



Porter's Wood

Management Plan 2011-2016

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Porter's Wood
Location:	Woodbridge
Grid reference:	TM264482, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169
Area:	3.35 hectares (8.28 acres)
Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This wood is very popular with and well used by local people. The pictures above give a good sense of this wood and the range of broadleaf trees that it supports. The well used Pilot Way footpath runs along the western edge of the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

This 3.35 ha broadleaved woodland is a very important amenity and landscape feature that is well used by the people of Woodbridge. It lies in a distinctive hollow and is possibly the site of an ancient woodland. With oak, beech and sycamore there are a number of very large dominant mature trees, the most notable being an old veteran oak pollard situated on the western boundary. Within Porter's Wood there is a low-lying area of wet woodland, where large common alder is the dominant tree species.

Porter's Wood was badly affected by the storms of 1987 and due to poor natural regeneration, further thinning, felling and replanting took place with oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple in 1989 in order to diversify the age structure. The ground flora includes bluebell, ramsons, snowdrop, foxglove, winter aconite and cuckoo-pint.

There is a well-used public footpath known as Pilot Way which runs along the western boundary. Although the Trust owns this land it is fenced off on either side. The land use around the majority of the woodland is residential with large gardens and ornamental trees backing onto the wood. To the east there is a small meadow which is possibly managed under the Countryside Stewardship scheme, and the extension of the wood to the east is owned by Notcutts Garden Centre.

There is a small triangular piece of woodland which belongs to the Trust at the southern end of Pilot Way where it joins Broomheath. This has a litter bin.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Porter's Wood is situated off Sandy Lane in Woodbridge, just off Ipswich Road (B1438). The local bus service is run by First Norfolk & Suffolk and the nearest bus stop is at the Junction of Old Barrack Road and Ipswich Road. From here it is about a 500 metre walk to the wood. The bus services are as follows:

- 63: Ipswich - Woodbridge (Monday to Saturday)
- 64: Aldeburgh - Woodbridge - Ipswich (Monday to Saturday)
- 65: Aldeburgh - Woodbridge - Ipswich (Monday to Saturday)
- 65B: Ipswich - Woodbridge (Sundays only)

link to First buses: www.firstgroup.com/norfolk-suffolk

Woodbridge has a train station, which is a 0.8 mile walk from Porter's Wood. The train operator is Greater Anglia.

Link to train times: www.thetrainline.com

3.2 Access / Walks

There are three pedestrian entrances at Porter's Wood - a set of steps off Sandy Lane and two kissing gates accessed from Pilot Way, the public right of way running along the western edge of the wood from Sandy Lane to Broomheath.

The site itself is very undulating and the internal dirt paths are cut twice yearly. The unsurfaced paths can become muddy in wet weather so it is advisable to wear sturdy footwear.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Due to past management and environmental factors, Porter's Wood has a diverse age structure, significant amounts of standing and fallen deadwood and abundant ground flora. The long-term intention is to maintain this floristically diverse woodland and woodland structure through minimal intervention.

In accordance with the Trust's objective of increasing public enjoyment of woodland, Porter's Wood will continue to be managed primarily for its amenity value. It is currently well used by the public and this will be encouraged by ensuring the paths are kept open, carrying out regular tree safety inspections and maintaining welcoming entrances.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

The woodland is very well used by the local community of Woodbridge. There are three entrances to the wood along the western boundary - the northerly entrance by the pump house on Sandy Lane has steps running down into the wood, the other two have kissing gates and the southerly entrance also has a management gate.

There is a public footpath known as Pilot Way that runs along the western boundary - although this is owned by the Trust it is separated from the wood by a stock proof fence. Within the boundary of the wood itself there is an unsurfaced footpath which is kept clear of encroaching vegetation. Four small sleeper bridges have been installed in the low-lying area of wet woodland to make it easier to follow the footpath across some of the wetter sections.

Significance

Public access is an important feature at this site because the wood is in a residential area, meaning it's a local woodland resource for the people of Woodbridge.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to maintain high quality access infrastructure at Porter's Wood to encourage its continued use as an important local resource. Due to the topography of the site, it will not be possible to provide increased access for people with disabilities.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Continue to review and upgrade site infrastructure to maintain appropriate access to the site and ensure its ongoing use by the public.

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

Maintain the site as an area of public open access, with all main internal paths being kept to a width of up to 2 metres, unhindered by ride-edge woody scrub and fallen trees. Internal structures such as steps and sleeper bridges will be maintained in a safe and usable condition.

Work Programme: Cut paths May and August.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Porter's Wood suffered significant damage in the 1987 storm and due to poor natural regeneration, further thinning, felling and replanting took place with oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple in 1989 in order to diversify the age structure. There is now a range of tree age classes and species and a developing understorey of mainly hazel and holly. Floristic diversity is good and includes bluebell, ramsons, snowdrop, foxglove, winter aconite and cuckoo-pint and there is also a significant amount of standing and fallen deadwood habitat.

Significance

The woodland is an important feature in the urban landscape and well used by the local population. There are a number of very large mature trees, the most notable being a veteran oak pollard situated on the western boundary.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to maintain the wood as a mixed broadleaved amenity woodland and to retain its diverse character and ecology.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback, Acute Oak Decline

Whilst there is evidence of ash dieback in the wood, common ash trees make up a relatively small proportion of the trees in Porter's Wood. Although this ash will decline, it will not have a significant impact on the makeup of the wood. The spread of Acute Oak Decline is of greater concern due to the number of mature oaks present and the affect this will have on the success of natural regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Porter's Wood currently supports several tree species of varying ages, an understorey, a good deadwood component and floristic diversity. The long-term aim is to maintain Porter's Wood as amenity woodland with a diverse high forest structure.

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

The woodland can be left to develop naturally through minimal intervention. The levels of natural regeneration and ground flora will continue to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the next generation of trees are becoming established and that conditions remain suitable for specialist woodland plants to thrive. The current deadwood habitat will be maintained across the site and the woodland will be left to undergo natural processes, except where any health and safety issues arise that pose a threat to public safety.

The occurrence of Acute Oak Decline will be monitored to get a better picture of the progression of the disease.

Work programme: Cut boundary hedge along neighbouring pedestrian foot path.

Annual tree safety inspection in September.

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	3.35	Beech	1800	Min-intervention	Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The wood is made up of scattered mature oak, beech and sweet chestnut with sycamore. The low-lying wet area is dominated by alder. The wood was damaged by the storms of 1987 and after the site was cleared of storm damage a native woodland mix including oak, beech, wild cherry, rowan and field maple was underplanted. The ground flora species vary greatly due to the nature of the site but include, bramble, bluebell, ramson, snowdrop, foxglove, winter aconite and cuckoo-pint.

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.