



Three Gates Farm

Management Plan 2015-2020

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Three Gates Farm
Location:	Aldeby, Beccles
Grid reference:	TM455938, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 134
Area:	11.46 hectares (28.32 acres)
Designations:	Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A former market garden/ fruit farm which came into the Trust's care in the early 1990s. Young oak, ash, field maple and wild cherry trees have become quickly established. A choice of circular routes with wide grassy trails make wandering a pleasure.

2.2 Extended Description

Three gates farm and St Mary's wood lies within in an Area of Landscape Value and is also within an environmentally sensitive area on the edge of the Norfolk Broads. Prior to being planted the site had a history of market gardening and fruit farming; of which remnants of the original orchard can be still visible today within Three Gates farm. The first phase of woodland planting took place in Three gates farm in 1987. Since then further areas have been planted with predominantly native broadleaved species in 1990, 94 95 and finally in 2005.

Three gates farm is situated on the edge of the village of Aldeby in South Norfolk, the site can be accessed through an entrance off Rectory road, or to the north off Church road. There is no car park at the wood although there is a pull in off Rectory road for one car.

In 1995 a further area, St Mary's Wood was given to The Woodland Trust by Yvonne Holmes. It is a small triangular field, surrounded by roads and housing within the village of Aldeby. Prior to this area being planted, it was under agricultural production. St Mary's wood was planted with native broadleaves in 1997 by the local community and contractors. Species used mirrored those found naturally in the locality and at Three Gates Wood. Off-road parking for up to 4 vehicles has been created and pedestrian entrances are available from the car park or to the north of the wood.

Mature hedgerows and remnant poplar/alder wind breaks surround and intersect the site, which include many mature trees these have been retained as conservation features.

Both Sites have flat grassy rides and paths that are cut up to 4 times per year.

The Sites Key features are as follows:

- Informal public access.
- New Native woodland.
- Open ground habitat.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

How to get to Three gates farm

Three gates farm is situated on the edge of the Norfolk village of the sites topography is flat and the paths are all mud/grass tracks. The main entrance of Rectory road is of a Squeeze gap design, whilst the northern pedestrian entrance off church lane is a step over stile.

Aldeby does have a buses service which is as follows:

577 : Beccles to Loddon via Ellingham and Kirby Cane

You will need to get off at the green bus stop at Aldeby and is a short walk to the site.

Link to buses time tables: www.angliancoaches.co.uk

The closest train station is at Beccles (within 5 miles)

Link to train time tables: www.onerailway.com

There are no public Toilets within the village of Aldeby. The closest usable toilets are at McDonalds restaurant at Gillingham on the A146.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Three Gates farm and St Mary's wood will be allowed to develop naturally and become high forest through minimal intervention. The woods will develop greater structural diversity and increased deadwood habitat concentrations through natural wastage through ash dieback, which will slowly reduce the population of common ash within the wood, but will increase the amount of deadwood habitat as the trees die and create open areas that will develop with natural regeneration. The eventual long term vision will be woodland that has a variety of scrub, young and old trees, with abundant deadwood habitat.

An acre of orchard will be retained as a historical feature, with either apple or pear trees local to Norfolk replacing ones that die. The rest of the orchard area in which the majority of trees have already died will be left as open space and scrub habitat.

The long-term intention for public access is to maintain a sustainable level of use by keeping paths mown and free from obstacles maintaining access features and internal infrastructure appropriately. The long-term management will concentrate on maintaining and where appropriate, improving the current standard of paths present.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

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

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

Three gates Farm is within easy walking distance of the village of Aldeby, and St Mary's is itself situated within the village of Aldeby. Both sites have a well-structured pathway/ride system.

St Mary's has a small purpose built car park that can fit about four cars.

Three gates farm although not having an official car park the management entrance can accommodate two vehicles.

Significance

The donor of the sites, Yvonne Holmes, who still lives at Three Gates Farm, is keen that the public are invited into the woodlands, increasing public enjoyment of woodland and other non-woodland habitats, providing a valuable source of open space.

Opportunities & Constraints

Commercial variety of bramble (Himalayan giant) can restrict some paths during the year due to very rapid growth.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Native broadleaved woodland with open public access for visitors to enjoy.

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

Maintain site as an area of public open access, with ride system cut to a minimum of 4 times per year to a width of up to 2m and obstacle free to allow unhindered access to the public. Maintain all internal structures in a safe usable condition.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Native broadleaved woodland has been planted at Three Gates Farm since 1987 in 4 phases and St Mary's Wood was planted in 1997. The main species at both sites are oak, ash and field maple with small-leaved lime, wild cherry, hazel and other woody shrubs present.

Significance

The woods are an important addition to the woodland and semi natural habitat network in the Aldeby area, which is dominated by predominantly arable farmland.

Opportunities & Constraints

With the majority of three gates farm and St Mary's wood being New native woodland there is an opportunity to develop the structure to improve the biodiversity within the local area.

Factors Causing Change

Ash Die back will change the structure of the woodland by causing the resident ash to die or be heavily suppressed. This will cause a significant increase in the deadwood habitat within the site.

Rabbits potentially suppressing the development of natural regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To have a mature native mixed broadleaved woodland with developing natural regeneration and abundant deadwood habitat.

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

With the woodland having ash dieback the site will be placed under minimal intervention. As the ash component begins to decline, there will naturally be holes developing within the plantation canopy promoting conditions conducive towards natural regeneration developing. A programme of monitoring will be required over the plan period to monitor presence and levels of natural regeneration, with 1/2 acre sized fenced enclosures being set up as a control to gauge the level of impact on the site's regeneration by rabbits.

5.3 Open Ground Habitat

Description

The surviving area of orchard which consists of mainly commercial eating pears, and a small number of rapidly declining commercial apple varieties. There is also a small area of orchard that had a number of local varieties of apple and pear planted in 2005. The rest of this orchard area has now developed into a mixture of rough grass habitat and bramble dominated scrub.

Significance

The site has had a historical connection with orchards and is a Norfolk BAP habitat. The rough grass and scrub habitat adds biodiversity interest to the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to manage parts of the surviving area of orchard, rough grass and scrub habitats as an area of open non-intervention to diversify the amount of habitats within the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Rabbit damage to the orchard trees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Having a patchwork of mature orchard, areas of open rough grass habitat and clumps of scrub.

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

Continue the historical continuity of the site and contribute to the Norfolk BAP habitat. Maintain areas of new orchard, whilst remaining old orchard areas will be left as an area of minimal intervention to scrub over with bramble and all dead orchard trees will be retained as standing deadwood.

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	8.50	Mixed broadleaves	1987	High forest			Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Planted in two phases 1987 and 1990 in several blocks within the site. Consisting of predominately native broadleaved trees (oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, small-leaved lime, hornbeam, silver birch) with a small percentage of horse chestnut interspersed. All areas of this sub compartment have now reached maturity, but has little understorey. Some areas of thick scrub and bramble present throughout the compartment.</p>							
1b	1.06	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest			Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Remnant of the commercial orchard and area new orchard trees. Small area replanted with traditional varieties of Norfolk apples and pears to continue the historical legacy of the site. Remaining old orchard stock now provide valuable deadwood habitat. Large areas of bramble and scrub within the northern part of the sub-compartment, whilst a small mature copse is situated to the east.</p>							
1c	1.88	NULL		High forest			Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area
<p>Area of new native planting in Winter 2005 (oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, hazel and Hawthorn). Previously this was an area of redundant orchard, which had completely died. Dead orchard trees have been retained as deadwood habitat. There are small areas of natural regeneration present within the sub compartment. Ground flora within this area is a patchwork of open rough grass sward and mature bramble.</p>							
2a	1.00	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest			Area of Landscape Value, Environmentally Sensitive Area

Known as St Mary's wood. An established new native broadleaved woodland in 1997 using the following species: oak, ash, hornbeam, field maple, wild cherry, small-leaved lime, hazel and other woody shrubs. The compartment is surrounded with mature hedges.

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.