WOODLAND TRUST

Drovers Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Drovers Wood
Location:	Upper Breinton
Grid reference:	SO477406, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 149
Area:	3.20 hectares (7.91 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Drovers Wood was established by the local community in 2001. A pair of oak benches located by two mature oak are a feature of the site as are views of the Malvern Hills. Plenty of paths cross the wood and access is from bridleways on all sides.

2.2 Extended Description

Drovers wood was established in 2001 as a Woodland On Your Doorstep, it lies 200m from a Herefordshire Nature Trust woodland reserve named Green Lane Wood. The site lies just outside of Hereford itself, within National Character Area (NCA) 100 Herefordshire lowlands. Further afield in the landscape (1.2km) lies the River Wye SSSI and 1.69 Km from the nearest small concentration of AW named Broomy Rise Coppice (located to the south and on the southern banks of the River Wye). Located 4.02 km distance to the north is the Woodland Trust property Credenhill Park Wood.

Formerly in arable production Drovers wood was seeded with a non vigorous grass seed mix prior to planting with mixed native broadleaves in 2001; considerable efforts were made by the local community at public planting events (despite snowy weather!). Species include Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch and Crab Apple with Woody shrubs comprising Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Guelder Rose, Elder, Wild Privet and Spindle. Mature hedgerows dominated by blackthorn provide shelter on the south and west boundaries, the latter including a number of mature trees. A small number of large mature Oaks are present and one example has been pollarded. The planting design accommodates the mature Oaks into internal open space and glades.

The site is well linked to the local public right of way network which in turn links the site to the Wye Valley Walk. A pair of well fashioned Oak benches provides Drovers wood with a commemorative Millennium Feature. The name was chosen through public consultation prior to establishing the site and derives from the use of the bridleway as a route to market for drovers. An internal permissive path network has been incorporated into the planting design and this is maintained through annual mowing regime. The design emphasises views to the north-east (and to the Malvern Hills) and the mature trees within the site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

A public bridlepath [BT9] leads southwards from Kings Acre Road [A438] crossing the western edge of the field . This passes onwards across a private track to meet the Upper Breinton Lane further to the south of the site.

A public bridleway [BT4] passes adjacent the southern boundary of the site in an east- west direction. This is actually outside the site to be acquired.

Public access is therefore available to the site from all four points of the compass.

Drovers wood is a flat woodland creation site with a grassy ride network. Horse access is offered along the public bridleway that runs down the west of the site. This links to the external public right if way network where bridleways are well represented. Drovers wood is situated in the parish of Breinton and within walking distance of the residential area of Hereford called Whitecross and Kingsacre.

There are no formal parking facilities at the site.

The Hereford to Brecon service stops at regular intervals along Kings Acre Road, Hereford. The site is easily accessed from Kings Acre road.

There are a number of locations within Hereford that have public conveniences suitable for disabled users, they are at:
Blackfriars Street
Bus Station, Union Walk
Castle Green
East Street
Maylords Orchard
St. Martins
Union Street/Ladies.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

To create and maintain a diverse, irregular high-forest structure comprised of native broadleaved species. Subject to the development of ash dieback, this will be 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

Drovers wood is flat, located close to the outskirts of Hereford and well connected throughout the rural and suburban landscape with public rights of way. It is estimated that the site is visited by pedestrian daily throughout the year, visiting by car has not been seen despite small nearby parking possibilities. Drovers has a circular walk designed into the plantation which has remained grassy and in good condition throughout the wood's development so far. The millennium features, two benches set beneath the two mature oak trees within the wood offer pleasant resting spots. Despite being well used Drovers wood is small and not a destination wood, rather a wood that is walked through as a part of a longer walk through the landscape. The local proximity of a large number of houses means that public access through the site and the area is in demand.

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 Drovers wood.

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Current plans for development in the area could threaten future use of the woodland, either directly or through adjacent developments leading to a higher rate of visitors and potential anti-social behaviour

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

Even-aged, broadleaved woodland planted on former arable in 2001. Area was seeded with a non-vigorous grass seed mix prior. Species are mostly dominated by ash, as well as pendulate oak, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch and Crab Apple with woody shrubs comprising Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Guelder Rose, Elder, Wild Privet and Spindle. Mature hedgerows dominated by blackthorn provide shelter on the south and west boundaries, the latter including a number of mature trees. A small number of large mature Oaks are present (one specimen has been pollarded in the past). (see Conservation Features map - reference point C1). The planting design accommodates the mature Oaks in to internal open space and glades. Little is currently known about wildlife present.
Past management has largely focused on establishment and public access. It is believed the stands have not been thinned since planting.

In terms of connectivity Drovers wood is distanced from designated sites of conservation interest but does sit within a landscape that has good connectivity and permeability to wildlife.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that there should be twice as much native tree cover like that at Drovers wood in the UK. Through managing Drovers wood 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

Opportunity to restructure the woodland which remains even-aged and unthinned since planting

Deer browsing level is currently minimal, but with the high density of ash means that monitoring will be required and exclosures will be installed to monitor browsing impact and control of deer will be undertaken to ensure that sustainable pospulations don't limit NR.

Squirrel impact on this site is currently low and squirrel impact will be monitored and management undertaken if populations increases and the risk levels rises.

EPS species including bats, otters and doormice could be using this wood and all EPS guidaince and good practice notes for the appropriate species will be observed. Prior to works commencing an OSA will be carried out to ensure operations are carried out in accordance with guidance.

Operations will be timed and carried out to limit negative impacts on soils and water. If ground conditions are unsuitable the operation will cease until appropriate. The type of machinery and location and spacing of racks will be agreed. Spill kits are manditory and if machinery is stored on site then locations agreed with the WT.

Fire risk is low. If a fire is detected or reported the fire brigade will be called if appropriate

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback is likely to have a significant effect on the tree species composition although there are a number of other species present on site which will colonise in time.

Climate change may have a long term impact on this site affecting suitability of current tree species.

Acute and chronic oak decline might lead to a change in the suitability of oak at this site. Monitor and if diversity of natural regeneration is low then replanting with additional native species will be considered.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create and maintain a diverse, irregular high-forest structure comprised of native broadleaved species. Subject to the development of ash dieback, this will be maintained by regular successive thinning, 2 zone ride management and coppicing interventions to maximise biodiversity and natural regeneration opportunities.

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

Selectively thin cpt 1a by roughly 30% 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 opportunties, creating a more diverse and varied habitat for associated species. Ensure as part of the selective thinning, that the mature multi-stemmed veteran trees are protected and their canopies have sufficient space to develop, halo thinning as required. Retain a proportion of deadwood through harvesting operations, and where safe to do so any standing dead trees.

Veteran and feature trees, which are generally located on the sites boundaries trees be released during thinning operations.

2 zone ride management, will be carried out on selected rides to increase understorey diversity. Rides will be 10 metres wide and connect into coppiced areas. Understorey coppice across the site will be managed within the next 5 years, as this is below the licencable threshold this will not be included in the POP. Alder and Willow along the riverbank will also be managed, as this work potentially could have an impact on the adjacent SSSI a seperate supplimentory notice of operations has been completed.

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.

Carry out deer impact assessment and develop appropriate management accordingly

Monitor impact of grey squirrel

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	3.24	Ash		High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

Formerly in arable production over a sustained period this land was seeded with a non vigorous grass seed mix prior to planting with mixed native broadleaves in 2001. Planted species include Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch and Crab Apple with Woody shrubs comprising Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Guelder Rose, Elder, Wild Privet and Spindle. The locally typical species mix resembles NVC W10. The field layer is dominated by the grass seed mix sown prior to planting. Mature hedgerows dominated by blackthorn but including hawthorn and holly provide shelter on the south and west boundaries, the latter including a number of mature trees towards the north end of the site. A small number of large mature Oaks are present within the internal areas of the site and one example, located towards the north of the site has been pollarded (see Conservation Features map - reference point C1). The planting design accommodates the mature Oaks into internal open space and glades.

The site is well linked to the local public right of way network; a Bridleway follows the southern and western boundaries and this route links the residential area of Hereford called Whitecross (1km distance) to the site. A PROW footpath off this bridleway links the site to the Wye Valley Walk just a kilometre to the south of the site. A pair of well fashioned Oak benches provide a Millennium Feature within the site and these are located by two mature Oak trees. An internal permissive path network has been incorporated into the planting design and this is maintained through annual mowing regime. The design emphasises views to the north-east (and to the Malvern Hills) and the mature trees within the site by incorporating these features into open grassy glade areas.

Management access is provided by a 12 foot gateway at the south western corner of the site, this is approached over a private driveway that the Woodland Trust has an access right over at all times.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	3.24	19	60
2025	1a	Thin	3.24	19	60
2030	1a	Thin	3.24	19	60
2035	1a	Thin	3.24	19	60

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.