



Stainton Low Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM Page No.

Introduction

Plan review and updating

Woodland Management Approach

Summary

1.0 Site details

2.0 Site description

2.1 Summary Description

2.2 Extended Description

3.0 Public access information

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 Long term policy

5.0 Key Features

5.1 Informal Public Access

5.2 New Native Woodland

6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Glossary

MAPS

Access

Conservation Features

Management

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Stainton Low Wood
Location:	Stainton
Grid reference:	NZ473145, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 93
Area:	9.69 hectares (23.94 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Created as part of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' campaign, Stainton Low Wood lies on the south-west edge of Middlesbrough, close to the village of Stainton in Teesside. There is great access for visitors, who can come and watch this young woodland grow.

2.2 Extended Description

Stainton Low Wood occupies 9.62 ha of former agricultural land acquired by the Trust in March 1997 on the southwest edge of Middlesbrough, close to the village of Stainton in Teesside (NZ 474 145). It consists of 8.56 ha (sub-cpt 1a) of new native woodland planted in February and March 1998 under the Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep (WOYD) campaign and a 1.06 ha strip of grassland alongside Low Lane (the B1380).

The wood is predominantly on level ground with only gentle slopes along its southwest side where it drops down to Stainton Beck. Adjacent to this watercourse grows a band of mature and semi-mature trees (predominantly ash). Two small ponds located in sub-cpt 1a that were restored during February 1998 as part of the millennium feature for this Woods on Your Doorstep site. Both ponds were re-excavated to remove accumulated silts and debris and some of the surrounding trees re-pollarded to reinvigorate them. The wood forms part of the former Tees Community Forest and local people helped to design it.

Vehicular access for management purposes is available directly off the B1380 through the field gate in the southern boundary. Public access to Stainton Low Wood is available directly off the B1380 (Low Lane) via two pedestrian squeeze stiles in the southeast-facing boundary. The west entrance leads onto a public footpath that crosses the wood heading northwest to another pedestrian stile in the northern boundary fence. The east entrance provides access onto the meadow (sub-cpt 1b) from where visitors are free to roam across site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

For those wishing to reach the wood by public transport, any bus stop in Stainton village will leave visitors with only a few minutes walk to reach the wood. Walk north-westwards out of Stainton along Strait Lane until you reach Low Lane (the B1380). A squeeze stile entrance providing access to the wood is located on the opposite side of the road a short way along the green verge. Visitors arriving by car will also need to find on-road parking in Stainton village and walk to the site from there.

Public access to Stainton Low Wood is available directly off the B1380 (Low Lane) via two pedestrian squeeze stiles in the southeast-facing boundary. The west entrance leads onto a public footpath that crosses the wood heading northwest to another pedestrian stile in the northern boundary fence. The east entrance provides access onto the meadow (sub-cpt 1b) from where visitors are free to roam across site. Stainton Low Wood occupies level ground and the grass paths and rides are mown three times a year to facilitate public access. However, please note that the meadow and public footpath still contain old rip-lines from when the wood was planted making walking difficult in some places.

For those needing public conveniences whilst visiting the wood, public toilets, including disabled facilities, can be found in Thornaby-on-Tees on Allensway a few miles to the northwest of the wood. Two RADAR toilets are also located in Thornaby; one in the town centre and one at Thornaby Station (TransPennine) available during station hours.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Stainton Low Wood will be managed in order to realise its potential as a native broadleaf high forest woodland. The objective is that over the long-term (50 to 100 years), the wood becomes self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity.

Sub-compartment 1b, will be maintained as open ground whilst the sewage pipe running under it continues to be operational. The sward will be managed to encourage its development as a wild flower meadow by only mowing the whole area once a year in September, to allow the wild flowers present time to flower and seed.

Informal public access will continue to be encouraged by annual mowing of the public footpath, permissive rides and open spaces on site to ensure these remain unobstructed for walkers.

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

Stainton Low Wood provides 9.62 ha of land open to free public access on foot for quiet enjoyment. Two pedestrian squeeze stiles in the southeast-facing boundary adjacent to the B1380 and one in the northwest-facing boundary provide points of access to the wood for walkers. A public footpath runs across the southwest side of the wood and is linked into permissive rides and open spaces that provide access to other parts of the wood. Woodland Trust welcome signs at entrances help promote access to the wood.

Significance

Providing public access to woods is a cornerstone of the Trust's management approach to its properties and is encapsulated in its corporate objective of increasing enjoyment of woodland. Stainton Low Wood is situated in an area with little or no woodland or other available land for the public to roam freely upon and so has the potential to fulfil an important function as a local amenity for the residents of Stainton and the surrounding urban areas. Being in the former Tees Forest it also contributed to the creation of the community forest around Middlesbrough.

Opportunities & Constraints

Being located close to the village of Stainton, as well as the extensive urban conurbation of Middlesbrough, places Stainton Low Wood in an ideal location for providing informal public access. The installation of a pedestrian entrance in the northeast boundary might help alleviate some access issues by making it no longer necessary to walk alongside this fast and noisy road to reach the wood's entrances. The public footpath through the southwest side of the wood provides a link between Stainsby to the north and Thornton to the south, providing a further means of accessing the wood. Within the wood itself, the paths and rides provide a circular route for walkers.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back could affect the stability of the path side vegetation.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure free public access to the wood continues to be available in the future by maintaining the three entrances currently in use and by keeping all formal rides, paths and open spaces free of obstruction for walkers.

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

The three pedestrian entrances to the woods will be inspected at least once a year to ensure they are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition for public use. Permissive rides, glades and the public footpath will be kept open for walkers by mowing three times a year and collecting litter at least once a year. Public safety will be protected by carrying out a tree safety survey at least once every three years on the trees adjacent to Stainton Beck and around the two ponds. A site risk assessment of all known hazards within the wood will also be maintained and any necessary work carried out in order to minimise the dangers associated with these. Monitor the progress of Ash die back and report back via EMC or site manager visits on the condition of the path edge vegetation and order maintenance as necessary over and above the standard EMC path side vegetation management.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Approximately 17000 native trees and shrubs were planted in February/March 1998 over a net area of 7.55 ha in sub-cpt 1a in order to create a new native broadleaved wood on former farmland, now a well established native woodland. Regeneration is evident in places with a variety of species.

Significance

Native broadleaved woodland is a vital habitat for many plants and animals found in the UK. Over the centuries, our countryside has lost most of its natural tree cover, with a consequent loss of biodiversity. By planting new native woodland we are helping to reverse this depletion and fragmented fragmentation of the countryside. Planting on former farmland provides a net gain in biodiversity that will increase as the wood develops. Consequently, increasing the area of new native woodland is one of the Trust's four key corporate objectives that the creation of Stainton Low Wood helps to fulfil.

Opportunities & Constraints

The establishment of young woodland across Stainton Low Wood appears largely to have been achieved, although heavy deer browsing at the southwest end of the wood is acting as a constraint on the development of woodland in this area. With farmland bordering the wood on most sides, the opportunity for future expansion of the wood through further land acquisition and new planting is a possibility.

Factors Causing Change

Browsing damage can be seen across the site but in particular on the Hazel coppice stools, although this is not seen as a major issue, providing a diversity of habitat in an otherwise uniform aged plantation. Due to the warm wet weather in 2014, several of the tree species are suffering from bacterial infections. Ash die back. Monitor Ash die back, this will encourage regeneration and the long term viability of the other species, some ash will remain to slowly die out and provide deadwood, whilst allowing regeneration underneath.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure that native high forest broadleaved woodland is successfully established across sub-cpt 1a and to ensure this remains healthy and vigorous so that, over the long-term, the wood becomes self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity.

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

The wood has formed into dense thickets of young trees whose canopy has closed, creating the early stages of a woodland environment. However, with Ash die back we can expect these thickets to be affected by the loss of these trees. The trees and shrubs planted to the southwest of the public footpath are likely to develop into more fragmented and open woodland due to the effects of heavy deer browsing these plants have suffered. The condition of the woodland will be monitored at least once per plan period. Some thinning work throughout the site in 2020 in conjunction with the ash dieback (thinning will favour against ash) will create a more open woodland structure, with larger gaps created through dieback will likely be filled by natural regeneration which is evident where light levels allow.

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	8.56	Oak (sessile)	1999	High forest		Informal Public Access	Community Forest
<p>Sub-cpt 1a covers a gross area of 8.56 ha of which, 7.55 ha was planted during February and March 1998 as a Woods On Your Doorstep (WOYD) site with a mix of native broadleaved trees and shrubs, dominated by ash, sessile oak, wild cherry and hazel planted into a sward consisting of low yielding grass species over a stony clay loam soil. Planting was carried out at a stocking density of 2250 trees/ha and at a spacing of 2.1m between stems using 30-45 cm high nursery transplants. A 0.6m Tubex tree shelter or NetGuard was used to protect each plant for the first six years until removed in 2004 and sent for recycling. Woodland establishment across the site has generally been good, though the trees and shrubs to the southwest of the public footpath have suffered from heavy deer browsing. The remaining 1.01 ha consists of open ground made up of grassy rides, glades and a public footpath. Two old ponds also exist within sub-cpt 1a surrounded by mature sycamore, oak, horse chestnut and willow. These were cleared of encroaching vegetation and re-excavated in 1998 when the site was planted. However, they are ephemeral in nature as they regularly dry up in seasons of low rainfall.</p>							
1b	1.06	Open ground	1998	Non-wood habitat		Informal Public Access	Community Forest
<p>Sub-cpt 1b consists of a 1.06 ha strip of grassland approximately 20m wide that runs along the southeast edge of the wood between sub-cpt 1a and the B1380. This area was not planted with trees because of an underground sewer pipe that runs along its whole length but at the request of the local community was sown in October 1997 with a low yielding grass and wild flower seed mix containing the following species: 24% Crested dog's-tail, 20% Chewings fescue, 16% Sheep's fescue, 16% Slender creeping red fescue, 4% Browntop bent 5% Ox-eye daisy, 4.5% Corn cockle, 3% Ribwort plantain, 2% Ragged robin, 1.5% Corn marigold, 1% White campion, 1% Cornflower, 1% Corn buttercup, 1% Common poppy.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	8.56	18	150
2035	1a	Thin	8.56	23	200

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.