



Girton

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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: | Girton |
| Location: | Girton |
| Grid reference: | TL426624, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154 |
| Area: | 2.42 hectares (5.98 acres) |
| Designations: | Green Belt |

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Girton Wood is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands, created to commemorate the Millennium. As well as young broadleaf woodland, the site features mature hedgerows and a central glade, where you can sit on the Millennium seat and enjoy the view.

2.2 Extended Description

Girton Wood was planted with a wide range of native broadleaved species in December 2000 as part of The Wood On Your Doorstep programme. Prior to Trust ownership the site was an uncultivated arable field. Mature hedgerows run along the southern, eastern and part of the western boundaries. The strip of land to the east of the wood (locally called the "Pan Handel") is believed to have been a green lane at one time and, although it is now a dead end.

The trees have established well, although a little slowly. Closed canopy is achieved throughout most of the site with an average top height of 5 meters in 2016.

Soil is a chalky-clay loam and therefore slowly permeable, but prone to waterlogging in periods of heavy or prolonged rain and can be a long time drying out.

A network of Grassy paths provide visitors with a choice of circular routes around the wood. A seat has been installed in the central glade of the wood as the millennium feature. Car parking is available in the recreation ground car park with space for upwards of 40 cars.

The key features are:

- Informal Public Access
- New Native Woodland

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access across the recreation ground located next to the church in the centre of the village, or on the surfaced path up past school and along the side on the sports pitches Internal paths level and in good condition but unsurfaced and so can become muddy in wet weather. Plenty of parking available in recreation ground car park

Bus stop next to entrance to recreation ground. For bus routes and times visit www.traveline.org.uk or ring Traveline on 08712002233. No information available on public toilets

Entrances have no obstructions

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Girton wood will be allowed to develop naturally wherever possible. Areas of grassland within Girton wood will be maintained as areas of open ground adding further diversity to the site. Public access will be maintained at the current level through regular path maintenance, including access features and internal infrastructure, ensuring the path network will be welcoming and kept open and easy to use.

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 wood is well serviced with a network of grassy paths allowing free public access. Formal entrances have been created from the recreation ground where there is a car park. Underlying soils are slow draining making the paths seasonally quite muddy in places.

Significance

As part of the WOYD project it is important to maintain the site to a high standard for informal public access. Accessible woodland is at a premium in the local area, and the wood has become a significant facility for the village and is well supported by the parish council.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

To involve the local community in managing the wood

School very close by

Close ties to the parish council.

Constraints:

Relatively small site.

Seasonally muddy

Factors Causing Change

Encroaching vegetation.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Girton wood will be a key part of open access and recreation for the surrounding village, regularly enjoyed and valued by the wider community.

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

To maintain site as an area of public open access, with ride system cut to a minimum of 2m wide, 3 times through the growing season to allow unhindered access for the public. Areas of open space are not allowed to scrub up with natural regeneration. Entrances kept in a presentable and tidy condition.

Works undertaken as identified following annual inspection by site manager.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

The site was planted up as broadleaved woodland in December 2000 using species native to the area. Now well established, the area is developing a "woodland feel" with a closed canopy throughout.

Significance

Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in the country - any increase in woodland, especially in the Green Belt, will benefit people, wildlife and the landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity:

Locally important habitat, linked to hedgerows

Constraints:

Small island habitat

Factors Causing Change

Tree Pests and disease. (chalara - 2014)

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A robust and diverse secondary native broadleaved woodland with shrubby edge, Managed to support natural processes with periodic ride edge coppice to promote access and maintain the shrubby edge.

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

Intervention based on promoting "resilience" and encouraging a varied age and species structure. Deadwood will be left in situ where it is safe to do so. Ride/ footpath edges will be timed back or coppiced as needed (see KF1). While ash dieback is known to be on site and affecting most ash trees, it is expected that there is enough diversity of planting and sufficient stand diversity to absorb the loss. Summer inspections should be carried out every 2 years by the site manager to monitor the decline of ash and gauge the need for intervention.

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 | 2.51 | Oak (pedunculate) | 2000 | High forest | | Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland | Green Belt |

Prior to Trust ownership, this flat square field had been left uncultivated. Planted in December 2000 as native broadleaved woodland using the following species: oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam, silver birch, crab apple, willow, alder and woody shrubs (hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, buckthorn, guelder rose and spindle). Ash regeneration has been prolific in the western half of the wood, but is suffering from dieback (first noted 2014)

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.