



# Waulkmill Wood

## Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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

<b>Site name:</b>	Waulkmill Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Bollington
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SJ942768, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 118
<b>Area:</b>	1.49 hectares (3.68 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Conservation Area, Local Wildlife Site, Special Landscape Area

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Waulkmill Wood is located on the slopes of the ridge of Kerridge Hill, close to the town of Bollington in east Cheshire and the edge of the Peak District. There is a public footpath through the wood linking into a network of footpaths in the area and the wood is popular with local people and visitors. The wood has a lovely display of flowers in the spring time including native bluebells and red campion.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Waulkmill Wood is located in north-east Cheshire, about a mile to the south of the village of Bollington and about four miles to the north-east of Macclesfield. It lies on the western edge of the Peak District National Park within the Bollington Conservation Area and an Area of Special Landscape Value. The wood was purchased by the Woodland Trust in 1996 and is part of the Kerridge Hill Local Wildlife Site. The surrounding landscape is rolling countryside with predominantly sheep and cattle farming.

The wood is situated on the lower eastern slope of Kerridge Ridge within the local beauty spot of Ingersley Vale. The slope is very steep and near vertical in places with several rocky outcrops on the lower slopes. The picturesque hamlet of Ingersley Vale with an old mill pond and weir lies at the northern end of the wood, with the River Dean meandering along the bottom of the slope on the eastern boundary to the wood. The south and western boundaries of the wood are adjacent to grazing pasture. An old derelict cotton mill, Rainow Mill, is located next to the lane from Bollington about half a mile to the north of the wood.

It contains a mix of predominantly native broadleaves, with the canopy dominated by sycamore and beech, however other species such as oak, birch, lime, ash, rowan and horse chestnut are also present along with some pines. The shrub layer comprises hawthorn, hazel and holly along with natural regeneration of mainly beech and sycamore. There is a well-developed ground flora including woodland species such as bluebell, red campion and bramble. Natural secondary woodland is a Key Feature of the site.

A public footpath runs north-south through the wood and is used regularly by local people and ramblers walking in the countryside. Informal public access is a second Key Feature of the site. The path links into the wider network of public rights of way in the area including footpaths to the top of Kerridge Hill to visit White Nancy, a Victorian folly built to commemorate the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

From the centre of Bollington take the B5090 Palmerston Street and then onto Church Street. Follow this for about 300m until you come to a left turn signposted for Ingersley Vale. There is no parking at the wood and the lane is narrow so visitors should park in Bollington and then walk along the lane towards Ingersley Vale. The wood is about a mile along the lane.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

A public footpath goes from Ingersley Vale up through the wood and comes out on the neighbouring farmland on the side of Kerridge Hill. There is a public bridleway that runs along part of the west boundary of the site but does not enter the wood. There is an extensive network of footpaths linking the wood to the wider countryside.

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Waulkmill Wood is to maintain the wood as a high forest of predominantly mixed native broadleaves (mostly sycamore, beech, oak and rowan) that provides a conservation and amenity feature within the local landscape.

Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, the long term management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public access. The wood will be allowed to develop largely through natural processes with mature and veteran trees retained for their ecological value. There will be minimal management intervention apart from for public safety/access and to make the wood more resilient to future threats such as climate change. Standing and fallen deadwood will be retained where safe to do so.

The current low level of public access with two entrances will be maintained. The Trust's duty of care to visitors and neighbours will continue to be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections.

## 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

An unsurfaced Public Footpath climbs up through the wood from Ingersley Vale to the upper slopes of Kerridge Hill. The path is approximately 200m long and there are two public access points into the wood at either end of the path. The bottom entrance has a pedestrian squeeze access point with a small management access gate to the side and the top entrance has a metal kissing gate leading out into grazing pasture beyond. Both entrances have Woodland Trust signs.

There is no parking at the wood and the nearest parking is in Bollington approximately 1 mile walk from the wood.

#### Significance

Increasing access to and enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Waulkmill Wood contributes towards this in the local area.

The footpath through the wood is a public footpath and links in to the wider countryside path network on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

There is no vehicle access into the wood because of the narrow path and steep slope which is a constraint to carrying out some management operations.

The footpath is unsurfaced, but is well defined on the ground and is suitable for the location and level of use that it gets.

#### Factors Causing Change

Erosion of the path surface could occur after heavy rainfall due to the steep slope.

Horse riders have used the footpath in the past causing damage to the surface, however the gates have stopped this happening, although mountain bikes occasionally use the path.

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to maintain the footpath and visitor access points for the current level of public access to the wood.

The site will be made as safe as practicable for visitors through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones and inspections of site hazards.

Public use of the site will be monitored during the plan period to identify if there any issues arising from visitors.

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



Cut back/trim vegetation encroaching along the footpath once a year in the summer.  
Maintain the public access points and welcome signs once a year.  
Inspect trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to the footpath and neighbouring properties) and site hazards (as per the SRA inspection regime) to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertake any remedial safety work identified.  
Monitor the condition of the footpath and access infrastructure once during the plan period to assess if the current access provision is adequate, identify any issues or threats from public use of the wood, and take appropriate action to address them if necessary.

## 5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

### Description

Waulkmill Wood is situated on the steep eastern slope of Kerridge Ridge within Ingersley Vale. It is secondary woodland with the canopy dominated by sycamore and beech, however other species such as oak, silver birch, lime, ash, rowan, horse chestnut, alder and a few Corsican and Scots Pines. Species such as hawthorn, hazel and holly typically make up the shrub layer along with natural regeneration of sycamore and beech. The ground flora is made up of species such as bluebell (native), red campion and bramble.

### Significance

The woodland is a prominent feature in the surrounding landscape and provides an important habitat for wildlife and an opportunity for people to enjoy nature.

### Opportunities & Constraints

No vehicle access into the wood because of the narrow path and steep slope which can be a constraint to management operations.

### Factors Causing Change

Sycamore and beech regeneration are dominant and may out-compete other species in the long term.

Livestock from neighbouring farmland have caused damage to natural regeneration in the wood in the past when the boundary fencing was derelict so these need to be maintained to be stock proof.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to maintain a high forest of mixed, mostly native broadleaves with a diverse structure (in terms of species composition, age/size classification). The wood will be allowed to develop naturally with mature trees, standing and fallen dead wood retained where safe to do so, and succession promoted through natural regeneration.

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

The wood will be subject to minimal intervention.

Carry out woodland condition assessment once during the plan period to monitor the health and resilience of the wood to identify any threats from tree diseases, pests, mammals or people.

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## 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	1.49	Sycamore	1930	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Conservation Area, Local Wildlife Site, Special Landscape Area

Steeply sloping, north facing river valley, in a landscape of predominantly rough grazing pasture interspersed with clough woodlands and wooded copses. The compartment is on a steep facing slope leading down to the River Dean which forms the eastern boundary, with pasture to the east and south of the wood. The hamlet of Ingersley Vale nestles in the valley at the northern end of the compartment.

The dominant species are sycamore and beech, with some oak, birch, ash, lime, rowan, alder, and horse chestnut, as well as several Corsican and Scots pines.

There is a well-established shrub layer comprising of hawthorn, hazel and holly, and ground flora consists of species such as bluebell, bramble and red campion.

A 20% thin across the compartment was carried out in 2005 to create gaps in the canopy to encourage greater species diversity and natural regeneration. Due to poor levels of natural regeneration, this was followed up in 2008 with the planting of 200 whips, (60-90cm) mostly of oak, ash and rowan.

## 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.