



Tom Benson Walk

Management Plan 2018-2023

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Tom Benson Walk
Location:	Preston
Grid reference:	SD506319, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 102
Area:	3.04 hectares (7.51 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Tom Benson Walk is a predominantly broadleaf wood close to the village of Cottam. The wood has four entrances, three off Tom Benson Way and one off Dunoon Close. The entrances lead onto over 600 metres of footpaths.

2.2 Extended Description

Tom Benson is located on the western side of the city of Preston in a densely urban area. The northern boundary abuts Cottom Hall Lane (pedestrian walk way). The Eastern boundary is defined by a hawthorn hedge planted on the verge of Tom Benson Way, this continues round to form the southern boundary alongside the access road to the waste disposal site. The Eastern Boundary in the south is defined by concrete marker posts and to the north abuts the garden fences of thirty domestic properties in Whitby Avenue and Dunoon Close.

This thin, flat woodland is approximately 550m long with a generally north south orientation and 80m across at its widest point; the land is poorly drained due in part to a soil profile made up of sandy-silt-loam soils.

The woodland was planted circa 1980 by The Commission for New Towns (CNT). The area has approximately two-thirds tree cover, the remainder is grassland. The species mix comprises predominantly broadleaved species and is dominated by ash and alder, with field maple, cherry, thorn, willow, white poplar, oak, birch, pine and a variety of woodland shrubs.

Around 1/3 of the site is open ground in the form of grassland. This open space is not floristically rich and offers little in the way of habitat to local wildlife, but does give the woodland an open feel with good sight lines through the site when following the footpath.

Management access into the site is poor, there is only one access point which can be used by vehicles and the permanently wet ground limits the type of machinery which can be taken on site.

Tom Benson is one site in a network of woods which were gifted to the Woodland Trust by the Commission for New Towns in 1996. Before planting it's believed that the area was pasture land. The site is named after a colourful local character Tom Benson, Preston's record-breaking "King of the Road," who held at least six world walking endurance titles in the 1970s and 80s. The woodland has two Key Features Informal Public Access & Secondary Woodland.

The woodland has five public access points opening onto approximately 640m of surfaced permissive footpath and is well used by the local population. Incorporated in a developed urban landscape the wood is an integral part of a wider mosaic of habitats including acres of gardens, open ground, ditches, ponds, verges and other new and old plantations. As a part of this landscape Tom Benson Walk helps to offer habitat variety for local wildlife, and provides a public amenity through open access and as a visual feature and buffer serving to softening the built environment.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Tom Benson Walk is located on the western edge of Preston, close to the village of Cottam. The wood has a total of four pedestrian access points in all. 3 of the pedestrian access point are located on the sites western/north western boundary just off Tom Benson Way and 1 pedestrian access point can be found on the sites eastern boundary just of Dunoon Close. The pedestrian access point leads onto approximately 640 metres of level surfaced footpaths.

Parking is available on nearby local roads but likely to be very limited.

Nearest public toilet: Is located at Asda Superstore, Eastway, Fulwood which is around one mile away from the wood. (Note ASDA toilet facilities are for customers only)

Nearest bus stop: Located on Keats Way, which is approximately half a mile away from the wood. Keats Way is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

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

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Our long term intention is to manage Tom Benson as a mixed broadleaved, predominantly native high forest. Both native and non native regeneration will be accepted within the woodland. Active thinning work will take place to promote long term stand stability and this work will be focussed where the woodland borders housing and the main road (Tom Benson way). Gaps created by trees gradually reaching senescence, or by trees been felled for safety reasons will also create opportunities for natural regeneration to occur. We will retain older trees of any species across the whole site as long as safety allows. Some of the open ground may be allowed to scrub over as it is currently of little value for wildlife.

Access will be maintained at its present level of 5 access points and approximately 640m of surfaced paths to ensure that the woodland continues to provide quiet informal recreational opportunities for all.

Local people should be informed of and involved with the site management where appropriate, especially to help understand the management needs of the wood, and the negative effect of some activities such as dumping garden rubbish, which have had a major impact in certain areas.

Statutory obligations will continue to be met with respect to managing tree safety and 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 Informal Public Access

Description

Tom Benson has approximately 640m of surfaced paths, and five pedestrian entrance points linking the site with Cottam Hall Lane, Whitby Avenue, Dunoon Close, and Tom Benson Way. The paths and access offer a small circular and through walks and provide easy access to the whole site.

Significance

The value of the wood to the local population is derived from its services as a filter for airborne pollution; light and noise buffer; and as a visual amenity to be enjoyed by all. As the woodland matures its value as habitat for a range of wildlife will increase providing greater opportunities for observation and enjoyment.

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the Tom Benson Walk, and its large areas of roadside and property backed boundary restrict the sites recreational value. The close proximity of a large population means that the site is subject to intense use and sometimes misuse during the summer months. Wear and tear on open spaces; fires; den building; vandalism; fly tipping; dog excrement are all perennial problems

However the wood does however provide an informal recreational opportunity for local people, footpath networks also link the site to other WT sites in the Fulwood area.

Factors Causing Change

Fly Tipping, Fires, Vandalism.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Tom Benson will continue to be used by local residents and by walkers accessing the network of local open space.

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

Signs or plaques welcoming the general public to make use of the site will be maintained at the entrance points. Vegetation encroaching onto paths will be cut back and annual maintenance of all woodland fixtures; including, signs, gates, and fences will be undertaken. The site will be kept clear of litter and fly tipping.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Tom Benson Walk has 67% tree cover, and 33% open space mostly grassland. The majority of the tree cover is semi-mature plantation with some relics of old hedgelines and areas of scrub in the southern fifth of the site. A small stream / drainage ditch runs across the southern end of the compartment. Tom Benson Walk is the main block of woodland in a local mosaic of habitats that include acres of garden and hedges to the east, and a large area of more formal parkland and network of ponds directly to the west across Tom Benson Way.

Significance

The local area has been developed with the loss of numerous hedgerows and farmland trees. The effects and changes typical of an urban environment will continue to be a disturbance to local wildlife. The creation of Tom Benson Walk although small provides a replacement for lost tree cover. Its management as woodland for perpetuity it will provide a core of habitat stability in an otherwise changing landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunity exists to ensure a continuity of valuable woodland habitat in an area under intense pressure from development. The existing habitat value can be improved upon through the retention where suitable of standing and fallen dead wood and tree safety operations will create gaps in the canopy for regeneration.

The main constraints on management derive from the sites location near a built environment. The close proximity of the woodland edge to domestic properties, and the high recreational usage, means that boundary and safety issues may take precedence over habitat improvements. Intense use during the summer months can manifest itself as "miss-use" and "over-use", wear and tear on open spaces; fires; den building; vandalism; and fly-tipping; are factors that have to be considered in relation to habitat creation and management.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with a continuous canopy and diverse age and species range and succession by natural regeneration. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, ash, birch etc.

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

Active thinning work will be undertaken in 2020 to ensure long term stand stability, this work will be focussed on areas where the site borders housing and the main road (Tom Benson Way).

A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site, key elements of which are likely to include the effects of ash disease, the development of natural regeneration and any future thinning requirements.

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	3.04	Ash		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

The compartment is approximately 550m long by 80m at its widest point; it is flat with poorly draining (gleyed) sandy-silt-loam soils. The west and southern boundaries are defined by a hedgerow that abuts Tom Benson Way and the entrance road to the waste disposal site; the eastern boundary from south to north is defined by concrete marker posts for 200m then by the garden fences of properties in Dunoon Close and Whitby Avenue; the north boundary abuts Cottom Hall Lane and is defined by a fence and hedge. Management access can be gained from the north off Cottam Hall Lane and to the south off Tom Benson Way 100m before the roundabout; access to the southern most section is via a gate off the waste disposal site drive. The compartment has just over two thirds tree cover; the remaining space is open grassland/planted wildflower meadow. The bulk of the woodland blocks were planted by the Commission for New Towns (CNT) in the early late 1970s to early 1980s with some minor infill planting by the Woodland Trust more recently. The planting mix is dominated by ash alder, wild cherry, field maple, with birch, oak, white poplar, willow (crack & osier) and areas of thorn scrub. Marginal planting through the centre of the site has included areas of amenity orientated planting such as dog wood), willow and shrub roses.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Thin	3.00	10	30

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.