



Bog Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM Page No.

Introduction

Plan review and updating

Woodland Management Approach

Summary

1.0 Site details

2.0 Site description

2.1 Summary Description

2.2 Extended Description

3.0 Public access information

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 Long term policy

5.0 Key Features

5.1 Informal Public Access

5.2 Secondary Woodland

6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Glossary

MAPS

Access

Conservation Features

Management

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Bog Wood
Location:	Runcorn
Grid reference:	SJ563825, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	2.83 hectares (6.99 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Bog Wood is a small broadleaf woodland in the Sandymoor Valley. The area is becoming increasingly urbanised with new housing, roads and facilities being built. The wood has a nice mix of mature broadleaves including oak, sycamore, ash, silver birch and in spring has patches of bluebells. There are several other Woodland Trust woodlands nearby. A surfaced path passes through the wood linking it to other nearby woodlands and open spaces in Sandymoor valley.

2.2 Extended Description

Bog Wood is a small broadleaved woodland in the parish of Sandymoor, about 4 miles to the east of Runcorn town centre. The surrounding land use is becoming increasingly urbanised with the building of new houses, schools and other facilities as part of the growth of the Sandymoor district. The area was previously countryside, predominantly farmland for grazing with grassland, wooded copses, hedgerows, ponds and ditches.

The local landscape is low-lying and flat within the Sandymoor Valley, with higher ground to the west towards Windmill Hill and to the east towards Daresbury village. A small river, called Keckwick Brook, flows south to north through the valley and the river level can rise rapidly after heavy rain causing flash flooding. The local water table is high resulting in wet ground conditions in some areas, although there is a network of drainage ditches across the valley. The soils are mainly silty-loam with pockets of clay and peat.

Bog Wood was formerly part of the Brooke Family estate (centred around nearby Norton Priory) and was purchased by the Runcorn New Town Development Corporation in the mid-1970's as part of the future development of Runcorn New Town. The Development Corporation subsequently installed surfaced paths and footbridges for public access in the wood and carried out under storey/ edge planting in the 1980's. The wood along with several others in the local area was gifted to the Woodland Trust in 1995.

It is secondary woodland with a canopy of mature broadleaves, comprising mainly oak, sycamore, beech, silver birch, alder, with occasional sweet chestnut and hornbeam. There is a reasonable shrub layer of hazel, hawthorn and elder and the ground layer contains a good variety of woodland plants including bluebell, bramble and bracken. The under storey includes hazel, birch, rowan, wild cherry, oak and ash from both natural regeneration and the under planting by the Development Corporation in the 1980's. These group plantings have become suppressed under the closed canopy.

The woodland is surrounded by a ditch network that acts as the main drainage system for the surrounding fields into the Keckwick Brook, along with remnants of old drainage ditches in the woodland.

Public access to the wood is available from three open access points leading to a surfaced footpath with four timber footbridges where the path crosses over ditches. A footpath passes through the eastern edge of the wood and is part of a multi-user greenway trail through the Sandymoor valley. Visitor numbers to the wood have been fairly low in the past, but as the area is being developed with more houses the number of people using the site is increasing.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

By car: From Runcorn, head east along the Daresbury Expressway (A558) towards Manor Park and Warrington. At the end of the dual carriageway section of the expressway is a roundabout. Take the exit for Sandymoor onto Pitts Heath Lane and follow this road for about a 1/4 mile before taking a left turn onto Wharford Lane. Follow this road to a mini-roundabout and bear slightly to the right to head towards Sandymoor Community School. At the roundabout turn right and follow the road for a further 1/4 mile to a T-junction. Bog Wood is located straight ahead. There is an entrance into the wood further along the road after it crosses over a ditch, with the entrance on the left hand side of the road. Parking is only available on the estate road.

By bus: There is a bus stop on Wharford Lane (approximately 1km walk from the wood).

By train: The nearest train station is Runcorn East station (approx. 3.2km/ 2.0 miles).

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

There are three public entrance points into the wood leading onto a surfaced footpath that passes through the wood and links to a surfaced path which runs north to south alongside the Keckwick Brook through the Sandymoor Valley.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Bog Wood is to maintain a high forest of mixed native broadleaves with oak, sycamore, beech, silver birch, alder and occasional sweet chestnut and hornbeam. 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.

Open public access will be retained in perpetuity and the current level of access infrastructure will be maintained with approximately 340 metres of surfaced footpath and three entrance points. 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

Public access is available to Bog Wood with 3 open entrance points from adjoining green spaces and housing estates to the west, north and east of the wood. There is approximately 340m of surfaced permissive footpath through the wood along with 4 small wooden footbridges where the footpath crosses over ditches. Along the eastern edge of the wood passes a surfaced linear trail called the Sandymoor Greenway. The wood is used mainly by local people and at present the number of visitors to the wood is fairly low, but is increasing as more houses are built in the surrounding area. There is no parking at the wood and the only parking is on nearby housing estate roads

Significance

Increasing access to and enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Bog Wood provides local people with the opportunity to access and enjoy woodland and nature close to where they live. As the local surrounding area has been developed the woodland provides an amenity feature and helps to soften the increasingly urban landscape. The wood is linked to other nearby areas of woodland, semi-natural habitat and green space by a linear multi-user recreational route (Sandymoor Greenway) which passes through the eastern edge of the wood and makes it accessible to the growing residential population in Sandymoor.

Opportunities & Constraints

The development of much of the surrounding land for new houses will lead to more people using the site and this provides an opportunity to raise local awareness of the Woodland Trust and to promote this woodland to local people.

Conversely the growing local population means that the wood will be subject to greater potential misuse (fires, den building, vandalism, litter and fly tipping) and this will need to be monitored and any new threats dealt with.

The small size of the wood limits the opportunity to increase public access other than to maintain the present footpath network and access infrastructure.

Factors Causing Change

New housing development near the woodland will lead to increased visitor usage of the wood and could lead to more litter, fly tipping, vandalism, fires as well as greater wear and tear on the footpath infrastructure.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term intention for Bog Wood is to maintain the present levels of public access. Guided by the parameters set out in the Woodland Trust's 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 public access to the site. To achieve this the short term objectives are to:

1. carry out annual maintenance of all entrances, signage, footbridges and footpaths to ensure they remain easy to use. Any vegetation encroaching on footpaths will be cut back and litter/ fly tipping removed as necessary.
2. 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.
3. carry out monitoring at least once during the plan period to assess whether the current access provision is adequate for the level of public use, to identify if there are any people issues/ threats to the wood, and taking appropriate action to address them if necessary.
4. carry out coppicing alongside paths and entrances to improve sight lines in the wood in 2018.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Bog Wood is a small secondary mixed broadleaved woodland with a canopy of mainly oak, sycamore, beech, silver birch, alder, with occasional sweet chestnut and hornbeam. The understorey which includes birch, rowan, wild cherry, ash, hazel and hawthorn, was mostly planted by the Commission for New Towns in the 1980s, along with some ash regeneration and suckering of elm. The ground flora is relatively sparse, but there is a good population of bluebell, bracken, bramble and honeysuckle. There are a network of drainage ditches around the outside of the wood as well as some ditches through the wood which are normally dry.

Significance

The Sandymoor Valley is subject to intense development pressure and the remaining small fragmented pockets of woodland and semi-natural habitat are increasingly important in this context providing valuable green space and helping to "soften" the urbanisation of the area.

Bog Wood is a significant woodland feature in the landscape and forms part of the local ecological network with other woodlands, grasslands, ponds, ditches and Keckwick Brook which provide a valuable habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals. The woodland contains significant stands of mature/ semi-mature oak.

Opportunities & Constraints

Tree safety work will also provide opportunities to create gaps in the canopy to allow natural regeneration to develop and enhance levels of deadwood in the wood.

The development of the adjoining land next to the site constrains any possible expansion to the size of the woodland and puts a greater pressure on site management for tree safety along boundaries.

Factors Causing Change

Over mature trees and dense canopy shading may result in the canopy being dominated by one or two species over time and limit the development of natural regen and ground flora.

The impact of the new houses nearby will lead to greater pressure from visitors/ neighbours for carrying out tree safety and it may lead to increased fly tipping, particularly of garden waste, and may result in non-native garden species spreading in the woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term objective for the wood is to maintain a high forest, continuous canopy cover of native broadleaves with mixed structure, species and age composition, diverse shrub layer and ground flora. The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with mature and over mature trees, standing and fallen deadwood retained where safe to do so, and succession promoted through natural regeneration. Due to its urban location, tree safety work may be required for public safety which will create gaps in the canopy to promote natural regeneration. Threats to the wood from pests, invasive species and tree disease will be monitored and where necessary appropriate action taken to control them.

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

During this plan period the wood will be managed through minimal silvicultural intervention other than for tree safety work identified as part of the tree safety inspection programme. The health of the woodland will be monitored during the plan period by carrying out a Woodland Condition Assessment to identify any threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species, human impacts, and appropriate action taken where necessary.

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	2.83	Oak (pedunculate)	1920	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest

A roughly rectangular shaped compartment situated on low lying flat ground on the flood plain of the Keckwick Brook. The compartment is part of a larger woodland area called Bog Wood. Along the eastern boundary is an area of unmanaged grassland and a wooded railway embankment; the land on the northern and western boundaries was until recently unmanaged grassland, but is now (2017/2018) being built on for new houses; the southern boundary of the compartment merges into a further larger area of the woodland (owned by Halton BC). There is a network of deep drainage ditches around the outside of the wood which feed into the Keckwick Brook which passes near to the eastern boundary, and within the compartment are remnants of old drainage ditches which are normally dry.

The woodland canopy is mainly oak, sycamore, beech, silver birch, alder, with occasional sweet chestnut and hornbeam. The understorey which includes birch, rowan, wild cherry, ash, hazel and hawthorn, was mostly planted by the Commission for New Towns in the 1980s, along with some ash regeneration and suckering of elm. The ground flora is relatively sparse, but there is a good population of bluebell, bracken, bramble and honeysuckle. There is a surfaced footpath through the wood along with 4 wooden footbridges where the path crosses over ditches.

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	0.30	7	2
2023	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	2
2030	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	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.