WOODLAND TRUST

Point & Whitehall Wood

Management Plan 2019-2024

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM **Page No.**

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Point & Whitehall Wood
Location:	Combebow, Bridestowe
Grid reference:	SX482879, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 191
Area:	8.75 hectares (21.62 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Point and Whitehall Wood stands on a southwest facing slope north of the old A30 near the village of Bridestowe, roughly five miles west of Okehampton.

2.2 Extended Description

Point and Whitehall Wood stands on a moderately steep southwest facing slope north of the old A30 near the village of Bridestowe approximately 5 miles west of Okehampton. The wood lies within The Culm National Character Area (NCA No149) which extends from northeast Cornwall across Northwest Devon to Exmoor and southwards to Dartmoor. The Culm Measures are characterised by heavy clay soils which, combined with the exposed wetter Atlantic conditions, support a specialist grass sward over much of the area. The Culm is generally sparsely wooded across its upper plateaus but often, as at Point and Whitehall, is densely wooded in the small but steep sided river valleys that extend through the area.

The wood derives its name from the two woods it consists of. Whitehall Wood occupies approximately one third of the south-western end of the property is designated as Ancient Semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and is stocked predominantly with a beech and oak high forest. Point Wood occupies the remainder of the property. Its south-western end is designated as an Ancient Woodland site (AWS) is separated from Whitehall by a small well eroded earth bank, and is largely stocked with stored oak coppice with occasional maiden trees. Its north-eastern end is designated as ASNW has less stored coppice and more maidens trees..

Occasional mature sycamore and beech, also sometimes in groups, are scattered throughout the site as well. It is adjoined on two sides by agricultural grassland. The north-eastern end of the wood stands very close to similar woodland and therefore helps to form a sizeable area of conservation value. Understory is predominantly of large patches of holly with occasional clumps of hazel, rowan and beech or sycamore regeneration. Ground flora is sporadic, which is typical of these sites locally, and due in the main to the heavy shading from the closed canopy and holly present, the latter indicating a probable history of under grazing. Ground flora consists of patchy bramble where light can penetrate the canopy, localised bilberry and extensive patches of ferns. There are also large patches of bluebells throughout the wood giving a good ‘show’ in May.

Centrally in the wood there is a sizeable rock outcrop and towards its northeast corner there are two quarries which will have taken advantage of the easily accessible stone. Around these the soils are thinner and plant growth is restricted, but elsewhere where the soils are better tree and plant growth is more vigorous particularly where a number of spring heads break through the clay and maintain wet flushes throughout the whole year.

A restrictive covenant prevents public access being permitted for a finite period after which access may be granted.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

No public access available during the lifetimes of the Donor and her great-nephew .

3.2 Access / Walks

A restrictive covenant prevents public access being permitted during the lifetimes of the Donor and her great-nephew

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Point and Whitehall Wood will continue to help deliver the Woodland Trust's Trusts aims and objectives of No further loss of ancient woodland, to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife and help to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.
The Ancient woodland will be managed as predominantly broadleaf high forest through a limited intervention continuous cover management regime to create and maintain a healthy, sustainable, predominantly native broadleaf woodland with a diverse species, age and size structure with a good proportion of mature trees with large spreading 'open grown' type crowns. It will support a rich under-storey of woodland shrubs and flora and act as a refuge for biodiversity in the wider landscape

As the woodland is of predominantly oak thinning operations will target beech and sycamore seed trees to help reduce the speed at which they colonise the wood. These non-native species will not be eradicated from the wood in order to make it more resilient against climate change and disease and to prevent the creation of large holes in the canopy that may lead to wind damage of the oak itself or dense scrub patches at ground level detrimental to flora.

Any colonisation by Invasive species such as Rhododendron, Laurel, Himalayan balsam and Japanese Knotweed in the wood particularly from fly tipping from the adjacent layby and lane will be controlled and eradicated as and when they occur in order to reduce the shading and other detrimental effects they would have on ancient woodland flora

It is estimated that 14% of oak coppice stems have been killed as a result of historic ring-barking operations in the wood. This helps create a substantial level of deadwood habitat. Much of this is standing, although some have collapsed or been felled to maintain safety when other operation have taken place in the wood. This deadwood will be retained where possibly and will be enhanced during future thinning and safety operations

Dense holly clumps that have been cut and reduced in size during past work is being partly controlled by deer browsing and should not quickly reach the sizes that they have been in the past however some work to control their development and hence reduce any adverse effect they may have on ground flora may be required in the future.

The track through the wood will be managed to maintain the required third party and on-going management access.

The wood will be managed as required to fulfil all Highways clearances, safety and other legal obligations

A restrictive covenant prevents public access being permitted during the lifetimes of the Donor and her great-nephew and so no provision of public access or management to support this will be undertaken and there will not be an informal public access key feature, however as there may be some 'unauthorised' local use tree safety inspections and work may be undertaken to reduce the risk of accidents.

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 Ancient Woodland Site

Description

A predominantly oak woodland typical example of western oak woodland W17. Whitehall Wood lies at the south-western end of the property, occupies approximately one third of the woodland and is designated as Ancient Semi-natural woodland (ASNW). Point Wood occupies the remainder of the property. Its south-western end is designated as an Ancient Woodland site (AWS) and is separated from Whitehall by a small well eroded earth bank, while its north-eastern end is designated as ASNW. Oddly Whitehall Wood although designated ASNW appears to have undergone the most intensive management in the past and has a substantial amount of mature beech high forest and the related shaded and quite flora free ground below, while much of the AWS in Point Wood is more typical of many stored oak coppice ASNWs in the area. Beech and sycamore as well as a few small groups of early mature ash also exist in the wood. Large clumps of holly dominate ground flora but many of these were cut during the thinning operations of 2003/04 and are being ‘managed’ as a result of deer browsing pressure . Ground flora of bluebell, bilberry and bramble are redeveloping where this shade has been removed. Dense bryophyte and fern populations exist whee the shade is heavier. Management access is limited to a short track with third party rights that exits awkwardly off the highway and cuts across the southern corner of the wood to the adjoining agricultural land. A track extends from this to form a ‘circular’ route around the wood before linking back on itself with each linear section cutting the woodland slope into thirds.
Whitehall Wood was designated as PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site) due to its past management history of felling and replanting with many non-native tree species, however as these are solely broadleaved, generally non-invasive and of species widely distributed locally they do not pose a high level of threat to the ancient woodland and therefore the wood is now considered to be 'restored' and requires no further restoration processes.

Significance

Point and Whitehall is a very a good, albeit relatively small, example of an Ancient Western Oak Woodland and fits well into local, regional and national Biodiversity Action Plans. As such it fulfils the Trusts objectives to conserve ancient woods, to help to prevent further loss of the valuable habitat as well as the enhancement of woodland biodiversity. It will be managed through limited intervention towards a predominantly oak high forest.

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Natural regeneration of species likely to adversely affect light levels/regeneration so may include species like beech, sycamore and holly which although considered an acceptable part of the woodland species mix are already forming dense canopies in places and increases may be detrimental if not managed.
Deer damage esp. to advanced BL regeneration and coppice, although they do provide a browse effect which slows down holly regrowth,
Diseases – Ash die-back – ash is not prominent in the wood but semi-mature and mature trees are close to A30Trunk road and could impact on the safety liabilities for the wood.
Squirrel Damage esp. to advanced BL regeneration and semi-mature trees
Colonisation of Japanese knotweed and other non-native invasive species present on adjacent land.
Fly-tipping, Vandalism and anti-social behaviour extending from adjacent layby into the wood

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Ancient semi-natural woodland and long established secondary woodland interspersed throughout the site will be managed as predominantly broadleaf high forest through a limited intervention continuous cover management regime to create and maintain a healthy, sustainable, predominantly native broadleaf woodland with a diverse species, age and size structure with a good proportion of mature trees with large spreading 'open grown' type crowns supporting a rich under-storey of woodland shrubs and flora acting as a refuge for biodiversity in the wider landscape.. As such it will provide and sustain a good resource of ancient woodland species and deadwood. Non-native and invasive species such as rhododendron/laurel growth will be controlled.

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

Management non-native invasive species within the whole wood. Primarily garden escapees such as monbretia, variegated archangel etc. dumped in wood but also Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam if present
Continue management of the track and roadside edges to create and maintain transitional woodland edge habitat via tree safety works, low level thinning and coppicing.
Undertake deer and rabbit damage impact assessments as a part of the Woodland Condition assessment to monitor population and damage levels and undertake deer control as necessary.
Undertake deer and rabbit management to reduce high levels of damage identified during impact assessments.
Increase levels of standing and fallen deadwood throughout the whole woodland as part of on-going operations for lichen benefits and via tree safety operations and clearance of wind damage.
Monitor impact of ash dieback and manage accordingly
Quarry fences will be maintained and replaced as required
Continue programme of cutting young and advanced natural regeneration and holly to improve the woodland condition to sustain and promote flora populations
Light thinning/singling of localised areas of oak coppice, beech and sycamore through the wood to breakup dense canopy areas and improve light penetration to woodland floor. Target sycamore and beech where present to reduce seed trees/regeneration and ash levels esp. where adjacent to boundaries to manage dieback risks.
Roadside hedges and property boundaries will be maintained for safety.
Third party access will be maintained by cutting vegetation growth and ensuring management gate opens easily in case it is needed although does not appear to have been exercised for many years. As some unauthorised walking does take place as well as management access tree safety will be undertaken along track edges.
The ring barked stems will be monitored for safety and where felled will be left as lying deadwood habitat, while dead stems will be left standing as often as possible where safety of contractors and staff is not compromised.
Holly clumps will be left to regrow. It is hoped that deer browsing will prevent clumps attaining past sizes and density where all and where it does occur it is likely to be browsed by deer. However if it does occur it may require cutting or chemical control to ensure it does not become detrimental to ground flora.

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	2.90	Beech	1920	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
Whitehall Wood (ASNW) Mainly stocked with semi-mature and mature beech with occasional 'maiden' oaks throughout and a continuation of stored oak coppiced towards the southern boundary. Felled/coppiced approximately 100 years ago. Some Beech or sycamore seed trees creating dense areas of natural regeneration below. The understory sparse due to the dense shade, with large patches of dense holly with scattered hazel rowan and hawthorn where light allows. Ground flora of localised bluebell, bramble, bracken and bilberry exist where holly and beech shade has not reduced it. Past thinning of parts of the wood have reduced the canopy density and removed much of the holly and ground flora has been able to redevelop. A track allows reasonable management access, but no public access around the wood.							
1b	5.30	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Services & wayleaves, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Woodland Site

Point Wood (southern end - AWS). Mainly of stored oak coppiced approximately 75 to 85 years ago with small numbers of large mature oak standards, some at wide spacing, others in small groups and mostly located towards southern boundary with highway. Some scattered areas are colonising Beech or sycamore again with occasional groups or single seed trees creating natural regeneration below. The understory is indicative of western oak woodlands, possibly with some history of under-grazing, and consists of large patches of dense holly with scattered hazel rowan and hawthorn. Ground flora of localised bluebell, bramble, bracken and bilberry exist where holly and beech shade has not reduced it. Past thinning of parts of the wood have reduced the canopy density and removed much of the holly and ground flora has been able to redevelop. Slopes are moderately steep. A track allows reasonable management access, but no public access around the wood.

1c	1.02	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Services & wayleaves, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Woodland Site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Point Wood (northern end - ASNW) Mainly of stored oak coppiced approximately 75 to 85 years ago with small numbers of large mature oak standards, some at wide spacing, others in small groups and mostly located towards south-eastern boundary with properties. Some scattered areas are colonising Beech or sycamore again with occasional groups or single seed trees creating natural regeneration below. The understory is indicative of western oak woodlands, possibly with some history of under-grazing, and consists of large patches of dense holly with scattered hazel rowan and hawthorn. Ground flora of localised bluebell, bramble, bracken and bilberry exist where holly and beech shade has not reduced it. Two quarries, one quite large exist towards the northern corner where the slopes are steepest.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2024	1b	Thin	1.00	20	20
2025	1c	Thin	1.00	10	10
2026	1c	Thin	1.00	20	20
2029	1b	Thin	1.00	20	20

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.