridleway. The Old London Road is the only route for horse access.

Significance

Great Ridings Wood provides open access to a significant area of accessible, natural greenspace and is a valued, local woodland for people living in Effingham and Horsley, in a busy part of the country. The location of Great Ridings Wood between the parishes of East Horsley and Effingham mean that the wood, together with its PROWs provide an important, strategic link between communities. As most of the surrounding woodland is in private ownership with no public access, Great Ridings wood is a particularly valuable site for allowing people to enjoy and connect with their local woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
- Scope to develop community involvement through activities such as conservation work parties and promoting Woodland Trust educational resources to nearby schools;
- High usage of the site could hold opportunities for the membership team;
- Scope to improve waymarking and interpretation.

Constraints:
- There is no formal car parking and the woodland is bounded by private roads with limited or no parking;
- The wood is often used as a cut-through for children going to and from school and has had some vandalism in the past, most notably to the interpretation boards;
- Many of the paths are wet and muddy during the winter;
- Occasional unauthorised horse riding off the Old London Road bridleway;
- Some access routes to the site from public transport hubs has some dangerous sections where no pavement exists.

Factors Causing Change

- Vandalism
- Footpath creep due to wet, muddy conditions
- Dangerous trees necessitating footpath diversions
- Desire lines altering paths and creating new routes
- Damage from increased use of the site

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Great Ridings Wood will continue to offer a quality visitor experience in line with a category A access designation (a maintained site with high regular usage at all times of the year). Free and open access will continue to provide the local community and surrounding area with a well-maintained site with walking paths, and entrance infrastructure. Information boards, waymark signs, and suitably placed benches will provide a welcoming atmosphere to visitors.

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

During this plan period the short-term objective is to provide a quality experience for visitors which is safe and enjoyable.

-Approximately 2.7km of paths and entrance points will be maintained to allow continued access across the site. This will include annual strimming of path and ride edges and cleaning/repairing entrance signage and infrastructure as required at the 3 external entrances and 4 internal access points that separate the Old London Road bridle path from the footpaths.

-Review the position of the waymarked signage and adjust as required to improve the ease of navigation around the site.

-Regular tree safety inspections – annually for Zone A and every 2 years for Zone B. Follow up tree safety work will be carried out as needed.

-Trial one volunteer conservation work party in 2020 in cooperation with the local parish council to help control the laurel in the south of subcpt 2a.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.63	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order
An area of ancient semi natural woodland, known historically as Ridings Wood, is dominated by oak dating from around 1900 with other mixed broadleaves including birch, hornbeam, field maple, hazel, ash, holly, scattered Turkey oak, hawthorn, Norway maple and sycamore. Ground flora is limited, probably due to factors such as shade and previous covering of rhododendron and deer browsing, but patches of bluebells are still present. Ivy, bramble and mosses are also present. There are scattered ornamental conifer trees from a previous era including Scots pine, Monkey puzzles and western red cedars. Rhododendron was removed from the northern edge of the subcpt 2013.							
1b	1.36	Oak (pedunculate)	1950	Min-intervention	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Connecting People with woods & trees	Green Belt
This subcpt is a narrow area of secondary woodland with mostly broadleaf species dominated by oak, but also hornbeam, birch, hazel, field maple, ash, aspen, sweet chestnut, wild service and holly present. Ground flora consists of bramble and some bluebells, but gorse and bracken are also present. An extensive programme of Rhododendron and laurel removal has taken place between 2012 – 2017 which has been successful in eradicating these invasive plants from the subcpt.							
2a	13.93	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Connecting People with woods & trees	Green Belt
Mature secondary mixed broadleaved woodland (historically Leewood Field Plantation, Great Ridings Plantation, and The Walleps) that is dominated by oak in most areas with a significant component of hornbeam. The mixed conifer component is <1% and comprises occasional stems of species such as Sitka spruce, Japanese cedar and Corsican pine. Most of the conifer is in poor condition and is not showing any signs of regeneration. Understorey species include hazel, birch, hornbeam, holly, turkey oak, sweet chestnut, field maple, ash and aspen. The ground flora includes dog's mercury, wood anemone, common spotted orchid, Geum spp, honeysuckle, nettle, bramble, bluebells and mosses. There was a large area of rhododendron in the west of the subcpt and alongside the Old London Road that has now been cleared. There is also a seasonal pond and stream in the south west of the subcpt. An area of 3.4 hectares located in the square earth embankment between The Walleps and Great Ridings Plantation was former agricultural land that was converted to woodland around 1914.							

2b	9.56	Ash	1930	Min-intervention	Diseases, Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt

Historic maps show most of this area of the wood, containing Orestan Plantation, was established in the 1930's. The earth banks found throughout the compartment are the remnant boundaries of former agricultural fields. There are small areas of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland at the northern edge of the subcpt (0.5ha) and a narrow strip along the southern and south-eastern boundaries of the subcpt (0.4ha). Both areas were originally shelter belt woodlands between the former agricultural fields but now appear to be secondary woodland. The upper canopy is dominated by an intimate mix of ash and oak, although ash is particularly dominant along the north-eastern side of the subcpt. This area of ash was last thinned in 2005. This subcpt is notable for its lack of mature hornbeam. Natural regeneration is abundant with development of a mid and lower canopy comprising ash, oak, sycamore, rowan and hawthorn. Some young hornbeam regeneration is also present. Through much of the subcpt the ground flora is dominated by bramble and bracken with clumps of pendulous sedge. Timothy and other grass species, dock, cleavers, nettle and buttercup are also present. The ground vegetation is generally more developed than in the rest of the wood probably due to higher light and fertility levels. Ride widening (2013) along the main SE/NW footpath leading from the entrance from Orestan Lane has helped increase the biodiversity and visual interest.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	2b	Ride edge Coppice	0.54	63	34

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.