WOODLAND TRUST

Piddington Wood

Management Plan 2019-2024

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM **Page No.**

MAPS

THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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

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

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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

Our strategic aims are to:

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

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

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

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

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

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

SUMMARY

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

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Piddington Wood
Location:	Cherwell, nr Bicester
Grid reference:	SP628163, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 164
Area:	18.47 hectares (45.64 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, Local Wildlife Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Piddington Wood is a 18 hectare woodland in north-east Oxfordshire, located between Thame and Bicester. The wood is a remnant of the ancient Bernwood Hunting forest dating back to Henry II which once covered an area of some 400km2 from the Great Ouse river in the north to the Thame river in the south. Piddington Wood is located on a hillside with a north-westerly aspect overlooking the village of Arncott and lies within Piddington parish. Most of the wood (almost 10 ha) is ancient woodland which has been managed historically as coppice; oak, ash, silver birch and hazel are the main species. The rest of the site to the north and east is a mixture of young trees and open ground. The Woodland Trust bought the wood in two main phases. The ancient woodland was bought in 1989, and then in 2002 the land to the north, south and east was acquired (compartments 2 and 3). The wood sits on calcareous clays and consequently the ground can remain very wet. Piddington Wood is a low key site for the public and has a limited number of visitors. Access to the wood is from a small lay-by at the B4011 road from which a public footpath enters the site. From here there is good network of paths around the whole site. The wood is well renowned locally for its populations of uncommon butterflies including black hairstreak and brown hairstreak.

2.2 Extended Description

Piddington Wood is an 18.5 hectare / 45.5 acre site in north-east Oxfordshire, located between Thame and Bicester. The woodland is a remnant of the ancient Bernwood Hunting forest dating back to Henry II which once covered an area of some 400km2 from the Great Ouse river in the north to the Thame river, a tributary of the River Thames, in the south. Piddington Wood is located on a hillside with a north-westerly aspect overlooking the village of Arncott and lies within Piddington parish.

Most of the wood (almost 10 ha) is ancient woodland which has been managed historically as hazel coppice with oak and ash standards. Large birch standards (self-sown) are scattered throughout and occasional boundary ash stools occur. The southern boundary has a dense fringe of mature blackthorn scrub and a stand of young sycamore occurs parallel to the western boundary, just to the north of a glade. The rest of the site to the north and east is a mixture of young planted trees, naturally emerging scrub and open ground. Piddington Wood is rare in that it is one of only few ancient woodlands in Oxfordshire that has not been replanted with conifer.

The Woodland Trust bought the wood in two phases. The ancient woodland was bought in 1989 (compartment 1), and then in 2002 the land to the north, south and east was acquired (compartments 2 and 3). The underlying geology for the northern half of the site is Kellaways formation and Oxford clay formation and the south on West Walton Formation, Amptill and Kimeridge Claywood. The soil is highly fertile slowly permeable lime-rich calcareous clay soils and consequently the ground can remain very wet. NVC most closely resembles ash field maple with dog’s mercury W8.

The wood is an area for priority species such as the brown and black hairstreak butterflies, tree sparrow, grey partridge and the deciduous woodland is listed on the Priority Habitat Inventory.

Prior to acquisition by the WT there was no public access due to the impenetrable nature of the wood and private ownership. Since the tracing and re-opening of the old ride system with additional rides and signs public use has increased, yet due to its remote location Piddington Wood remains a low key site for the public and has a limited number of visitors. Access to the wood is from a small lay-by at the B4011 road from which a public footpath enters the site. From here there is good network of paths around the whole site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Getting there: Piddington Wood is not well-served by public transport. Occasional buses run to Piddington (2kms away by road) from Bicester but not daily.

A small pull-in for vehicles is located at SP632164 off the B4011. At this point, two kissing gates lead into the site - one giving access into the field with young trees, the other is at the start of the public footpath (No.13). There are no surfaced paths through the wood and during wet weather, especially during the winter, they can become very muddy. Piddington Wood is on a hillside and there are consequently gentle gradients throughout the site.

The nearest public conveniences are over 5 miles away in Bicester. These are located at Bure Place and Claremont Car Park (Off Victoria Road). For further information, contact Cherwell District Council on 01295 221940.

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0871 200 22 33.

All distances are approximate.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term policy for Piddington Wood is focused on one of the Woodland Trusts key aims;

- to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife

Overall the management focus will be on retaining and improving woodland biodiversity and resilience, with all major ancient woodland components in a secure and improving condition including old growth trees, ground flora, archaeological features, and a diverse deadwood component. Management will also focus on improving accessibility and increasing peoples understanding and enjoyment of woodland.

The ancient woodland component (Cpt 1 -10ha) has largely developed naturally over the last 60 years since the cessation of any large scale coppicing. The woodland is a prominent feature in the landscape and has therefore been an important component of the local area for many decades, and as such any required silvicultural intervention must ensure the mature woodland composition appears to be largely unchanged.

Oak, field maple and birch are likely to become the major tree species, given that ash will be mostly lost to ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus). There will be some restorative management of coppice and open and early successional habitat in the form of periodic cutting along rides and opening small glades, where edge trees will also be managed.

Natural regeneration has brought in many ‘new’ tree species such as field maple, birch and alder into the site and the wood is now more diverse than for the last 60 years since the last large scale active management. This process will continue and any intervention will therefore aim to further diversify the overall species diversity and stand structure through small scale works, mostly achieved through small scale coppicing and addressing tree safety requirements and path and access improvements. This will help increase light levels and improve overall health of retained trees, and encourage natural regeneration of species such as birch, field maple and sycamore to facilitate a more varied structure and composition.

Mature broadleaved trees, particularly oak, will be identified as future old growth trees and left to reach old age and decline naturally. Deadwood volume will increase as trees mature and senesce contributing to important deadwood habitat both standing and fallen, particularly for invertebrate and fungal communities, apart from where it poses a significant tree safety risk. Where mature ash die within stands and it is safe to do so trees will be left to decline and collapse to further bolster this niche habitat.

New areas of scrub and young planted trees will colonise part of the former open ground (Cpt 3b), and any threats to their development will be managed, for example from deer browsing. The ash component (C.25% overall) is likely to be lost to ash dieback, but species such as birch and blackthorn which are naturally colonising the area will succeed in the short term and provide bolstered habitat for the rare butterfly species identified at the site that require young blackthorn as part of their lifecycle. The open ground areas (managed rides and glades) will sustain the habitats for birds such as the barn owl as well as the important butterfly species known at the site.

Observations will be carried out to record any factors causing change that may be detrimental to the vitality and structure of the woodland. For example there should be no damaging invasive species present on the site, and the likely colonisation by ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) and other pests and diseases monitored and managed where necessary.

The public's enjoyment of the woodlands will be enhanced by maintaining an accessible and safe network of paths and rides, in line with the recommendations for category C for access (low usage site where we do maintain paths). On-going monitoring will ensure access and boundaries remain as safe as possible. This will be achieved through a managed path and entrance network and regular safety inspections of site infrastructure and of higher risk tree zones.

Archaeological features such as boundary woodbanks and pits will be monitored and protected for future generations of visitor to enjoy. Entrances, boundary fences, and benches will be maintained as necessary and the appropriate access provision will be monitored and delivered.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

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

5.1 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

The ancient woodland component at Piddington Wood accounts for just over 50% of the whole site (9.76ha), and is entirely contained within compartment 1. The woodland approximates to W8 in the NVC (National Vegetation Classification): ash-field maple-dog's mercury woodland.

It is composed of oak and ash high forest with an understorey of hazel coppice and scattered birch, field maple and sycamore. There is also a significant blackthorn content, particularly towards the woodland edges. The woodland has traditionally been managed as coppice with standards and there are some very large old coppice stools present, especially on the boundaries, as well as oak/ash/hazel coupes within the compartment. The last significant management intervention was undertaken in the early 1960's.

Natural regeneration is abundant in the woodland, especially ash, birch, field maple and blackthorn.

There is some deer browsing at present but this is not preventing adequate survival of young trees or vigorous regeneration from coppice stools. A small test area comprising C.0.25 acre was re-coppiced in 2016 and regeneration from cut stools is strong and evidence of browsing is minimal.

The ground flora contains dog's mercury, primrose, violet, wood anemone, bluebell and pendulous sedge on the wetter rides. There are several shallow ponds and seasonally wet areas and an historical woodbank along parts of the perimeter, especially the western edge which is a parish boundary. Several uncommon butterfly species have been recorded at the wood including black hairstreak (concentrated to only around 50 sites), brown hairstreak and purple emperor.

Significance

Ancient woodland is a limited and irreplaceable resource which is home to more species of conservation concern than any other habitat in the UK. A substantial number of specialist woodland species are almost wholly confined to coppice and old growth stands. Approximately 40% of England's ASNW is found in the South East.
ASNW is very important due to the continuity of woodland cover over hundreds of years which allows for a diverse range of wildlife and vegetation to develop over time that cannot be found in new woodland creation sites.
A key aim of the Woodland Trust is to prevent any further loss of ancient woodland.
The woodland also has local significance in being a remnant part of the large Bernwood hunting Forest, and is host to nationally rare and declining species such as the black hairstreak butterfly, found only in thickets of blackthorn in woodlands on heavy clay soils between Oxford and Peterborough.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:
- Some woodland archaeology is present such as perimeter woodbanks and damage must be avoided during any management operations
- The woodland has limited infrastructure for timber harvesting – no surfaced tracks and unsuitable entrance points for forest machinery. Access can become boggy in wetter weather. Any management work should be carefully timed with drier site conditions if possible
- Key species present such as black/brown hairstreak that require conditions on working practices and timing of operations
- Low timber quality and volumes make thinning works / coppicing uneconomical

Opportunities:
- Selecting and promoting old growth trees well into the future to enable them to become veteran and ancient trees; this will require some control of competing trees
- Improvement of tree age range, structure and species diversity through silvicultural management and natural processes such as wind-throw

Factors Causing Change

- Mammal damage (deer, squirrel) - Currently low risk; control implemented, evidence of low pressure and repeat monitoring scheduled
- Increasing shade and loss of structure in minimum intervention stands and coppice areas - Low risk medium impact - monitoring and management scheduled
- Changes in structure and gaps in canopy due to wind-blow and disease/dieback e.g. Hymenoscyphus fraxineus in ash - High risk, medium impact due to ash comprising circa 25% mature canopy and naturally regenerating composition
- Open areas are succeeding to scrub and woodland thickets, dominated by blackthorn and birch – High risk, low impact due to permitted succession of scrub succeeding failed ash, and review process monitoring benefit of scrub habitat for key species i.e. brown / black hairstreak
- Anti-social behaviour problems: fly tipping/litter – Low risk due to remoteness of site

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Piddington Wood will continue to develop largely through natural processes, where the deadwood habitat is likely to increase over time through trees being left to age and collapse, and subsequent natural regeneration succeeding within canopy gaps. Intervention will take place to reduce threats to this natural development where required.

The composition will remain broadleaved, with all major ancient woodland components in a secure and improving condition including old growth trees, ground flora, archaeological features, and a diverse deadwood component. The likely colonisation by ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) will affect the species composition of the wood over time, and the resulting mixed stands (oak, cherry, birch, hazel, field maple being the most common species) of high forest will be being managed on a continuous cover silvicultural system to produce uneven-aged, self-regenerating stands of high conservation and amenity value. The deadwood habitat will become very well developed as ash and the old coppice stools in particular collapse and die.

Small-scale coppicing of viable areas will be maintained, and ride widening to create some edge structure and glades at intersections to introduce some lighter, drier conditions within the woodland which will benefit some woodland species like the brown & black hairstreak butterfly.

Any threats to the biodiversity or historic features of the wood will be monitored and resulting action taken, i.e. deer damage to the broadleaf trees will be monitored and action taken if the damage becomes unacceptable.

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

The ASNW woodland area of Piddington Wood (cpt.1a) is likely to undergo composition change within this plan period due to colonisation by Hymenoscyphus fraxineus (ash dieback). Ash is regenerating from mature trees present within the compartment, and it is likely most of the regenerating ash and many mature trees will fail.

Intervention is not at this stage required to re-stock as although ash comprises around 25% of the canopy, oak will close many canopy gaps and there is abundant regeneration (birch / hazel / field maple / sycamore most commonly) to mitigate risk from coarse vegetation proliferating.

Small-scale coppicing work to re-instate a coppice regime on redundant hazel stands will take place, concentrating on ride edges and to diversify structure and habitat within the site overall, to suit species present of local importance such as willow warbler, spotted flycatcher, black hairstreak, brown hairstreak.

- Coppice areas will be marked / agreed only where available light is already present to ensure successful regeneration from cut stools - mature standard trees will be retained - work areas for boundary definition only: Coupe 1 (2020) - Area 0.4ha + open out intersection (approx. 200m3) retaining mature trees cutting back hazel / ash / birch regen; Coupe 2 (2022) - Area 0.7ha; Coupe 3 (2024) - Area 0.6ha. See operational work plan.

- Deer will continue to be controlled and impacts monitored to vary the pressure of control if required – assessments due : 2021 / 2023 / 2025

Other threats will also be monitored through main woodland condition assessment – next due: 2022

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The secondary woodland at Piddington Wood consists of a plantation in compartment 3 which was created in early 2003 and a thin strip of mature secondary woodland to the south of the site comprising compartment 2.

The young 2003 plantation is dominated by ash and oak which make up 60% of the planting mix; minor components of other species make up the other 40%: field maple, hazel, blackthorn and silver birch. The western half of compartment 3 (approximately 2.5ha – cpt 3b) is open and grassy but does contain some natural regeneration, especially advanced on the margin with the ancient woodland. The grassland is former arable farmland and is not ecologically rich in flora. The natural regeneration is dominated by blackthorn but also contains ash and oak. Barn owls are known to use the open ground for feeding and boxes have been erected to encourage them to breed.

The mature secondary woodland present in compartment 2 is dominated by oak, with a dense understorey of hazel and especially blackthorn. Several seasonal ponds are present in this area. This area is especially important for black hairstreak and brown hairstreak butterflies.

The established secondary woodland area (compartment 2a) has undergone a series of ride-edge coppicing and scalloping works within the last plan period with operations concluding early 2019. The regeneration, comprising mainly hazel and blackthorn is robust and the mix of retained mature and regenerating blackthorn provides good habitat opportunities for brown and black hairstreak butterfly populations.

Significance

The secondary woodland is adjacent to ancient woodland at the site and acts as a buffer to the road on the east and arable land to the south. Over time it will adopt some characteristics of the much older semi-natural woodland.

The secondary woodland is also providing habitat diversity on the site: some open ground, successional scrub and young woodland. The high blackthorn content also helps to support important butterfly species known at the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
- Enhancing existing pond to improve and retain habitat variance within secondary woodland area
- Selecting and promoting old growth trees well into the future to enable them to become veteran and ancient trees; this will require some control of competing trees
- Improvement of tree age range, structure and species diversity through silvicultural management and natural processes such as wind-throw

Constraints:
- Some woodland archaeology is present such as perimeter woodbanks and damage must be avoided during any management operations
- The woodland has limited infrastructure for timber harvesting – no surfaced tracks and unsuitable entrance points for forest machinery. Access can become boggy in wetter weather. Any management work should be carefully timed with drier site conditions if possible
- The size of the open ground limits any grazing management potential
- Key species present such as black/brown hairstreak that require conditions on working practices and timing of operations
- Low timber quality and volumes make thinning works / coppicing uneconomical

Factors Causing Change

- Mammal damage (deer, squirrel) - Currently low risk; management in place, evidence of low pressure; repeat monitoring scheduled
- Increasing shade and loss of structure in minimum intervention stands - Low risk medium impact - monitoring and management scheduled
- Changes in structure and gaps in canopy due to wind-blow and disease/dieback e.g. Hymenoscyphus fraxineus in ash - High risk, medium impact due to ash comprising circa 30% planted stock and 20% naturally regenerating composition. Natural regeneration of other species (blackthorn, birch, oak) is strong and will replace ash over time
- Open areas are succeeding to scrub and woodland thickets, dominated by blackthorn and birch – High risk, low impact due to permitted succession of scrub succeeding failed ash, and review process monitoring benefit of scrub habitat for key species i.e. brown / black hairstreak

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The new secondary woodland area will be allowed to develop naturally and any management intervention required will be on a continuous cover silvicultural basis to produce uneven aged, self-regenerating stands of high conservation and amenity value. Deadwood habitat will increase over time through some trees being left to age and collapse naturally.

Over time they will become more ecologically rich, with a greater deadwood habitat and older trees. Oak is likely to become the major tree species and ash lost to ash dieback will be replaced by previously planted species and those naturally regenerating on site. Birch, field maple, blackthorn, hazel and hawthorn likely being the most common species. Some open ground habitat (approx. 25% of Cpt 3b) will be retained and managed to support important invertebrate species and raptors, and this will be provided in the form of wide sunny rides and glades. The area of secondary woodland will be increased slightly by allowing new woodland to develop on the periphery of established woodland blocks.

Deer damage to trees will continue to be monitored and action taken if damage becomes unacceptable.

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

Apart from any remedial works required for safety reasons there are no further planned operations within the plan period within cpt. 2a

Compartment 3, comprising planted trees, successional scrub and open areas will be managed as follows;

- Approximately 1.5ha of scrub woodland will continue to naturally develop in compartment 3b, on the fringes of existing woodland
- Approximately 1.5ha of open ground will be managed in 3b in the form of a glade and a wide scalloped rides – annual
- Where planted and naturally regenerating ash fails, natural succession will be favoured to replace them, although monitoring will be undertaken to establish whether enrichment planting would benefit the overall composition – assessments due – 2022 / 2024
- Deer will continue to be controlled and impacts monitored to vary the pressure of control if required – assessments due : 2021 / 2023 / 2025

Other threats will also be monitored through main woodland condition assessment – next due: 2022

5.3 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Piddington Wood is relatively remotely located in east Oxfordshire 2.7km (1.7 miles) west of Piddington Village (pop 370), 3km (1.9 miles) south of Blackthorn (pop 317), 3.5km (2.2 miles) east of Upper Arncott (pop 1738), and 3.3km (2.1 miles) north of Boarstall (Bucks, pop 128). Surrounding land use is mainly arable, with patches of isolated woodlands in private ownership as well as a large MOD site and Bullingdon prison to the north. An accessible 5 ha / 13 acre woodland, Boarstall Duck Decoy lies to the south, a National Trust property.

Piddington wood has approx. 4km / 2.5 miles of permissive paths and rights of way for pedestrian access only, and offers a variety of interesting circular walks through a number of different habitats. There is a small layby next to the wood and alongside the B4011 where up to three cars can be parked, and this is the main entrance into the wood. There are two other entrances on the other side of the wood which link to a lane and a right of way footpath across neighbouring farmland. The site is a category C for access site (low usage site where we do maintain paths).

Piddington is a quiet wood and visitor numbers are not high. Overall visitor facilities are low-key but the site offers the visitor a peaceful place in which to which to enjoy the natural environment. The wood forms part of the circuit for the 7km / 4.5 mile ‘Piddington Circular Walk’, which is a leafleted walk promoted by Cherwell District Council.

There has been a strong element of community involvement at the site, for instance in monitoring butterfly species, erecting raptor boxes and helping to manage the paths.

Significance

This relatively remote site provides a quiet area for walking and recreation for some people living within walking distance of the woodland, and is a site of interest for some local naturalists.
One of the Woodland Trust's main objectives is the promotion of public access to, and enjoyment of, woodlands.
The site has a variety of habitats and historic features that can be used to engage the public, including children, in appreciating the landscape on a wider scale.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:
- Piddington Wood has limited (2/3 cars) parking facility
- Paths can be muddy and waterlogged during the winter / wet weather due to the underlying geology

Opportunities:
- Ride edge coppicing will help to create more open, drier path surfaces for visitors
- The special wildlife at the site (e.g. brown / black hairstreak butterflies) offers a wider interest for specialist ecological groups, and could be used for educational purposes

Factors Causing Change

- Antisocial activities such as fly tipping in the parking area
- Changes in vegetation along rides

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Public access for informal and quiet recreation will be maintained in perpetuity. The woodland will be kept as safe as practical for visitors and there will be a managed network of paths, together with visible and clearly signed entrances.

An on-going programme of maintenance will ensure as much as possible safe and uninhibited access along clearly defined routes for quiet recreation. Provision of infrastructure will be kept low key as appropriate for the grading of this site: Category 'C' 'low usage site'

Involvement of the public in wildlife monitoring will continue to be supported if there is local interest.

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

Management objectives are low key in line with the current use of the site and with requisite grading category. A visitor assessment was carried out in 2017, and site improvements proposed are scheduled below, alongside programmed routine management.

- Replacement entrance and welcome sign – 2019
- Entrance vegetation management – coppicing of approx. 150m2 vegetation around entrance and in to main path in to wood to improve sight lines and safety – complete early 2019
- Routine safety inspections of the trees in higher risk zones along the roadside boundary – annual
- Routine safety inspections along internal path network within the site – annual due to presence of ash dieback
- The entrances, main paths open areas and glades will be maintained, through cutting where necessary, to ensure they remain open for visitors - annual
- Community involvement will be supported through The Woodland Trust meeting with the current site warden to review activity - annual
- Contact with The Upper Thames butterfly group to support the annual monitoring of butterfly species - annual

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	9.76	Oak (pedunculate)	1901	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Connecting People with woods & trees	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Landscape Value, Local Wildlife Site
Semi-natural ancient wood composed predominantly of a mixture of mature ash and oak, with field maple / birch and hazel understory - NVC W8. The canopy is fairly even-aged though there are more open areas to the south. Plant species comprise primrose, dog's mercury, dog violet, lesser celandine, bluebell, wood anemone and bramble, and pendulous sedge on the wetter rides. Occasional tree / shrub species include sycamore, cherry, aspen, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, crab apple, goat willow							
2a	2.59	Oak (pedunculate)	1980	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Connecting People with woods & trees	Area of Landscape Value, Local Wildlife Site
Strip of mature secondary woodland outside the woodbank of 1a and forming the southern edge of the site. Largely composed of oak, cherry, ash, hazel and a high component of blackthorn, with birch and elm and sycamore also present. There is a scattering of more mature oaks but most of the compartment was felled and re-planted in the 1980's at 3m spacing. The main entrance to the wood enters this compartment and the main path transects its full length. There is a semi-open area in the west as well as an ephemeral pond. Flora includes blue bugle, lords & ladies (Arum maculatum) with sedges and some bracken to the very south.							

3a	2.80	Oak (pedunculate)	2003	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Connecting People with woods & trees	Area of Landscape Value
Plantation on former arable field dating from 2003. Ash and oak together make up 60% of the planting mix; minor components of other species make up the other 40%: field maple, hazel, blackthorn and silver birch. Ash is showing symptoms of ash dieback and is likely to mostly fail. Naturally regenerating scrub is prevalent including drifts of blackthorn which will succeed and increase the long-term habitat for the brown hairstreak. This compartment also contains a long hedged road-side section with the B4011, mostly comprising elm, crack willow, hawthorn and blackthorn, with dog rose, guilder rose and goat willow also present.							
3b	3.15	Mixed native broadleaves	2003	Wood establishment	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Connecting People with woods & trees	Area of Landscape Value
This is an area of grassland left as open ground between the plantation in 3a and the ancient woodland (1a). Scrub and young trees are present on the edge of the ancient woodland and slowly colonising the open area. This as well as 3a was formerly part of an arable field. Ash, oak, field maple and alder are present as well as blackthorn, crab apple, goat willow and hazel.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Coppice	0.40	13	5
2022	1a	Coppice	0.70	7	5
2024	1a	Coppice	0.60	8	5

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.