



# Staffhurst Wood

## Management Plan 2012-2017

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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.

## 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>	Staffhurst Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Limpsfield
<b>Grid reference:</b>	TQ413490, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 187
<b>Area:</b>	12.90 hectares (31.88 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Used as an ammunitions dump during the second world war, today this nationally important site boasts 200 species of flora and 288 species of moth fauna, including orthosis populeti. Largely level with four public footpaths. No public bridleways.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Staffhurst and Great & Little Earls Wood are ancient woodlands situated at the southern edge of Limpsfield Parish, bounded by both the Edenbridge and Oxted Roads. Staffhurst Wood is an ancient wooded common of national importance lying on Weald Clay and forming part of a larger block of woodland most of which is designated an SSSI because of its long documented history of continuous woodland cover since at least Saxon times when it was part of a royal hunting forest. The SSSI extends to 49.8ha of which the Woodland Trust own and manage the north-eastern 13.1ha. Surrey Wildlife Trust manages the adjacent section of Staffhurst Wood. The woodland was used in the Second World War as an ammunitions dump and the whole area is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

Great & Little Earls Wood is located just to the west of Staffhurst Wood. Great Earls Wood is largely sweet chestnut coppice and is located in the southern part of the wood. Little Earls Wood is largely hornbeam and is located to the north.

The woodlands have a good network of well maintained permissive paths and are popular with many locals and visitors from further a field during the display of bluebells in the spring. Public and management access is excellent. There are three information boards on site providing visitors with a description of features of interest and future management intentions. There is a permissive surfaced bridleway on the west side of Staffhurst wood. This track also serves as the main management access and could provide suitable access for less-abled visitors. There is no formal parking available but there is a public car park nearby in the south-west of Staffhurst Wood that is maintained by Surrey Countryside Services and some roadside parking at the southern entrance of both woods. A private residence "The Horns" exists as an island in the centre of Staffhurst wood and the track to this house is owned by the Trust with access rights given to the owners.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

This is a level site with an excellent network of public and permissive footpaths extending to over 4km in length and including four public footpaths (nos. 201,202, 202A, 524 & 203). Permissive horse access is presently allowed only along the surfaced track forming the western boundary of compartment 1b. Access for less abled visitors is also possible along this track, although not advertised as such.

Staffhurst and Great & Little Earls Wood is located close to the village of Merle Common, near Oxted in east Surrey. The Woodland Trust own the NE part of Staffhurst Wood and Surrey Wildlife Trust manage the rest and larger part of Staffhurst. There are 3 entrances off Grants Lane to our site, 2 of which are public footpaths. The other is along a surfaced track leading to a private dwelling (The Horns) which is surrounded by Staffhurst Wood. There is also a public footpath which crosses the 1a, and this can be taken from further north up Grants lane and across fields. There is a stile into the wood from the fields. There are also several entrances off Merle Common Road and Caterfield Lane. The entrances off Caterham Road are through wooden kissing gates, unsuitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. All other entrances are open.

The bridleway can be accessed off Staffhurst Wood Road, and it is surfaced and possibly useable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. There are a number of paths leading from The Wildlife Trust part of Staffhurst into our part. There are a number of other unsurfaced paths around the wood. There are 4 public footpaths running east-west across our wood as well as the public bridleway.

The best place to park is the public car-park at Staffhurst Wood, managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. The car-park is located at the west end of Staffhurst Wood Road. From here it is possible to walk through the Wildlife Trust part of Staffhurst and into The Woodland Trust part and also cross the road into Great & Little Earls Wood. There is also another car-park managed by The Wildlife Trust further south of our wood on Grants Lane.

The nearest railway station is at Hurst Green, approximately 2 miles away. The nearest bus-stop is not close by (1.5 miles away), but at Holland (near Hurst Green) on Coldshott, off Holland Road. The nearest public toilet is at Ellice Road car-park in Oxted, which has disabled access (via RADAR key) and baby changing facilities. For further information about public transport please contact Traveline - [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) Tel: 0870 6082608

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term, these woods will be allowed to develop naturally, unless there is a need to maintain habitat continuity for species that are wholly reliant on it. The woods are developing nicely with a good amount of deadwood, emerging veteran trees and a healthy diversity in species and age structure. Much of the former coppice compartments are now out of rotation.

The Trust will ensure that the public can enjoy good and appropriate open access to the wood by maintaining the entrances and checking that the main paths remain safe and unblocked. The Trust's regular inspections, including routine tree safety inspections will continue.



## 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

Staffhurst and Great & Little Earls Woods have an access B category designation (moderate usage site with 5-15 people using each entrance per day). The site is open to the public for quiet informal recreation and has five public footpaths (nos. 201, 202, 524, 202A & 203) cross the site and together with permissive paths amount to over 4km of paths being available for walking. Limited parking is available for visitors coming from further afield in the south-western corner or in a nearby car park maintained by Surrey County Council.

#### Significance

The close proximity to other woods and the extensive path network enable visitors to fully explore this woodland and the surrounding area. Great & Little Earls Woods were bought with the help of generous contributions from local people as well as donations from all levels of local government. These woodlands are well used by local people throughout the year and attract visitors from further afield in the spring due to the display of bluebells.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The paths can get muddy in the winter

#### Factors Causing Change

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

A good and accessible path network with signed entrance points and 5-15 visitors using each entrance per day as per the access B category. The wood will be widely used by local people and other visitors coming from further away, especially to see the bluebells in the Spring.

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

Regular inspections of entranceways and pathways. Entrance furniture will be repaired or replaced as required.

Open up the ditch near eastern boundary of Gt. Earls Wood and channel water toward old pond. New footbridge to be installed near western boundary of Gt. Earls Wood where path crosses ditch.

Tree safety inspections to be carried out at least once every 18 months on Zone A - to include one autumn and one summer inspection in every 3 year period. Zone B inspections to be carried out every 36 months. Arboriculture work to be carried out as appropriate

## 5.2 Ancient Woodland Site

### Description

The areas of the site commonly known as Staffhurst Wood and Little Earls Wood are made up of oak, beech and ash high forest with hornbeam, hazel, holly, blackthorn, birch and sweet chestnut also present. Much of this has established since 1920 when the site was largely clear felled. The area to the south of Great Earls Wood, commonly known as Little Earls Woods, is mainly sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards. These woodlands are noted for their spectacular spring flowers, particularly the extensive bluebell carpets. The SSSI designation covers compartment 1b and is identified for its outstanding assemblages of Invertebrates and particularly moth species (including *Orthosia populetis*). In damper hollows the ground flora in this area is rich and includes *Carex strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-sedge) which is rare in Surrey.

### Significance

The continuity of woodland cover over many centuries is a very important aspect to Staffhurst and Great and Little Earls Wood. These conditions have produced some very old trees with associated outstanding moth fauna and unusually rich lichen flora.

The amount of ASNW left in Britain has been drastically reduced over the last century. Approximately 40% of England's ASNW is found in the South East. ASNW is very important due to the continuity of woodland cover over hundreds of years which allows for a diverse range of wildlife and vegetation to develop over time that cannot be found in new woodland creation sites. In a heavily wooded area where woodland has become fragmented larger areas of woodland are able to withstand external pressures such as climate change much better. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and the prevention of its loss is one of the main aims of the Trust.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity for educating visitors on the importance of ASNW.

Heavy Weald Clay soils prohibit work in winter with machinery.

### Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage, Deer damage

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

High forest woodland maintaining a good diversity of native species and tree ages, with understory of native shrubs and young trees. Good deadwood habitat present through standing and fallen dead trees and ancient living trees. Ground flora should continue to contain specialist woodland plants, indicative of ancient woodland, especially bluebell.

Veteran trees will be retained and next generation veterans encouraged through the minimum intervention policy, which will lead to species like oak and beech becoming veterans within 50-100 years.

At least 95% of cover in any one layer of site-native or acceptable naturalised species.

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

Manage the main body of the ancient woodland through minimum intervention during this plan period. Two scallops will be created each year from 2012 until 2016 along the main rides in compartment 2a. The scallops will measure approximately 15mx5m.

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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	2.43	Mixed native broadleaves		Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order

This is the northern part of the wood commonly known as Staffhurst Wood. The stand comprises high forest of oak and ash dating from the 1920s as well as hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, holly, sweet chestnut coppice and hazel. Much of the larger sweet chestnut appears to have blown in the 1987 storm and has been left. Individual specimens of wych elm, dogwood, willow and elder can also be found. Ground flora species include bluebells, patchy dogs mercury, bramble, honeysuckle and violet helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*) recorded here. A hard track provides excellent access to this northernmost compartment and the southern boundary is formed by a stream.

1b	10.58	Mixed native broadleaves		Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
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The canopy is largely made up of beech and oak from the 1920s. Other broadleaves present include hornbeam, holly, hazel, blackthorn, birch, hawthorn, sweet chestnut, yew and aspen. The understory is dominated by hazel to the south. Some natural canopy gaps are allowing the understory to thrive although bracken is also present in these, especially in a previously open area near 'The Horns'. A public footpath crosses the northern part of this compartment area and once it passes north of 'The Horns' forms a distinct compartment boundary. The ground flora is relatively sparse, especially under the beech in the west where only bluebells and ivy are found. In other areas there is also bramble, bracken, dog's mercury, stitchwort, wild rose, ferns and honeysuckle. Management access is over the surfaced track also serving "The Horns" and off the surfaced track forming the western boundary. "The Horns" residence effectively forms an island within this compartment. There is a redundant water storage tank south of the "The Horns" near the western boundary.

2a	3.41	Mixed native broadleaves		High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order
<p>This is the southern part of the wood commonly known as Great Earls Wood. A stand of well stocked sweet chestnut coppice last cut between 1987 and 2002. Scattered oak maidens dating from around 1880 with occasional birch, hornbeam, oak, hawthorn, hazel coppice, ash, holly, elder and beech also present. The ground flora is dominated by a dense bluebell carpet, bramble, honeysuckle and mosses. There is a seasonal stream in the north which flows into a small seasonal pond.</p>							
2b	3.87	Mixed native broadleaves		High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order
<p>This is the northern part of the wood commonly known as Great Earls Wood. Ancient semi-natural high forest principally of oak dating from around 1920. Other canopy trees include sweet chestnut, hornbeam and birch. The understory is made up of holly, sweet chestnut, hawthorn and hazel. The ground flora consists of bramble, bracken and honeysuckle, with large numbers of bluebells in the spring. There is a large amount of standing and fallen deadwood in this compartment. There is scattering of Japanese larch trees grouped across the southern border of 3a and the northern border of 2b. A seasonal stream forms the southern boundary and public footpath no. 524 dissects the area.</p>							
3a	2.58	Hornbeam		Min-intervention		Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order

This compartment is known commonly as Little Earls Wood. The canopy consists of hornbeam, oak and sweet chestnut and the understory is a mixture of sweet chestnut, ash, beech, hawthorn, holly, hazel and elder. The ground flora is dominated by a bluebell carpet but there are also wood anemones and dogs mercury together with nettles. There is scattering of Japanese larch trees grouped across the southern border of 3a and the northern border of 2b.

## 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.