



Sycamore Grove

Management Plan 2019-2024

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 Natural 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Sycamore Grove
Location:	Baxenden
Grid reference:	SD771270, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 103
Area:	0.46 hectares (1.14 acres)
Designations:	Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

An attractive, popular site with locals. Sycamore, beech and lime trees form the majority of the woods, and the site is crossed by stone-surfaced paths to increase access to the area.

2.2 Extended Description

Sycamore Grove is situated in the middle of a densely populated residential area in the ward of Baxenden approximately one mile from Accrington town centre. Laund Clough an ancient woodland also in the care of The Woodland Trust lies just to the north of the site. Haworth Park, a small municipal park in control of the local authority lies just to the west of the woodland.

It is situated on relatively level, fertile ground, or on a gentle slope facing north, with a small knoll in the middle. The watercourse running south-north through the site was culverted in 1990.

Sycamore Grove is a small wood, and it consists of a group of mature, broadleaved, even-aged trees. The Woodland Trust owns the majority of the wood, but several little areas to the south belong to neighbours. The dominant species are sycamore, beech and lime, with horse chestnut and elm remaining but in sparse numbers. The trees are generally in good health, and stand out as a major landscape feature in the area, protected by a Tree Preservation Order since 1952. When the wood was acquired by the Woodland Trust there were no shrubs or regeneration, but as gaps have been created in the canopy, and people directed onto footpaths, both have started to appear. Regeneration is still sparse, but adequate in areas where it does occur, and is mainly ash (probably from neighbouring trees), beech and sycamore. Shrubs are rather mixed, mainly around the edges and many are of garden origins.

Poor management access and areas of permanently wet ground make management operations with machinery challenging.

The wood was gifted to the Woodland Trust by Rawlings Bros. (NW) Ltd of Blackburn on 1 November 1990. Very little is known about the history of the wood, and there are no signs of ancient origins. Therefore it appears likely that the whole wood was planted, and certainly the limes through the centre of it were planted as an avenue, leading up to the old house, The Laund. This was demolished long ago, and a housing estate built in its place and on the fields surrounding the wood, approximately in the 1960's. A pair of old stone gateposts marks a drive at the eastern end of the wood.

The woodland has two key features Informal Public Access & Natural Secondary Woodland.

The wood is in the centre of a number of routes and lots of houses, hence it is very well used by local people at all times, as a through route and recreation area. The wood provides an attractive, surprisingly large landscape feature, in an area otherwise dominated by houses and roads.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Sycamore Grove is situated in the suburb of Higher Baxenden about one mile from the town of Accrington in East Lancashire. The woodland is situated on Sycamore Grove which is just to the east of A680 (Manchester Road). Pedestrian access is available from 4 main entrance points, 2 are located on the northern boundary off Sycamore Grove, 1 is located on the southern boundary off Laund Road and 1 is located on the eastern boundary off an alleyway leading from Southwood Drive. The pedestrian entrances lead onto a 200 metre circular even surfaced path network.

Parking is available on nearby local roads such as Laund Road and Sycamore Grove but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: Located at Asda Superstore Hyndburn Road which is located approximately 2 miles away from the wood.

Nearest bus stop: Located at Laund Road, which is approximately 200 metres away from the wood. Laund Road is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

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

Sycamore Grove will be allowed to grow and develop naturally, as a refuge for wildlife. The wood will be managed as high forest of mixed broadleaves, including non-native trees common to the local area. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature, through minimal intervention. Gaps will be created in the canopy due to senescence and tree safety operations.

Low key public access will continue to be provided at a level which is appropriate for a small urban woodland.

Statutory obligations will continue to be met with respect to managing tree safety and ensuring public access via the permissive path.

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 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Dominant species are sycamore, beech and lime, with horse chestnut and elm found sparsely. The trees are generally in good health, and stand out as a major landscape feature in the area, protected by a Tree Preservation Order since 1952. Initially, there were no shrubs or regeneration, but as gaps have been created in the canopy, and people directed onto footpaths, both have started to appear. Regeneration is still sparse, but adequate in areas where it does occur, and is mainly ash, beech and sycamore. Shrubs are rather mixed, mainly around the edges and many are of garden origin.

Significance

Its main value is as woodland open, visible and available to many hundreds of local people on a daily basis. Its wildlife value has not been investigated, the ground flora is sparse, and animals likely to be restricted to common, robust, urban species such as grey squirrels and various birds. However, these are visible and appreciated by people living locally.

Opportunities & Constraints

Sycamore Grove is a small wood, and apart from tiny areas not in Woodland Trust ownership, it is surrounded by housing and cannot be extended. It is isolated from other woods. However, it is stable and mature enough to provide for urban wildlife, along with similar pockets of woodland elsewhere in the area.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback. Overmature trees and tree safety

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain a broadleaved high forest as a local conservation and landscape feature.

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

It is expected that tree safety work will continue to create gaps for natural regeneration to colonise within the woodland. A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site, key elements of which are likely to include the effects of ash disease and the development of natural regeneration. Ash make up a very small component of the canopy of this woodland so the impact of Chalara is likely to be minimal.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

The site has 4 formal entrances, and approximately 200m of circular footpath on a generally flat site.

Significance

The wood provides a green breathing space for people in a densely urban environment

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the site limits the informal recreational opportunities but the path network does link to other areas of open space including nearby Laund Clough another Woodland Trust site and Haworth Park a local authority site.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Public Access will be maintained at its current level at least, with four entrances and a circular path around the wood.

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

Signs welcoming the general public to make use of the site will be maintained at the entrance points. Vegetation encroaching onto paths will be cut back and annual maintenance of all woodland fixtures; including, signs, gates, and fences will be undertaken. The site will be kept clear of litter and fly tipping.

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	0.47	Sycamore	1880	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Tree Preservation Order

The wood is 0.61 hectares (1.5 acres) in size and consists of a small block of mature broadleaved woodland. It is located in a densely urban area and is surrounded domestic properties on all boundaries. The dominant species are sycamore, beech and lime, with horse chestnut and elm remaining sparsely. Regeneration is still sparse, but adequate in areas where it does occur, and is mainly ash beech and sycamore. Shrubs are rather mixed, mainly around the edges and many are of garden origins.

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.