



Chickerell Downs

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM	Page No.
Introduction	
Plan review and updating	
Woodland Management Approach	
Summary	
1.0 Site details	
2.0 Site description	
2.1 Summary Description	
2.2 Extended Description	
3.0 Public access information	
3.1 Getting there	
3.2 Access / Walks	
4.0 Long term policy	
5.0 Key Features	
5.1 Secondary Woodland	
5.2 Informal Public Access	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
Glossary	
MAPS	
Access	
Conservation Features	
Management	

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Chickerell Downs
Location:	Chickerell
Grid reference:	SY648799, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 194
Area:	5.10 hectares (12.60 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The site at Chickerell Downs is a mosaic of habitats including woodland, grassland, wet flushes and ponds. Tree cover is scrub woodland and mixed broadleaf: birch, willow, alder, oak and ash are common. Two manmade ponds also lie within the site.

2.2 Extended Description

Chickerell Downs lies on the southern edge of Chickerell approximately 2 miles from the centre of Weymouth.

The wood is very much urban fringe in context having been acquired in 1990 from Wilcon Homes. It is a secondary woodland, created through a mixture of natural regeneration and some planting, with ponds, an area of reed bed and rough grassland. It has considerable bird interest with a wide range of warblers including Cetti's warbler. Water rail can also regularly be heard 'squealing' in the reed bed area. The ponds are based on parts of a former brick pit, known as Putton Lane brickworks and also as drainage ponds from when the housing estate was built.

The wood sits with the National Character Area no. 138 The Weymouth Lowlands. These are characterised by urban fringe activities with sparse woodland making Chickerell Downs locally important as a habitat.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Chickerell Downs is immediately adjacent to Bennett's Water Gardens on the edge of the small town of Chickerell to the north west of Weymouth.

Access is available direct from the surrounding suburban roads via four entrances along the north-western boundary (Glennie Road), one from Trenchard Way and a further entrance at the south-eastern point of the wood from Putton Lane. A level surfaced path approx 200 metres long loops between the 2 middle entrances off Glennie Way with kissing gates suitable for manual wheelchairs and pushchairs. Other entrances to the site are simple squeeze stiles. There are two short, flat linear routes from the Putton Lane entrance to the pond and from the north eastern entrance off Glennie Way to the high point of the site. Other paths are of an unmodified grass and earth surface which get slippery and muddy when wet. Steep slopes in the centre of the site, some with flights of steps, and a small bridge over a stream may limit access further round the site for some users.

Parking is available for one car in front of the Putton Lane entrance. Otherwise, parking may be available in surrounding suburban streets although parking on Glennie Way is difficult as it is busy and on a bend. Parking is available at Willowbed Hall - approximately 400m away along Glennie Way/Putton Lane - which are suburban roads with a pavement.

Nearest public toilet: None known in Chickerell, nearest toilet thought to be at the Swannery car park, by Radipole Lake in Weymouth - approximately 3 miles away - toilets suitable for the disabled (require a RADAR key) and baby change facilities. Not open 24 hours. Information from the Weymouth and Portland Borough Council website www.weymouth.gov.uk as at July 2006

Nearest bus stop - Glennie Way opposite the wood, and Willowbed Hall - approximately 400m away along Glennie Way/Putton Lane - which are suburban roads with a pavement (although NB the stretch of Putton Lane leading to the south eastern entrance to the site does not have a pavement). Information from Traveline website as at July 2006

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision is for Chickerell Downs to become attractive, mature native broadleaf woodland containing a healthy mix of trees, shrubs and a thriving understorey. This will help fulfil the Woodland Trust's aim of increasing native woodland cover.

The wildlife value of the complementary habitat of the ponds as they merge into the new woodland will be retained and improved, contributing more to the overall diversity of habitat.

The site will be well used and valued by the residents of Chickerell. The woodland will be managed as an important open access area where the public are welcome. This will help in fulfilling the Trust's aim of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

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

5.1 Secondary Woodland

Description

Mixed native broadleaf planted between 1991 and 1995, with a design incorporating wide rides and glades. The new woodland has bolstered and enlarged older naturally established scrub woodland of birch, willow and alder on the southern side of the site which in turn link to mature boundary hedges outside of the site providing some linkage with the wider area. The mature woodland and hedges provide opportunity for the spread of woodland species into the newer woodland.

The woodland now covers more than 80% of the site. There are two man-made ponds. The larger pond was built to retain storm water runoff from the adjacent estate and the Trust has responsibilities for its maintenance. The central pond is dominated by Phragmites reed. The reedbed and the scrubby vegetation surrounding most of the pond make it a good habitat, and Cetti's warblers have been recorded here. Both great crested and smooth newts have been found using the pond.

The second smaller pond is thought to be a flooded brick pit. It is open on the southern edge to provide views for the public but otherwise is surrounded by trees and scrub. Although more open water is present the pond is less diverse than the central pond, possibly due to overshadowing, increased nutrient levels due to leaf litter, duck weed and deep central sections (see Environment Agency report of Nov 2000). Parrots Feather is widespread.

The ponds and associated habitats in Chickerell Downs form part of a wider network in the local area, including those at Bennett's Water Gardens and Crookhill Brick Pit SSSI (designated partly for its exceptional population of great crested newts).

Some Japanese Knotweed has been found on the site and chemically controlled. It has not been seen since 2016.

Significance

The Woodland Trust has an aim that there should be more native woods and places rich in trees. The planting and establishment of woodland at Chickerell Downs helps fulfil this aim. The mixture of natural habitats also provides wildlife benefits linking two important sites, and increasing the overall habitat available.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint. Misuse of the site will always limit the wildlife potential of the site through disturbance.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die-back will affect the planted areas of the wood.
The spread of non-natives such as parrot's feather will also cause a decline in the diversity of the ponds.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure. A mixture of trees, shrubs, open space, wet woodland and pond features with a developing ground flora.

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

The short term objective is to ensure woodland is continuing to mature, however some felling maybe needed particularly behind Trenchard Way for safety purposes as ash die-back takes hold. Path edge coppicing will be implemented within the woodland areas (cpt 1a) adding diversity to the structure of the woodland, creating ride-edge transitional habitat. Checks for invasive non-native species (especially Japanese Knotweed in the area (cpt 1a) where it was previously found) will be implemented and if necessary remedial control and eradication undertaken.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Chickerell Downs lies between the suburbs of Chickerell and Charlestown and is immediately adjacent to a large housing estate. It is also a major commuter route for local Budmouth College. As such it is quite well used by local people. A network of rides and open space was incorporated into the design to provide for public access. In previous years surfacing of paths and installation of kissing gates helped to make the site accessible to a wide range of the population. Some paths become very muddy during heavy rain and have the feel of becoming tunnels between walls of bramble and have an oppressive feel which may deter some visitors concerned for their safety.

Fly tipping, vandalism, misuse by young adults and mountain biking have all been issues in the last few years.

Significance

The wood is very highly valued by local people.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: There has been a history of misuse at the site including dumping and vandalism and misuse of the wood which will put some people off visiting. The dense bramble thickets provide screening for anti-social behaviour.

Factors Causing Change

The growth of the woodland, particularly those scrubby areas where there is a lot of blackthorn and bramble will cause the paths to close over.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A site that contains well-maintained, attractive paths and welcoming entrances. The wood will be used and valued by all users.

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

The short term objective is to maintain accessible, attractive and safe woodland that the public frequently enjoy by:

1. Maintenance of the entrances, seats, steps, bridge and surfaced paths on the site as appropriate for level of use. Some of the surfaced paths may need scrapping clean over the 5 year period.
2. Mowing of the paths expected to be three times a year and litter picks at the same time.
3. Coppicing of the path edges on rotation to 3m back to ensure they do not become narrow tunnels and aid the drying of the path surfaces.
4. Fly tipping and vandalism will be dealt with as necessary.

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	3.60	Mixed broadleaves	1991	Min-intervention	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access	
<p>Mixed native broadleaves planted by the Trust between 1991 and 1995 on former improved grassland/reclaimed brickworks site. Main species are alder, oak and ash.</p> <p>Part of this area includes naturally established scrub woodland and wet flushes along the lower lying wet areas on the southern boundary forming a thickened boundary along mature boundary hedges. The main species present are birch, willow, & alder. It is not known exactly when the scrub first developed, but it is assumed that it occurred gradually after closure of the brick pit in 1965, and the woodland is well established.</p> <p>The trees have generally established well, although slower than expected. A combination of poor soil and vandalism has led to lower establishment levels on the higher ground near Trenchard Way, but over time the area is self seeding and becoming woodland.</p> <p>As part of the design rides and glades were incorporated into the woodland to maintain open space and provide access. The new planting also links with mature hedges and older scrub woodland on the site and adjacent land which may help to provide corridors to the wider landscape which is becoming increasingly fragmented by development.</p>							
2a	1.00	Open ground	1965	Non-wood habitat	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access	
<p>This compartment is comprised of open grass and a large wet flush running east to west along the south-western edge of the site. This was intentionally left open at the time of planting. The open grass transitions into ever wetter soil until standing water and ephemeral ponds are encountered along the boundary. This scrubby grass and wet meadow provide undisturbed habitat used by much of the wildlife from the ponds and is an important linking feature between the ponds and the neighbouring SSSI.</p>							
3a	0.40	NULL		Non-wood habitat	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access	

This compartment is a manmade pond contemporary with the housing development and therefore about 15 years old. Generally steep sided, and more than 1m deep at deepest point. The pond was built to retain storm water from new development, and the Trust has responsibilities to maintain it as such. Bankside vegetation around the ponds is generally overgrown with willow and bramble acting as a natural barrier and a useful safety feature.

The pond itself is dominated by Phragmites with very little open water.

The pond is known to be potential habitat for a range of wildlife including dragonflies and newts although the reduction of open water is correspondingly reducing the habitat potential.

3b	0.10	NULL		Non-wood habitat	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access	
----	------	------	--	------------------	--	------------------------	--

A second smaller pond which is dominated by invasive Parrot Feather. Banks are either shallow or with very short drops. Bank vegetation is mostly wooded with large willows around all sides except for the southern edge. The southern bank is open with patches of emerging vegetation sheltered by clumps of woody vegetation. Frequent use by dogs keeps the banks denuded of vegetation.

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.