



# Beacon Coppice

## Management Plan 2011-2016

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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>	Beacon Coppice
<b>Location:</b>	Kingston St.Mary
<b>Grid reference:</b>	ST226303, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 182
<b>Area:</b>	0.36 hectares (0.89 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Walk about half a mile down a quiet country lane in Kingston St Mary (limited car parking) and then cross two fields (which have permissive access but no marked footpath) to reach this small, secluded woodland within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with far-reaching views towards the Blackdown Hills. Follow the hedgerows to reach the entrance but note that all surfaces are uneven and may be seasonally wet, muddy and/or slippery with a sustained climb uphill and a step-over stile to access the site.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Beacon Coppice is small, peaceful woodland located near to the village of Kingston St. Mary, approximately 3 miles north of Taunton. Situated high above the village the wood perches on a south-west facing slope of the Quantock Hills forming part of the dramatic change from upland to a lowland mixed farming landscape characteristic of the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes Natural Area just below Kingston Beacon.

It is bordered by grazed fields and a larger block of woodland. The Copse's position in this landscape leads to far-reaching views towards the Blackdown Hills and the site lies within the Quantock Hills AONB. The underlying geology is largely Permian Sandstone. The wood is 0.35 hectares and despite its name there has no history of coppicing within the wood. The cover consists largely of a broadleaved mix of mainly mature oak, sweet chestnut, lime, sycamore and ash trees although some conifers are present including larch and Scots pine which add to the structural and visual diversity of the site. A small amount of enrichment planting of trees and shrubs was done in 1994 but these did not survive and there is little natural regeneration at present due to deer browsing pressure.

The wood can be reached by walking on a permissive path across two fields, but it is fairly remote and consequently isn't greatly used. This route is also the management access for vehicles.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Beacon Coppice is a secluded woodland located away from any roads or tracks. There is a small pull in beside the road that is also an access to a farm building complex offering very limited car parking in close proximity to the site. Further car parking maybe available within the village of Kingston St Mary which is a walk of approximately one kilometre down a quiet country lane which has no pedestrian pavement.

It is important to note that the wood is approximately 300 metres from the public highway across two fields with no marked track or public footpath but across which permissive access has been granted, It is recommended that people follow the hedgerows to reach the entrance to the wood. The surface both here and the within the wood itself is naturally uneven and unmodified so maybe seasonally wet, muddy and slippery with a sustained climb uphill to get into the site.

There is a step-over stile provided to access Beacon Coppice from the fields. Inside the wood there is no formal path and both the gradient and aspect of the ground varies greatly. A visit can therefore only be recommended for those able to deal with such terrain.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision at Beacon Coppice is to manage the woodland as mature high forest, whilst allowing diversification of age and structure to represent typical lowland mixed broadleaved woodland and continue to preserve the woodlands position in the landscape. By this management a continuous canopy cover will be maintained. Non-native broadleaves will be accepted as a maximum of 20% part of the species mix. It is not anticipated that planting will be required. This site will thereby help towards fulfilment of the Trust's vision of the country being rich in native woods.

Given the unusual circumstances and position of the site it does not warrant having public access as a key feature of the site. Pedestrian entrances will be maintained to allow access but no formal path network will be maintained within the site.

Under the conditions of the lease, a sign must always be maintained asking site users to keep dogs on leads and out of the wood from April-June. This is because the wood had previously been used by breeding red deer.

## 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 Local Woodland Habitat

#### Description

The wood and the larger neighbouring block create a useful area of secondary native woodland. The conifer and non-native element are not a significant percentage and add to the diversity of the wood as a habitat.

The wood is on a hill on the edge of the Quantocks and is highly visible adding to the landscape feature.

#### Significance

Beacon Coppice forms an integral part of the local landscape and positively contributes towards the area and it's designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Management of the site will continue to make a positive impact on the surrounding area and helps the Woodland Trust achieve one of its corporate objectives of increasing native woodland cover.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint:

Pest damage by rabbits and deer detrimentally affect the success of regeneration.

#### Factors Causing Change

Pest Damage

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

The woodland will be a small part of the overall AONB landscape character which will become slowly more wooded with time. The woodland will remain healthy.

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

The objective is to ensure that the wood remains healthy.

Check the boundaries ensuring they remain intact and are preventing grazing damage to regeneration by livestock.

Tree shelters from the failed planting will be removed in 2012

A visit will be made during the plan to check for invasive non-native species. If any are found they will be removed.



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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	0.35	Ash	1930	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Local Woodland Habitat	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>A stand comprised of largely mature broadleaf species such as oak, ash, sycamore and sweet chestnut along with some larch and Scots pine. There is very limited due to deer pressure. Ground flora is abundant with grasses, dog's mercury, cuckoos pint, bluebell, primroses and patchy bramble present. The stand has a south westerly aspect.</p>							

## 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.