



Gross' Wood in Shootalong Field

Management Plan

2010-2015

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Gross' Wood in Shootalong Field
Location:	Norton sub Hamdon
Grid reference:	ST473160, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 193
Area:	1.63 hectares (4.03 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This wood is surrounded by grazed farmland, an orchard, mature hedgerows and an historic millstream running along the southern boundary, all of which add to the attractiveness of the setting. There is also a seasonal pond on the western boundary and lovely views from either end of the wood, towards the village hall and Ham Hill.

2.2 Extended Description

Gross's Wood was planted as a community woodland by the local residents in 1998 as part of the Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' project. Generally the planted trees are mixed native broadleaves, although a small area of orchard was created to reflect the past tradition of the area and to give additional visual and habitat interest to the site.

The wood sits on level ground at the foot of Hamdon Hill Country Park, on the northern edge of the village of Norton Sub Hamdon. The underlying geography is Jurassic limestone, from which is produced Hamstone, a distinctive 'warm coloured limestone'. The area immediately surrounding the site is grazed farmland; although wide networks of mature hedgerows create linkages and give the landscape a wooded feel. A historic millstream runs near to the southern boundary.

There is a small seasonal pond on the western boundary. There are attractive views from either end of the site, towards the village church and Ham Hill.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location

This wood lies just north of Norton Sub Hamdon. The nearest large town is Yeovil which is 8km to the east

Overview

The site is accessible from a public footpath that passes SW-NE across the site. The entrances are through small kissing gates at either end of the footpath. A stoned road adjoins the eastern edge of the land, from which vehicular management access is obtained. The track itself is grass covered and easy to walk. Smaller trails in the wood have low overhanging branches and are maintained to a narrower width. Several long-distance trails cross the area and adjoin the site to a well provisioned network of accessible greenspaces.

Parking

Limited suburban parking is available in the lanes leading to either of the woods entrances.

Public Transport

The nearest bus stop is 500m away in Great St. Buses frequently serve it, destination Yeovil

Facilities

The nearest public toilets are situated at Ham Hill Country Park. They are 1.5km away up a steep road without pavements

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Woodland Trust's objective of increasing new native woodland has been furthered by the planting of Gross' Wood. Ongoing management of the site will allow it to develop into mature mixed native broadleaved woodland. The orchard element will grow naturally allowing the trees to develop interesting characteristics more quickly, the blossom and fruit adding attraction for visitors throughout the years.

The Trust's objective of increasing enjoyment of woodland will be furthered by maintaining and encouraging community interest in the site. Keeping the site attractive, welcoming and easily accessible for a wide range of the public will do this.

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 a wide central ride and a looping smaller path. These link the site to the village and the abundant network of public footpaths.

An information board exists to provide visitors with a map and features of interest.

A small area was planted with local fruit trees as a feature to mark the Millennium.

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. Providing areas for public access is a fundamental aim of the Trust.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: To keep the interest of the community in accessible woodland, and provide the chance for them to remain engaged with the site as it develops.

Constraint: The large Hamdon Hill Country Park provides much greater recreational activities, leaving possibilities for engaging people at Gross' Wood overshadowed.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The provision of safe, attractive woodland for quiet informal recreation, benefiting the local people, who value the site for its own sake. The orchard area will remain a feature and provide interest for visitors.

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

Objective: Ensure the site remains accessible and welcoming to the public with paths at a standard to support the usage of access category B.

Work programme:

- This will be achieved by cutting paths at a minimum of twice annually and to the standard Woodland Trust specification.
- The entrance furniture will be checked annually and maintained to ensure it remains in good condition. The site will also be checked at this time to ensure it is welcoming to visitors, free from litter and safe.
- The most vigorous shrubs along the central ride will be cut back where they encroach into the main path. This will be done once during this plan cycle.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

New native mixed broadleaf woodland planted in 1998 with a network of rides and glades and a small seasonal pond. The planting of orchard trees creates added interest.

The old hedgerows surrounding the new wood link the wood to nearby ancient woodland. Some of these hedges are overgrown, whilst others are being bought back into traditional styles of management.

Significance

As a Woods on your Doorstep site the project has been funded on the understanding that the woodland will be established and maintained for the enjoyment of future generations. This woodland furthers the Trust's objective of creating new native planting.

The small orchard area provides a link with the heritage of the area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: To create an additional area of native woodland in an area which has scattered blocks of ancient woodland.

By being allowed to develop naturally the orchard trees may start to become biologically interesting in the near future through the range of epiphytic plants and insects they can support.

Constraint: Views to the village church and from the village to Ham Hill constrained the species choice for the NW corner of the site to low growing shrubs.

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage, Deer damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Attractive native broadleaf woodland with mixed species and age structure. Woodland flora will encroach from the hedgerows as the closed canopy shades the grass out.

The additional habitat areas of the wide central ride, the seasonal pond and orchard will be well integrated into the site.

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

Objective: The trees will be left to develop naturally and take on the feel of mature woodland.

Work programme:

- It is not envisaged that any work will be required during the plan period as the woodland will develop naturally.
- Where appropriate to prolong their life and to reduce the threat of them splitting under their own weight the fruit trees will receive minor crown reduction works if inspection deems this necessary.
- To ensure the pond is not overgrown by surrounding vegetation. Cut back overhanging and encroaching vegetation once every 5 years sufficient to ensure the surface of the pond is not covered within the next 5 year period.

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	1.60	Oak (pedunculate)	1998	null		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

A level agricultural field planted with native broadleaf trees in 1998. Species planted include oak, ash, field maple, wild cherry, goat willow and woody shrubs. The site is surrounded on three sides by mature hedges that contain a variety of native species including elm and hawthorn; these are slowly beginning to spread into the wood.

The trees are reaching the age where they are becoming victim to squirrel damage, and many have lost their tops as a result.

Ground flora is slowly beginning to spread from the hedges as the recently closed canopy shades the grass.

The central ride allows views through the site, and smaller side paths create a loop.

A small area to the southern edge is planted with a variety of local fruit trees.

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.