



Markethill Wood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Markethill Wood
Location:	Markethillwhiteh*
Grid reference:	H961403, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 19
Area:	0.44 hectares (1.09 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' woodlands, created to commemorate the Millennium. Among the young woodland are three animal sculptures, which were carved by local artists.

2.2 Extended Description

The land at Markethill was purchased as one of the Woodland Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep projects to create a new community woodland. It covers 0.47 hectares of land and all of it was planted with predominately broadleaved tree species, to provide a valuable area for public recreation and wildlife.

The site is located opposite Gosford Forest Park. It consisted of Forest Service land planted with Sitka Spruce. The ground is generally flat with only moderate exposure. All the brashings from the original Forest Service operations had to be removed before Woodland Trust planting could begin. The remaining surrounding lands consist of housing.

Following consultation with the local community the compartment was planted in 2001. The planting consists predominantly of mixed deciduous species - mainly rowan and aspen with equal numbers of oak, ash, wild cherry and beech interspersed throughout the site planted in clumps of 50. A total of 900 trees were planted. 50 Scots pine were also planted in with the clumps.

Free public access is provided across the whole site at all times. One kissing gate, two management gates and 150 metres of gravel path facilitate access for the pedestrian. An information board is located at the main entrance and Welcome and Help Us signs are attached to the gate posts. Three animal sculptures had been carved by local artists to make some interesting features for the users of the wood.

There is no official Woodland Trust car park here but cars and indeed lorries, do park on the roadside without impeding the passage for other vehicle users.

There is no evidence of vandalism and only litter that has been blown in or left by some of the lorry drivers is present. The local council do generally keep the main entrance free of litter. More recently there is evidence to suggest there is some anti-social behaviour in the area.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The public have informal access to the site via a kissing gate off the entrance road to Markethill village. There is a 150m loop path around the site with 3 animal sculptures to view.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term, whilst maintaining the site for public access, it would be intended to encourage the site to become a self-sustaining high forest of predominately mixed deciduous woodland. This will be achieved through initially, the establishment of the trees, with spiral guards to prevent rabbit damage, regular weeding and replacement of any failures. It is unlikely that it will ever produce quality timber as it is small and was planted for recreational purposes. In the medium term, this may require thinning and restructuring as all of the woodland was planted in the one year. However, as the stand is a mixed species stand, self thinning should take place, this will result in some trees or parts of trees dying naturally as competition increases.

The resulting deadwood will be left in place creating valuable habitat. The need for thinning should be assessed in year 20 to enable any of the work to be written into the budget for the following years. The density should be great enough to deter the public choosing additional routes through the woodland. The site will continue to be managed to encourage a diversity and structure able to cope with increasing environmental threats such as climate change and tree disease.. Where opportunities arise through woodland creation and or partnerships we will seek where possible to connect this woodland with other adjacent habitats for a more resilient future landscape.

Public access will remain over the whole site and levels of public useage will determine the level of facilities and future work plans. The gravel path has been allowed to grass over and will be cut with 1m of edging strimmed.

Public safety will be assessed regularly, especially with regard to the electricity cables and Northern Ireland Electricity contacted if required. Tree inspections will be carried out every 2 years, but no trees will qualify for at least the next five years.

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

As part of the Woods on Your Doorstep project, Markethill is a community woodland. Free public access is provided across the whole site at all times. Two 3 metre management gates are located midway on the westerly boundary and south easterly boundary. One kissing gate adjoins the management gate at the south easterly boundary. An information board is also positioned at this entrance. Welcome signs and Help Us signs are fixed to the two management gate posts. A gravel path takes the walker through the majority of the site and three wooden sculptures have been dotted throughout the site to add to the general interest. Two seats have been constructed to facilitate visitors to the wood.

Significance

The access facilities provide the opportunity to "increase people's awareness and enjoyment of the woodland", one of the Woodland Trust's key objectives. Markethill received a lot of support from the local residents, one of whom was the Deputy First Minister for NI, Seamus Mallon. It provides an important resource for the people of Markethill and visitors to the town. It will be important to retain this informal public access.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

There is no official car park there but cars do park on the roadside, without hindering passage to other vehicles. An electricity cable runs through the length of the site running southeast to northwest. The presence of the electricity poles initially decided the route of the path. Some of the areas are quite wet which also precludes additional access.

Opportunities:

As a Woods on Your Doorstep site this wood provides an excellent opportunity for many local people to enjoy the woodland. Commuters also stop at this wood e.g. lorry drivers to have their lunches. Seamus Mallon, Deputy First Minister has been involved in planting and a number of photo opportunities.

To make connections with any friends of groups associated with Gosford Forest Park with a view to create an active community woodland.

Factors Causing Change

Canopy closure, Level of public use, litter, climate change.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain informal public access through the site by providing facilities appropriate for the level of use. This will include the maintenance of the path to an acceptable standard where it can be used all year round and maintaining the provision of on-site information appropriate for the level of use. For the site where possible to be managed locally as a community woodland resource as part of a community woodland network.

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

The paths have grassed over and will be cut regularly. The edges of the path should be strimmed to a 1metre wide swathe to eliminate vegetation encroaching on to the path. The need for continued strimming and cutting the paths should be assessed in and around year 2015 as the tree canopies close in around the path edges and hence restrict any vegetative growth. Boundary inspections, litter clearance and repairs to entrance furniture or features to be assessed and undertaken if required. Look for opportunities for "Friends of Groups".

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

A total of 900 trees were planted in 2001. A mixture of rowan, aspen, oak, ash, wild cherry, beech, crab apple, alder and scots pine were planted in clumps of 50. The ground was originally Forest Service land and had a plantation of Sitka Spruce growing on it.

Significance

The aim of the Woods on Your Doorstep project was to create community woodland. This also fulfills one of the Woodland Trust's key aims to "increase new native woodland". In addition, woodland creation, especially from an original Forest Service Sitka Spruce plantation, will add a variety of different ecological niches to the site and greatly improve its biodiversity value.

The site also plays a role in terms of urban biodiversity and urban resilient landscapes by connecting the existing street trees, garden trees and local parks for useable and sustainable wildlife corridors.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

There had been no serious problem with drainage or exposure on this site that would affect the growth of the trees. The only constraint is the presence of electricity poles running southeast to nothwest cutting the site in two halves. A 16 metre strip had to be provided under the electricity line to ensure that the trees will not interfere with the supply in future years.

Funding constraints.

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to manage Markethill as a broadleaved woodland for people to enjoy, and to create an area of broadleaved woodland in the area.

Links where possible to Gosford Forest Park and adjacent hedgerows and farmland.

Factors Causing Change

climate change, anti-social behaviour - litter, tree disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To establish a predominately mixed broadleaved woodland, managed as high forest. Canopy composition will be predominately native tree species. Where possible look for potential planting areas and linking this habitat with other existing woodland and open habitats within the area.

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

Establishment of the planted area is of prime importance. The trees are now well established and all failures have been replaced until 2006 after which it is unlikely beat up will be required. Tree safety inspections will be undertaken on a bi-annual basis, but until the young trees mature, the only tree safety issues will be the ash along the boundary fence. Tree safety inspections will include trees around the electricity wires.

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	0.47	Beech	2001	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

A small triangular shaped site of 0.47 hectares lying on the outskirts of Markethill, opposite Gosford Forest Park. The site is reasonably flat with a gentle slope to the north west corner. Planted in 2001 after conifer clearance by the Forest Service in 2000. Drainage is adequate and brown earth is the main substrate.

The compartment was planted in 2001. The planting consists mainly of mixed deciduous species - predominately rowan and aspen with equal numbers of oak, ash, wild cherry and beech interspersed throughout the site planted in clumps of 50. A total of 900 trees were planted. 50 Scots pine were also planted in with the clumps.

A gravel path loops between the two management gates, taking in 3 sculpures that give added attraction to the site.

The trees have now closed canopy.

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.