



# Culvery Wood

## 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](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>	Culvery Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Pensford
<b>Grid reference:</b>	ST616639, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 172
<b>Area:</b>	3.56 hectares (8.80 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Community Forest, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Culvery Wood is a mixture of new and mature broadleaf woodland with some large veteran oak and hornbeam trees. Extensions to the woodland were planted in 1998, 2001 and more recently in 2016. Wood edge habitats and rides provide important habitat for nesting birds, invertebrates and plants, including bluebell, wood anemone and primrose stands on the steep lower slopes.

It is peacefully situated on the western edge of the village of Pensford overlooking the Chew Valley, next to the Pensford viaduct, approximately seven miles south of Bristol and eight miles west of Bath. It is on the A37 road from Bristol to Shepton Mallet. A circular path and two public footpaths cross the site and walkers can enjoy the River Chew that runs along the southern boundary.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Culvery Wood was acquired as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project in 1997. A small extension was gifted in 2000, and a further extension was gifted in 2016. It is peacefully situated on the western edge of the village of Pensford overlooking the Chew Valley, next to the Pensford viaduct, approximately 7 miles south of Bristol and 8 miles west of Bath. It is on the A37 road from Bristol to Shepton Mallet.

Culvery Wood is a linear woodland standing on a south-westerly facing valley slope. Mature broadleaf woodland with some large veteran trees and an understory of ASNW flora, including bluebell, wood anemone and primrose stands on the steep lower slopes. New broadleaf woodland was planted in 1998 and 2001 on the upper slopes, and an extension to the north west of the wood was acquired and planted with broadleaved species in 2016. The site is bounded by fields to the north, south and west with a few houses and mature woodland along part of the eastern boundary. The site runs down to the River Chew in two places at its southern end.

The surrounding area was extensively mined for coal in the late 19th and early 20th Century, of which some evidence remains outside the site, including a large viaduct forming an impressive landscape feature to the south. There is a small rough area with remnants of a pond on the boundary between the two acquisitions which was the site of a cottage.

Two public footpaths cross the site. Management access is via a narrow private road from the village under the viaduct.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

#### General Location

The wood lies to the east of Pensford village, which is 4km south of the outskirts of Bristol on the A37.

#### Overview

Public access is available via a public footpath along the private lane (Culvery Lane) up from Church Street in Pensford. A small quantity of on-road parking is available here with an uphill 200m walk to reach the site. The track to the wood is surfaced, but with some vegetation narrowing the path.

Once inside the wood the tracks are all unsurfaced and sloping. A circular path runs through the site.

3 entrances to the wood exist, two of which link into the "3 Peaks Walk". The 2 entrances here are through small kissing gates; the third entrance is across a stile into farmland as a continuation of a second footpath.

#### Public Transport

The nearest Bus stop is at Pensford Bridge, 250m from the site.

#### Facilities

Public toilets are a further 100m away.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision at Culvery Wood is for attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland. A healthy canopy of trees with an understorey of woodland shrubs, integrating with surrounding hedgerows and woodland. This will fulfil the Trust's aims of increasing new native woodland and improving woodland biodiversity.

The mature and recently planted woodland will eventually be managed as high forest on a continuous cover basis. The wood will be managed towards mixed broadleaf high forest with a wide age, size, structure and species range with rich shrub and flora layers.

The wood is generally widely spaced on a steep slope and will be managed through natural processes with limited intervention undertaken only where necessary. There are no interventions planned for the mature broadleaf woodland in this plan period.

Where necessary selective trees will be coppiced in areas where the canopy is dense to improve the biodiversity and age structure of the woodland, and ride side trees will be coppiced to allow woodland flora to develop in these areas. The extension to the wood will see the newly planted woodland extend north across the pasture fields.

Culvery Wood has two well used public footpaths and will be managed as an important open access area where the public are welcome. The signs and well-kept paths will encourage public use of the woodland; fulfilling the Trust's aim of inspiring everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.

The rides and paths will be managed as necessary to provide appropriate access and valuable rideside habitats.



## 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

Public access is available with paths circulating the site. Formal entrances have been created on the public footpaths, one of which provides management access to the site. An information board has been erected to provide visitors with a map and features of interest. A seat is the Millennium feature.

#### Significance

Created as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project, the local community were involved in the fundraising, design and planting of the site.

Informal Public Access fulfils the Trust's aim to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees. The site fits into a network of well used footpaths; the footpath leading from the village through the site is part of a walk promoted by Bath and North East Somerset District Council.

It also adds interest to the village of Pensford and provides an excellent place for locals to walk and enjoy quiet recreation

#### Opportunities & Constraints

There is an active volunteer group at the site that meet once a month to carry out small woodland management tasks as directed by the Site Manager.

There is no parking near the site. Public access from the village via public footpath c 400m from village.

#### Factors Causing Change

Flytipping and litter. Anti-social behaviour. Canopy closure of trees making paths wet/muddy/slippery. Loss of the woodland through pests/diseases E.g. Ash die-back

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

The wood will be well-used and valued by the surrounding community. It will be known for the variety of walks, abundance of spring flowers and links with the wider footpath network. It will be welcoming and easily accessible. It can offer views across surrounding landscape or of the river, inspiring access to woodland in an unwooded landscape.

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

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public frequently enjoy. Entrances, facilities and path network are appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category C.

To achieve this, paths will be cut three times a year and entrances and benches maintained.

Particularly muddy areas on steep slopes will have steps and revetment to improve and maintain informal public access. All paths will be safe and walk-able throughout normal weather conditions by 2020.

The volunteer group will carry out occasional coppicing of ride-side trees in particularly shaded, damp and muddy sections of the steep paths where access is difficult.

Small access improvements when current infrastructure needs replacing can be carried when needed by contractors or the volunteer group as instructed by the site manager.

## 5.2 Local Woodland Habitat

### Description

A narrow strip of established woodland runs the length of the wood on a steep slope. This is probably ASNW but is below the size recorded in the ancient woodland register.

Planted native broadleaved woodland and shrubs covering approximately half of the site on the upper slopes to East and extension to the North. Cpt 1a in 1998 and extended in 2001, and Cpt 1c in 2016.

An existing hedgerow runs along the footpath at the west boundary which was hedge-layed in 2016.

### Significance

The wood and the River Chew are part of a larger SNCI. The established wood may be a remnant of ASNW. It is on a steep slope and has a flora with a number of AW species including bluebell, wood anemone and primrose stands on the steep lower slopes. There are a large number of veteran hornbeam trees within this area, which is unusual for the local area, as well as veteran oak and ash trees. The new woodland extends this habitat.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to buffer an existing wood, linking it to a small area of woodland in separate ownership and to create and sustain attractive and developing native broadleaved woodland.

Opportunity for Culvery Wood to engage local community through active volunteer group, led by the volunteer warden.

Powerline crosses southern section of the woodland, and needs regular pruning work by contractors for Western Power.

Squirrel damage of newly planted hornbeam, oak and field maple is an issue, as many have damage on stem and branches preventing them from reaching maturity.

The management access is narrow and with steep slopes.

### Factors Causing Change

Squirrel Damage, Deer Damage, Invasive bracken

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats. There will be many wood edge habitats, important for nesting birds, invertebrates and woodland / grassland flora. More recent native planted woodland integrated with existing woodland on the site. As the developing canopy closes, rough grass in the planted areas will gradually diminish as shade loving plants more typical of a secondary woodland take over and spread from the more ASNW areas.

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

To ensure continued existence of the mature wood in its current condition with mature trees and small amounts of regeneration. This means there will be no work other than for tree safety in the plan period.

New planting in 2016 secure from damage by browsing allowing it to successfully mature into woodland habitat, by making sure guards and shelters are protecting saplings. Make sure grass does not compete with tree saplings by spraying competing vegetation and replant any dead or unsuccessful trees in 2017 and/or 2018. In 2020 remove all tree guards, and dispose of once trees are tall enough or sturdy enough to survive without them.

Monitor damage by squirrel and/or deer.

The hedge, rides and internal pathways will be managed by rideside coppicing to ensure it allows light and air movement along the paths to benefit wildlife, increase and allow the spread of ground flora, in addition to improving public access. It is hoped that this work may be achieved by volunteers.

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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	1.40	Mixed native broadleaves	1998	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat	Community Forest
<p>Area planted by volunteers and contractors in December 1998 with oak, ash, hornbeam and woody shrubs. Prior to planting the field was a mixture of bracken and rough pasture. An area along a public footpath and under overhead cables was left unplanted. A further area was planted with the same species mix in 2001.</p>							
1b	1.00	Mixed native broadleaves	1900	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat	Community Forest, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)
<p>Mixed broadleaf woodland predominantly ash, hornbeam and oak P c1900 with hazel, hawthorn understory. Some regeneration of all species. The mature woodland has many ancient and semi natural woodland indicators including woodland flora such as wood anemone, bluebell, and primrose with veteran hornbeam, oak and ash trees. Grazed in the past. Short river frontage. Small quarry/dump area.</p>							
1c	0.40	Mixed native broadleaves	2016	Wood establishment	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat	
<p>Mixed broadleaf woodland planted by volunteers in Feb 2016 with oak, hornbeam and woody shrubs. Prior to planting the area was agricultural pasture grazed by cattle. Access to hedgeline line left for neighbouring farmer to carry out management on hedge line and ditch.</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.