



# Reedbush

## 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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>      | Reedbush                            |
| <b>Location:</b>       | Fiskerton                           |
| <b>Grid reference:</b> | TF055716, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 121 |
| <b>Area:</b>           | 0.42 hectares (1.04 acres)          |
| <b>Designations:</b>   |                                     |

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

A small site that is accessible from the Viking Way public footpath. A damp site, it is mostly open with some willow and alder along the northern edge. An important wildlife site close to the river with a rich diversity of birdlife.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Reedbush is a 0.42 ha remnant fenland site situated 300m SE of the village of Fiskerton and 5 miles east of Lincoln. It can be reached from the Viking Way public footpath which runs adjacent to the site from Fiskerton village centre.

The site is naturally damp lying immediately north of the North Delph drain, which runs parallel to the River Witham. It therefore lies within the R. Witham flood plain and is the last remaining piece of the Willingham / Fiskerton Fen not to be under agricultural production. It has historically also been known as 'The Willow Piece'.

Currently, the site is largely open, with some willow and alder naturally occurring along the more northern boundaries. Ground vegetation is typical of damp, fertile sites including much willowherb and nettle along with more desirable sedge and reed. This habitat is important for wildlife however, particularly in its location close to the river: the combination of open ground, scrub and occasional trees being a feature. It is not intended that the site be a woodland although trees may develop, particularly on the western side of the site. The remainder will be reed / sedge where the ground conditions remain damp to water-logged for a large part of the year. Birdlife is thought to be particularly rich, with relatively little disturbance.

A 5m strip adjacent to the North Delph is to remain free of trees to allow for management of this water course. This is a restrictive legal covenant.

Reedbush was donated to the Trust on 26th November 1993 by Mr E Clark.

The whole site has access to the public but is generally being left as an undisturbed reedbed with limited access. It is felt that the site is adequately served by the public footpath on the north boundary and the one running north /south to the North Delph.

Reedbush is likely to appeal to visitors who enjoy wildlife and enjoy quiet areas where management is deliberately low-key and visitor numbers are generally thought to be low. Signage will be maintained at the boundary for corporate visibility given the high level of people passing the site on the Viking Way.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

A 0.42ha site adjacent to the Viking Way footpath and to the River Witham. It lies 5 miles east of Lincoln and is approached via a RUPP running in a generally southerly direction, 400m east of Fiskerton. A footpath then runs west to the site, north of the River Witham and North Delph. A welcome sign identifies the site. The public footpath is part of the long distance Viking Way that passes through the area. A short dead end spur runs off this and through the property north/south for 50m to the North Delph.

It is remnant fenland lying some 300m SE of Fiskerton village, to which the footpath links. It is not intended that the site be a woodland although trees may develop, particularly on the western side of the site. The remainder will be reed / sedge where the ground conditions remain damp to water-logged for a large part of the year. The whole site has access to the public but is generally being left as an undisturbed reedbed with limited access. It is felt that the site is adequately served by the public footpath on the north boundary and the one running north /south to the North Delph. Reedbush is likely to appeal to visitors who enjoy wildlife and enjoy quiet areas where management is deliberately low-key and visitor numbers are generally thought to be low. Signage will be maintained at the boundary for corporate visibility given the high level of people passing the site on the Viking Way.

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

It is intended to manage Reedbush as an important area for wildlife through minimum intervention. The balance will be maintained between having damp, open ground of at least 60% area mainly to the east, with scrub fringe and some taller trees tending towards the west. There is likely to be some vegetative succession to tree cover, which can be recorded through woodland condition assessment each plan period. This succession is unlikely to be rapid due to the dense existing ground cover, which appears reasonably stable. Management in order to retain the 60% open ground is therefore not likely in the foreseeable future .

Public access is available via the Viking Way around the perimeter and the north/south public footpath that bisects the site. Most visitors to the area are likely to remain on the adjacent Viking Way public footpath.

A 5m width adjacent to the North Delph must be kept clear of any trees and managed as such.



## 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

The 0.42ha site adjacent to the Viking Way footpath and to the River Witham and 5m east of Lincoln. It is remnant fenland lying some 300m SE of Fiskerton village, to which the footpath links. It is not intended that the site be a woodland although trees may develop, particularly at the western side of the site. The remainder will be reed / sedge where the ground conditions remain water-logged for a large part of the year. The whole site has access to the public, however this will be allowed to reed over to give a larger undisturbed reedbed habitat. It is thought that visitor numbers off the footpath are v. low. The wood is further bisected by a public right of way branching off the Viking Way, north/south which stops at a dead end after less than 50m by the North Delph over which there is no bridge.

#### Significance

Its importance to public access is limited as described previously. However, for those enjoying quiet enjoyment away from areas of agricultural production, it is an oasis.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The absence of high forest woodland, small size and wet conditions are constraints to the site being appealing to many visitors. However, for those who enjoy wildlife, particularly bird watching, the site provides a quiet sanctuary that is reasonably accessible. The dead end public footpath spur is more of a constraint as it goes nowhere and fragments the reedbed: yet must be maintained.

#### Factors Causing Change

Natural Regeneration of willow and alder scrub, changes in drainage, flooding episodes

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

To maintain a welcome sign at the entrance to the site for corporate visibility given the no of people walking past on the Viking Way..

To maintain a route following the north /south PROW through the site accessible by visitors.

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

Assess level of public use and accessibility at the end of each plan period. Ensure the PROW remains passable and remove scrub growth from path line with a cut every 2 years, to include the cutting back of vegetation and scrub along the dyke edge for the drainage board.

## 5.2 Mixed Habitat Mosaic

### Description

Reedbush is remnant fenland that has survived agricultural changes. It is dominated by damp loving species such as reed and sedge, alder and willow. It is a mixed habitat that is unlikely to be woodland as such, but succession to scrub and some trees are likely on the western side. The eastern side should remain as reedbed, an important habitat type particularly for birds and invertebrates. The NW boundaries have been developed by the planting of additional willow to form willow hedges.

### Significance

With most fenland now being lost to agricultural production, wet areas such as Reedbush have become increasingly valuable as wildlife reserves. The addition of developing scrub and trees is valuable, whilst open reed and sedge beds are also retained. The corridor effect of the River Witham is important in reducing the fragmentation effect that occurs elsewhere.

### Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland size is a constraint to providing significant areas of either trees or wetland. The current mix that has naturally developed does achieve this however on a limited scale and there is an opportunity to try and retain this fine balance.

### Factors Causing Change

Scrubbing up, changes to drainage patterns, flooding episodes, possible scrub encroachment into reedbed

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain areas of both alder and willow scrub and a reedbed area with sedges in a reasonably natural balance. Reverse the fragmentation of the reedbed by abandoning the cutting of the permissive east west path.

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

To monitor the development of the scrub and reed bed areas through woodland condition and key feature observations, one observation within each plan period (5 years).

To ensure that the reedbed area does not become scrubbed over and to intervene if it falls below 60% of the site by scrub removal.

To keep the 5m strip adjacent to the North Delph clear of scrub and consider periodic swiping if scrub does encroach.

Ensure that boundary willows remain manageable. Pollarding or coppicing may be necessary in the future should they become overgrown and infringe on adjacent farmland.

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## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type of Work | Description | Due By |
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No. | Area (ha) | Main Species | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints         | Key Features Present                         | Designations |
|---------|-----------|--------------|------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| 1a      | 0.42      | Open ground  |      | Non-wood habitat  | No/poor vehicular access to the site | Informal Public Access, Mixed Habitat Mosaic |              |

A small parcel of flood-plain land adjacent to the River Witham (which is thoroughly canalised) and the North Delph. The area is dominated by reed, sedge and willowherb especially to the east. Scattered willow and alder exist at the west end of the site. The long distance footpath -The Viking Way- runs along the north boundary of the property. The surrounding farmland is intensively farmed and water courses are all canalised with high floodbank protection.

## 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.