



Stanground

Management Plan 2016-2021

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Stanground
Location:	Stanground, nr Peterborough
Grid reference:	TL210972, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 142
Area:	6.27 hectares (15.49 acres)
Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Situated on the edge of the Fens, Stanground Wood is easy to reach on foot or bike, with the Peterborough Green Wheel, NCN 12, passing by the entrance.

2.2 Extended Description

Stanground Wood lies right on the outer edge of the Peterborough fens. Kings Dyke, a tributary to the Nene, forms the south western boundary and is managed by Mid level drainage board. Beyond this to the south is rising ground formed by an old river terrace, now housing. To the north and east is the Nene river valley, a managed landscape of intensively farmed arable land with brick pits and the sliver of SSSI/SPA washland which brackets the river and was created to buffer against flood waters. Although the Stanground wood is low laying it is protected from serious flood by the Nene Washes barrier bank to the north (reinforced in 2015). However, Kings Dyke does overtop its backs on occasion.

Stanground wood was planted into arable land in 1996, entirely by volunteer effort. The mix of trees species and the layout of the wood were governed by its close proximity to the Nene washes SSSI and SPA (special protection area). This is an internationally important habitat for breeding and over wintering birds, and it was felt that planting of the full area would encourage predatory birds and corvids, which would negatively impact the "more desirable" birds of the washland. This, along with the 10m management access strip required by Mid Level, sees over 60% open space on the site. This also ensures a softer landscape impact of the site, allowing a smoother transition from fenland into high forest.

The largest woodland block is located away from the SSSI at the far southern end of the wood and has established well, achieving closed canopy in the mid 2000's and with an average top height of over 10 meters in 2015. The species mix is dominated by ash, alder and willow, which tolerate waterlogged conditions, which do occasionally occur in the virtually treeless fen edge landscape. Included in the mix are 4 varieties of willow.

The open ground is managed as a meadow and grazed with horses, or mown to prevent scrub growth (either by mid level to maintain their access interests or for public access and amenity). High nutrient levels and historic poaching of the paddock area mean weed (stinging nettle and common doc) growth is a significant issue.

A substantial pond was created in 2015 by FrogLife, as part of the "River Nene Dragon Finder project". This is located in the North easter quarter of the wood.

The key features of the site are:
Informal Public Access
Mixed Habitat Mosaic

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Accessed via Thistle Drive in Stanground village and along part of a track which is publicly adopted . The whole track is a public footpath and bridleway. Parking is very limited at the site entrance and so parking is recommended before the river/lock is crossed. The entrance is via a kissing gate. Although the site is level it can lie very wet in winter and has very vigorous grass growth in summer often almost chocking the paths at times

There are no public toilets in the immediate vicinity although the city centre some 3km to the west has such facilities.

There is a bus stop near the start of Thistle Drive with a regular service. For times and routes contact Travel Line on 0871 2002233 or www.traveline.org.uk

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Stanground's trees will be allowed to develop into high forest, with intervention as required to achieve a varied age and species structure that is robust into the future.

A high percentage of open space will be maintained with minimal input and grazing being the preferred management practice where possible.

The areas of willow coppice should continue to be managed in a sustainable rotation with the materials used locally wherever possible.

Essentially a community green space, the current level of public access should be maintained, with signage and infrastructure in good condition. Providing an inviting and safe environment for quiet informal recreation.

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 site is situated on the outskirts of a suburb of Peterborough. It is on the Peterborough Green Wheel and is readily accessible by cycle and foot from the nearby public rights of way network. There is a network of paths and a large amount of open grassland within the site

Significance

There are no other open woodlands in the area, the wood is situated on a surfaced cycle track (Green wheel) and is a significant feature in a sparsely wooded fenland landscape, there was a great deal of community involvement in the planting of this wood

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

- Due to fertility of the site grass growth on the paths can make it difficult to maintain easy access.
- There is only one entrance and exit

Opportunities

- The wood is overlooked by many newly built houses.
- There are no other open access woodlands in the immediate vicinity

Factors Causing Change

Antisocial behaviour
Encroaching vegetation

Long term Objective (50 years+)

An inviting and safe area of community green space, used regularly for quiet informal recreation.

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

To maintain site as an area of public open access, with path network cut to a minimum of 2m width, 3 times during the growing season to allow unhindered access for the public. Entrances kept in a presentable and tidy condition and to latest WT specification. Works to be undertaken as needed, identified through biennial inspection by site manager.

5.2 Mixed Habitat Mosaic

Description

The wood has developed in to a young secondary woodland and has reached canopy closure, with sparse understory and ground flora. In association the grassland and open ground areas have developed since the sites creation with an improving structure and decreasing dominance of noxious and invasive weeds. Between the open grassland and the woodland a varied and extensive zone of scrub edge habitat has developed. The combined effect of the mixture of habitats is extremely valuable for many species of wildlife, dragonflies, common birds, butterflies and other invertebrates. Two areas have been fenced off to create enclosures for livestock, so far horses from as the small stable next door (IDB land belonging to the lock) have been resident through the spring and summer.

Significance

Woodland of any kind is rare in this part of Cambridgeshire, which is the least wooded county in Britain. Much of the surrounding land is either intensively farmed arable or regularly inundated washland so this wood does provide a resource for wildlife not available to any great extent locally

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to continue to graze the area as a means to maintain the current habitat structure of the meadow and develop a mosaic of woodland, woody scrub and open grassland.

Constrains

Vandalism and misuse of site.

Factors Causing Change

- Over browsing of woodland and scrub areas and increase of invasive noxious weeds
- Scrubbing over of open areas.
- Changes in local drainage and flooding patterns. (climate change or development driven)

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To provide a diverse structure of secondary woodland with a developing deadwood habitat and natural regeneration. Increase the amount of scrubby woodland to develop within the open areas, whilst maintaining the current decreasing open grassland structure.

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

Woodland developing well. Suffering from misuse in areas, but generally doing Ok. Trees reaching an average total height of 5-6m. A selective thin to stimulate regeneration and stabilise the stand (re-pollard willows) would be useful. But this should not be undertaken until the effects of chalara are understood. The combination of unauthorised damage/ felling and loss of ash could see the site over thinned if combined with silvicultural operation. Therefore a robust safety led approach to the woodland should be adopted. With the declining ash removed as needed, alongside badly damaged trees or unstable willow pollards.

5 yearly condition assessment (in addition to safety inspections) by the site manager will identify necessary intervention, with works planned accordingly.

Areas of open space are not allowed to scrub over with natural regeneration, achieved through a combination of grazing and annual mowing. Over-grazing or poaching of ground should also not be allowed to occur. With inspection undertaken annually and actions based on observations.

Willow coppice to continue under agreement/ contract with materials used locally wherever possible. Reviewed at least every 5 years.

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	2.30	Alder species	1996	Min-intervention	People issues (+tve & -tve), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Mixed Habitat Mosaic	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>An area of woodland planted in 1996 comprising of the following species, Ash, Alder, White willow, Field Maple with a mix of shrubs including hazel, Hawthorn, Goat willow and Guelder rose, planting density is at the required 1100 per hectare. The trees have thrived since the planting despite strong competition from grasses and other weed species on the rich previously arable soil, many have attained heights of up to 10m. The compartment is very low lying and parts are sometimes under water in wet weather</p>							
1b	3.40	Open ground	1996	Coppice	Management factors (eg grazing etc), Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Informal Public Access, Mixed Habitat Mosaic	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>Area of open grassland that surrounds the main planting areas is bordered by the Middle Level Commissioners main drain to the south and east and small feeder drain to the west and north. This grassland was created by natural regeneration of the existing grasses and seed sowing at the same time as the woodland creation. It is managed as unimproved grassland but this has not been very successful due to the species mix, the lack of grazing and the fertile soil. The compartment is very low lying and parts are sometimes under water in wet weather. This compartment also includes a block of willow coppice. This comprises of Osier and white willows. Ad-hock management to date leading to poor form in the block.</p> <p>In the northeast quarter of the wood, a substantial pond was created in 2015 by FrogLife. Part of the "River Nene Dragon Finder project" designed to improve habitat for amphibians within the nine catchment.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2016	1a	Pollard	1.00	10	10

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.