



# Whittle Spinney

## Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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

<b>Site name:</b>	Whittle Spinney
<b>Location:</b>	Chorley
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SD584225, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 102
<b>Area:</b>	2.42 hectares (5.98 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Whittle Spinney is located in the village of Whittle Le Woods, near Chorley. The woodland was planted in the 1970s with mixed broadleaved species such as ash, oak, birch and cherry as well as coniferous species such as Larch and Scots Pine. Running alongside the M61 motorway and bounded by housing, this wood is nevertheless well used by local people and other visitors going to see the limekiln within it. The line of the Lancaster Canal can be traced through the woods and there are three small areas of grassland that open out to give better views of the surrounding countryside. A further feature is a Catholic shrine to St Helen's Well that is believed to have been under what is now the motorway.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Whittle Spinney was planted in the late 1970s by the Central Lancashire Development Corporation as part of a general plan for the Cuerden Brook area. It was acquired as a gift by the Woodland Trust as part of a package of woods in 1996. The site is narrow and is bounded by Birch Lane, the M61 motorway, a low density housing development built around 1995, Preston Old Road and a stream beyond which lies open ground associated with a low density housing project, erected circa 2000.

Whittle Spinney occupies former wet grazing land on a clay soil; the remnant hedgerow features reflect this, with several large alder, oak and holly trees. The northern boundary is an old established hawthorn hedge adjacent to the stream, which is fed by a number of ditches within the wood.

Secondary Woodland is a key feature of the site. The tree species are typical of late 1970s amenity plantings; native species are augmented by Norway maple and larch. Scots pine is also present. There is an overall matrix of ash, oak, hazel, birch, hawthorn, cherry and alder, which reflect local woodland types. Small leaved lime and field maple are also present.

There are three small areas of open grassland within the site, which serve to open up sightlines and increase the total amount of woodland edge.

Contained within the site is a limekiln under the management of Chorley Borough Council. This feature is associated with the Lancaster Canal whose path can be traced through the site. The kiln features in a number of local historical and walking leaflets and generates one-off visits to the site.

A memorial has now been established by local historians to St Helen's Well, a Catholic shrine that is held to have stood nearby under what is now the M61 motorway.

Informal Public Access is a key feature of the site. There is a well-used pathway, which serves to unite adjacent countryside with built up areas, attracting joggers, walkers and regular dog walkers.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Whittle Spinney is located in the suburb of Whittle-le-woods which is approximately 1 mile from Chorley Town Centre. There are 7 pedestrian access points. 1 pedestrian entrance is located on the sites southern boundary just off Birchin Lane, 4 pedestrian kissing gate entrances can be found on the sites western boundary just off Wilderswood Close. The most north westerly access point off Chorley Old road is located at the top a steep flight of steps. The final pedestrian entrance on the sites northern boundary just off Knebworth Close and is a step over stile. A level surfaced circular footpath network of around 600 meters orbits the wood. However the paths on site can become muddy and slippery when wet.

Parking is available on nearby local roads such as Birchin Lane & Wilderswood Close but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: Located at Pall Mall, Chorley which is approximately 4 miles away from the wood. Information provided by Chorley Borough Council. [www.chorley.gov.uk](http://www.chorley.gov.uk)

Nearest bus stop: Located at Cloverfields, Clayton Green, which is approximately 300 meters away from the wood. Cloverfields is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- [www.traveline.org.uk](http://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 Whittle Spinney as a mixed broadleaved, predominantly native high forest. An element Scots Pine will also be retained to reflect the original planting mix. 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, footpaths and the M61 motorway. 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.

We will strive to provide a good standard of access provision and visitor facilities at the wood. This will be achieved by providing a network of well-managed paths & entrances for pedestrian access. Continued investment in visitor facilities will be made at the wood to ensure it is welcoming. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections of high-risk tree zones and access infrastructure.



## 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 Secondary Woodland

#### Description

Whittle Spinney is a small (2.4ha approx.) secondary woodland, the tree species are typical of late 1970s amenity plantings; native species are augmented by Norway maple and larch. Scots pine is also present. There is an overall matrix of ash, oak, hazel, birch, hawthorn, cherry and alder, which reflect local woodland types. Small leaved lime and field maple are also present.

#### Significance

Without woodland planting this part of Chorley would be dominated by housing and other urban development. Whittle Spinney and other woods break the landscape down into small areas bounded by woodland and other landscape features. It also serves a purpose as a sight and sound barrier screening the M61 motorway from the nearby housing.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Whittle Spinney is typical of many new town secondary woodlands planted in the 1970/80s in the fact that it is long, thin and densely planted. This structure gives it a high landscape impact in relation to its' area. However the small size of this site and the fact that it is surrounded by buildings and roads means its value as a wildlife habitat is very limited. Unfortunately the woodland does not link with any other habitats, and there is no opportunity to extend it. However it does provide a refuge for urban wildlife.

#### Factors Causing Change

The close proximity of the motorway will continue to influence the size of edge trees we are able to retain along the eastern boundary.

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Establishing and maintaining a mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with a continuous canopy composed of a mixture tree species, with diverse age range and succession by natural regeneration. An element of Scots Pine will also be retained to reflect the original planting mix. 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 2017 & 2022 to ensure long term stand stability, this work will be focussed on areas where the site borders housing, footpaths and the M61 motorway.

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.

## 5.2 Connecting People with woods & trees

### Description

Whittle Spinney has a total of seven pedestrian access points with welcome signage installed which lead onto a surfaced path network of around 600 meters in length. The entire path network is surfaced which provides year round dry access. The site is well used by local people and is a favourite for dog walkers and joggers. The Trust has given the wood an access category A designation which is the highest level, and this equates to a wood which is 'regularly used at all times of year, with more than 15 - 20 people using one entrance every day.

### Significance

Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes. Opportunities for informal recreation in an urban environment are often highly valued. The adjacent housing creates a strong demand for informal recreation, which Whittle Spinney is well positioned to fulfil.

### Opportunities & Constraints

**Constraints:** A lack of car parking provision at the site will always limit the amount of visitors the woodland gets.

**Opportunities:** The site's urban location and surface path network means it can be enjoyed by large numbers of people visiting on foot all year round and there is an opportunity to encourage even more people to enjoy the woodland.

### Factors Causing Change

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Whittle Spinney should offer a high quality visitor experience in line with a category A Access designation. Access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity. There will be a well-managed network of paths around the wood which are easy and obvious to follow. Prominent signage and information will be made available at the main entrances to enable visitors to explore the site and to appreciate its inherent qualities and wildlife; the objective is that visitors should leave with some understanding of the value of woodland and this site, and a clear knowledge of The Woodland Trust. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones and inspections of access furniture.

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

During this plan period the main short term objectives are to provide a high quality visitor experience, which is safe and enjoyable and to enhance the welcome information at the wood. High quality path and entrance improvements have been completed (February 2017) to ensure the wood offers informal recreational opportunities and a warm welcome to local people year round. Any threats to the wood arising from public access will also be monitored and managed. Approximately 600m of paths and all 7 entrances will be monitored annually to ensure they are kept open for use as part of the Estates Maintenance Contract. All signage and information boards will remain clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate. Access provision will be monitored at least once during this plan period to ensure it is adequate and to determine the severity of any threats to the wood from public access.

We will conduct regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (e.g. the edges of the roads and main paths), to ensure Whittle Spinney is as safe as possible for visitors, neighbours and road users. Access provision is adequate and to determine the severity of any threats to the wood from public access. Measures to lessen any recorded threats will be undertaken.

We will explore opportunities to engage with local schools via Forest School activity and to use the site for key Woodland Trust initiatives such as the green schools tree planting programme.

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## 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	2.43	Ash	1977	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Connecting People with woods & trees, Secondary Woodland	
<p>Compartment one consists of oak, alder, ash, cherry, Norway maple, larch, sycamore, Scots pine, willow, beech, aspen, hawthorn, dogwood, spindle, and hazel planted in the late 1970s. There are remnant hedgerows with old pollard trees and associated flora. There are three open area's of meadow. The site is bordered by roads and housing estates.</p>							

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**Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)**

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2017	1a	Thin	2.43	12	30
2022	1a	Thin	2.43	12	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.