



Pear Tree Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Pear Tree Wood
Location:	Ratby
Grid reference:	SK503065, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
Area:	18.45 hectares (45.59 acres)
Designations:	National Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Essentially a mix of native broadleaf trees, Pear Tree Wood also includes a Millennium feature of 12 Coast Redwoods, as well as a number of Scots pine. Open ground has been left at the stream, in the hope that floristic diversity will increase.

2.2 Extended Description

Pear Tree Wood is an 18.4 ha woodland creation site west of Ratby village in Leicestershire on the eastern boundary of the National Forest area. Significantly it lies between two other Woodland Trust woodlands, Martinshaw Wood to the north which consists of 100 ha's of Ancient Woodland planted with conifer currently undergoing restoration and Burroughs Wood to the south-west a 35 ha mix of mature secondary woodland and new native woodland plantation. These Woodland Trust properties form part of a larger block of native woodland, predominantly new plantation planted on private property in the local area. Path networks link these woods and public car parks exist at Burroughs and Martinshaw Woods also. Visitor access is via Markfield Road, Ratby via Martinshaw Wood or Burroughs Road, Ratby via Burroughs Wood respectively. The land was for many years permanent pasture but was ploughed and had a single crop of linseed prior to acquisition. Pear Tree Wood was named after Pear Tree Farm in Ratby Village, of which the land was part.

The Wood was designed in conjunction with local people in 1997 and planted at the end of that year. The northern 8.3 ha formed part of the Woodland Trust millennium "Woods On Your Doorstep" initiative. The Millennium Feature is a grove of 12 Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), which were a favorite tree of the Woodland Trust's founder, Kenneth Watkins OBE and were planted in commemoration of him following his death in 1997. Pear Tree Wood is essentially native broad-leaved woodland but in addition to the 12 Coast redwoods a further 3150 Scots pine were interspersed among the planting at the northern end of the property to replicate the nature of the adjacent largely coniferous Martinshaw Wood. Open ground has been left unplanted roughly 25 meters either side of a stream that runs through the property. It is anticipated that the floristic diversity of this damp grassland will increase over time.

A permissive bridle / cycle path runs NE to SW through Pear Tree Wood. The route links into Pear Tree Wood from Martinshaw Wood to the north (crossing over Markfield Road) and then follows Burroughs Road for a short distance before entering and running through the southern most compartments of Burroughs Wood. The surfaced route was created in Spring 2001 in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council. The path forms part of a long distance bridle / cycle way between Leicester and the National Forest.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Pear Tree Wood lies to the west of the village of Ratby between Markfield Road and Burroughs Road. There is a Woodland Trust Car Park on Burroughs Road which it shares with the adjacent WT Burroughs Wood site. There is no space to park cars on the northern boundary but it is an easy walk from the WT Martinshaw Car park to the Pear Tree entrance on Markfield Road by following Sustrans bridleway. There is enough space for approximately 12 cars in each of the WT car parks. Visitors are asked not to park their cars across farm gates on Burroughs Road.

The surfaced bridleway traverses the site from NE to SW and although there is a gradient the route can be used by all abilities. Further paths and rides allow access to most parts of the wood and there is a link through into the adjacent WT Burroughs Wood. Small sections of these paths are steep and muddy at times and are not negotiable with wheel chairs. The path which runs east-west parallel to the brook and links with Burroughs Wood is almost flat.

Leicester has the nearest railway station and is approximately 8 kms from Ratby. There is a bus service from St Margaret's Bus Station in Leicester to Ratby (Service 27). The walk from Dane Hill (Ratby) along Burroughs Road to the site is about half a mile.

There are no Public toilets with 5 miles of the site.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The primary objective pertaining to the Woodland Trusts "Conservation" corporate aim is to allow Pear Tree Wood to develop into healthy, resilient mature woodland consisting of multiple native tree and shrub species of varying age classes and to preserve the woodland in perpetuity. The primary plan is to allow this to take place with minimal management intervention. Any interventions that do take place will come about as a result of recommendations made during the periodic Woodland Condition Assessments carried out prior to each management plan review in conjunction with assessments made during New Native Woodland Key Feature Observations. Any interventions will come out of a necessity to promote the woodlands resilience in the light of threats from pests and disease such as Ash Dieback and also environmental changes resulting from climate change. That said, there may be the potential for economic thinning at Pear Tree Wood as per the Woodland Trusts "Production of Timber Policy" document. Timber production should always be a secondary objective on Woodland Trust property and should only take place where the act of economic harvesting is not of detriment to the Woodland Trusts primary corporate objectives of Conservation, People and Woodland Creation. Economic thinning should only take place if financially viable, evidence that this is the case would be required before any works of this type take place on site. The combination of an environmental assessment and indicative costings should indicate suitability and will be investigated over coming management plan periods to ascertain Pear Tree Woods potential for Economic Timber Production.

In order to meet the Woodland Trusts "Public" corporate aim Pear Tree Wood will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation at all times with regular path cuts and entrance and welcome signage maintenance taking place annually as part of the Estates Management Contract associated with the property.

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

Pear Tree Wood is located on the edge of the village of Ratby and is well connected by the local public access network into surrounding blocks of woodland and via Martinshaw Wood the village of Groby. The main access point would be from Markfield Road via Martinshaw Wood and associated car park or from Burroughs Road via Burroughs Wood and its associated car park. A series of internal paths link these three properties together and provide circular walks within the woodland linking also into neighbouring privately owned woodlands. Pear Tree Wood also hosts a section of a surfaced Sustrans route for horses, bicycles and pedestrians which links Leicester to the National Forest area.

Significance

The paths at Pear Tree Wood are important in fulfilling the Woodland Trusts corporate objective associated with "People"; a publicly accessible path network in beautiful green space open to the public free of charge, 24/7. The woodland is located in the National Forest area and links with other woodlands in the area and the wider rights of way network via its paths and rides. Open access to walkers remains throughout with the possibility of long woodland walks within the Forest having become a reality. Public access and its promotion is an important objective of the National Forest initiative, the access provided at Pear Tree Wood forms an important contribution to that wider goal and is symbolic of on-going successful partnership working between the Woodland Trust and The National Forest Company.

Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland is an important amenity resource for local people; sitting within the National Forest it fits nicely into the wider public rights of way network.

There is the potential for future partnership working with the National Forest Company in terms of access promotion and linking the property into the wider National Forest area.

The National Forest long distance surfaced cycle / bridleway (Sustrans route) that runs through the wood allows the Woodland Trust to promote itself to an array of visitors of all abilities. Less abled visitors should be able to take advantage of this high quality track via disabled access kissing gates installed by Leicestershire County Council in 2010.

A possible constraint brought on by the Sustrans route is the undesirable use of the wider property by horses, mountain bikes, motorbikes etc. However at the time of writing this does not appear to be a significant issue.

Factors Causing Change
Potentially the misuse of the wider path network within the woodland by horses, mountain bikes, motor bikes, quads etc.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To maintain the current path network, Woodland Trust "Welcome" signage and entrances in perpetuity.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
To mow the paths three times a year in May, July and September. To maintain the Woodland Trust "Welcome" signage at the entrances, to be inspected and cleaned by the contractor annually in July. To maintain the existing pedestrian access points as part of the visits made by the contractor as described above. All of the above to be included in the Estates Management Contract for the property.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Pear Tree Wood (18ha) along with Martinshaw (100ha - ASNW / PAWS), Burroughs Wood (35 ha) and new native woodland creation on adjacent privately owned property has become an integral part of one of the largest continuous blocks of woodland in Leicestershire. The integrated planting of conifers adjacent to Martinshaw aims to provide both a visual sense of continuity as well as opportunities for wildlife.

Pear Tree Wood is native broadleaf plantation planted in 1997 and consisting of ash and oak as the main tree species. 2250 trees were planted per hectare and individually protected against rabbits and hares using tree shelters; 1350 Scots pine and 12 Coast redwoods were planted in a grove at the highest point on the northern boundary.

Significance

Pear Tree Wood is one of many new woodlands planted in and making up National Forest area. Locally Pear Tree Wood is one of a number of new woodland plantations which occupy a significant area on the edge of Ratby village. The woodland contributes greatly to biodiversity in an area that consists predominantly of agricultural fields and urban conurbation being close to the edge of Leicester. Pear Tree Wood plays an important role in buffering and extending upon the adjacent Martinshaw ASNW / PAWS woodland.

Pear Tree Wood achieves the Woodland Trusts corporate objective associated with "Woodland Creation" and that associated with "Conservation".

Opportunities & Constraints

Pear Tree Wood sits within a wider block of woodland creation in the local area in what is otherwise predominantly agricultural fields adjacent to Ratby village; there may be further opportunities in the future for joint partnership working with both the National Forest Company and other local landowners pertaining to a range of management and promotional activities.

Pear Tree Wood forms an important buffer, link and add on to adjacent Martinshaw Wood ASNW / PAWS.

The M1 motorway passes through Martinshaw Wood and Markfield Road runs between Pear Tree Wood forming barriers to species movement.

Ash die-back is present at Pear Tree Wood in its early stages at the time of writing - Given that ash is the main species component at Pear Tree Wood and that species planting occurs in single species blocks its presence is a concern.

Squirrel and deer damage has been noted at the property, though not yet significant it should none the less be monitored via the Woodland Condition Assessments and control measures undertaken where and when appropriate.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback has been noted at the property and could have significant impacts to the woodland in the longer term.

Squirrel and deer damage has been noted at the property, though not yet significant it should none the less be monitored via the Woodland Condition Assessments and control measures undertaken where and when appropriate.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To allow the woodland to develop into native high-forest with trees and shrubs of varying age classes and species types. The woodland will reach this state primarily via natural processes through a minimum intervention management approach. "Woodland Condition Assessments" will inform management going into the future, interventions only taking place if highlighted as necessary by the Woodland Condition Assessments; the aim being to ensure the long term resilience of the woodland in perpetuity.

To explore the opportunities associated with economic thinning at Pear Tree Wood and the practical and economic feasibility of related operations once the woodland has passed the 20 year mark as per the Woodland Trusts "Woodland Condition Assessment - Guidance for Site Managers" document and following the criterion stipulated in the Woodland Trusts "Timber Production Policy" document. These assessment will be used to inform ongoing management plan reviews.

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

Monitor the woodland annually to assess its health and well-being via the New-Native Woodland Key Feature observation, pay particular attention to the development and effects of ash die-back. Once in the plan period, just prior to the next management plan review, assess the woodland using a "Woodland Condition Assessment" the results of which will inform the next management plan review in 5 years' time.

Assess the economic and practical feasibility of commercial thinning's at Pear Tree Wood in 2020 incorporating an Environmental Risk Assessment and an estimate of costs versus profit / benefits and make a decision as to whether economic thinning's are viable and whether they have a part to play in the management of the woodland going forward into the future.

Some thinning of ash maybe required in 2020 where it is over-topping and shading out other native species.

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	18.40	Ash	1997	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	National Forest
<p>18.4 ha woodland creation site planted in 1997 with 17 ha of native broadleaf trees and 1.4 ha Scots pine to emulate Martinshaw Wood to the north. Up to 20% of this area remains unplanted, being a series of paths, including a long distance surfaced bridle path and a wet meadow area either side of a bisecting stream. Trees are planted at 2250 / ha with mainly oak, ash and birch together with woody shrubs such as hazel and hawthorn. 1350 Scots pine and 12 Coast redwoods in a grove at the highest point have also been included. A footbridge crosses the stream at the western end and a bridle bridge at the eastern.</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 on 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.