



Pucketts Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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: | Pucketts Wood |
| Location: | Stoke Water, Beaminster |
| Grid reference: | ST467012, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 193 |
| Area: | 9.84 hectares (24.32 acres) |
| Designations: | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Set in a secluded river valley, this site is primarily dominated by native broadleaves such as oak and ash, with grassland areas to encourage habitat diversity. A peaceful site in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with two public footpaths in the woods.

2.2 Extended Description

Puckett's Wood is set in a secluded river valley at Stoke Water in West Dorset and forms part of the Dorset AONB. The wood is less than 1km by footpath or country road from the centre of Beaminster and is well used. Two public footpaths cross the site, one of which forms part of the long distance Wessex Ridgeway. There is currently a lack of parking spaces at or near the wood so most visitors walk from the town.

The original 8ha site was planted by the Woodland Trust between 1993 and 1995 with mixed native broadleaves on four former grass fields. These fields were separated by mature hedges which are still visible running across & around the woodland. Some areas of improved grassland were left unplanted to retain an element of habitat diversity within the site leaving one intact field and a 20m wide strip by the stream on the western boundary. A 2ha extension to the site, known as Workhouse Wood, was gifted to the Trust in 2012. This is also a native woodland creation site which predates Puckett's planting by a couple of years and the trees are noticeably larger.

The site slopes gently from east to west. It is bordered by a small stream on the western boundary. Most other surrounding land is currently managed as pasture.

Located in the Marshwood and Powerstock Vales National Character Area no. 139. The Vale is a landscape of pasture farming with medium-sized fields, trimmed hedgerows and numerous mature hedgerow oaks. Ribbons of woodland follow many streams but are uncommon elsewhere. The hedgerows are rich in shrub and herbaceous species and the Vale has a lush and remote quality. Settlements mainly comprise of small hamlets and many farmsteads linked by winding lanes. The Lower Lias clays and Middle Lias sandy clays, & silts such as are at Pucketts Wood are surrounded by hills of Upper Greensand rocks.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Puckett's Wood is situated approximately 1km from the centre of Beaminster and is reached either by a single lane country road (Stoke Road), which is without pavements or public footpaths across surrounding farmland. There are two public entrances from the road, one in the SE corner and the other further west opposite the entrance to Knowle Farm. There is just enough room for one car to park in front of the gateway of the south eastern entrance off the road. In addition the Wessex Ridgeway public footpath crosses the wood west to east. The western entrance on this path is a wooden footbridge (not Woodland Trust owned) across Stoke Water - a short steep slope from the bridge on the Woodland Trust side can get slippery in winter. Paths have a natural grass and mud surface and are uneven in places. The site is on a gentle slope.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The majority of the wood (Compt 1a) will be managed as high forest, with some intervention through thinning as necessary to maintain a diverse irregular structure. The woodland area will be extended by planting cpt 2a to provide further woodland habitat and to promote wider connectivity with the surrounding woodland landscape. The main ride running through cpt 1a and glade area will have a varied edge structure maintained through coppicing and mowing on a long-term rotation.

Close to the town of Beaminster and as part of a long-distance walkway, the site will be a valued easily accessible green-space. Footpath furniture and paths will be maintained to a standard which is suitable to the level of use the wood gets.

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

Recent secondary woodland (Compt 1a) covers 7.83 ha of the site. It was planted in two stages, the oldest (Workhouse Wood) being planted by a private individual and gifted to the Woodland Trust in 2012, and the second (Puckett's Wood) planted by the Woodland Trust. The main tree species are oak, ash and alder with willow, hazel and field maple in the shrub layer., Workhouse Wood has some more unusual species within it, including an avenue of cherries, a deodar cedar and eucalyptus. The ground flora is limited in diversity and dominated by nettles and thistles in areas. The open grassland area (Compt 2a) will be planted to form a scrub edge to the wood during the plan period.

The woodland contains and is surrounded by mature hedges except where it borders Stoke Water stream which has a fringe of mature trees and a 20m strip of open grassland. There is a historical record for Green winged orchid but the source is unknown and the Dorset Environmental Record Centre has no records for it in the area. There is a serrotine bat roost at Stoke Water House directly south west of the wood. It is understood that they do not use trees to roost in. There are anecdotal reports of dormice being present but these are unconfirmed.

Significance

The broadleaved woodland contributes to the habitat action plans at local, regional and national level and fulfils the Woodland Trust's objectives of creating new woodland and protecting native woodlands.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: To extend woodland habitat and wider connectivity through further extension of woodland area, planting cpt 2a.

Factors Causing Change

Canopy closure is inhibiting regeneration. Other potential issues are, Deer Damage, Squirrel damage, tree diseases, particularly ash die back, and the shading of open areas. Rabbits grazing occurs episodically in the wood and may require management in the future. Himalayan Balsam may increase along the stream affecting the diversity of the habitat.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats. A mixture of trees, shrubs, open rides, streamside habitats and developing ground flora provide a mosaic of associated semi-natural habitats. The woodland area will be extended by planting cpt 2a to provide further woodland habitat and to promote wider connectivity with the surrounding landscape.

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

The short term objective is to facilitate natural regeneration in the existing woodland and increase woodland cover; this will be done by:

1. Opening up the rides to create extraction routes for thinning with the aim of creating a transitional ride edge habitat through long-term rotational coppicing.
2. Thin the main areas of woodland (cpt 1a) to promote increased diversity of broadleaved species, promoting sub-dominant species other than ash, to provide greater resilience from ash die back, while creating and maintaining an increased irregular structure.
3. Plant the north-eastern field (cpt 2a) with native scrub species to further expand woodland area and increase wider connectivity of associated species and habitat. The cpt will be managed by grazing in year 1 to ensure a short turf for planting.
4. Maintain the open grassland glade on the western side of the wood through mowing.
5. Control and eradicate where possible Himalayan balsam along river edge .

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Puckett's Wood is well used as it is within easy walking distance of Beaminster, and crossed by a long distance public footpath. Its location within a sheltered valley and the combination of open ground, woodland and stream make it a very pleasant place to visit. Access is generally through kissing gates and paths are generally level or gently sloping. Some areas get wet and muddy. Parking is very limited to 1 car in front of the SE gateway from the road.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that everyone should recognise that trees and woods are an essential part of a healthy environment and that there should be a wood with open access close to everyone's home.

It provides an excellent place for locals to walk and enjoy quiet recreation as well as linking wider access routes in the area where accessible woodlands are limited.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

A lack of parking, narrow lanes and footpaths which cross neighbouring fields may all limit its accessibility to some user groups. The site holds water after rain and can become slippery and boggy in places.

Factors Causing Change

As the wood matures and the canopy closes some paths may get darker and wetter.
Increase in fly tipping

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Woodland with well-maintained, attractive paths and entrances that links to the wider network of rights of way. The wood will be valued as a place for quiet informal recreation.

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

The short term objective is to ensure the site remains accessible and welcoming. This will be done by:

1. Ensuring paths are appropriate for the level of use and type of demand from the local population.
2. Cut path at least twice each year and letting more light in as part of the ride edge habitat improvements.
3. The road side hedge will also be trimmed to maintain our legal obligations as a landowner.
4. The feasibility of increasing the car parking capacity servicing the wood will be explored during the plan period.
5. Moving on middle entrance gate to deter fly-tipping.

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 | 7.83 | Ash | 1993 | High forest | Mostly wet ground/exposed site | Informal Public Access | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| <p>2 sections of woodland one planted in 1990 - Workhouse Wood - the trees are a mix of native species dominated by ash, oak and wild cherry. The planted understory is developing and contains hazel, hawthorn and yew. A number of honeysuckle plants were specifically also planted to climb up the trees. Oddities were also planted amongst the wood including a Deodar Cedar, a Eucalyptus and possibly a Filbert. The ground flora is a little more developed than the rest of the wood and includes more bluebells and primroses spreading from the hedges, but is dominated by nettle.</p> <p>A central avenue was created with the original planting mix although it is now lost within the larger woodland. . Other minor paths have been made to link up with those in Puckett's Wood.</p> <p>Pucketts Wood - Previously grassland, which was planted between 1992 and 1995 with mixed native broadleaves. Main species include pedunculate oak and ash, with common alder and grey willow on the wetter western side. Shrubs including hazel and field maple were planted by the paths. The trees are established. Some damage from deer, rabbits and squirrels is evident but this is not currently at a level which will affect the continued development of the wood. A wide grass strip is on the western edge between the wood and the Stoke Water.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 2a | 1.80 | NULL | | Wood establishment | Management factors (eg grazing etc) | Informal Public Access | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| <p>A semi-improved neutral grassland field at the north east of the site. It is on a south-west facing slope. When surveyed it was predominantly MG6 (Perennial rye grass & Crested dogs tail) with some areas of MG1 (False oat-grass) with small areas transitional towards a more diverse MG5 (Crested dogs tail & Common knapweed). 3 Dorset notable species were recorded in 2000 - Common birds foot trefoil, Common knapweed and Oxeye daisy.</p> <p>Although already of botanic interest it has the potential to improve with sensitive management. Conversely the diversity of the grassland could decrease. The open area will also provide habitat for numerous invertebrates although no survey has been undertaken.</p> <p>Visually it provides a pleasant to the new woodland and improves the internal landscape.</p> | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

| Forecast Year | Cpt | Operation Type | Work Area (ha) | Estimated vol/ha | Estimated total vol. |
|---------------|-----|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2019 | 1a | Thin | 7.83 | 18 | 140 |

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.