



Harpsden & Peveril Woods

Management Plan

2014-2019

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

5.2 Informal Public Access

6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Harpsden & Peveril Woods
Location:	Harpsden
Grid reference:	SU760803, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 175
Area:	18.74 hectares (46.31 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The wood is dominated by mature beech, pedunculate oak, ash trees and sessile oak. Also hazel, holly, field maple, rowan, wild cherry all present. There are several uncommon species such as birds nest orchid and narrow-lipped hellebore.

2.2 Extended Description

Harpsden and Peveril Woods is an 18 hectare ancient woodland. It is situated next to Henley Golf Club in the parish of Harpsden, approximately 1 mile south of Henley-on-Thames, and within the Chiltern Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The majority of the wood (Harpsden Wood) was acquired by The Woodland Trust in 1991 with the help of substantial contributions from local residents, and then in 1995 the area known as Peveril Wood (to the northwest) was added to the Trust's landholding. Woodlands Road winds through the site and this breaks the wood and landholding up into 3 blocks.

Beech dominates the tree canopy of the wood, but oak, ash, birch and cherry are also common. The wood has for many years been managed as high forest and much of the beech was almost certainly planted.

The wood forms part of a larger complex of ancient woodland, roughly twice the size of The Trust's landholding. The whole of this woodland area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by virtue of its diverse ground flora and soil types. Over 40 flora species associated with long established woodland have been recorded (including several uncommon helleborines), and the wood has also been noted for its diversity of fungi. The wood has some steep chalk slopes towards the north of the site, and also contains many man-made quarry pits.

A network of footpaths provides good access for pedestrian visitors, and there is also a bridleway through the site. Limited parking is possible at the wood via a number of lay-bys alongside Woodlands Road.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Getting there: Harpsden and Peveril Woods lie approximately 1 mile to the south of Henley-on-Thames. There is a railway station at Henley which connects with the Reading to Paddington railway line. Buses run between Henley and Reading along the A4155 road - the nearest stop is at Harpsden Turn near Sheephouse Farm. From this point, it is about a 1/2 mile walk along a country lane to reach the north east corner of the site. There are several informal lay-bys off Woodlands Road through the centre of the site if arriving by vehicle.

There are two public rights of way on site: a public bridleway along part of the eastern boundary and a public footpath coming off the bridleway and running to the south west, as well as numerous permissive paths. None of the paths are surfaced and there is no path furniture to negotiate. The northern quarter of the wood is on a valley slope with the rest of the wood being reasonably level.

Public conveniences: There are three public conveniences in Henley on Thames at: Station Road, Greys Road and Kings Road - check opening times with South Oxfordshire District Council www.southoxon.gov.uk, tel 01491 823000.

For further information about public transport, contact 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 majority of the Harpsden & Peveril woods will be managed with the minimum of silvicultural intervention. This form of management perpetuates the approach of the last 50+ years, which has led to an accumulation of large deadwood and over-mature beech trees. The natural collapse and windblow of large mature beech trees is predicted to continue, and this will produce canopy gaps for natural regeneration of other species to occur, such as oak birch, sycamore and cherry. The loss of ash through 'ash dieback disease' is very likely to occur in the next 10 years and this will also add gaps to the mature tree canopy, again adding diversity to the structure of the woodland by allowing younger trees to develop naturally. Over time the woods are likely to become more of mixture of beech, oak, birch and sycamore.

Open managed rides will however be present, particularly in the northern quarter of the woodland on the sloping chalk valley side. Major paths and the road through this part of the site will be made much more open via tree felling, and this will also help to reduce the tree failure risk at the site. Most importantly the open rides will improve the habitat for uncommon floral species present on the site (eg helleborines), which are a key characteristic of the SSSI status.

The wood will continue to be largely composed of native species, although the presence of sycamore will be accepted. But invasive non-native species which are threat to native flora (rhododendron, cherry laurel and variegated archangel) will no longer be present at the wood in the future.

The Woodland Trust has given the site a category B for access (which implies regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day). This is a medium rating so a good standard of access provision will be maintained at Harpsden & Peveril: a managed path network will be kept open for use and entrances will be accessible and clearly signed.

The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors, neighbours, and adjacent road users through regular tree safety inspections

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 woods are dominated by mature beech, with a scattering of oak (including sessile) and ash. Other species present include birch, hazel, holly, field maple, rowan, wild cherry, sycamore, horse chestnut, larch and wayfaring tree.

The NVC classification approximates to W14 (beech with bramble) for most of the woodland area on the southern plateau, leading to W12 (beech with dogs mercury) on the sloping northern quarter of the site.

In many parts of the woods the structure is dominated by the mature beeches and lacks an understorey. However, there are some canopy gaps, most notably in compartment 1b, where windblow events (most notably in 1990) have led to gaps now being filled with younger trees of a variety of species. Smaller canopy gaps are being created as the over-mature beeches succumb to fungal pathogens and collapse.

The woods are designated as ancient woodland and SSSI (Site of special scientific interest) on account of their diversity of woodland flora. There are forty recorded species of flowering plants strongly associated with old woodland, and this reinforces the ancient woodland status. Uncommon plants include bird's nest orchid, narrow-lipped helleborine, green-flowered helleborine, cow-wheat, goldilocks and the yellow bird's nest. The woodland on the chalk slope to the north of site is especially important for these species. Other more common woodland plants include bluebell, woodruff and dogs mercury.

The deadwood habitat is also very rich, and a fungal survey in 1999 recorded 171 species of which 9 are rare.

There are many pits and hollows in the woods, most of which are thought to derive from quarrying. The most notable pit is a large one in the centre of compartment 1c. Other historic features include the hollow way track along the bridleway route and the woodbank on the northern boundary with the golf course.

Small patches of non-native invasive species are present, namely rhododendron, cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel. These are likely to have derived from neighbouring gardens.

Significance

Harpsden & Peveril woods are the major portion of the Harpsden SSSI which is especially important for its diversity of woodland ground flora. The woods are within the Chiltern Hills AONB, one of the most heavily wooded landscapes in the country, and locally they link to a complex of ancient woods located less than a mile away to the south and west.

Opportunities & Constraints

Steep terrain could be a constraint to timber extraction from any woodland operations.

Factors Causing Change

Browsing by deer. Squirrel damage. Regeneration and spread of sycamore. The probable loss of ash in the future from ash dieback disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The majority of the Harpsden & Peveril woods will be managed with the minimum of silvicultural intervention, which will continue to lead to an accumulation of large deadwood and over-mature beech trees. It is possible that veteran beech trees will start to develop in the future. Any potential veterans will be identified at an early stage and any threats to their survival (eg light competition by other trees) will be managed. The natural collapse of some of the over-mature beeches and loss of ash from ash dieback will create natural gaps in the canopy. This will allow natural regeneration to occur and vary the structure of the woods. Species such as oak, birch, sycamore and cherry are likely to regenerate within these canopy gaps, as well as younger beech. The woodland habitat on the northern chalk slope will be made as favourable as possible for important woodland plants, in recognition of the SSSI status. Hence small glades and wide open rides will be present along the road and the major paths through this part of the site. The wood will continue to be largely composed of native species, although the presence of sycamore will be welcomed. Hence invasive non-native species such as rhododendron, cherry laurel and variegated archangel will not be present at the wood in the future. Threats to the woodland, for example from deer browsing or the further arrival of exotic species, will be monitored. Appropriate action to remove any threats will be taken as required.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to monitor and take action on any threats to this ancient woodland and to make improvements to the woodland structure in targeted areas. This will be achieved by the following specific actions:

- Approximately 400m of path and roadside felling will be carried out on the northern slope of the wood. This work will be carried out in 2017 and will be mostly in compartment 1b, along the northern section of road and along the public footpath. Felling will be carried out to create small glades or scallops along the edges of the road and path and these will be up to 20m in width. Mature beech trees will be especially favoured for felling along the road to help reduce the tree safety risk.
- The small clumps of invasive exotic species currently present (rhododendron, cherry laurel and variegated archangel) will be eradicated during this plan period, commencing in 2016. Chemical control will be used against the laurel and rhododendron and manual removal is preferred for the archangel species.
- A deer impact assessment, using the Woodland Trust's methodology, will be undertaken in 2015 and 2017. If the impact on the woodland from deer reaches unacceptable levels then control of the deer population will be carried out.
- Carrying out a survey of potential veteran trees in 2017, with the aim of identifying 20 over-mature beech trees with potential to grow on to veteran status. Any threats to the survival of the trees will also be assessed.
- Informal woodland condition monitoring will be undertaken in 2016 to assess any other threats or changes occurring to the woodland. A more in-depth woodland condition assessment will be carried out in 2019, using The Woodland Trust's methodology, and this will inform the next management plan

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Harpsden & Peveril woods are popular with local people for recreational walking. They are within easy walking distance of clusters of houses to the south, north and west and are only a mile from the population of Henley-on-Thames. The site contains a public footpath which crosses Woodlands Road and a public bridleway, as well as a network of permissive paths allowing a variety of circular walks. Car parking is possible but limited at the site to a number of laybys off Woodlands Road. The woods have a number of features to interest visitors including large impressive beech trees, undulating terrain and old quarry pits.

Significance

The woods provide an important natural setting for informal recreation to the south of Henley-on-Thames.

Opportunities & Constraints

Car parking is limited at the site and this restricts accommodating an increase in visitors from further afield.

Factors Causing Change

Anti-social activities such as flytipping along the road edges & unauthorised motor vehicles using the woods.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

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

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to provide low key public access which is safe and enjoyable. This will be achieved by:

- Annual management of the main paths (approx 3km in total), including the public bridleway and public footpath.
- Annual maintenance and repairs to the 10 main entrances, including maintaining the welcome signage and the restrictions to motor vehicles.
- Annual tree safety surveys along the roadsides, paths, golf course boundary and garden boundaries.
- Annual clearance of litter at the entrances and along the roadsides.

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	2.22	Beech	1900	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Tree Preservation Order
Part of the site known as Peveril wood. Terrain slopes steeply to the north. A mixed structure with mature beech and ash dominating with smaller components of wild cherry, yew, field maple and hazel.							
1b	4.86	Beech	1900	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest
Beech is the dominant mature tree species throughout. Character of the woodland changes from south to north. Oak and birch present with the beech on the flat plateau to the south but increasingly more ash on the slope to the north. Canopy gaps present, especially in the south, with birch, cherry, sallow and hawthorn also present in them.							
1c	11.68	Beech	1900	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest
The major portion of the wood and dominated by beech. On flat terrain at the top of the slope. Oak and ash are also present together with hazel, holly, field maple, rowan, wild cherry and wayfaring tree. There are occasional scattered larch and horse chestnut.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1b	Ride edge Coppice	0.50	100	50

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.