



# Hatherstone Wood

## Management Plan 2018-2023

## MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

| <b>ITEM</b>                          | <b>Page No.</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 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 Secondary Woodland               |                 |
| 5.2 Informal Public Access           |                 |
| 6.0 Work Programme                   |                 |
| Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions |                 |
| Glossary                             |                 |
| <br>                                 |                 |
| <b>MAPS</b>                          |                 |
| 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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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

|                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Site name:</b>      | Hatherstone Wood                    |
| <b>Location:</b>       | West Coker, nr Yeovil               |
| <b>Grid reference:</b> | ST526127, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 194 |
| <b>Area:</b>           | 3.44 hectares (8.50 acres)          |
| <b>Designations:</b>   | Special Landscape Area              |

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Public access is available directly from the public road (Primrose Hill) adjoining the site. A public footpath from the direction of the adjoining village of East Coker enters the public road opposite this site, thus connecting it into the surrounding public footpath network.

A figure-of-eight path runs through the site. This is unsurfaced and grass-topped. The entire site is on a gentle slope. A large kissing gate provides access at the main entrance which will allow pushchairs and small wheelchairs through. The other entrance is reached across three steps and by crossing a narrow bridge.

The wood has parking for up to four cars in the gateway from Primrose Hill.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Hatherstone Wood lies on a gently north facing slope midway between the villages of West Coker, East Coker and Hardington Mandeville. The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 140 Yeovil Scarplands, where woodland tends to be small and scattered, only forming 4% of the highly rural farmed landscape. It was planted with native mixed broadleaves in 1999 as part of the Woods on Your Doorstep Millennium project.

A small clump of Scots pine was planted at the top of the hill reflecting local coniferous hill top plantings. A pond was created in a damp area in 2004 at the centre of the site. A hamstone bench and some large hamstone rocks were placed on site as features to mark the Millennium. The site is bound by mixed hedgerows, with a public highway running along the eastern boundary.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

#### General Location

The wood lies south of the village of West Coker, which is 3km south-west of Yeovil.

#### Overview

Public access is available directly from the public road (Primrose Hill) adjoining the site. A public footpath from the direction of the adjoining village of East Coker enters the public road opposite this site, thus connecting it into the surrounding public footpath network.

A figure-of-eight path runs through the site. This is unsurfaced and grass-topped. The entire site is on a gentle slope. A large kissing gate provides access at the main entrance which will allow pushchairs and small wheelchairs through. The other entrance is reached across 3 steps and by crossing a narrow bridge.

#### Parking

The wood has parking for up to 4 cars in the gateway from Primrose Hill

#### Public Transport

The nearest bus stop is at Holywell Cross. This is 300m away at the bottom of a steep road which is without pavement.

#### Facilities

No public toilets are known in the immediate vicinity. The closest are thought to be at the service station on the A30 just outside Yeovil

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Woodland Trust's aim of increasing new native woodland has been partially fulfilled by the planting of Hatherstone Wood. It will be sustained by the on-going management of the site as native broadleaved woodland with the associated habitats of rides, glades and pond.

The Woodland Trust's belief of accessible woodland within reach of people's home will be partially fulfilled by, maintaining the rides and entrances for the required level of public access.

## 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 Secondary Woodland

#### Description

Native broadleaved wood planted 1999 with predominantly oak, ash, field maple and woody shrubs reflecting the general woodland type of the area. There is a small area of Scots pine planted to emulate similar hilltop coniferous plantations. The pond was created on a wetland flush with a small area of wild flowers sown in the adjacent glade. The trees struggled to grow in the early years meaning that the wood has not developed as quickly as others planted around the same time. There are few records of species present within the woods. However, local records taken within one km vicinity record the presence of dormice, field mouse and numerous woodland birds in the area, including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk and Tree Creeper.

Management has been largely limited to establishment and tending with some minor areas of coppicing. The ash, which is a major component of the wood has developed ash die-back which will significantly alter the structure, light levels and composition of the wood over the coming 5 year plan period and beyond.

#### Significance

As a Woods on your Doorstep site the project has been funded on the understanding that woodland will be established and maintained for future generations. The creation of the new wood and local involvement both in planting and management helps achieve the Trust's aim of increasing new native woodland and people's understanding and enjoyment of woods.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The presence of ash dieback poses an opportunity for natural thinning of the plantation as mortality occurs

As the long term impact of ash dieback is unknown, WT policy is to retain ash trees for as long as possible (where they present no major health and safety risk) in case some trees prove to have any resistance / tolerance to the disease.

#### Factors Causing Change

Tree disease in particular ash die back will have a major impact on the structure, light levels and composition of the wood. It is likely as mortality occurs, increased light will lead naturally to increased natural regeneration opportunities

Squirrel and Deer may potentially affect natural regeneration and tree growth and will need to be assessed in year 5 of the plan

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)



Attractive native broadleaf woodland managed as high forest with mixed species and age structure and additional habitats i.e. pond, rides and glades.

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

The woodland will be left to develop as naturally as possible in light of the potential changes caused through the development of ash dieback.

1. As ash dieback has been identified as present during 2017 / 18 no interventions within the stands will take place until the long-term effects of the disease and its development become clear. Some safety work may be required around the overhead power lines, which will need to be carried out by Western Power Contractors.
2. The pond should be considered self-maintaining and be allowed to continue to develop a mixture of fauna and flora during the plan period with no further management intervention.
3. Open rides will be cut once annually to maintain transitional open/successional woodland habitat
4. The small wild flower area created by volunteers is now established and will be cut once annually along with the rides after it has flowered in August.
5. The hedgerow along the road edge will be cut in February each year to comply with our legal obligations

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

Public access is available with rides crossing and circulating the site. A formal entrance exists off the public highway with a small area for parking and there is a minor entrance off the road at the southern end of the site. A locally made hamstone seat and some hamstone offcuts are the millennium feature.

### Significance

Created as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project, the local community have been involved in the fundraising, design and planting of the site. Public access is vital to ensure on-going support for the Trust's work and achieves the Trust's belief that people should have accessible woodland near their homes

### Opportunities & Constraints

The Friends of Hatherstone Wood community group provides an opportunity to engage local people in the wood that would not be there without them.

### Factors Causing Change

The onset of ash dieback has reduced the potential for the local community to be involved in the direct practical management of the wood as a different approach is adopted while the long-term effects of the disease are become clear. There is a risk that this could lead to a decline in local interest in the site.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Provide safe, attractive, open access woodland for quiet informal recreation for the benefit of local people. The hamstone features will be maintained to enhance visitor enjoyment.

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

The objective is to ensure the site is accessible to the public with paths and rides maintained at a level appropriate to usage.  
This will be achieved by cutting paths three times each year and maintaining access points, seats throughout their safe working life.

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## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

| Year | Type of Work | Description | Due By |
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|
|------|--------------|-------------|--------|

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

| Cpt No.   | Area (ha) | Main Species             | Year | Management Regime | Major Management Constraints | Key Features Present                       | Designations           |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1a  | 3.43      | Mixed native broadleaves | 1999 | High forest       |                              | Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | Special Landscape Area |
| <p>Site planted in Q4 1999 with 25% oak, 30% ash, 25% wild cherry, small leaved lime and mixed shrubs. A small group of Scots pine have been planted on a highpoint. There are wide rides circulating the site with a central glade around a pond.</p> <p>Representatives from the three surrounding parishes have formed a group to help care for the site. They raised funds for the creation of the pond and created a wild flower area.</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 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.