WOODLAND TRUST

New Covert & Park Woods

Management Plan

2018-2023

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MAPS

THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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

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

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland.

Our strategic aims are to:

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

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

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

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

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

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

SUMMARY

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

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	New Covert & Park Woods
Location:	Melbourne
Grid reference:	SE732442, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 106
Area:	10.80 hectares (26.69 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The isolation of these linked woods keeps visitor numbers low and wildlife interest high. New Covert, a favourite haunt for barn owls at twilight, links to Park Wood via a thicket of willow and alder, where willow tits are sometimes heard.

2.2 Extended Description

The main body of the site, compartments 1a, 2a and 3a was acquired on the 19th April 1988 with funding from the Countryside Commission, Humberside County Council, East Yorkshire Borough Council, and the David Farnsworth Memorial Fund. Compartments 4a and 5a were acquired in two parcels in 2002 with funding from Enventure Ltd.
The wood is situated in the flat landscape of the Vale of York, approximately 1 mile to the south west of the village of Melbourne. The landscape is characterised by large fields and occasional blocks of woodland, many of which are coniferous. Most of the site lies on silt with clay but with sand underlying the northeast corner of Park Wood. Parts of the site are particularly prone to water logging, especially compartment 4a.

The northern two thirds of the site was shown as scrub woodland but the southern section known as New Covert was devoid of trees at this time. On the 1910 map, all areas were shown as mixed woodland. The northern area of Park Wood appears to have been cleared and was shown as scrub with isolated trees on the 1930 ordnance survey map. The field to the west of the wood appears on

the maps as former parkland to Rossmoor Lodge, which still remains.

Park Wood (northern compartment 1a) is predominately even aged mature silver birch with a rhododendron under storey and occasional oak, rowan, hazel, sycamore, goat willow. It is shown as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland however any remaining ground flora is sparse as the wood was dominated by rhododendron for many years.

The field separating New Covert and Park Wood (Compartment 2a) was planted with native broadleaves in 1987, including birch, oak, alder, ash, rowan, white willow, hawthorn, guelder rose, holly and goat willow.
New Covert (Compartment 3) is very similar to Park Wood but is not considered to be ancient, with the site shown devoid of trees on the ordnance survey maps dated 1854 and 1880. It consists mainly of fairly even aged birch, willow, oak, sycamore, alder, ash, hawthorn and holly.

The field between New Covert and the main road (Compartment 4) was planted with mixed broadleaves in 2002. The planting consisted of 15% alder, 25% birch, 15% goat willow, 20% pedunculate oak, 5% rowan, 5% ash and 5% aspen. Shrub species planted include, 2% guelder rose, 2% elder, 2% holly, 2% hawthorn and 2% hazel. Also created in 2002 was a pond in the south east corner and the car park.
The small area of woodland adjacent to the car park is compartment 5a and consists of even aged mature birch, alder, oak and willow.

Birds identified in the woodland include, long tailed, blue, great and willow tit, tree creeper, greater and lesser spotted woodpecker, sparrow hawk, woodcock, tawny owl, garden warbler, willow warbler, blackcap and barn owl. Roe and fallow deer have been seen in the wood.

Public access is served by a 1.6 kilometre circular footpath which runs around the woods from a small car park situated 20m of the main B1228 (York to Howden) road. A Woodland Trust entrance sign is adjacent to the access gate with an information board near the car park.From York follow the B1228 (York – Howden) through the villages of Elvington and Sutton upon Derwent. Just past the turning to Melbourne where the road turns due south a car park can be found approximately half a mile from the junction. The car park is down a short track approximately 20m into the wood. (SE732442) A large woodland Trust sign has been placed on the roadside. There is room for approximately 4-5 cars within the car park. An information board is can be found in the car park where a circular way-marked route begins.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

ACCESS TO THE SITE
The wood is located near the village of Melbourne in East Yorkshire.
From York follow the B1228 (York – Howden) through the villages of Elvington and Sutton upon Derwent. Just past the turning to Melbourne where the road turns due south a car park can be found approximately half a mile from the junction. The car park is down a short track approximately 20m into the wood. (SE732442) A large woodland Trust sign has been placed on the roadside. There is room for approximately 3-4 cars within the car park. An information board is can be found in the car park where a circular way-marked route begins.

ENTRANCE AND FOOTPATHS
Access to the site is via a squeeze stile. The wood contains a circular path of approximately 1700m. The paths are grass or bare earth and contain sleeper bridges over ditches. The paths can be very muddy when wet and suitable footwear is required.

PARKING
Small car park for 3-4 cars at the entrance of the wood.

PUBLIC TOILETS
None available locally

BUS STOPS
Melbourne - 1.5 miles from the site.

TRAVEL INFORMATION
Further information about public transport contact Traveline on www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention is to develop and maintain a diverse broadleaved high forest dominated by native broadleaved species, (80-100%) with a mixed shrub layer and diverse age structure. This will be achieved through minimal intervention allowing the loss of trees through natural senescence and new trees introduced through natural regeneration, thus encouraging self-sustainability and creation of a more diverse age structure in future years.

Public access will be maintained along the main footpath which extends for approximately 2,100m around the perimeter of the site. Access to the site will be provided through a field gate from the highway on the western boundary of the site where a site entrance is in place.

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

Access to the woodland is over a bridged ditch into the Woodland Trust car park from the B1228, which links York to Howden. A large woodland Trust sign has been placed on the roadside. There is room for approximately 4-5 cars within the car park. Two gates have been erected, one located at the entrance to the site off the B1228. The second gate has been placed approximately half way down the access track to compartment 4a. An information board has been erected in the car park where a away-marked circular route begins of over 1 mile. Sleeper bridges have been built at various locations over ditched and wet areas throughout the woodland. Oak woodland benches have also been placed at strategic points around the circular path.

Significance

Due to the land purchases and access works carried out during 2002 the woodlands recreational potential has been radically enhanced. Although the area still remains isolated the woodland now possesses the criteria required for it to become an extremely well used and enjoyed amenity. It does form one of the few sites in the area with open public access, which is important in this region, which has very limited publicly accessible woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

At present the site has low public use, no doubt due to its isolated position. The purchase of 5a and 4a and the creation of a circular route has greatly improved access and the recreational potential of the woodland. A permissive footpath link to the public footpath to the south east of New Covert could also be explored. Obtaining this link would enable the wood to be connected by footpath to the village of Melbourne and the Pocklington Canal.

Factors Causing Change

Increase in public usage, Site water logging

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To have a well-maintained car park and circular path that enables good access all year round. To have well maintained signs, seats and bridges.

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

Maintenance of the existing circular path (2,100m), car park, access and information signs (2), culvert bridges (7) and seats (3). Paths to be cut and inspected once annually.
Paths to be monitored within the plan period to assess for any increase in usage.
The whole site can be very wet during periods of heavy rain. The objective for 2018 is to undertake a small 30m diversion to one section of the footpath in compartment 2A to avoid a very wet patch of ground.

5.2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Park Wood (comp1a) is listed in the Nature Conservancy Council's Inventory of Ancient Woodland (1987) The wood is on an area of low lying fen, containing medieval ditch and bank systems, which are supporting a number of wetland species. The wood contains mainly coppice birch with a small percentage of oak rowan, sycamore and goat willow.

The ground flora is that of impoverished woodland on acid soil which has had extensive areas of rhododendron which has produced large areas of bare earth. Bramble and bracken are present and in places an interesting heath land flora of heather, foxglove, and wood sage.

Significance

Woodland cover in the East Riding area is one of the lowest in the country at about 2.7% (Source NCC - provisional1989) Only 6% of this figure is considered as Ancient Woodland. The site is therefore especially special for this part of the country.

Opportunities & Constraints

The natural woodland type for Park Wood (1a), given its acid soils, would likely to be predominantly birch and oak. A high percentage of birch is therefore acceptable and in this case forms an attractive individual characteristic of this wood. However, a greater degree of species diversity, especially an increase in the percentage of oak would be desirable for conservation reasons. Currently approximately 90% of the compartment is even aged birch and to improve the species and age diversity will take a long time through natural processes. Seedling birch is developing naturally and this will be beneficial in improving the age diversity. This process should increase now the rhododendron has been removed.

Factors Causing Change

Deer and rabbit damage etc, Natural regeneration of non-natives, Competition by invasive species such as the re-establishment of rhododendron seedling.

The wood has a low percentage of ash, especially within the ancient woodland area which is dominated by mainly birch so ash dieback disease will have minimal impact.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term vision is to maintain as a broadleaved high forest with mixed under-storey and ground flora species.

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

Natural regeneration is to be monitored over the next 20 years but given the current level of regeneration it is not anticipated this will be a problem.
On-going control of rhododendron will be necessary and this will be assessed every 5 years as part of the condition assessment. The plan proposal for 2019 is to complete a programme of rhododendron removal for the whole site. This is made up of very small patches of regrowth around 100 in number but extending to an area of no greater than 200 sq m.

5.3 Secondary Woodland

Description

Compartments, 2a and 4a are planted native secondary woodland dating from 1988 and 2002 respectively. Compartments 3a and 5a are considered to be secondary woodland with establishment unknown, but it appears to be from coppice growth and natural regeneration. Compartment 3a contains a number of ancient woodland indicator species, and its origin needs further investigation.

Significance

Woodland cover in the East Riding area is one of the lowest in the country at about 2.7% (Source NCC - provisional1989) The species diversity in this wood makes this woodland a valuable habitat and landscape feature of the surrounding area. This newly planted section will also help diversify the age structure of the existing woodland

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood is surrounded by other woodland, mature parkland and hedgerow trees and colonisation by certain woodland species is therefore likely to occur. A constraint maybe the heavy waterlogging of the whole of compartment 4a during wet winters, which may define the type of woodland that develops.

Factors Causing Change

Water logging of the site, Damage by rabbits, Damage by deer

The secondary woodland areas contain a low percentage of ash so ash dieback disease will have some impact with some medium sized trees adjacent to the main footpaths. These trees may need to be removed in the future if they suffer from the disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The vision is to develop and maintain the new planting in order to achieve a diverse broadleaved high forest encouraging self-sustaining woodland, dominated by 80-100% native broadleaved species, with a mixed native shrub layer and diverse age structure. The wood will contribute to the area as a valued landscape feature and wildlife habitat.

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

Monitor the on-going establishment of the secondary woodland areas as part of the general woodland observations every 3 years.

Ash dieback to be reviewed in summer 2018 as part of the all sites inspections planned for 2018. The survey will be to review both the extent of dieback and to consider if any action is likely in 2019. Such work would be likely to be confined to removal of trees immediately adjacent to footpaths only.

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	2.84	Birch (downy/silver)	1960	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
Park Wood Broadleaved high forest consisting of predominately even aged Birch 90%, with a mixture of other species including oak, rowan, hazel, ash, sycamore, holly, hornbeam and goat willow accounting for 10%. Ground flora consisting of rhododendron, bracken and limited regeneration, except one patch of young birch. Rhododendron once occupied around 90% of the ground area but this was cleared across the whole site in 2010 and only small remnants remain.							
2a	2.35	Ash	1988	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Mixed native hardwoods planted in 1988 with, 30% oak, 30% alder, 20% ash, 5% rowan, 10% white willow, 5% shrubs hawthorn, guelder rose, holly and goat willow.							
3a	3.05	Birch (downy/silver)	1960	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
New Covert The compartment comprises of even aged mixed deciduous trees, probably developed from natural regeneration and coppice re-growth of approximate age of 1960 (P1960) Approximate species composition being, 40% birch, 15% willow, 10% sycamore, 10% alder, 5% beech, 5% hawthorn, 5% holly, 5% oak and 5% ash. Under-story shrub species is limited with approximately 10% of the area covered with shrubs; these are mainly 50% holly, 40% hawthorn. The area was cleared of rhododendron in 2010 and now only small remnants, odd seedlings etc remain.							
4a	2.39	Birch (downy/silver)	2002	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

Planted in 2002 compartment 4a consists of native broadleaves including 15% alder, 25% birch, 15% goat willow, 20% pedunculate oak, 5% rowan, 5% ash and 5% aspen(Shrub species planted include, 2% guelder rose, 2% elder, 2% holly, 2% hawthorn and 2% hazel. There are already signs of alder naturally regenerating in the northwest section of the newly planted area. Power lines cross the centre of the site running in a northwest to southeast direction. A pond created in 2002 in the southeast corner of the compartment links in with an existing pond in the southwest corner of compartment 3a. A sleeper bridge capable of carrying vehicles has been constructed in the northeast corner of the site facilitating management access into compartment 3a. During wet winters the whole area is very prone to water logging.							
5a	0.19	Birch (downy/silver)	1960	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Compartment 5a is a small section Guy's Wood and contains the car park and main access point for the woodland. It consists of even aged (P1960) 50% birch, 20% alder, 10 % oak, 10% sycamore and 10% willow and an occasional lime. Its under-storey mainly consists of mainly bramble with a very small area to the south of the access track covered with rhododendron. The rhododendron adjoins a larger area of neighbouring woodland which is densely covered with rhododendron.							

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.