



# Sandymoor 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](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>	Sandymoor Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Runcorn
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SJ562833, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
<b>Area:</b>	2.35 hectares (5.81 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Sandymoor Wood, is a small woodland consisting mainly of birch (downy and silver), sycamore and oak with some pockets of bluebell. There are three entrances into the woodland with a surfaced footpath and pond near the southern end of the site. The wood is a local wildlife site.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Sandymoor Wood is a broadleaf woodland in the Sandymoor area of Runcorn, about 4 miles to the east of town centre. The surrounding land use is becoming increasingly urban with the development of land for new houses, schools and other community facilities in this growing suburb. The land use was previously countryside, predominantly farmland for grazing with wooded copses, hedgerows, ponds and ditches.

The landscape within the Sandymoor Valley is low-lying flat land, 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 local soils are mainly silty-loam with pockets of clay and peat.

Sandymoor 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 culverts for public access in the wood and carried out understorey planting in the 1980's. The wood along with several others in the local area was gifted to the Woodland Trust in 1995. To the west of the wood is housing, the southern boundary is adjacent to a community hall building and areas of unmanaged grassland which is likely to be developed in the near future, and the eastern and north boundaries are ditch lines leading on to open grass verge and beyond that to roads and housing.

It is secondary woodland with a canopy of mature broadleaves consisting of birch (silver and downy), sycamore, oak (Pedunculate and sessile) with scattered alder, ash, willow and wild cherry. The under storey contains occasional hazel, hawthorn and elder. Ground flora consists of bramble, bracken, honeysuckle and some broad buckler fern along with occasional woodland flowers including pockets of bluebell. The woodland is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

There is a network of open drainage ditches around the outside of the wood that feed into two local ponds, one of which is in within the wood and is connected by a drainage ditch to a second pond which lies just outside the Trust ownership boundary.

Public access to the wood is available from three open pedestrian entrance points leading to a surfaced footpath through the wood with culverts at ditch crossing points. 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 has increased and will continue to.

## 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. Sandymoor Wood is located immediately on the right hand side with an entrance into the wood across a small ditch on the outside of the wood. No parking is allowed on the road, but there is limited parking on nearby housing estate roads.

By bus: There is a bus stop on Wharford Lane immediately next to 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](http://traveline.org.uk).

There are three open access entrances into the wood from the adjoining land which leads onto a network of surfaced footpaths through the wood with no gradients.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Sandymoor Wood is to ensure the continuity of high forest mixed native broadleaf woodland. The canopy will contain with birch (silver and downy) oak, sycamore, alder, cherry and willow, with an under storey of hazel, holly and elder and a diverse ground layer. It will primarily be managed as a recreational and landscape feature providing an important 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 400 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

Informal public access is available to Sandymoor Wood with 3 open entrance points from adjoining green spaces and housing estates on the north western and eastern boundaries. There is approximately 400m of surfaced permissive footpath through the wood along with culverts at ditch crossings. 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 enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Sandymoor 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 local residential population.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The development of much of the surrounding land for new houses will lead to more people using the site which 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 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

Development of neighbouring land for housing will lead to increased pressure on the wood and wildlife (more visitors and potentially more litter, vandalism, fires and fly tipping).

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

The long-term intention is to maintain the present levels of open 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, culverts 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.

## 5.2 Secondary Woodland

### Description

Sandymoor Wood is a small secondary woodland with a canopy of mature broadleaves consisting of birch (silver and downy), sycamore, oak (Pedunculate and sessile) with scattered alder, ash, willow and wild cherry. The under storey contains occasional hazel, hawthorn and elder. Ground flora consists of bramble, bracken, honeysuckle and some broad buckler fern along with occasional woodland flowers including pockets of bluebell. There is a network of open drainage ditches around the outside of the wood that feed into two local ponds, one of which is in within the wood and is connected by a drainage ditch to a second pond outside of the Woodland Trust boundary. The woodland is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

### 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. Sandymoor Wood is a significant woodland feature in the landscape and forms part of the local ecological network of habitats for wildlife with other woodlands, grasslands, ponds, ditches and Keckwick Brook. The woodland contains significant stands of semi-mature/ mature oak and provides an important wildlife habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals. The ponds and ditch network in the wood are of significant value for local biodiversity.

### Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunity exists to enhance the woodland through natural processes and allow older trees to develop as veterans. 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. There is poor vehicle access (narrow culvert crossings) which is a constraint to carrying out some management work or silvicultural operations. The small size of the wood limits the opportunities for enhancing and creating new habitats although considering this the site already has several habitat types. Existing/ proposed development around most boundaries are a constraint to any expansion to the woodland and can act as a barrier to wildlife movement between nearby habitats.

### Factors Causing Change

The impact of more new houses nearby will put greater pressure for undertaking tree safety and may also lead to increased fly tipping of waste, particularly of garden waste, and possibly 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 aim will be to manage the woodland through minimal silvicultural intervention (other than tree safety work identified as part of the tree inspection programme). The short term objectives are to monitor the health of the woodland during the plan period to identify any threats from tree disease, pests, animals or people, and take appropriate action where necessary. Monitoring will also be undertaken during the plan period to assess rhododendron regrowth and carry out work to control it from spreading in the wood.

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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	2.35	Birch (downy/silver)	1920	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site

A roughly rectangular shaped compartment situated on low lying flat ground with underlying peaty soil. The compartment is bordered by houses along the western boundary (although the Trust does not own the bit of woodland immediately adjacent to the garden fences this was passed to Halton BC), a community hall building and unmanaged grassland to the south, and to the north and east of the wood are areas of short mown amenity grassland bordered by roads. There is also a water pumping station building located by the north west corner of the wood.

The woodland consists of silver birch, sycamore, oak with scattered alder, ash, willow and wild cherry. The understorey contains occasional hazel, hawthorn and elder. Rhododendron used to be quite widespread in the understorey, but has been completely cleared in recent years. The ground flora consists of bramble, bracken, honeysuckle, some pockets of broad buckler fern and a variety of general woodland flora including pockets of bluebell. There is a network of open drainage ditches around all the boundaries of the wood that feed into local ponds. There is one pond within the wood in the south western part and this is lined by a drainage ditch flowing west to east through the wood to a second pond which is located outside the eastern boundary. The site is designated at a Site of Biological Importance/ Local Wildlife Site.

A network of surfaced paths (with culverts at the ditch crossings) run through the wood linking it to the adjoining housing estates and green spaces.

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**Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)**

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	2
2025	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.