WOODLAND TRUST

Elkin Wood

Management Plan 2013-2018

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Elkin Wood
Location:	nr Corley Moor, Coventry
Grid reference:	SP281837, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
Area:	4.99 hectares (12.33 acres)
Designations:	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Elkin Wood is an isolated square woodland totalling 5 ha situated to the south of the village of Corley Moor. It is a Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) and exhibits a bluebell display that is regarded as one of the finest locally. The site also lies within a designated Special Landscape Area. Although there is much woodland in the locality Elkin Wood itself, is isolated from other woodland, with the surrounding hedgerows providing connectivity to habitats other than agricultural. Surrounding land use is a mix of arable and stock farming, on the East and North boundaries and a public road forming the West and South boundaries.
The site is predominantly flat and free-draining, with a gentle slope running down towards the northern boundary where a small ditch-fed pond is located close by.

Management access to the wood is via a double field gate from the road to the south (Clay Lane). This access leads into a timber stacking/loading area.
Pedestrian access is via three kissing gates along the western and southern boundary leading a broadly circular walk. Access to the woodland from the north-west corner and the management entrance on the southern boundary are the most accessible.

Although the planting year is not known, much of the wood appears no older than from the 1970's. Across the wood, age range is uniform with a diverse species range and mix. Corsican pine (Pinus nigra) and Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris) are found throughout the wood, the former being more numerous, especially through the centre of the wood. Sycamore (Acer psuedoplatinus) is found in concentrations to the west of the wood. Beech (Fagus sylvatica) is found in number to the east and north. In addition to the above species concentrations, the following are found throughout the wood in varying mixes and as mature and understorey or regenerating examples; Birch (Betula pendula), Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia), Hazel (Corylus avalana), Pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), Holly (Ilex aquafolium), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). Willow (Salix sp.), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and Alder (Alnus glutinosa) are found locally in and around the seasonal pond. Around the borders of the wood Hawthorn and Blackthorn are found in number, with the former being planted as a hedgerow along the north boundary. Individual specimens of Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) are scattered along the path to the east of the wood.
The richness of the wood is notable, in terms of species mix and quality and spread of regeneration. Holly, Rowan, Birch and Hazel all regenerate freely throughout the wood.

Due to shading ground vegetation is limited mainly to Bracken, Bramble and grasses with lesser plants unidentified. Honeysuckle is found throughout the wood, climbing all tree species, especially to the east. Bluebells, wood sorrell and Yellow Archangel are also found throughout the wood.

Key Features for this site include:
KF1 – Connecting People with Woods & Trees
KF2 – Planted Ancient Woodland Site

2.2 Extended Description

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3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Elkin wood is situated just outside of Coventry and to the northwest. It is located near to the village of Corley Moor and the suburb of Allesley. The countryside and lanes in the landscape around Elkin wood is well served with public footpaths. Within Elkin the permissive paths are not surfaced but flat and free draining. Entrances are metal kissing gates to prevent unauthorized access, only pedestrian access is permitted.

There are no parking facilities at the woodland.

There are two local services that stop in nearby Corley Moor;
Service Number: 735
Provider: A & M Group, De Courcey Travel
Service Number: 232
Provider: Flexibus Service. A & M Group.There is no information on public conveniences within 5 miles of the site.

Public access is direct from three points. One is from the council road to the north-west (Watery Lane) and two are from the council road to the south and south-east (Clay Lane).
There is no public access to the farmland along the north and east boundaries.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Our long term intention for the Planted Ancient Woodland Site Key Feature is to maintain the resilient and robust woodland in favourable condition as high forest with native mixed broadleaves as the dominant species. Ancient woodland features both historic and ecological will be secured and enhanced across the site e.g. deadwood, trees and understorey shrubs, archaeological features and woodland plants.

This will be achieved through a thinning programme over a number of decades reducing the proportion of non-native conifers and assisting the wood's development toward a predominantly native species mix.

Observation and monitoring visits will inform timing and execution of operations to reduce the impact of shading from non-native conifers, and protect the existing features.

Three pedestrian access points and a broadly circular route exist within the wood. Path management in the future will maintain this level of access, with further improvements by regular path edge coppicing undertaken where necessary as the paths become narrow and darker. This will have the additional benefit of improving structural diversity within the wood and enhancing visitor enjoyment.

Management of the woods riparian feature, the seasonal pond (identified as an important humid microclimate in Coventry Wildlife Surveys 1982/83/91) will be combined with other tree canopy management and access operations. These works will reduce the overshading by adjacent conifers and in future maintain the pond area reasonably free of regenerating trees. We will maintain a buffer zone largely free of mature trees and shrubs of 4-5m around the pond edge.

Monitoring and maintainance of the supply ditch through the removal of major obstructions that threaten the inflow of water will be undertaken.

An historic boundary bank with ditch exists along the southern edge of the wood, and forms part of the buffering hedgerow. This structure will be protected during woodland operations.

The Connecting People with Woods & Trees Key Feature consists of three pedestrian access points and a broadly circular route exist within the wood. Path management in the future will maintain this level of access, with further improvements by regular path edge coppicing undertaken where necessary as the paths become narrow and darker. This will have the additional benefit of improving structural diversity within the wood and enhancing visitor enjoyment.

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 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Elkin Wood is well used by local people. Three pedestrian access points lead to a broadly circular interior walk along unsurfaced permissive footpaths.

Significance

It has been proven that access to woodland provides an improved quality of life with benefits to both mental and physical health. Elkin wood provides a safe, well maintained amenity resource for local visitors within a landscape of inaccessible agricultural countryside.

The wood provides a preferred short cut from Watery Lane to Clay Lane for pedestrians as well as providing an enjoyable amenity area for dog walkers. The bluebell display in spring attracts many local visitors.

Informal Public Access is one of Woodland Trusts' core management objectives.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
To maintain existing access network to a high standard
The paths within the wood are well established, as are the access points. The ground conditions tend to be reasonably favourable in wet weather so there is little to constrain existing access provision.

Constraints:
Unsuitable for less-abled visitors due to terrain and unsurfaced footpaths.
Very limited local parking. Local population not large.
Ancient woodland site.

Factors Causing Change

Change in nature and volume of visitor use.
Woodland management operations such as thinning/timber harvesting which may impact up on publicly accessible areas, at least in the short term. Ground conditions may also be affected after such operations.
Path deterioration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Present level of informal facilities for visitors maintained within guidelines for health and safety and the Woodland Trust's access policy.
The established permissive routes and entrances to be available and in good condition.

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

Permissive routes and entrances are maintained in good and safe condition. This will be achieved through maintenance of paths including existing glades to allow continued access through this wood for pedestrians by mowing up to a 2 meter width twice a year during the summer months.

To monitor the unauthorised access and strengthen boundaries and entrance points to prevent this from occurring at this site.
Inspection of all gates/stiles and monitoring of path surfaces to be carries through the Estates Maintenance Contract.

Maintain a safe environment for site visitors through tree safety inspections being carried out for both Zone A and Zone B areas as defined by the site risk assessment, undertaking remedial work as required.
Any mature hedges forming our boundary along public roads will be flailed outside of the bird nesting season to ensure clearance above the full width of the highway.

Woodland operations will be clearly communicated to site visitors through the display of appropriate signage prior to any woodland management operations taking place within Elkin Wood, ensuring that local visitors are aware of works and that safety information is clear and available.

5.2 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

Description

Elkin Wood is a Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). At some point within the 1970's the wood was felled and replanted with a conifer species mix predominantly made up of Scots and Corsican pine.
The canopy is currently dominated by Scots and Corsican (approximately 75%) with native species of regeneration and of coppice origin growing vigorous in the understory.
Ancient bluebell ground flora exists throughout the wood and forms a fine display when flowering.

Significance

Elkin Wood has been woodland cover since at least 1600 and as such has had time to develop a sensitive and advanced ecosystem under natural conditions (represented visually by bluebells). However, since felling and replanting with non-natives, this habitat has become threatened.
It is therefore important to reduce the dominance of the conifers and allow natural processes to replace this dominance over a suitable time scale with native broadleaf tree and shrub species such as birch (Betula pendula), rowan (Sorbus aucuparia), hazel (Corylus avalana), pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), holly (Ilex aquafolium), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and willow (Salix spp.).

Ancient woodland (AW) is a dwindling and irreplaceable habitat and as such all remnants of ancient woodland needs to be protected from further loss.
Protection of AW is a key objective of The Woodland Trust as is the restoration of all PAWS to its traditional woodland type, thereby increasing the area of AW.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity

To increase the broadleaved native species component of the woodland by appropriate thinning of conifers thereby helping retain ancient woodland flora and fauna to recover to pre-coniferisation levels of abundance.
Enhance the pond habitat within the site.
Thinning operations also present opportunities to widen exiting routes through the woodland to enhance visitor enjoyment.

Constraints
Difficult management access for harvesting and haulage purposes.
Poor markets for sale of any conifer material produced due to poor form of the trees.

Factors Causing Change

Windthrow
Disease or pathogenic infection affecting the mortality of tree species.
Shading from conifer
Increase in coarse vegetation after woodland operations
Increase in herbivore browsing levels

Long term Objective (50 years+)

In the the long term (50 years+) Elkin Wood to be predominantly broadleaved in character with all other major ancient woodland components in a secure and improving condition.
We would expect the canopy to be predominantly made up of native broadleaf species such as birch (Betula pendula), rowan (Sorbus aucuparia), pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), willow (Salix spp.), alder (Alnus glutinosa) and beech (Fagus sylvatica).

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

This section should be read in conjunction with the PAWS assessment and strategy maps.
Thinning the areas of PAWS/conifers will aid release and development of existing site native broadleaves within the canopy; provide hotspots of ancient woodland flora with more light to develop and spread; increase light to the developing site native broadleaved understorey. All to create a more robust and resilient woodland in light of increasing pressures from climate change and pest and diseases.
To be carried out through To carry out a second thinning (first phase carried out in 2008) of the conifer dominated areas. This programme will be repeated on a 7-10 year cycle.
Enhance pond habitat with woodland through the removal of excess sediment and vegetation, including trees immediately adjacent to the pond casting shadow.

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	1.60	Scots pine	1970	PAWS restoration		Connecting People with woods & trees, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Broadly rectangular compartment dominated by Scots pine and Corsican pine (the latter less so), especially to the south and west. Rowan, Birch, (forming an understory) are also relatively common with a small proportion of Sycamore and Pedunculate oak (probably planted). In less shaded areas ground flora is dominated by bracken and bramble, although bluebell is present through most of the compartment. To the north-east of the compartment is a seasonal pond surrounded by Alder, Birch and Rowan. A dense carpet of locally scarce Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage occupies the pond bed. Standing and fallen Course Woody Debris (CWD) is present throughout. Conservation feature 'Pond' (CF1) found at the centre of the site within compartment 1a - A seasonal pond and wet woodland area found within sub-compartment 1a. A small drainage system feeds a marshy hollow at the woods centre which has been identified as an important humid microclimate (Coventry Wildlife Surveys 1982, 1983 and 1991). It is sheltered and shaded supporting a number of uncommon insect species and contains a dense carpet of locally scarce Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage.							
1b	2.20	Corsican pine	1970	PAWS restoration		Connecting People with woods & trees, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Sub-compartment 1B is an inverted ‘L’ shape occupying the north and east parts of the wood. An old bank and ditch forms the southern boundary. Scots and Corsican pine dominate and share canopy with Birch, Sycamore and oak. Canopy Beech is found to the north and east (mature examples along the north boundary). Understorey is shared by Oak, Rowan, Holly (some large examples) and Hazel, with regeneration profuse in clumps. Several individual Douglas fir are found along the path to the east. Blackthorn is found along the south edge. Ground flora is bracken and bramble with significant growth of Elder and Thorn alongside the above natural regeneration. Bluebell exists throughout. Honeysuckle is rampant through most of 1B and climbs pine particularly.							

2a	1.20	Sycamore	1965	Min-intervention		Connecting People with woods & trees, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Special Landscape Area
Sub-compartment 2A is broadly rectangular and occupies the west portion of the wood. Sycamore (some evidence of historic coppice management) dominates the canopy, mixed intimately with Beech, Scots and Corsican pine with Birch and Pedunculate oak to a lesser degree. Understorey is sparse but Rowan, Holly, Birch and Sycamore are found. Ground flora is also sparse with bracken and bramble occupying the less shaded areas. Bluebell is found throughout. CWD (Course Woody Debris) is found standing and fallen.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1a	Thin	1.60	56	90
2019	1b	Thin	2.20	55	120
2019	2a	Thin	1.20	50	60
2029	1a	Thin	1.60	28	45
2029	1b	Thin	2.20	27	60
2029	2a	Thin	1.20	25	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.

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