



Plain Copse

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Plain Copse
Location:	Lydiard Millicent, nr Swindon
Grid reference:	SU058857, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 173
Area:	1.36 hectares (3.36 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Braydon Forest Project, Community Forest, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc)

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

An ancient wood with oak, birch and coppicing used to be part of the ancient Braydon Forest. Good for spring flowers and woodland birds.

2.2 Extended Description

Plain Copse is a 1.36ha woodland located 3 miles north of Royal Wootton Bassett. The site is surrounded by farmland to the east, north and west. A field track runs along the southern boundary and a track bisects the far western end of the wood, running north-south. The Trust owns approximately half of Plain Copse, with the rest of the wooded area lying to the south of track on the southern boundary.

The Wood is designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and is a remnant part of the ancient Braydon Forest. The Wood also falls within the Great Western Community Forest area. The GWCF is one of 12 community forests close to major population centres in England where local people and organisations work together to create a better environment. The Wood is also designated as a County Wildlife Site.

Plain Copse is composed mainly of mature oak and silver birch with some hazel understory. The Copse is particularly beautiful in spring, with bluebells and other typical woodland wildflowers.

The gravel track leading from the B4696 to the wood is not owned by the Trust. Pedestrian access to Plain Copse is via two stiles in the south western corner of the wood and one stile in the south eastern corner of the wood, all leading off from the gravel track that runs east-west along the southern boundary. The site is very flat and there are no formal or marked paths but due to its small size and fairly open structure, a circular walk through the wood is possible.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Directions to main entrance

1. From junction 16 of the M4 take the A3102 towards Royal Wootton Bassett
2. Go straight over two roundabouts and you will be on the B4042 and you pass under the M4 motorway.
3. After going under the M4 motorway, after 0.3 miles, take the right hand turning B4696 towards Ashton Keynes
4. After 0.8miles the road curves to the left. There is a small layby on your right hand side. Parking is possible here but please do not block the access track nor gates into adjacent fields.

3.2 Access / Walks

Access

Legal access for management purposes/public is granted across a small area of open ground between the road (B4696) and the south western corner of the woodland. This access also serves farmland to the north and east of the woodland via the two tracks that lead east/west and north/south through Plain Copse.

Paths

No formal paths exist but a circular route around the outside edge can easily be followed. This route is not maintained and although the site is relatively flat, it can be water-logged in areas.

Public Transport

There are no public transport options within approximately 3 miles of the site.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to grow and develop naturally, as a refuge for wildlife. This will be achieved with minimal intervention, allowing deadwood and older trees to thrive and young trees to regenerate where there are losses. Canopy disturbance to maintain light levels will be created through natural dieback of trees or by felling for safety reasons. Any material felled or falling in the wood will be left on site to increase the volume of deadwood.

Low key public access will continue to be provided at a level appropriate for this small quiet woodland. Statutory obligations will continue to be met with respect to managing tree safety and access along the tracks within the wood.

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

Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

5.2
Description
Significance
Opportunities & Constraints
Factors Causing Change
Long term Objective (50 years+)
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

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	1.62	Oak (pedunculate)	1930	High forest	Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Braydon Forest Project, Community Forest

The wood is of hazel coppice with oak and ash standard structure. It is a remnant of Braydon Forest. The wood now forms part of the Great Western Community Forest. A small stream runs across the south-eastern corner. The western end is marked by a bank and ditch.

Natural regeneration appears good for all main tree species. The shrub layer and ground flora is variable - from dense to sparse, containing hazel, hawthorn, guelder rose and blackthorn in addition to sapling and young ash, oak and birch.

The standards are of mainly Pedunculate oak; with occasional silver birch Whilst most trees appear to be less than 100years old there is some stored oak coppice whose stools pre-date this. The wood has some ash but fewer than is generally expected in many woods around the Swindon area. Guelder rose, Bluebells, wood Anemone, early purple orchid, celandine, foxglove, pendulous sedge, honeysuckle form the ground layer.

There are signs of old ditches/drainage systems, other than the current main system. The wood is a fine bluebell woodland in spring - and contains other typical ancient woodland flora throughout the year.

The hazel regrowth is generally good and straight A small test coupe, off the east-west ride was cut 05/06 however this did not coppice well due to browsing and appears to have had no real benefits to the wood so will not be continued.

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.