



Birkwith Wood

Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Birkwith Wood
Location:	Low Bentham
Grid reference:	SD652685, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 97
Area:	0.86 hectares (2.13 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A very small block of ancient woodland to the south of Burton in Lonsdale.

2.2 Extended Description

A very small block of woodland located directly to the east of a minor road, to the south of Burton in Lonsdale. Situated in rolling hills the site has a high landscape value even for its small size, being in an area of little woodland cover. Designated as an Ancient Woodland Site, in a Special Landscape Area, the woodland is composed predominantly of mature oak, ash, beech, birch and sycamore with some remnant elm. The under storey is composed of hazel, elder and blackthorn with good regeneration of the canopy species. The ground flora is indicative of ancient woodland, with bluebells, wild garlic, Dog Violet, wood sorrel and dogs mercury, on a generally dry and well drained site.

Although the site was too small to be included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, its composition, position and flora would definitely suggest it is an ancient woodland site. A small stream running south to north forms the south eastern boundary, minor road to the east, with improved pasture fields to the north and west. Pedestrian and management access is available directly from the road, although the site is very infrequently used for informal recreation and no provision has been made in the form of paths. Very little is known of the sites history, however, the woodland has been used as common woodland, and rights still exist for Eskewbank Farm to cut pea sticks, cut peat and turf, and to graze 100 hens, although the rights have not been exercised for many years. The remains of an old trackway run through the wood, the origins of which are unknown.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Due to the site's small size and nature, public access remains informal with no formalised paths. Access to the woodland is available direct from the public highway via a short steep bank, with parking space for a single car to the south on the roadside verge. Access is denoted by a single Woodland Trust freestanding sign visible from the roadside.

Bus services are available to the nearest village which is Low Bentham, access from there is on foot along a single track lane with no pavement for approximately 1km to the south east. Information from the traveline website. Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2608. Nearest public toilets are situated in High Bentham, 2km to the east.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The management of this small woodland will be minimum intervention (allowing for health and safety priorities) to allow the native broadleaved species to mature and regenerate naturally. The elm is slowly dying and regeneration is predominantly ash and birch, with very little beech or sycamore. With a small woodland like this it would be possible to speed up the process through selective felling, but opening the canopy to such an extent may have a detrimental effect on the ground flora and would certainly make a large and sudden impact on what is a very small woodland. Through minimum intervention it is anticipated that the current woodland structure of mature canopy with a mixed understorey of hazel and thorns and a rich ground flora, will continue to develop. Monitoring of the woodland at intervals of 5-10 years would be sufficient to discreetly follow any development of the non-native beech and sycamore and any changes to the ground flora.

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

Whilst the woodland does not have any formal permissive routes, its small size lends itself to full public access, although these rights are little used due to the remote location of the wood and its small size - being able to see right through the wood in all directions from the roadside there is little point venturing into the wood except for perhaps survey work etc. Woodland Trust welcoming signs are present along the roadside.

Significance

This is likely to be an ancient woodland, and forms part of a landscape of small isolated woodlands in this part of the county.

Opportunities & Constraints

Very small size and no formal permissive routes maintained.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain the current level of visitor access, with free and full public access although no formalised paths are to be cut or maintained.

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

Given the current extremely low level of visitor access, no formalised paths are to be cut or maintained within the plan period. Works will be undertaken as required on a reactive basis, such as the occasional flytipping incident. Tree safety along the roadside will be undertaken on a frequency dictated by the tree safety policy, likely to be on a 2 year cycle.

5.2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Although too small to be considered in the Inventory of Ancient Woodland, being only 0.85 hectares, the wood composition of ash, oak, beech, birch and sycamore with some remnant elm and ground flora are indicative of ancient woodland. Although the tree canopy contains some non-natives of sycamore and beech, there is a definite understorey of hazel and a ground flora composed of grasses, dogs mercury, bluebells and garlic.

Significance

This may be one of very few remaining Ancient Woodland Sites in this part of Craven District, the majority of these woodlands, are as in this case small woods limited to wet or streamside locations

Opportunities & Constraints

The greatest constraint is the physical size of the wood, any works undertaken here will have a greater impact on the remaining trees and ground flora in particular, this does however lend itself to a small woodland of minimum intervention, where there already is minimal informal access and where the vegetation remains relatively undisturbed.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain broadleaved woodland through a process of natural succession, maintaining this small woodland as an important feature in the local landscape

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

Monitoring once per plan period through the woodland condition assessment to ensure there is adequate regeneration and establishment of native broadleaved species to ensure continuity of the woodland. Otherwise works will be limited to the roadside tree safety operations. However during this plan period, with the emergence of Ash dieback and the roadside trees dominated by Ash, the tree safety inspection may be carried out more frequently.

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	0.85	Ash	1920	Min-intervention	Management factors (eg grazing etc), Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
<p>Predominantly mature ash, oak, beech, birch and sycamore with some remnant elm on a gentle south facing and well drained site. Dense understorey of hazel, elder and blackthorn with some regeneration of the canopy species. Ground flora of bluebell, wild garlic, wood sorrel, dog violet and dog's mercury. Bounded to the north and west by hedgerows and improved grassland, to the south by a small stream and existing mature woodland of a very similar type and to the east by a minor road and further improved grassland. Access is direct from the public highway.</p>							

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.