



Bewsey Farm Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Bewsey Farm Wood
Location:	Warrington
Grid reference:	SJ589896, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	0.92 hectares (2.27 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A small mixed broadleaf wood, with some mature oak, horse chestnut, beech, sycamore and ash trees. The ground flora is relatively sparse and dominated by bramble and ivy although there is a good display of bluebells in spring. The wood provides a valuable urban oasis for nature with a variety of woodland birds, butterflies and small animals.

2.2 Extended Description

Bewsey Farm Wood is a small secondary woodland located in the Old Hall district in north-west Warrington, approximately 3 miles from the town centre. It is a narrow linear woodland just under 1ha in size. It is situated in an intensely urban environment and is sandwiched between Bewsey Farm Close and a housing estate.

The site is mostly flat although the ground slopes down towards an old drainage ditch in the south-eastern part. Soils are mostly undisturbed brown earth with sandy loam in the higher horizons leading to sand rich lower horizons with some areas of gleying.

The wood is situated on land that was previously part of the Bewsey Hall estate and was acquired by the Commission for New Towns in the late 1970's. It was given to the Woodland Trust in 1992/93 along with another nine woodlands within a 2 mile radius which together make a local woodland estate of approximately 26ha. There is a Tree Preservation Order covering the wood.

Secondary broadleaved woodland is a key feature of the site. It contains a mix of broadleaves, predominantly mature English oak, sycamore, horse chestnut, crack willow and beech, with ash, lime, wild cherry, field maple and birch. It has some structural variety with small areas of open grassland, elder scrub, semi-mature canopy, and patches of natural regeneration. The herb layer is sparse with areas of bare ground, various grasses, bramble, bluebells, nettles, dock, and a variety of Umbelliferae.

Informal Public Access is a second key feature of the site although there are no formal footpaths in the wood, but there is an informal footpath in the northern part of the wood next to an old barn. It also links into other nearby areas of green space such as Sankey Valley Park which is in the ownership of the Warrington Council. The wood has in the past suffered from typical urban issues such as fly tipping, particularly of garden waste and vandalism.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Bewsey Farm Wood is located in the Westbrook/ Old Hall area of Warrington, approximately 3 miles to the north west of the town centre. There are no formal entrances or footpaths within the wood, but there is an informal access point and "desire line" path in the northern part of the wood past the two old derelict barn buildings (which are on private land).

By car: From the A574 (Cromwell Avenue) turn onto Old Hall Road and continue past Westbrook Old Hall primary school. Take the second road on the left, called Bewsey Farm Close and drive down this short road to The Maltings pub. There is parking available either in the pub car park or on nearby roads. The wood is directly opposite from the pub car park.

By bus: The nearest bus stops can be found on Old Hall Road, about 3-5 minutes walk from the wood.

By train: The nearest train station is Sankey station (3.7km/2.3 miles).

For up-to-date information on public transport, visit traveline.org.uk.

The nearest public toilets can be found at The Maltings pub or the Westbrook Shopping Centre, approximately 3/4 mile from the wood on Cromwell Avenue.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Bewsey Farm Wood is to maintain a high forest of mixed native broadleaves with oak, sycamore, beech, horse chestnut and willow. It will primarily be managed as a recreational and landscape feature providing an important woodland habitat for wildlife and people to enjoy.

Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, conservation and access policies long term management will aim to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The wood will be managed to maintain a diverse structure and mix of species to ensure that it is as resilient as possible to future threats such as climate change, pests and tree disease. Mature trees will be retained for as long as safe to do so and natural regeneration will be encouraged. The key drivers for management operations will be for public access, safety and long term stand stability.

The Trust's duty of care to neighbours and visitors will continue to be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections.

The woodland will be regularly monitored for threats from tree diseases, pests, non-native species, human impacts and the long term sustainability of the woodland.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the Bewsey Farm Wood is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. There are no formal paths or entrances in the wood, but there is an informal route through the undergrowth into the wood from alongside the old hay barn made by other visitors. The wood is to the west of Bewsey Old Hall and Sankey Valley Park to the east of the wood. It is also very close to two other Woodland Trust sites, Ladies Walk Wood & Twig and Bog Woods.

Significance

Bewsey Farm Wood serves as a prominent landscape feature and provides the opportunity for the public to access and enjoy nature as well as a food source and habitat for a wide range of wildlife. It also delivers a range of amenity benefits, including helping to "soften" the surrounding urban landscape, absorption of pollution and as a barrier against noise from nearby roads, and provides physical and mental health benefits for people in the local area. The wood is part of the Mersey Community Forest, which aims to promote and improve the management and accessibility of woodland in the region.

Opportunities & Constraints

The size and limited structural variety of Bewsey Farm Wood means that opportunities for community involvement are limited. The close proximity of a large population means that the site is subject to intense use and sometimes misuse, for example fires, den building, vandalism, fly tipping, dog excrement, are perennial problems that need to be taken into consideration when carrying out any new management operation (particularly access work). Approximately 200m of the boundary backs onto domestic properties giving rise to a variety of boundary related costs. There has been development proposed adjacent to the wood in the past (the old barns) This situation will be monitored and reacted to accordingly to protect the Trusts interests.

Factors Causing Change

Future development of the open ground to the north of the wood or of the two derelict barn buildings that are immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the wood could lead to increased pressure for tree safety work and increased visitor numbers (and potential greater misuse) in the wood. Like other urban sites it suffers from vandalism/ damage to trees/ fires/ litter/ fly tipping from time to time which needs dealing with when it occurs.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term objective is to maintain the present levels of open public access. Guided by the parameters set out in the Woodland Trusts woodland management principles and access policy, management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The site will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access furniture. Any threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken if necessary.

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

During the plan period the aim is to maintain the current level of access to the site. To achieve this the short term objectives are to:

1. Carry out annual maintenance of welcome signage and cut back vegetation encroaching onto the roadside boundary along Bewsey Farm Close annually.
2. Remove accumulations of litter and fly tipping as necessary.
3. Undertake regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to houses, roads and footpaths) and site hazards (as per the Trust's safety inspection regimes) to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.
4. Monitor once during the plan period the level of public use and condition of access infrastructure to assess whether the current access provision is adequate, to identify any issues or threats arising from public use of the wood, and take appropriate action to address them if necessary.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Bewsey Farm Wood has a reasonably varied structure that includes areas of mature and semi-mature canopy, scrub, and scattered natural regeneration. There are a number of trees in the early stages of decline (or bearing wounds, cavities and other damage resulting from misuse) which will eventually become dead wood habitat. The understorey is patchy mostly comprising elder with, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, bramble and yew, with some natural regeneration of beech, horse chestnut, sycamore ash and oak. Much of the woodland floor is shaded resulting in areas of bare ground with a relatively sparse ground flora. Two heavily silted and mostly dry drainage ditches and a wet flush in the southern half of the wood support a range of mosses and ferns with a willow overstorey. Water held in the ditches is used as a spawning ground by frogs.

Significance

The Woodland Trust owns and manages a further nine woodlands within 2kms of Bewsey Farm Wood amounting to a local estate of 25.8 ha. The surrounding landscape has a number of secondary woodlands similar to Bewsey Farm Wood and the wood is an integral part of this mosaic of local woodlands providing important habitats for biodiversity. The urban setting and accessibility of the wood means that maintaining stand stability and public safety is of great importance.

Opportunities & Constraints

The dense canopy of the wood makes under planting and the establishment of natural regeneration difficult and light demanding species such as oak may struggle to establish unless large canopy gaps occur. At present the main opportunity to establish future canopy trees comes from the existing natural regeneration amongst the woodland edge which is acting as a shelter crop for young rowan, sycamore and oak. Further opportunities may develop out of canopy openings resulting from tree safety works and the decline of mature trees.

Poor management access from the adjoining land is a constraint to carrying out management work in the wood.

There is a Tree Preservation Order on the wood which is a constraint to carrying out silvicultural management operations.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive Himalayan balsam is present in the north eastern part of the site and if not controlled will spread in the wood.

Vandalism, misuse and fires cause damage to trees, natural regeneration and the ground flora.

Future development of the area to the north of the wood or of the two derelict barn buildings that are immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the wood will lead to increased external pressures on the woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term objective for the wood is to maintain a continuous high forest of mature, mixed broadleaved species with a diverse structure (in terms of species composition, age/size classification). The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with mature and over mature trees retained where they remain safe, deadwood habitats and succession promoted through natural regeneration. However due to its urban location with housing along a boundary and an access road to residential/ commercial premises, the Trust's duty of care to visitors and neighbours may require management intervention for public safety. This will be assessed through the regular programme of safety inspections and woodland condition assessment. Himalayan balsam will be monitored, and controlled in the wood, if it is sustainable to do so as part of controlling this in the wider area.

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

During the plan period the aim is to manage the woodland through minimal intervention (other than any safety work identified as part of the routine safety inspection programme). The short term objectives are to:

1. monitor and assess Himalayan balsam levels in 2018 and consider feasibility/sustainability of controlling it given the scale of infestation on surrounding land.
2. carry out a woodland condition assessment once during the plan period to monitor natural regen. and ground flora, the health and resilience of the woodland and identify any threats from tree disease, pests or mammals.

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	0.92	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Legal issues, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order

The compartment has a mature canopy comprising of English oak, sycamore, horse chestnut, crack willow and beech. There is also a mixture of more recent plantings, natural regeneration and scrub between which includes field maple, ash, birch, yew, holly, goat willow, sycamore, oak, horse chestnut, lime, wild cherry, hawthorn and elder. The ground flora consists of a mixture of grassland and bramble. Himalayan balsam is prevalent in pockets on the northern boundary. Two short ditches in the southern section of the compartment drain towards a culvert on the south-east boundary. The western boundary is defined by the garden fences of twelve properties in Hudson Close. The south/south-eastern boundary is defined by a ditch alongside Old Hall Road, and the kerb edge of Bewsey Farm Close. The northern boundary is defined by a 2m chain link fence, and the eastern boundary by marker posts. These boundaries abut land and outbuildings belonging to Bewsey Old Hall (English Partnerships) and the Sankey Valley Park (Warrington Borough Council).

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.92	2	2
2024	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.92	2	2

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.