



Netherwood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Netherwood
Location:	Stoke Lacy
Grid reference:	SO620491, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 149
Area:	3.80 hectares (9.39 acres)
Designations:	Conservation Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Netherwood is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands, created to commemorate the Millennium. It lies near the village of Stoke Lacy, from where the woodland is easily accessed.

2.2 Extended Description

Netherwood was purchased as a part of the Woodlands On Your Doorstep campaign and was heavily supported by the local community who contributed to the purchase, design and choice of millennium feature. Netherwood is an ex arable agricultural field planted with a mix of locally typical broadleaved native species in 1999. The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 101 Herefordshire Plateau. Woodland tends to play a minor role within this largely arable and very rural landscape, although there are 10 ancient woodland sites all under 6Ha in size and well scattered in the vicinity; the nearest is Hopton Dingle less than a mile away, and hence Netherwood is well in keeping within the wider landscape.

Netherwood is fringed by mature trees on all boundaries. To the east ash grows as standards within neat boundary hedges dominated by hawthorn. To the west, a boundary made by the river Lodon, mature Alder dominates with some ash and willow (including pollarded examples of both). Mature willow trees form an open canopy to the north of the site and over-shadow a small, shallow sided, shallow depth pond. The summit of the site is located towards the centre and gentle slopes lead off this area grading to a flat area towards the south of the site.

The planting design incorporates a double circular permissive path way and a 10 tonne stone millennium feature engraved with poetry verse. The local community designed the feature and buried a time capsule before the stone was placed in position. The time capsule has been filled with mixed contemporary memorabilia including clay, oven fired name plates for the local community.

The planting emulates the woodland community NVC W6 and W10. W6 areas are located on the edges of the watercourses and in wet flushes; alder dominates these areas and is complimented by birch, thorn, ash, oak, guelder rose and salix spp. The majority is covered with W8 woodland dominated by ash and oak that is complimented by field maple, thorn, cherry, hazel, rowan and guelder rose.

Netherwood is easily accessed from the village of Stoke Lacy via a quiet county highway; in turn the village is linked to others in the landscape via the PROW network. Access is served via a management gateway off the county highway and this is accompanied by pedestrian access and enough parking for one vehicle (out with Woodland Trust property).

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The site has a field gate entrance from the public highway [a country lane]. Frontage is only limited to the public highway but adequate to provide public /management access.

There is a narrow grass verge between the road frontage boundary and the public highway which is a technical ransom strip although rather more of academic interest than of practical significance as the existing farm gate entrance has long been in use.

Netherwood is situated on the outskirts of the village of Stoke Lacy. It is in a rural landscape that perhaps has an unusually low density of public right of way. The paths through Netherwood are grassy flat to moderately steep. In wet weather the lower paths can become wet and greasy. The main entrance is a pedestrian kissing gate and this obstructs all but pedestrian access.

There is parking at the main entrance for one vehicle.

The following service stops at Stoke Lacy, A465 Bromyard Road, adj, Plough Inn.

Service Number: 419

Provider: Bromyard Omnibus Co., Bromyard

There are no public conveniences within 5 miles of the site.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

To create and maintain a diverse, irregular high-forest structure comprised of native broadleaved species and maintained by regular successive thinning and coppicing interventions to maximise biodiversity and natural regeneration opportunities.

The site should be safe and welcoming in terms of signage and/or interpretation as well as presentation and quality of access paths and tracks.

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

The site is used chiefly by members of the local community, residents of Stoke Lacy. Community involvement and interest in Netherwood has continued in the years following the planting event (1999); signs, tidy entrance furniture, well-mown rides and predominately grassy glades all add to the attraction for visitors. Where rides are narrow the culmination of ride side trees and people walking on the track result in wet sections of muddy path that detracts from the visitor experience.

The seats and the millennium feature offer visitors the chance to stop and observe the tranquil internal landscape. A 10 year anniversary event was held at Netherwood in 2010; the area has previously been use by a local pfor forest school activities.

All threshold signage has been updated in 2018.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that everyone should recognise that trees and woods are an essential part of a healthy environment and that there should be a wood with open access close to everyone's home. We aim to achieve that through the provision of public access to Netherwood.

Opportunities & Constraints

To cut back trees and shrubs from narrow sections of pathways to allow the development of grass vegetation and drying out of the ride surface.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site should be safe and welcoming in terms of signage and/or interpretation as well as presentation and quality of access paths and tracks.

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

Review current entrance as part of the Secondary Woodland objective for forestry access but ensure it is adequate and presentable for public access use.

Ensure the site is maintained to a high amenity standard in terms of path cuts, appropriate signage is up to date and maintained and that the site remains litter free and welcoming to the public.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Netherwood is an ex arable agricultural field planted with a mix of locally typical broadleaved native species in 1999. Planting emulates the woodland community NVC W6 and W10. Cpt 1a is dominated by willow and is largely a natural area, cpt 1b, is an even-aged ash dominated plantation with pockets of other species mostly, oak as well as field maple, cherry and hazel. In line with the NVC type, thorn, rowan and guilder rose have also been planted.

Traditional hedges, maintained through regular flailing create external boundaries with arable and pasture agricultural land. Mature ash and willow pollards provide for micro habitats associated with veteran and ancient trees.

In terms of past management, other than some light conservation thinning the wood has largely been unmanaged since planting. The stands are now rather dense and require opening to enable better canopy development and promotion of a more diverse structure in the long-term.

There has been some historic presence of Japanese knotweed which has been spotted again recently.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that there should be twice as much native tree cover like that at Netherwood in the UK. Through managing Netherwood we aim to provide it as an example of this and deliver our aim of protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future.

Opportunities & Constraints

Machinery access into the wood is good, the site being relatively flat with wide unsurfaced tracks. The potential stacking area adjacent to the main entrance however requires further enlargement to accommodate full lorry access.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback will over time have a considerable effect on the tree species composition of the woodland. Given the presence of other species, it is envisioned that a woodland canopy will survive however, thinning interventions should aim to favour non-ash species which are currently being suppressed by ash.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create and maintain a diverse, irregular high-forest structure comprised of native broadleaved species and maintained by regular successive thinning and coppicing interventions to maximise biodiversity and natural regeneration opportunities.

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

Selectively thin cpt 1b by roughly 20% basal area (BA) to open up and promote canopy development, favour non-ash tree species currently being suppressed as a way of mitigating future ash dieback, and over time develop a more irregular structure facilitating natural regeneration opportunities, creating a more diverse and varied habitat for associated species.

Widen main access rides by targetting track edge trees for removal during harvesting operations, with the aim of promoting more varied ride-side habitat for associated species

Carry out feasibility study during 2019 of current management access entrance for harvesting purposes and upgrade as required.

Identify scope of japanese knotweed and implement control measures with the aim of eradication within the plan 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	0.45	other willows	1930	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>An area dominated by mature willows that over shadow a shallow sided and shallow depth pond habitat. It is expected that the pond habitat has been developed since the 1980's. The external boundary of 1a is made of a very large garden to a residential property. A pedestrian access from the residential boundary has been granted. This boundary has been established with a hawthorn hedge planted on the Woodland Trust side of the stock fence boundary line. Planting occurred in 2000.</p>							
1b	3.57	Ash	1999	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>1b represents the main woodland creation area. Alder dominated woodland is located along the sides of the River Lodon and within the flatter area to the south of the site. This W6 woodland type represents one third of the total woodland creation area. The remaining two thirds have been planted to resemble NVC W10 and are dominated by oak and ash. Shrubs line the permissive footpath network that provides adequate access for visitors and a pleasurable experience amongst the grassy rides and glades and developing woodland. The banks of the Lodon are lined with mature Alder and willow. There is no woodland cover on the banks of the Lodon within a 5km distance. The pollards, dominated by willow but including one ash are located in 1b within the riparian zone on the west. This boundary has been designated a Conservation feature of the site and this can be seen on the Conservation Features map as reference point C1.1b includes the 10 tonne granite rock donated by Nash Rocks. This is a centre piece and focus for many site visitors. Two seats have been located to the sides of the footpath network by the local community, these were installed in 2002.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1b	Thin	3.57	21	75
2025	1b	Thin	3.57	21	75
2029	1b	Thin	3.57	25	90
2034	1b	Thin	3.57	25	90

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.