



Burcote Wood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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®) 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:	Burcote Wood
Location:	Towcester
Grid reference:	SP690466, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 152
Area:	3.80 hectares (9.39 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A former gravel quarry, Burcote now supports native broadleaves such as oak, ash, cherry, field maple and alder. Woodland habitats including scrub, mature hedgerows and coarse grassland have developed over the life of this site.

2.2 Extended Description

The site lies north of the minor road which connects the southern outskirts of Towcester with the A43/A413 junction some 800 metres to the southwest. It was a former gravel quarry which was subsequently reclaimed by landfill and is surrounded by farmland. In some locations tipped material lies close or at the surface. Planting of native broadleaves (oak, ash, field maple, alder and cherry) took place in three phases between 1985 and 1987. An ancient field boundary with associated mature trees forms the north-eastern boundary whilst the remaining boundaries have wire fencing and hedges, there is a lot of elm in the road hedge. A hedged farm track forms the western boundary for its entire length. The hollow in the south-eastern corner was left unplanted and has now scrubbed over.

Access is from the minor road where there is a small pull-in and there is a pattern of permissive footpaths, which provides access to most of the site.

A number of woodland habitats have developed on the site. Although the majority of the woodland has become closed-canopy woodland there are a number of areas where the canopy has remained open creating grassy clearings

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Located a 3 km to the south of Towcester on the Woodburcote Road. A public footpath crosses adjacent farmland from the southeast and exits onto the Woodburcote Road immediately south of the site entrance. There is a small pull-in by the entrance gate large enough to accommodate three cars. The entrance width is restricted to exclude bikes and horses. The internal path network is flat and reasonably free draining except in the wettest periods. The nearest public toilets are located in Towcester in Moat Lane, 8am to 5pm, disabled facilities.

The nearest bus stop is in the village of Burcote 1km NE along the minor road to Towcester, no footpath. For times and routes contact www.traveline.org.uk or 08712002233

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Our intention is to manage this site in such a way that its potential for biodiversity and public enjoyment is conserved and enhanced. The nature of the soils and substrate has meant that the woodland has developed differentially and a number of different habitats and ecotones have emerged, grassland, scrub and mature trees. These will be further enhanced by low key management including regular strimming of the path network and periodic cutting of scrub to ensure easy passage of visitors.

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 Informal Public Access

Description

This rural site is less than 1 km. from the southern suburbs of Towcester and is consequently well used by the public especially for the exercise of dogs. A wide circular path was established as part of the initial design and subsequently further desire-lines have been created by usage. In the majority of the wood the trees are well established and have created a canopy. In other areas, where, for various reasons, establishment was patchy, glades with few scattered trees are developing naturally. This variation in woodland habitat will enhance the public enjoyment of the site.

Significance

Although there are a number of large woodlands around Silverstone some 5 kms, to the southwest this small wood is the most easily accessed location from the southern edge of Towcester

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint

Limited parking and no footpath from habitation. Relatively small site

Opportunity

Near to population centre. Attractive location and wood. Path network stands up well in wet weather

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

It is possible that Towcester will expand further in the next few decades consequently the pressure on this most easily accessible woodland site will increase considerably. The present circular ride will continue to provide an open walkway.

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

The public access provision, gates, signs and paths will be inspected once every 2 years. Where trees/shrubs/pathside vegetation restricts passage along the large circular path they will be cut back. Litter and fly-tipping will be removed from the entrance if necessary. The roadside hedge will be inspected annually and trimmed if necessary. Periodically dead elm stems will need to be removed where they are likely to create a hazard.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

The site was a former gravel quarry within an agricultural landscape and therefore by its very nature relatively sterile. The reclaiming of the pit and the subsequent planting by the Trust has increased the biodiversity of the site considerably. Further diversity is being created by the way in which the site is developing over time. Some areas have become closed-canopy high forest whilst others will have a more open nature with grassy clearings. Further small areas will become scrub or will be dominated by Blackthorn thickets. The whole process will combine to form a diversity of habitats.likely to create a hazard.

Significance

The immediate surrounding area is dominated by commercial agriculture and all that implies in terms of biodiversity. Therefore this small developing woodland provides an important function for both resident and migratory wildlife.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint

Relatively small isolated woodland. The reclamation was not that good in places and the soil is very shallow and generally dry, leading to poor tree growth in places

Opportunity

The poor soil conditions have led to a diverse structural habitat from dry grassy glades through to scrub and closed canopy woodland

Factors Causing Change

Rabbit damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The initial design and process of differential establishment and development has created a number of different woodland environments viz. Closed canopy mixed native W8 broadleaved woodland with a well-developed sub-canopy and shrub layer, open grassy glades with a few selected trees and finally an areas of scrub. These integrated but different woodland environments have created a diversity of habitats for both resident and migratory wildlife and have greatly enhance the biodiversity of this small woodland island in the sea of the agricultural landscape. Management will be predominantly of minimal intervention.

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

Minimal intervention during this plan period. Monitor changes to woodland condition.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.81	Ash		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

For the purposes of this management plan the whole site is to be treated as one sub-compartment although there is some variation due to the initial establishment rate and species planted. The site was planted in three annual phases starting in 1985 on a reclaimed (land fill) gravel pit in an agricultural landscape of pasture and arable fields. The species planted to form a High Forest canopy included Alder, Ash, Oak (both Pedunculate and Sessile), Birch, Field maple and Common Lime. In addition Hawthorn and Blackthorn were planted in some locations to provide a sub-canopy and an edge profile. The ground layer is dominated by grasses but there are also some significant areas of bramble and bracken although these are under pressure due to the often high rabbit population. An area adjoining the agricultural grassland in the south was left unplanted and has developed as scrub and due to poor establishment and development clearings have developed naturally. A circular path was part of the initial design.

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.