



Percy Wakley Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Percy Wakley Wood
Location:	Rockbeare
Grid reference:	SY034953, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 192
Area:	5.41 hectares (13.37 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Percy Wakley wood is currently a quiet rural secondary woodland located just off the old A30. It is composed of two narrow diagonally opposed blocks, with a narrow corridor between them. The wood is generally flat, with a slight north west aspect. Although within a mile of the villages of Rockbeare, Strete Raleigh and Marsh Green, these are small (total population approximately 900). The wood is tucked down a quiet country lane, with limited parking, and this limits use of the wood.

It has a secluded feel, as it is bounded by mature hedges. Mature high forest woodland forms approximately third of the wood, and a further two-thirds were planted by the Woodland Trust in 1993/94 on semi improved grassland, with a small pond between the two.

The woodland creation area is bounded by mature hedgerows. The wood is broadleaf, with predominant species being ash, oak, field maple and willow. The mature woodland is drawn-up over stood ash coppice in the main. Although in parts the ground flora is dominated by rank vegetation it also contains species such as honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion & herb robert, and is potentially a source for these species to spread into the newer woodland in the longer term.

2.2 Extended Description

Percy Wakley wood is currently a quiet rural secondary woodland located just off the old A30. It is composed of 2 narrow diagonally opposed blocks, with a narrow corridor between them. The wood is generally flat, with a slight north west aspect. Although within a mile of the villages of Rockbeare, Strete Raleigh and Marsh Green, these are small (total population approximately 900), the wood is tucked down a quiet country lane, with limited parking, and this limits use of the wood. However it appears to be well used by a core of local people. The wood has a secluded feel, as it is bounded by mature hedges, but it is clearly visible from the route of the old A30 to the north, and to those flying in and out of Exeter Airport to the west.

Mature high forest woodland forms approximately 1/3rd of the wood, and a further 2/3rds were planted by the Woodland Trust in 1993/94 on semi improved grassland, with a small pond between the two. The woodland creation area is bounded by mature hedgerows. The wood is broadleaf, with predominant species being ash, oak, field maple and willow. The mature woodland is drawn-up over stood ash coppice in the main. Although in parts the ground flora is dominated by rank vegetation it also contains species such as honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion & herb robert, and is potentially a source for these species to spread into the newer woodland in the longer term. The woodland creation area has generally established well with good stocking rates and growth, although deer and rabbit damage may become a problem in the future.

Within the woodland creation area 10% of the area was left as open ground, and the remaining grassland habitat along the rides and in open areas appears to support a relatively diverse range of grasses, and consequently good populations of butterflies favouring long grass habitats. The small pond presents further diversity of habitat and both the grassy rides and pond contribute to an enhanced visitor experience.

Percy Wakley wood lies within the Devon Redlands Countryside Character Area. The valley bottoms of this area are characterised by deep red soils, predominantly arable with small woodland copses, with the larger woodland being more concentrated on the hillsides. Percy Wakley Wood is characteristic of this.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The wood is currently rurally located, just off the old A30 (now a minor road) and east of the village of Rockbeare, but with the development of Cranbrook and Rockbeare, it is likely to have more of an urban fringe feel to it in the future. Public access is direct from the country lane (Rewe Lane) which runs along the southern boundary. This is a single carriage way lane with no pavements. There is space to park two cars in the car park at the south west corner of the wood. A second entrance in the south east corner has a squeeze stile which enters directly off the road.

A level un-surfaced path runs around the wood linking the younger and older woodland. Rides are generally at least 1m wide (some much wider) and have grass surface. Close to the main entrance, the pinch point in the middle of the site and paths in the mature woodland are wet and muddy in winter.

Nearest bus stop: Rockbeare School, approximately 1 mile.

Nearest train station: Whimble - approximately 2 miles by country roads without pavements.

For further information on transport see the Devon County Council website

http://www.cartogold.co.uk/Devon_Transport/Devon.htm or contact the Transport Co-ordination Service by phone 01392 382800 or email devonbus@devon.gov.uk

Nearest toilet: The Flexton, Ottery St Mary, approximately 5 miles away which has a toilet suitable for disabled people (requires a RADAR key). Information taken from East Devon Online Council website on the community pages March 2014 - http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/public_toilets

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The mature woodland at the back of the site will be left to allow natural processes to dominate with the intention to create old growth stands of varied canopy structure in an equilibrium of decline and re-growth. Intervention will only occur for safety reasons.

The areas of maturing planted woodland will be managed as continuous cover to develop a varied structure, allowing for community groups to manage the wood for local use if the interest arises. As rides, hedgerows and areas of open ground are increasingly occluded by regeneration and canopy development, management will be undertaken to maintain the open access and pond area of the wood.

Low key informal public access throughout the site will continue, with links between woodlands and also the wider rights of way network being improved as appropriate, if opportunity allows through green infrastructure links with Cranbrook. The long term vision for the wood fits with the corporate objectives of the Woodland Trust through Protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future and - Inspiring everyone to enjoy and values woods and 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 Local Woodland Habitat

Description

Secondary native broadleaved woodland, approximately one third of which is mature stored coppice thought to be 50-60 years old. Although, the compartment exhibits ancient semi-natural woodland characteristics, the 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the area as scrub/rough pasture. The current canopy is almost pure late pole stage ash, with an occasional oak thinned in 1997. The understory is developing, with occasional hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn, but mainly sycamore. A dense stand of cotoneaster occurs in the north east corner. The ground flora is typically of a wet woodland of this type, dominated by ivy, ferns, rushes and sedges, and stands of nettle, other species include honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion and herb robert. The compartment is generally damp and has a small spring fed pond on its southern boundary and many wet runnels.

The rest of the wood was planted in 1993/94 on two grazing fields with 50% ash, 15% oak, 15% field maple, 10% woody shrubs, and 10% open space forming the ride network. 20 years on the natural regeneration is occurring but with a lot of regeneration being browsed off. The ground flora is a mix of patches of nettles, grasses and buttercups. There are spring lines creating wet areas. The mature woodland in the adjoining compartment will provide opportunities for long established woodland ground flora to seed and migrate into the recently established woodland. A small pond between compartments 1 & 2 also adds diversity.

Although much of the wood is now surrounded by arable land, the hedgerows, and potentially unimproved grassland to the south provides linkage with the wider countryside.

Significance

The woodland contributes to the habitat action plans at local, regional and national level, no BAP species known to be on the site and fulfils the Woodland Trust's objectives of creating new woodland and protecting native woodlands.

The site forms part of a mosaic of small woodlands and mature hedges set in a rural landscape, providing a local network of habitats. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is listed as of local significance in the Devon Redlands Natural Area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

1. Funding of the planting scheme allowed for very few shrubs to be planted during the creation phase. Work to maintain the paths through ride widening could give the opportunity to plant shrubs to increase diversity. Ride management will also improve the diversity of the ride flora.
2. There is the potential to use the wood for a community firewood supply increasing structural diversity,. It would give the wood greater relevance to the local community assuming that the link with the origin of the firewood is maintained.
3. The spring lines that currently run along the central path could provide a wetland habitat if the path route were altered. This would both provide a more diverse woodland ecologically and a better visitor experience.
4. Green Infrastructure links may provide improved habitat connectivity so effectively increasing the amount of functioning woodland in the area.

Constraints:

1. While the green infrastructure opportunities mentioned above may improve habitat connectivity if they fail to arise the wood could become an isolated fragment in an urban landscape.
2. Increased use of the wood by the people of Cranbrook could limit the development of natural open space vegetation so limiting the diversity potential of the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Storm events, disease (particularly ash dieback), dense shading from increasingly closed canopy structure. Browsing of regeneration from both deer and rabbits. Cotoneaster could spread further from the north east corner of the wood so decreasing the diversity of the ground flora. Increased use stopping ground flora development. Greater littering and fly-tipping could occur due to greater use by the public.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Manage the wood as continuous cover to create woodland of varying structure and habitat with established woodland ground flora. The wood will have a high degree of connectivity to the surrounding landscape through the green infrastructure provided by Cranbrook.

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

Operational objective:

Maintain habitat diversity, and ensure opportunities for the development of woodland ground flora in recently established woodland are implemented.

Work Programme:

1. To improve the open ground / ride edge habitat by initially coppicing all the edges to 2 tree widths to open them out in year 1 of this plan and then manage them on rotation in future plans.
2. Increase tree diversity by planting shrubs in the existing main ride as a new route is created. The spring lines should be left unplanted as these have the potential to develop into a diverse wet open habitat.
3. Maintain the pond as partially open and remove pond weed in September to avoid affecting any amphibians.
4. Control the cotoneaster in compartment 1a.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

The wood is currently in a secluded location with parking for 2 cars. A core of local people comes from the nearby villages of Rockbeare, Strete Raleigh and Marsh Green, hamlets populated with 900 people. Permissive paths can be accessed from Rewe Lane, but permissive routes provide no direct link with public rights of way. In wet weather the woodland paths are wet and boggy underfoot.

Significance

There are relatively few public rights of way, or small accessible woodlands (as measured by the Woodland Trust) in the surrounding areas, so the wood offers an opportunity for the local population to enjoy a peaceful woodland experience which contributes to the Woodland Trust objective to 'Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees'

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: Cranbrook is being developed and there is the potential for the wood to be a part of the Green Infrastructure for the new town, potentially expanding the Woodland Trusts visibility to a much wider range of people in the area.

Constraints:

1. The car park has space for 2 cars - the entrance is tight and enclosed making it difficult for vehicles to see when pulling out
2. The current size and accessibility of the wood may put people off revisiting the wood if it becomes too heavily used for its size due to the expansion of Cranbrook.

Factors Causing Change

A potential increase in use as Cranbrook expands could create greater pressure on the paths and the car park area.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

That the wood is welcoming and easy to visit, with facilities maintained appropriate to visitor numbers linking sustainably using green infrastructure to Cranbrook. That the existing opportunity to enjoy sunny open areas along key paths and by the pond is retained as the woodland creation area matures

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

Operational objective

Accessible, attractive, well maintained and safe woodland with a mosaic of associated habitats that the public frequently enjoy. Entrances and path network are appropriate to the level of use from the local population for pedestrian access.

Work Programme

1. Re-route the old path from the car park through higher dry ground closing off the old path by planting of shrubs.
2. Put sections of sleeper type boardwalks in the pinch point (still allowing vehicular access between the compartments) and some of the paths which regularly flood in the rear ash compartment.
- 3.
4. Path cutting - Cut paths once in Compartment 2a: twice annually in May and late August/September (depending on ground conditions)
5. To ensure that all paths are safe for people to walk by carrying out tree safety surveys and carrying out works as required.

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	1.52	Ash	1950	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat	
<p>Stored coppice thought to be 50-60 years old. Although, the compartment exhibits some ASNW characteristics, the 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the area as scrub/rough pasture. The current canopy is almost pure late pole stage ash, with an occasional oak thinned in 1997. Understorey sparse, with occasional hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn and sycamore. A dense stand of privet occurs in the north east corner. Natural regeneration is evident and is almost exclusively ash. Ground flora is dominated by ivy, ferns, rushes and sedges, and stands of nettle, other species include honeysuckle, common spotted orchid, enchanter's nightshade, wood woundwort, red campion and herb robert. The compartment is generally damp and has a small spring fed pond on its southern boundary</p>							
2a	4.00	Ash	1993	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat	
<p>Planted in 1994 on two grazing fields with 50% ash, 15% oak, 15% field maple, 10% woody shrubs, 10% open space forming the ride network. Trees are established although some deer damage still occurs. The mature woodland in the adjoining compartment will provide opportunities for long established woodland ground flora to seed and migrate into the recently established woodland. The hedges, rides and glades supports a healthy population of butterflies, including marbled white, ringlet, small skipper & meadow brown.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2016	2a	Ride edge Coppice	3.85	11	43.61

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.