WOODLAND TRUST

Croft Glebe

Management Plan 2013-2018

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Croft Glebe
Location:	Croft
Grid reference:	SP507959, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
Area:	3.93 hectares (9.71 acres)
Designations:	Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This woodland has no public legal right of way in to it or provision for car parking except for visitors to the adjacent Croft Cemetery. However there is an unofficial access point (squeeze gap) off the eastern end of Marston Road which connects with the two permissive footpaths which cross the site. Care must be taken when walking in this wood during stormy weather or immediately after heavy snowfall due to the age and condition of some of the trees, which may cast branches.

2.2 Extended Description

The site extends to approximately 10 acres (4 hectares). The majority being parkland, set around an open open space, which was formally the village cricket pitch. As glebe land, the site has been part of the fabric of village life, from its use for the church festivals, to the informal gathering of hedgerow berries and conkers from the parkland trees.

The mature trees, mainly horse chestnut, sycamore and hornbeam dominate the site creating the feel of the parkland landscape and together with the boundary hedgerows provide the site's nature conservation interest as habitats for nesting birds, including: tawny owl, great-spotted woodpecker, lesser whitethroat, black cap and mistlethrush. The trees and the remnants of the hedgerow along the southern boundary are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Whilst the site adjoins houses to the north and east, the tall, broad hedges and local topography preclude far-reaching views either into, or out from the site, so that the focus is an internal one. The only exception to this is the view from the southern boundary across the River Soar and adjoining grassland, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The site is bounded by a public bridleway to the north, and public footpaths to the west and south. Within the site there are two permissive paths. One through the fenced paddock, which is grassed and also contains the majority of the parkland trees. The other runs through the newly planted area along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site.

Croft Cemetery has been extended onto land between Huncote Road and the site. Whilst the Trust has a right of way for management purposes across this land, there is no public legal right of access to the site, or provision for car parking, other than that for cemetery visitors.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There is an unofficial access point (squeeze gap) off the eastern end of Marston Road. This connects with the two permissive footpaths which traverse the site. One footpath enters the fenced paddock through a kissing gate on its NE boundary and exits through another on the south western boundary of the parkland. Within the paddock the route of the footpath is not easily discernable because it is grazed by cattle during the Summer. Additionally it was made clear in the original design specification that walkers with dogs may prefer not to use this path when the cattle are in the field. Access to the paddock is via wooden kissing gates which are not negotiable by wheelchairs or larger push-chairs.
The second and major path follows the eastern and southern boundaries and takes the walker through the new planting and exits the site in the extreme south west corner where it links with both footpaths V52 and V100.
At present there are two links with footpath V52 which lies just outside the site along the southern boundary. It is understood that they may be an application made in the near future to close the present footpath where it crosses the adjoining horse paddock and divert it through the site.
It is important to note that there are a significant number of parkland trees within the site which are reaching senescence and are inclined to cast branches during severe weather. Although the condition of these trees is monitored constantly and remedial tree safety work undertaken considerable care must be taken when walking this site during stormy weather or immediately after heavy snowfall.
There is a bus service from Leicester (St Margaret's, Bay 20) to Arbor Road, Croft. See www.traveline.org.uk for details.It will then be necessary to walk to the end of Arbor Road, turn right along Station Road and then turn left into the site entrance next to the burial ground.
There are no public toilets within 5 miles of the site.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention at Croft Glebe will be to increase the structural diversity and habitat diversity over the whole 4 hectares. This will in turn advance three of the four of the Trust's corporate objectives by increasing new native woodland, increasing enjoyment of woodland and restoring and improving biodiversity of woodlands. Every effort will be made to maintain the parkland quality of the site.
The 2.87hectare area of Parkland is to be maintained through the continued grazing of the area with the intention of improving species diversity.
The parkland trees will be retained for as long as possible. However where trees have to be removed as a consequence of concern for public safety similar species will be planted to replace them.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description
1.17ha of mixed broadleaves planted in November 1999 main species include oak, ash, beech and field maple (see compartment records for full species mix).
Significance
Corporate objective to create new woodland
Opportunities & Constraints
To create a new native broadleaved woodland habitat. From a relatively early stage in the woodlands development i.e. 10-15 years the hazel will be coppiced to promote its vigour throughout the area. However this is subject to the availability of labour, which may be constrained by the market for the produce. Alternatively it could provide an opportunity for volunteers.
Factors Causing Change
Rabbit damage
Long term Objective (50 years+)
A balance of parkland, grassland and broadleaved woodland habitats.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
The 1.17 ha of secondary woodland will be maintained. Regular site condition assessments will be carried out every 3 years to monitor tree health. The remaining tree shelters will be removed during this plan period.

5.2 Veteran Trees

Description

Mature trees mainly horse chestnut, sycamore and hornbeam dominate the area and are protected under a TPO. See site files for TPO shedule and map of locations species. See also Site Risk Assessment file and current Site Survey Note for report on the condition of each tree.

Significance

Veteran trees capable of supporting a phenomenal range of other wildlife from large obvious creatures such as owls, woodpeckers and bats to a myriad of insects and communities of extremely specialised lichens, mosses and fungi.

Opportunities & Constraints

C1 Even agedness of mature trees. Many of the tree are reaching senescence and are beginning to cast boughs.

Factors Causing Change

Trees liable to damage from strong winds.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain the parkland landscape. Maintain standing deadwood within the limitations of public safety.

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

Maintain the senescent trees as long as possible by judicial pruning and other tree safety measures. Check their condition annually.
Where trees are likely to be lost in the short term continue to plant parkland species in small stock-proof enclosures.
Maintain the parkland character by grazing under licence. If for any reason grazing does not occur then top the grass and treat nettles, docks and thistles.
The licence is to run between 15th April and 31st October annually and allows the grazing of either cattle or sheep at a stocking rate to be agreed in advance with the Trust.

5.3 Informal Public Access

Description

The site is bounded by a public bridleway to the north, and public footpaths to the west and south, the only formal public access existing currently is the footpath that clips the southernmost toe of the site, however public access is permitted through out the whole area.

Significance

In line with corporate objectives-to increase visitor access and enjoyment.

Opportunities & Constraints

O1 To make the site available for use by community groups/schools for one off events.
C 1 No parking facilities.
C2 Grazing animals on site at certain times of the year

Factors Causing Change

Encroachment of shrubs and lower branches of planted trees on to paths.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintenance of paths and entrances to allow low key pedestrian access for as wide a range of people as possible given the limitations of the site.

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

Mowing of paths for access, entrance condition checks (with repairs as necessary) - currently three a year. Maintain/repair all gates, fences, stiles, information board, and welcome signs in good condition. Brash-back shrubs and crown-lift trees which limit passage along footpaths.
All aspects to be inspected once every two years.

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	1.36	Mixed broadleaves	1999	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, Veteran Trees	Tree Preservation Order
This area is new plantation, planted in part by local volunteers and contractors, in November 1999. Major species include oak, ash, beech, walnut, sweet chestnut, hornbeam and field maple. Lesser species are hazel, crab apple, dogwood and holly. The planting blocks are situated to the south and east of the site surrounding the open area of grassland at the heart of the site. Yew seedlings grown from the trees in St Michael's churchyard have been planted along the southern edge of the woodland to create a 'yew walk' and to provide a physical marker of the association between church and land.							
2a	2.62	Mixed broadleaves	1850	Wood pasture		Informal Public Access, Veteran Trees	Tree Preservation Order
This area of open parkland is separated from the new areas of planting by a post and wire fence with 3 kissing gates to allow public access. Mature trees mainly horse chestnut, sycamore and hornbeam dominate the area and are protected under a TPO. New parkland planting has been undertaken with hornbeam, beech, walnut, oak and horse chestnut to reflect the species already present locally. The parkland area is surrounded on the north and western boundary by mature hedgerows. The grassland is grazed annually.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Thin	0.30	0	0

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.