



Earl's Lane Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Earl's Lane Wood
Location:	Cleeve Prior
Grid reference:	SP082492, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 150
Area:	1.77 hectares (4.37 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Earl's Lane Wood sits on the edge of the village of Cleeve Prior in Hereford and Worcester. While many visitors cross the wood to access adjoining sites where there is more room for recreation, others prefer the quiet seclusion of the peaceful glade area.

2.2 Extended Description

Formerly an area of improved pasture, Earl's Lane Wood now forms a small but important woodland creation site on the fringe of the village of Cleeve Prior. The woodland creation project here formed part of a successful nationwide scheme of 200 community woodlands planted in close proximity to peoples homes. The site which slopes gently to the South-East, was planted in the winter of 1999/2000 using a mixture of native broadleaved species including Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn and Crab apple and the help of local volunteers.

The woods main public access point is through a kissing gate off the public highway to the north of the site. However the site link also conveniently links to the village millennium green which lies to the south and east of the site and is regularly used by local children and their parents as an alternative off road route to the local school. There is a sinuous linear path running in a NE-SW direction through the wood linking to the millennium green, which includes a short detour to a glade area in the north eastern corner. This open glade area is maintained as a place for visitors to enjoy (a request of those attending the design meeting here in the summer of 1999), possibly with the view of installing an informal seat within it in the future.

Although the site is small, the fact it links into and forms part of a much larger area of land open for public enjoyment, makes the site particularly important in terms of public access. The focal point in terms of key features at the site will therefore, focus on management work to ensure the existing access and visitor interest and enjoyment is maintained.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Situated on the edge of the pretty village of Cleeve Prior. Main access is via a kissing gate off the main road on the sites western boundary. There is also an opening at the south of the site via the footpath that runs through the adjoining millennium green. There is a linear footpath route (approximately 200m) that runs through the site connecting to a longer walk through the green and onto other parts of the village. The path is quite flat and normally well drained and dry underfoot except in extreme wet weather. Parking very limited - just one vehicle in the gateway by the road on the western boundary, alternatively one can park in the village and walk to the wood.

Nearest bus stop - in the nearby town of Bidford on Avon to the North of Cleeve Priors approximately 2 miles away

Nearest Railway station - Honeybourne railway Station 3.4 miles away

Nearest toilet - Evesham Oat Street, Evesham approx 5.5 miles away.

** Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for the site includes the continued development of native broadleaf woodland which will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation. In accordance with the Trusts Woodland Management Approach (WMA) the woodland will be allowed to develop naturally over the plan period. Intervention will be limited to carrying out essential tree safety work, clearance around natural regeneration and possibly some ride edge coppicing where this is seen to benefit visitor access enjoyment. Paths will be maintained so as to allow for easy access. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public enjoyment is the key feature at this site as it is already well used and enjoyed by the public. The permissive path forms part of a more extensive off road alternative, reaching other parts of the village. Long term therefore, the maintenance of existing access points and the paths through the site will remain a priority to ensure that visitors feel free and welcome to enjoy the site all year round.

KF1 - Informal Public Access
KF2 - New Native Woodland

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 main visitor access point is from the main public highway which runs outside the western boundary of the site and through a less-able kissing gate set back off the road within estate works, which includes a management gate as the sites main management access point. From here visitors can follow a sinuous linear route through the site, two thirds the way along the path diverges to the north east into an open glade, and to the south east to continue outside of Woodland Trust land in trust ownership, to connect with the millennium green to the south and east of the site. The main path through the wood slopes gently to the south east, and is clear and easy to follow as the path is maintained by an annual mowing programme.

While there is no real parking provision at the site, many of the visitors including children and parents on foot, who use the route through the wood and the millennium green as an off road alternative to arriving at the local school. As such the site providing both a useful means of crossing the village as well as a beautiful and interesting place to visit in order to relax or follow informal leisure pursuits.

Significance

The site provides a valuable, interesting and enjoyable place for local people in particular to visit and enjoy. In addition to this, the site also links to the village millennium green which provides an alternative off road "green route" for children and their parents to reach other parts of the village including the local school.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

This site lies in an area where the depth of topsoil is very shallow before reaching the bedrock. This in turn may have an effect on the speed and establishment of planted trees, and also should be considered when undertaking any estate or visitor access work as setting posts in the ground etc. is very difficult here on account of this. The size, location and layout of the site means that parking is very limited here.

Opportunities:-

The site is well used and valued as a through route as well as a woodland creation site to visit in its own right.

Factors Causing Change

Visitor numbers

Maturing trees near to main rides

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland which has welcoming and inviting access points which are easy to use and a path which is easy to follow and negotiate and provides visitors with interesting internal views of the wood.

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

Mow internal paths each summer to a minimum of 2 metres width and trim around entrances, signs etc. Check all facilities and signage for suitability/stability/safety on an annual basis and undertake remedial work where needed.

Infrastructure at the entrance leading onto the site from the main road is to be replaced like for like and new up-to-date signage to be installed at both entrances.

Ride side coppicing will take place where rides have become narrow and enclosure, and due to lack of light/space can become muddy/slippery in wetter weather. Total for plan period will be approximately 40m, unless further coppicing over the plan period is deemed necessary for public access issues.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Formerly an area of improved pasture, The site which slopes gently to the South-East, was planted in the winter of 1999/2000 using a mixture of native broadleaved species including Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn and Crab apple and the help of local volunteers. Ground flora such as pyramidal orchids, cut-leaved cranesbill, vetch and slender trefoil can be found on ride edges and clearings.

Significance

The creation of new native broadleaved woodland is an aim of the Woodland Trust and has also been identified as a priority by the Government in The England Forestry Strategy. The location of Earl's Lane Wood within a landscape regionally poor in woodland, and near an area of population means that the wood helps deliver national and regional forestry strategy goals, and the Woodland Trusts own core objectives of creating new native woodland and increasing public awareness in woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities - link to a larger area of open space, the millenium green next door and provides a short cut link to the school without the need to use the busy and narrow road on foot.

Constraints - the relatively small size of the woodland and bedrock feature which may affect planted trees as they develop

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage

Ash dieback (Chalara) due to the significant amount planted on the site, Other tree diseases

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The establishment of a robust and diverse native broadleaf woodland.

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

To allow the wood to develop naturally over this plan period with exception of essential tree safety work, some boundary hedge work against the main road, clearance around natural regeneration and possibly some ride edge coppicing where this will enhance visitor enjoyment.

Small scale halo thinning to take place around natural regeneration found with the stand and trees of good form/preferred species such as well developed oak. Natural regeneration mainly consists of cherry, with ash and maple seedlings also observed on site. Thinning around a number of established oaks and maples will also be beneficial, allowing increased room for canopy development. Volumes for thinning will not exceed 5m³ and therefore will not require a felling licence. Due the scale of the operation, timber will left in habitat piles to rot down in the interior of the stand adding a level of deadwood inon the woodland floor.

Ride side coppicing will take place where rides have become narrow and enclosure, and due to lack of light/space can become muddy/slippery in wetter weather. Total for plan period will be approximately 40m, unless further coppicing is deemed necessary for public access issues.

Brushcut blackthorn suckers on ride edge to maintain small clear areas for current populations of ground flora such as orchids and cranesbill.

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	1.84	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access	
An area of native broadleaved planting at 3.1m spacing, planted in the winter of 1999/2000. Native species mix.							

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.