WOODLAND TRUST

Packing 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Packing Wood
Location:	Hamstreet
Grid reference:	TR005352, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 189
Area:	40.46 hectares (99.98 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Landscape Area, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This wood is renowned for its outstanding invertebrate and breeding woodland bird populations. Seventeen species of butterfly have been recently recorded including white admirals and silver washed fritillary which are often seen in summer months; 92 species of moths and up to 29 species of birds. A seasonal stream flows south through the mainly flat site towards a small damp gill valley at the southern end of the site.

2.2 Extended Description

Packing Wood (40.46ha), bought by the Woodland Trust in 1991, is situated approximately 2 miles north of Hamstreet in the Low Weald of Kent and forms the northern end of the Hamstreet Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which totals 172.20ha. This SSSI is part of the larger Orlestone Forest. This forest contains fragmented areas of woodland that is the remnant of a continuous oak forest that once covered the Weald and is situated along the northern fringe of Romney Marsh on the escarpment of the old Saxon shoreline.

Packing Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) but also contains areas within it of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site) due to non-native conifers planted in the 1970's on 15.4ha (38%) of the wood. In 2019 5.47ha of Norway spruce was felled due to an infestation of the eight toothed spruce bark beetle (Ips typographus) which is a non-native species and a significant quarantine pest risk to the timber industry.

Sweet chestnut coppice was established in the 19th centuries on 12.7ha (31%) of the woodland area with the remaining area covered by native broadleaved woodland dominated by oak standards with hornbeam as an understorey. Veteran wild service trees exist within the oak and hornbeam areas as does an old wild pear tree. The site contains some woodland archaeological features of old woodbanks and boundaries.

Packing Wood is on the edge of a plateau of sands and clays which has acidic soils. The wood has a very gradual north to south slope and a small damp gill valley exists at the extreme southeast corner of the wood with a small pond along the route of this stream. Three other seasonally wet ponds or depressions exist within the wood, one of which was formed by a Second World War V1 bomb which was shot out of the sky on 6th August 1944.

A feature of this wood is the main track through the wood which has become an important open space habitat for invertebrates such as green hairstreak, common blue, gatekeeper, speckled wood and white admiral butterflies and woodland birds such as blackcap and nightingale within Packing Wood.

The A2070 Hamstreet by-pass was constructed through the southern end of Packing Wood under a Compulsory Purchase Order in 1990. A small area (4.6ha) of Packing Wood now lies between this new road and the Ashford to Rye railway.
An overhead (133,000 volt) electricity power line cuts a swathe through the length of Packing Wood on its eastern side.
Packing Wood has a good network of permissive paths and two Public Rights of Way which cross through it.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General location:
Packing Wood is situated approximately 2 miles north of Hamstreet, and approximately 5.5 miles south from the centre Ashford.
Packing Wood can be reached by road or by 2 Public Rights of Way (ref: AE555 and AE558).

By road from Hamstreet: take the Ashford Road north out of Hamstreet, until you reach a staggered crossroads after approximately 1.1 miles from the railway bridge in Hamstreet. Turn right down Capel Road and continue for a further 0.8 mile until our entrance to Packing Wood is found on the right hand side.

By Public Right of Way (PRW): Access into the northern end of Packing Wood on a PRW which crosses Capel Road and heads northwest towards Bromley Green and Shadoxhurst. To the east it leaves Packing Wood to cross fields before joining Poundhurst Road.
Alternatively a PRW crosses east to west in the southern part of the wood, heading westerly to Court Lodge Farm and then crossing the Ashford Road from Hamstreet; to the east the PRW leaves Packing Wood and ends up on Poundhurst Road. Both PRW's have unmodified grass and earth surfaces, which can get slippery and muddy when wet and stiles are encountered along their routes.

For more information on PRW's in Kent, look at "Explore Kent" found on the main Kent County Council website.

General overview of paths & entrances:
Entrances: There are 5 entrances to Packing Wood.
- 1 entrance (our main entrance) is from Capel Road. There is a squeeze gap entrance beside the wooden vehicle access gate.
- 4 entrances are along the Public Footpaths which exit the wood into agricultural fields some with livestock.

All the paths are unmodified grass and earth surfaces, which can get slippery and muddy when wet particularly in winter.

Parking:
There is no parking at the main entrance other than along the edge of the public highway on Capel Road. The main entranceway has to be kept clear for emergency access by EDF Energy to the overhead high voltage cables. There are no specific facilities for locking bikes to apart from the rustic post and rail fence which can be found beside the main entranceway.

Public Transport:
The nearest bus stop: Hamstreet (Railway) Station. This is approximately 2 miles away from the main entranceway along public roads - see General Location above.
The nearest train station: Hamstreet station which is on the Rye to Ashford line. Hamstreet station is approximately 2 miles from the main entranceway along public roads - see General Location above.

This information is from Traveline website as at August 2019. Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk or phone 0871 200 2233.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In fifty years' time, Packing Wood will be part of a resilient wooded landscape and be ecologically connected within the Hamstreet Woods SSSI and to the wider fragmented Orlestone Forest areas. Packing Wood will contain a diverse structure providing a good range of different habitats typical of native broadleaved woodland with its areas of ancient semi natural woodland and restored ancient woodland areas following the final removal of non-native conifers along with the preservation of its archaeological interest.

The restoration of PAWS is one of the Trust's major objectives for its own sites as well as those in other ownerships. Our approach is to restore the canopy to native broadleaved trees over the long term to avoid the sudden change in conditions that comes from clear-felling. This approach should encourage a more resilient woodland capable of better withstanding pressures from climate change, pests and diseases. Over the majority of the PAWS areas this approach will have been followed. The area clear-felled in 2019 and any subsequent area treated this way due to an invasive pest problem will have been allowed to re-forest using natural regeneration with supplementary planting of mixed broadleaves if rank vegetation was preventing a woodland canopy to develop over significant areas.

Within the ancient woodland there will be a mosaic of actively coppiced areas centred in the middle of the wood with neighbouring areas of over mature coppice converting to high forest and restored ancient woodland partly managed through minimal intervention. Linking up the active coppice areas will be a wide ride habitat centred on the main tracks whose edges are coppiced on a short rotation.

Through the active management of coppiced areas, habitat for a range of invertebrate, bird and mammal species, including woodland specialist species which rely on temporary open space, will be provided for. Due to the presence of ink disease on sweet chestnut, it is expected in fifty years' time that the monoculture of sweet chestnut will have been broken up with a hornbeam, birch, oak and sycamore seeding into areas where sweet chestnut vigour has been reduced or has died.

The areas of over mature coppice (not being coppiced) will be managed through minimal intervention to provide diverse habitat structures; they will see an increase in the age of the trees and will therefore accumulate dead wood which will help to support a large range of invertebrates and fungi. In addition, as the trees senesce there will be an increasing prevalence of coppice stools splitting and falling apart. This will not only help to generate more decaying and dead wood but also allow the regeneration of an understorey through increasing light levels. This is to be expected as a previously managed coppice woodland converts to a more semi natural woodland habitat through minimal intervention.

With the presence of ash dieback fungus diagnosed in this part of Kent since 2012, there will inevitably be subtle changes to the small area of ash coppice in the southwest corner of the wood as ash trees decline in health and succumb to this fungus. It is likely that sycamore, field maple, birch and other species will increase their proportion within the canopy to replace ash.
The presence of non-native trees and shrubs will continue to be monitored and appropriate action taken when necessary, although it is expected that in 50 years' time any active control will by then be minimal. Deer numbers will undoubtedly be on the increase in Packing Wood in 50 years' time and their numbers will be monitored and controlled if numbers become too high so preventing the

woodland from regenerating.

Although the site will retain its tranquil character, it will be visited by a moderate number of visitors each year who appreciate and respect walking in a wooded landscape with diverse habitats and archaeological features, along a well-maintained network of paths.

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing people’s understanding and enjoyment of woodland to help create a UK rich in native woods and trees, for people and wildlife.

Many of the Tree Charter principles are brought to life at Packing Wood, such as "sustain landscapes rich in wildlife", "grow forests of opportunity and innovation", "protect irreplaceable trees and woods", "make trees accessible to all", "combat the threats to our habitats" and "strengthen our landscapes with trees".

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 Woodland Site

Description

Packing Wood's habitat of ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW) is split up between areas which contain native broadleaved woodland (9.98ha), ASNW areas planted with sweet chestnut in the 19th century (14.97ha) of which 10.43ha is actively managed as coppice, and areas of ASNW planted with non-native conifers (PAWS) in the 1970's (15.49ha).

The native broadleaved woodland supports a tree, shrub and ground flora vegetation community of NVC (National Vegetation Community) W10b, oak, bracken and bramble. The majority of this woodland type contains hornbeam coppice with oak standards. Oak, southern beech and wild cherry were inter-planted at wide spacing between coppice stools when these areas were last coppiced in the 1980's. Wild service tree can be found with good mature examples seen along the ride edges, and a wild pear can be found too within the woodland. A small area of the native broadleaved woodland in the southwest part of the wood is classified as W8a, ash, field maple woodland with dog's mercury. This too has been historically managed by coppicing however the ash has had the ash dieback fungus since 2012. Both the W10 and W8 areas provide the spring flower carpets of bluebell and wood anemone.
The areas of native broadleaved woodland planted with sweet chestnut in the 19th century have oak standards. A significant proportion of the sweet chestnut coppice suffers from ink disease (Phytophthora cinnamomi and P.cambivora) due to the heavy wet clay soils impeding drainage. Because of this, localised die back of the coppice has occurred but has allowed birch, hornbeam and aspen to seed in and diversify these areas.

The areas of ASNW converted to plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) were planted with non-native conifers in the 1970's including Corsican pine, Norway spruce and western hemlock. Small areas of rhododendron were also present. These PAWS areas have been traditionally thinned over the years and are moving towards being restored to native broadleaved woodland through using natural regeneration, with hornbeam being particularly successful in becoming established.

A serious exotic pest outbreak of the 8 toothed European spruce bark beetle (Ips typographus) was discovered in Autumn 2018 within the Norway spruce areas in cpt.1b and part of cpt.1c. Following receipt of a Statutory Plant Health Notice from the Forestry Commission 5.47ha in cpt.1b and 1.00ha in cpt.1c of Norway spruce were clear felled in February 2019 and all lop and top burnt to eliminate this pest. The birch understorey was left in place where possible and this will help these cleared areas to naturally regenerate back to mixed broadleaved woodland.

Within the Corsican pine dominated areas (cpts.1f, 1g, 1h, 1i, 3b, 3c, 3d) the light levels under the canopy of Corsican pine is much higher compared to western hemlock in cpt.1c, therefore there is a much more developed understory of predominately hornbeam regeneration occurring. Short rotation coppice has been established along the edges of certain rides and open space areas since 2012 to

form wide ride habitats. These are along the main north-south ride, along the west to east Public Right of Way at the southern end of the site and along the eastern side of the 700m long wayleave strip. Wide ride habitats provide a patchwork of continual temporary open space habitat, and link up the areas under coppice rotation and help the ecological connectivity within the wood.

The Hamstreet SSSI was notified as a nationally important representative of this woodland type supporting outstanding bird and invertebrate communities. Within Packing Wood surveys undertaken since 2012 indicate that the woodland supports at least 9 BAP species of bird which have been seen on site (bullfinch, crossbill, cuckoo, linnet, marsh tit, nightingale, song thrush, turtle dove and lesser spotted woodpecker), 2 BAP species of butterflies (silver washed fritillary and white admiral) and 2 BAP species of moth, the beautiful pearl and olive crescent.

Within the ASNW are 2 streams, one of which flows into a shallow and partly shaded pond. There are 2 other ground water fed ponds within the wood which are currently under deep shade. Small areas of rhododendron have been eradicated during Woodland Trust ownership.

Significance

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) is a dwindling and irreplaceable habitat and as such all remnants of ancient woodland needs to be protected from further loss. Protection of ASNW is a key objective of the Woodland Trust.
Packing Wood is set within the larger Orlestone Forest, a fragmented area of woodland which collectively supports nationally-important moth and butterfly populations.
Restoring the PAWS areas back to site native species is a key national objective for the Woodland Trust thereby increasing the area of native broadleaved ancient woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
To demonstrate the restoration process to the PAWS areas back to its site native woodland type using best practice to form part of a resilient woodscape. Woodlands or systems with greater genetic, species and structural diversity are likely to be more resilient.
To use the site to demonstrate the Trust's approach to woodland management and to influence neighbouring landowners.

Constraints:
The clay soils which become wet in winter time and the European Protected Species status of dormouse, which are assumed to be present, restricts the seasons in which active management work can be accomplished.
Pure sweet chestnut coppice is relatively "species poor" compared to mixed native broadleaved coppice and will take decades to diversify.

Factors Causing Change

A population of Ips typographus within the Norway spruce, which is a serious pest for commercial spruce crops, required the clear felling of compartment 1b and part of 1c to remove the risk of infesting other spruce within the locality. This is contrary to our slow gradual PAWS restoration approach but unavoidable due to the Statutory Plant Health Notice issued by the Forestry Commission.

Natural regeneration of western hemlock can be invasive and compete against site native broadleaved species. Hand pulling of western hemlock natural regeneration by volunteers is an effective way of control.

Frequent wind blow damage particularly in the western hemlock area. Cpt.1c is particularly vulnerable with clear felling a possible option following a major wind blow event with restocking by planting and natural regeneration, and this is under constant review.

Increasing deer population - control of deer numbers will be needed to maintain this diverse habitat to ensure survival of a healthy and secure ground flora with appropriate deer numbers.

The presence of threatening invasive species like rhododendron to be absent or minor with containment and eradication work as necessary.

Tree diseases killing trees such as Phytophthora affecting sweet chestnut. Ash dieback fungus was identified on site in 2012 and will have a long term effect on the wood through killing ash trees, although ash forms a very minor component within the canopy. Where the structure of the woodland and its habitat is potentially at risk of being harmed by the loss of ash and sweet chestnut with the resulting increase in bramble and invasive scrub and no significant natural regeneration of site native broadleaves, re stocking with site native mixed broadleaves following coppicing/clearance of dying ash trees should be considered. Sycamore is to be accepted as a component of the resulting woodland at levels of less than 25% of canopy.

Windblow of the western hemlock areas has opened up the canopy too quickly in a few areas so allowing bramble and bracken to become dominant. This will limit the ability of site native broadleaved trees to restock these areas with natural regeneration, so prompting the use of nursery stock to achieve eventual canopy closure to restore the correct light levels.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Woodland biodiversity tends to be greater in wooded areas which are structurally diverse in terms of their age, species, edge habitat potential, understory and decaying and dead wood component. The long term objective is to develop varied and robust native woodland with diverse and complex structure within the different woodland habitat types such as managed high forest, coppice, standards, rides, decaying and dead wood, areas left to develop by natural processes and all well represented within this woodland. This will be achieved through thinning, coppicing and retaining standards and other interventions such as ride side management as follows:

- coppice approximately 22% of the ASNW containing sweet chestnut retaining standards which will become veteran trees
- the PAWS areas fully restored to site native ancient woodland species but still showing immaturity as an ancient woodland habitat
- a managed wide ride network
- areas left to develop through natural processes and maintaining SSSI woodland in favourable condition particularly for decaying and dead wood attributes. To ensure 3 fallen lying trees per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing all greater than 20 cm diameter.

Areas to coppice during particular plan periods will be dictated by their rotation age and their condition as a result of windblow and tree disease. The dominance of sweet chestnut is likely to diminish due to the effect of Phytophthora killing sweet chestnut stools so allowing other broadleaved species to take hold and broaden the species range within the chestnut areas. The relatively small area of ash coppice may completely change species due to ash dieback fungus killing a high percentage of the ash.
The long term aim is to achieve a diverse age range of actively coppiced areas connected by a maintained wide ride habitat set within a matrix formed of over mature coppice where some of the coppice stools will be collapsing and splitting apart. This latter habitat will be showing the development of more naturalised woodland characteristics with a broader age range of trees through increasing amounts of regeneration, a developing woody shrub layer and the proportion of standing and fallen deadwood will be increasing.
To maintain this diverse habitat to ensure survival of a healthy and secure ground flora with appropriate deer numbers. The presence of threatening invasive species to be absent or minor with containment and eradication work as necessary.

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

The short term objective is to contribute towards the creation/ maintenance of structurally diverse woodland within a resilient woodscape through coppicing, thinning the PAWS, ride management and the removal of exotic invasive species if present. This will be achieved through:

- Coppicing
Approximately 5.53ha of sweet chestnut coppice to be felled through the plan period (1.1ha in 2019, 2.ha in 2020, 0.63ha in 2022 and 1.69ha in 2024) felling coppice within compartments 1d and 1e. Standards will be retained within the areas coppiced and the recruitment of “new” standards will occur to create (in the long term) a density of approximately 20-30 per ha, with additional standards recruited where necessary each time the areas are coppiced. Standards are to be a mixture of long term species (oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, and sweet chestnut if disease free). Adjacent cants will not be cut until the coppice regrowth has reached a minimum of 2m in height with successful regrowth of cut stools, supplemented with natural regeneration of tree species to maintain an adequate stocking density where coppice stools have died of no less than 1100 stems per hectare.

- Ride edge management
During the plan period a 3 zone wide ride habitat with short rotation coppiced edges is to be established along approximately 1.7km of rides maintaining pinch points where designated. There will be an annual programme of works to cut the vegetation within the 3 zones with zone 1 areas cut annually, zone 2 areas cut on a rotation of 3-5 years, and zone 3 areas cut on a rotation of 10-12 years, and all cut in a piecemeal fashion.

- Wayleave management
Along the eastern side of the wayleave initial felling of coppice by UKPN (UK Power Network) to be carried out to create a short rotation woodland edge, with the remaining felling being spread out over 2 years (2021-2022). This will accentuate the woodland edge habitat providing valuable temporary open space coppice habitat. A piecemeal approach to be adopted to manage the coppice regrowth on a 10-12 year cycle.

- PAWS restoration

To eradicate western hemlock natural regeneration where it occurs through hand weeding during the plan period.
To allow natural regeneration to recolonise the cleared areas of cpt.1b, 1c and to monitor its progress. Additional trees and a greater range of tree species could be planted should natural regeneration not be sufficient. By the end of this plan period tree cover to be at a density on average of no less than of 1100 stems per ha across 80% of the area. Species diversity to be split between 75% birch and willow, oak 20% and wild service/hazel/wild cherry 5%.
To selectively thin to waste/ring bark Corsican pine in cpts.cpt.3d (0.22ha) and part of cpt.1f (0.35ha) in 2021 to encourage the further development of an understorey and ground flora species.

- Tree safety
to remove ash with 25% loss of canopy due to ash dieback fungus along road side strip along Capel Road in cpt.1a between 2019 and 2024.

5.2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Packing Wood is classified by the Woodland Trust as a category “C” site, where we are expecting a low level of public access (less than 5 visitors using one entrance every day) although it is a site which is important for demonstrating our corporate objectives.

The public have access to the wood along a Public Right of Way and through our main entrance on Capel Road. Another Public Right of Way crosses the site from west to east towards the south of the site leading to/from agricultural fields. There is a gated entrance off the A2070. These access points lead onto an unsurfaced permissive path network across the site which can become very muddy with continual use during the wet winter months. There are no formal parking areas for visitors’ cars.

Packing Wood is used by mainly dog walkers during the daytime and serves the numerous villages and scattered communities within the area such as Hamstreet (1.9 miles, pop.1,777), Shadoxhurst (3.2 miles, pop. 1216), Bromley Green (1.3 miles, pop. 1,708) and Ruckinge (2.4 miles, pop. 711). Ashford (8 miles pop. 74204) is the largest town near to Packing Wood.

Other Woodland Trust sites nearby are Great Chart Wood in the village of Great Chart, Dering Wood near Pluckley and Ketchley Copse in Lydd.

Within a short distance (less than 10 miles) there are a number of other attractions and areas for outdoor recreation including Orleston Forest owned by the Forestry Commission, Dungeness Nature Reserve managed by RSPB and the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch light railway.

Significance

Public access to this woodland helps fulfil the Woodland Trust's corporate objectives which is a UK rich in native woods and trees, for people and wildlife and to rekindle people’s love of trees and woods, making them more integral to our lives; and also fulfilled in one of the 10 Tree Charter Principles: to "make trees accessible to all".
It enables access to a large ASNW and gives an opportunity for the Woodland Trust to promote the message of ancient woodland habitats, the importance of restoration of PAWS and its protection.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity:
The provision of public access to a significant area of ASNW for its enjoyment – fantastic display of spring flowers and to demonstrate conservation management and restoration of PAWS areas by the Woodland Trust.
Constraints:
The clay soil tends to make winter walking muddy and slippery on well used paths.

Factors Causing Change

Fly-tipping can be a problem at entranceways and gateways.
Problems are caused by the infrequent quad/motorbike/mountain bike activity within the wood coming from neighbouring woodland areas.
Ashford is expanding into the surrounding countryside with large housing estates being developed or proposed. This could lead to an increase in visitor numbers.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A well established and safe network of paths for informal public access in Packing Wood where responsible visitors can appreciate and respect this wood with its different habitats, archaeological and wildlife interest without causing disturbances. The visitor numbers to be in line with its category C status.

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

During this plan period, the short term objective is to continue to provide public access at Packing Wood which is safe and enjoyable. How this will be achieved:

- Path mowing: 2.8km (1.7 miles) of paths will be maintained to allow continued access across the whole site for pedestrians by mowing as appropriate during the summer months. Access from the main entrance off Capel Road is to be maintained in a safe way by cutting back the roadside vegetation periodically through the summer months to maintain site lines along the public road.

- Monitoring of antisocial behaviour: To continue to monitor the antisocial use of the wood by quad/motorbike/mountain bike users and liaise with Kent Police to help stop anti-social behaviour occurring and removal of fly tipped material as and when is required.

- Annual inspections: annual inspection of all gates, stiles and constant monitoring of path surfaces.

- Tree safety: annual Zone A tree safety inspections during the summer due to ash dieback fungus. Fungal survey to be carried out once in every 24 month period in the autumn. Zone B tree safety inspections are to be carried out every 4 years. Arboriculture work to be carried out when necessary.

- All mature hedges forming our boundary along public roads are to be flailed (top and roadside only) in November/December each year to ensure a minimum height clearance above the full width of the highway to 5.1m.

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	1.37	Oak (peduncculate)	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
Mixed broadleaves of mainly oak standards with hornbeam, birch and aspen. It was gapped up in approximately 1979 with oak and wild cherry. Many of these trees have survived and are forming useful specimens competing in the canopy with the birch and hornbeam. At the northern end there is an "L" shaped pond linked into the perimeter boundary ditch. Area adjacent to and south of Capel Road contains many depressions and ditches and is predominately wet.							
1b	5.45	Birch (downy/silver)	1973	PAWS restoration	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Previous Norway spruce plantation in this sub compartment was clear felled in 2019 following receipt of a Statutory Plant Health Notice due to a population of Ips typographus killing spruce trees and of national concern. Understorey of predominately birch was left. Area being left to naturally regenerate with aspen, birch, oak, hornbeam and sweet chestnut appearing. Parts of this sub compartment are very wet, with numerous deep drainage ditches which some retain water for most of the year with patches of sphagnum moss. Ground flora composed of wood sage, bracken, bramble, small areas of heather and honeysuckle.							

1c	4.00	Western hemlock	1973	PAWS restoration	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order

Planted in 1973/74 with western hemlock and Norway spruce. The 2 tree species were planted in pure blocks with Norway spruce planted mostly along the western edge. A line thinning occurred in 1988 and selective thinnings occurred since then in 1997, 2002, 2006 and 2012.
The ground flora is very poorly developed due to the heavy shade of the canopy trees. Where it is present the following are represented: bluebell, wood sage, wood anemone, ferns, honeysuckle, bracken, bramble, stichwort, slender St.John's-wort, woodruff and foxglove. Tree regeneration recorded within the conifer area includes holly, oak, birch, hornbeam and sweet chestnut. Western hemlock regeneration is present but is small in number.
A deep ditch runs along the edge of the ride containing sphagnum moss which often holds water for most of the year.
Dendroctonus micans is present on the Norway spruce trees.
Norway spruce plantation established in 1973/74. It was line thinned in 1988 and subsequently thinned in 1997, 2002 and 2006 as part of the PAWS restoration work. The ground is flat and lies very wet particularly an area of approximately 2.20ha in the middle. In this wet area there is a high percentage of broadleaved trees - birch and oak mainly which are beginning to take over as the main tree type and has a heath land ground flora with patches of heather forming.
The ground flora for the remaining parts consists of mainly moss with isolated plants of wood sage, bracken, heather and honeysuckle.
Tree regeneration is appearing mainly of birch, oak, hornbeam and sweet chestnut under the gaps in the canopy.
In 2003 the Norway spruce was invaded by great spruce bark beetle (Dendroctonus micans). The predator species Rhizophagus grandis was released by Forest Research in 2004 with further releases in 2005.
A deep ditch runs along the edge of the ride which often holds water for most of the year with patches of sphagnum moss.

Norway spruce was clear felled in 2019 following receipt of a Statutory Plant Health Notice due to a population of Ips typographus killing spruce trees and of national concern.

1d	3.84	Sweet chestnut	1900	Coppice	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order

Predominately sweet chestnut coppice with scattered oak standards and some birch. Parts of this area were cut in 2000 and in 2014.
The following coppice cants are contained within this sub compartment: 1d1, 1d2, 1d3, 1d4.

1e	5.35	Sweet chestnut	1900	Coppice	Diseases, Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
Mixed broadleaves of mostly pure sweet chestnut coppice suffering from ink disease managed historically as coppice crops. The following coppice cants are contained within this sub compartment: 1e1, 1e2, 1e3, 1e4.							
1f	2.26	Corsican pine	1979	PAWS restoration	Archaeological features, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted in 1979 now containing an understory of hornbeam. The pine was thinned in 1997, 2002 and 2006 as part of the PAWS restoration work. The ground flora consists of: foxglove, bramble, small patches of bluebell, willow herb, wood sage, fern, yellow archangel, wood anemone, bracken and honeysuckle.							
1g	1.51	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration		Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted in 1974 with broadleaved regeneration beneath of mainly hornbeam. The northern end of this sub-compartment has suffered windblow damage, but otherwise the pine crop is reasonably consistent throughout. The pine was thinned in 1997, 2002, 2006, 2012 and 2018 as part of the PAWS restoration work. Ground vegetation flora is dominated by bramble but in the gaps created by the recent thinning and in the extraction racks the following plants are appearing: foxglove, grass species, bluebell (rare), willow herb, wood sage, fern, yellow archangel, wood anemone, honeysuckle, dog violet and bracken particularly in the open northern part. A Second World War V1 fly bomb crashed and created an impact crater which is now filled with water to form a wet depression.							

1h	0.46	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration		Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted in 1974 with broadleaved regeneration beneath of mainly hornbeam with occasional oak, sweet chestnut and wild service. The pine was thinned in 1997, 2002, 2006, 2012 and 2018 as part of the PAWS restoration work. Ground vegetation flora is dominated by bramble but in the gaps created by the recent thinning and in the extraction racks the following plants are appearing: foxglove, grass species, bluebell (rare), willow herb, wood sage, fern, yellow archangel, wood anemone, honeysuckle, wood melick, great wood rushand bracken.							
1i	0.38	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration		Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine in planted in 1974. It suffered minor windblow during the 1990's, and has been thinned in 2001, 2006 and 2012 as part of the PAWS restoration. Ground flora is sparse but is just beginning to develop due to higher light levels with bramble, wood sage, bluebell, honeysuckle, wood sedge now covering approximately 40% of the sub-compartment. Broadleaved regeneration is now starting to appear with hornbeam, birch, wild cherry, oak and willow showing.							
1j	0.95	Hornbeam	1900	High forest		Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
Predominately hornbeam which was gapped up with oak, wild cherry and southern beech when it was last felled in the late 1980's. Sparse ground flora due to low light levels, but dominated by wood anemone in the spring months.							
1k	4.22	Hornbeam	1900	High forest		Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order

Predominately hornbeam which was gapped up with oak, wild cherry and southern beech when it was last felled in the late 1980's. Also contains an area of ash dominated coppice along western edge. Sparse ground flora under the hornbeam areas due to low light levels, but dominated by wood anemone in the spring months. Bluebells present under ash coppice.							
2a	5.76	Sweet chestnut	1900	Min-intervention	Services & wayleaves	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
Mature sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards and birch, with groups of hollies, probably growing on old charcoal kiln mounds. An old ditch or wood bank crosses half way down. Ground flora consists predominately of: bluebell, stichwort, bramble, bracken (rare), wood anemone and wood sage. Honeysuckle is present growing up the trees. The western fringe consists of a wayleave area beneath the overhead 133,000 volt electricity power line supported on three pylon towers. Approx 700 metres long by 20 metres wide. Sweet chestnut, birch and willow grow beneath the cables managed as short rotation coppice by the power distribution company. The following coppice cants are contained within this sub compartment: 2a1, 2a2.							
3a	3.44	Hornbeam	1900	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
Mixed broadleaved woodland, mainly hornbeam and scattered oaks. Ground flora consists mainly of bramble although due to the dense shading by the broadleaves much of the ground is bare.							
3b	0.26	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted 1974 with some broadleaved regeneration beneath of mainly hornbeam. Ground flora is mainly bramble with some bracken. This sub-compartment was thinned to waste in 2002, 2006, 2012 and 2017 as part of the PAWS restoration work.							

3c	0.92	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted 1974 with mixed broadleaved regeneration of mainly hornbeam beneath. A small pond exists near to the A2070 fenceline in the northern half of this sub-compartment. This sub-compartment was thinned in 1997, 2002, 2006, 2012 and 2017 as part of the PAWS restoration work.							
3d	0.22	Corsican pine	1974	PAWS restoration	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/ Rocky ground, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order
Corsican pine planted 1974 with some broadleaved regeneration beneath of mainly hornbeam. Ground flora is mainly bramble with some bracken, wood sorrel and honeysuckle. This sub-compartment was thinned to waste in 2002, 2006, 2012 and 2017 as part of the PAWS restoration work.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1b	Clear Fell	3.00	195	584.059997558594
2020	1d	Coppice	0.49	110	54
2020	1e	Coppice	1.12	148	166
2020	1e	Coppice	1.60	148	236
2022	1e	Coppice	0.63	235	148
2024	1c	Thin	1.00	35	35
2024	1d	Coppice	1.69	146	246
2024	1f	Thin	2.27	35	80
2024	1g	Thin	1.51	33	50
2024	1h	Thin	0.46	22	10
2024	1i	Thin	0.38	26	10
2024	3b	Thin	0.26	15	4
2024	3c	Thin	0.92	14	13
2024	3d	Thin	0.22	14	3
2026	2a	Coppice	0.66	121	80
2028	2a	Coppice	0.58	121	70

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.