



Twenty Acre 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Twenty Acre Wood
Location:	Warrington
Grid reference:	SJ583896, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	2.25 hectares (5.56 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site, Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Twenty Acre Wood is a small mixed broadleaf woodland containing mature oak, horse chestnut, beech, silver birch, sycamore and lime trees. It provides a haven for wildlife in the local urban environment with a network of surfaced footpaths from the neighbouring housing estates.

2.2 Extended Description

Twenty Acre Wood is a small (2.25ha) urban woodland located in the Old Hall district of Warrington, approximately 3 miles to the north west of the town centre. It is surrounded by housing and paths on all sides; the northern and southern boundaries adjoin garden fencing; the eastern boundary is next to a surfaced footpath with a pond and small area of woodland owned by Warrington Council; the western boundary consists of a hawthorn hedge with a tarmac track/ footpath with more houses beyond this.

The woodland is situated on flat, low lying ground with soils which are typically sandy silt loam with a good humus and organic surface layer. A network of shallow drainage ditches run through the wood and drain into the pond on the neighbouring council land. The site was formerly farm woodland prior to the land being purchased by the Commission for the New Towns (CNT) in the late 1970's. It was gifted to the Woodland Trust in September 1995 along with a further nine woodlands within a 2 mile radius amounting to a local estate of approximately 26ha.

It is secondary broadleaved woodland which is a key feature of the site. The canopy contains mature oak, ash, beech, Silver birch, sycamore, Horse Chestnut and lime with the understorey comprising both natural regeneration and under planting from the 1980's of oak, ash, birch, alder, rowan, cherry, hazel, hawthorn and dog Rose. Rhododendron used to be present in the understorey, but has been removed in recent years. The site has a range of common woodland flora and fauna and has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Warrington Borough Council which recognises the local importance of the site for wildlife.

Informal public access is a second key feature of the site with several permissive surfaced footpaths. The wood is quite well used mainly by local people. Due to the urban location of the wood it suffers from misuse from time to time including fly tipping, vandalism and fire damage to trees.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Twenty Acre Wood has a network of approximately 730m of surfaced footpaths with no gradients and eight entrances from the housing estates around the boundaries of the wood.

There is no official parking at the wood although limited on street parking is available on nearby roads or at the Westbrook Shopping Centre, a 5-10 minute walk away along the pavement next to Cromwell Avenue.

The nearest bus stop is on Twenty Acre Road adjacent to the tarmac path entrance that leads to the management access gate and entrance. For more information on bus routes and locations of bus stops visit the Traveline website www.traveline.org.uk

The nearest public toilets can be found at the Westbrook Centre, about 5-10 minute walk north along the A574 Cromwell Avenue.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Twenty Acre Wood is to maintain a mixed broadleaved high forest. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature to ensure the continuity of woodland habit and will continue to provide an amenity to the local population. Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, the long term management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The woodland will be left to develop largely through natural processes, with mature and veteran trees retained and standing deadwood left on site where safe to do so.

Public safety and access will be the key drivers for woodland management operations with tree safety being a high priority in areas near to houses and footpaths. Tree safety and other silvicultural operations will aim to reduce long term tree safety liability and create gaps in the canopy to promote natural regeneration and improve the woodland structure. Regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted. Coppicing along paths and boundaries will be undertaken periodically to maintain path sight lines and create a more graduated woodland edge.

Existing levels of public access provision will be maintained and the Trust's duty of care to neighbours and visitors will continue to be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment inspections. The woodland will be regularly monitored for long term threats from tree diseases, pests, invasive non-native species and human impacts (particularly fly tipping and vandalism) to ensure the long term sustainability of the 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 Informal Public Access

Description

There is approximately 750m of permissive stone surfaced footpaths with 8 entrances to the site from the neighbouring housing estates on Tasman Close, Franklin Close and Ellesworth Close. The entrances are open access with no barriers apart from a wooden gate for management access on the western boundary from a tarmac pathway off Twenty Acre Road. It is relatively quiet and mostly used by local people for dog walking and as a cut through from the housing to nearby shops. Within the wood there is also network of open ditches in the wood with piped culverts where the paths cross the ditches.

Significance

Increasing access to and enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Twenty Acre Wood provides local people with easy access to woodland and nature in an urban environment. The wood is a prominent landscape feature in the local area and is visible from the A574 Cromwell Avenue. It also provides a range of amenity benefits including helping to "soften" the surrounding urban landscape, absorption of pollution and acting as a barrier against noise from nearby roads.

Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland is small and surrounded on all sides by houses and a road resulting in it being isolated from other nearby woodlands and green spaces. The site is flat and the existing surfaced path network make it accessible all year round for local people to use.

Factors Causing Change

The urban location of the wood results in occasional anti-social problems and issues including vandalism, fires, litter and fly tipping. The woodland and footpaths have flooded in the past requiring the ditches and culverts to be cleaned out regularly to maintain water flow.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term objective is to maintain the current level of public access to the site to ensure it is welcoming and accessible for visitors all year round. Access infrastructure including 750m of surfaced footpath, 8 entrances, signs, fences, gates, bridges and culverts will be maintained in good condition. The site will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access infrastructure. Any threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken if necessary.

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

Maintain entrances and footpaths by cutting back encroaching vegetation and trees; inspect signs, gates and fences; cut back the hedge along the western boundary to maintain sight lines; inspect ditches and culverts and ensure they are kept clear of obstructions; remove accumulations of litter & fly tipping as necessary - to be done annually via the EMC.

Undertake regular safety inspections of site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime, undertaking any remedial safety work identified.

Carry out coppicing along path edges and at entrances to improve sight lines by the end of the current plan period.

Monitor public use of the site during the current plan period to review the standard of access provision and identify if there are any issues/ threats to the wood from public usage, taking appropriate action to address them if necessary.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The wood consists of mature and semi-mature oak, beech, sycamore, ash, Silver birch, horse chestnut and lime with a reasonably diverse understory of oak, ash, beech, rowan, birch, lime, wild cherry, hazel, hawthorn some of which was planted in the 1980's by the Commission for New Towns. The ground flora is sparse although there is a range of common woodland flora present including bluebell, but with widespread bramble.

Significance

Twenty Acre Wood is a significant landscape and conservation feature within a very urban environment and provides a valuable habitat for a range of urban wildlife. Along with other nearby Woodland Trust owned woodlands it is part of the local ecological landscape in the area which includes ponds, streams and ditches, formal and informal scrub and shrubs, rough and managed grassland. The importance of the site for wildlife has been acknowledged by Warrington Borough Council who have designated it as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Local Wildlife Site).

Opportunities & Constraints

It is a small woodland surrounded by housing on three sides and a road on the other side and so cannot be extended in any direction.

There is only one vehicle access route into the wood along a narrow pathway which limits access for carrying out management work; other access is available on foot via footpath ginnels from the neighbouring housing estate roads.

The close proximity of the woodland to housing brings with it greater tree safety risk which needs to be managed and has significant cost implications. This will require tree safety work, stand stability thinning and boundary coppicing periodically which will provide opportunities for natural regeneration and to diversify the woodland structure.

Factors Causing Change

Tree disease, particularly ash dieback disease will impact on the canopy/ structure/ species mix in some areas.

Tree safety works in high risk zones will result in removal of some mature trees.

Fly tipping, fires and vandalism to mature trees and natural regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to maintain the continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest with a diverse structure, age classifications and species mix. The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with succession promoted through natural regeneration, mature trees retained into senescence and standing dead trees will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat where it does not compromise public safety. Woodland management will focus on maintaining stand stability and tree safety to reduce long term risks along boundaries and footpaths for public safety. This will create opportunistic gaps in the canopy promoting natural regeneration and structural diversification. Boundary coppicing will be undertaken periodically to maintain a graduated woodland edge structure and to reduce the tree safety/ encroachment liability at the same time as enhancing the biodiversity value of the woodland. Threats to the wood from pests, tree disease and invasive species will be monitored and appropriate action taken to control them where it is practical and achievable.

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

Carry out a Woodland Condition Assessment towards the end of the current plan period to assess the health and resilience of the woodland including the mix of species and natural regeneration, to monitor threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species and to take appropriate action where necessary.

Undertake tree safety inspections as part of the site risk assessment regime for public safety in high risk zones (i.e. by buildings, footpaths and roads) and carry out any remedial work identified.

Thinning operations for long term stand stability and tree safety will be carried out during the plan period focusing on boundaries next to housing and along footpaths.

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	2.25	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest

The compartment is flat, roughly square shaped situated on low lying ground surrounded by housing on all boundaries. The woodland canopy consists of mature oak, alder, ash, beech, birch, sycamore and occasional lime. There is a well developed understorey of natural regeneration and planted species in the early 1980's including oak, ash, birch, alder, rowan, cherry, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, dog rose. The path and woodland edges were densely planted in the early 1980's with mixed broadleaved shrubs. There was previously a significant amount of rhododendron in the understorey, but this has now been cleared.

Public access is via a network of surfaced permissive paths through the wood. There is a network of small shallow drainage ditches which link into a pond (owned by Warrington BC) located just outside the eastern boundary of the woodland.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	1a	Thin	0.25	28	7
2020	1a	Thin	2.25	9	20
2022	1a	Thin	2.25	9	20
2023	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.15	13	2
2027	1a	Ride edge Coppice	2.25	1	2

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.