



The Dell

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	The Dell
Location:	Warrington
Grid reference:	SJ619850, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	1.52 hectares (3.76 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This site is made up of three very small blocks of woodland - two are secondary broadleaved woodland typical of the area and the other called Broom Cottage Wood is a Victorian landscaped woodland which has retained some of its original features including ponds, footpaths and ornamental planting. The woods provide a refuge for wildlife in this suburban area.

2.2 Extended Description

The Dell consists of a group of three small urban woodlands (1.52 hectares in total) in Appleton, south of Warrington. They are set within an suburban landscape of housing and roads, although the area has retained small pockets of woodlands, roadside hedges and a network of green spaces which are connected by footpaths and roads. Several of these other woodlands nearby are owned by the Woodland Trust including Lumb Brook Valley which leads out to the wider countryside.

The two eastern sub-compartments are separated by Broom Avenue which is raised above them on an embankment. They were initially a single woodland occupying a stream valley. The western sub-compartment known as Broom Cottage Wood was formerly the landscaped garden of Broom Cottage and retains the characteristics to the present day. It lies in a small valley, probably enhanced by excavation, which was truncated by the steep embankment to Lyons Lane/Broom Avenue and contains two ponds, footpaths, rockeries and some ornamental planting.

A key feature of the site is secondary broadleaved woodland with a mix of mature species including Oak, Sycamore, Alder with some Beech and Willow. In the 1980s it was under planted with Ash, Alder, Beech, Rowan, Cherry, Hazel and Holly and there is a well developed under storey of Hawthorn, Holly, Hazel and Sycamore regeneration. Rhododendron and laurel were quite widespread in the wood, but have been controlled in recent years although continue to regenerate at low levels.

The second key features for the wood is informal public access with a permissive footpath in Broom Cottage Wood around the ponds and also a footpath passes through the compartment to the south of Broom Avenue towards Lyons Lane. There is no public access within the small wood to the north of Broom Avenue. Many of the boundaries to the woods abut houses, gardens and roads.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The Dell is split into 3 compartments separated by roads and footpaths and is located on Broom Avenue and Lyons Lane in Appleton to the south of Warrington.

Public access is available in Broom Cottage Wood via an entrance from Caversham Close. The paths around the site were resurfaced in 2007 although there are a number of steps and some short steep inclines. A second area of the woodland to the south of Broom Avenue can be accessed from either Broom Avenue via a grassy path or Lyons Lane. The paths through the wood are surfaced but steep inclines.

There is no public access or footpaths through the small wood to the east of Caversham Close.

There is no parking at the wood, although there is some limited parking available on nearby roads.

The nearest bus stop can be found on Lyons Lane. For more information on bus routes and locations of bus stops visit the Traveline website <http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm>

There are no public toilets in the vicinity.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for The Dell is to maintain the continuity of a high forest of mixed broadleaves with a diverse structure, species and age composition and sufficient regeneration to ensure the perpetuity of the woodland habitat.

Where possible the woodland will be allowed to grow and develop naturally as a refuge for wildlife, with mature and veteran trees retained and deadwood left on site where safe to do so.

The main driver for woodland management intervention will be for tree safety and stand stability due to the close proximity of the roads, footpaths and houses. Intervention may be required to diversify the structure and species mix to ensure the woodland is resilient to cope with future pressures from climate change, pests and tree diseases.

Public access will continue to be maintained at the current level with signage at entrances and public access points and permissive footpaths within the wood.

Invasive non-native species such as rhododendron, laurel and bamboo will be controlled so they are not a threat to future natural regeneration and ground flora in the wood.

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 informal public access in Broom Cottage Wood (sub-compartment 1a) with approximately 400 metres of surfaced footpath including some sections with steep gradients as well as some steps near the northern end of the ornamental pond, although these can be avoided by walking around the pond. Within sub-cpt 1c on the south side of Broom Avenue there is approximately 200 metres of permissive surfaced footpath with some steep gradients which links Lyons Lane. There are no footpaths and no public access in the small sub-compartment 1b. All entrances have Woodland Trust signs and no barriers apart from the entrance from Caversham Close which has a metal management access gate with a pedestrian squeeze point to the side.

Significance

In accordance with the Woodland Trust's general aims the wood is open to the public for quiet informal recreation. Although it is only small and surrounded by housing and roads the wood serves as a valuable amenity and landscape feature in this suburban area and provides the opportunity for people to access woodland and nature close to where they live.

Opportunities & Constraints

The Trust will continue to encourage neighbours and visitors to take an interest in the wood. The small size of the wood means that there is limited opportunity for increasing public access and community involvement. Management access is limited within the wood due to the small size and slopes.

Factors Causing Change

The site suffers from occasional misuse in the form of littering, camp fires, vandalism of trees and dumping of garden waste by neighbours. Growth of trees resulting in loss of sight lines along paths near pond and visibility on roadside boundaries.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The existing level of public access and network of permissive footpaths will be maintained so that people can use them all year round. The safety of visitors and our neighbours will be addressed through on-going tree safety inspections and site risk assessment generating remedial works as required.

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

Vegetation encroaching onto paths will be cut back annually and maintenance of all woodland fixtures, including, signs, gates, entrances, fences and litter control will be a part of an annual estate maintenance contract.

Path edge coppicing will be carried out during the plan period to improve sight lines for visitor access.

The condition of footpaths, entrances, site fixtures and levels of fly tipping, vandalism, etc will be monitored once during the plan period.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The Dell has a mix of broadleaf species including mature Oak, Sycamore and Alder with occasional Beech, Silver Birch, Willow and Ash. All three woods were probably once part of the same larger woodland, but have become fragmented by road and housing construction. They were underplanted in the 1980s with Beech, Cherry, Birch, Hazel, Rowan and Holly. In some areas the underplanting has integrated well to create well-structured, multi-layered, species diverse woodland. There are sufficient recruits amongst the understorey to ensure the maintenance of the High Forest canopy and guarantee continuity.

Significance

These woods are of considerable local landscape and conservation value.

Opportunities & Constraints

Limited management access to the woods means the use of machinery and/ or removal of material from the site may be difficult and this may restrict the scale of management operations.

The woodlands are small and mostly bordered by housing and roads which affects management operations.

Opportunistic tree safety work may create gaps in the canopy to encourage natural regeneration and development of shrub/ ground flora.

There is a TPO which constrains carrying out silvicultural work.

Factors Causing Change

Regrowth of invasive rhododendron and laurel which will spread if not controlled.

Camp fires and vandalism to trees has been an problem in the past although this is not currently a significant issue.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain a high forest canopy of mixed, broadleaved species with a varied structure in terms of species and age class distribution. The wood will be allowed to develop as naturally as possible and where safe to do so mature trees will be retained into senescence and standing columns of dead wood will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat. Tree safety will be a priority and may provide opportunities for natural regeneration of desirable species to develop as future canopy trees and the development of woodland ground flora. Rhododendron and laurel will be eradicated to encourage natural regeneration and the development of woodland ground flora.

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

Tree safety inspections will be undertaken on a regular basis and work carried out if necessary for public safety. Apart from this no silvicultural management work is planned during the plan period.

Rhododendron and laurel regrowth will be monitored and controlled during the plan period.

The condition of the secondary woodland & health of trees will be monitored once during the plan period through the woodland condition assessment.

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	0.72	Oak (pedunculate)	1880	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This small sub-compartment known as Broom Cottage Wood was planted as a Victorian pleasure garden with ornamental ponds, walkways, rockeries and exotic planting. The southern section is deeply shaded with mature Oak, Sycamore and Beech forming the upper canopy, with Holly, and the remnants of Laurel, Rhododendron and Bamboo in the understory and Ivy, Bramble, Ferns and a mix of natural and cultivated wildflowers in the ground layer. The northern section is more open with Oak, Beech, Sycamore, Ash and Poplar forming the canopy, and Hazel, Holly, Hawthorn and Sycamore in the understory with Bramble, grasses, Bluebells and Snowdrops. The southern half of the compartment is lower than the surrounding land with some steep slopes in the wood particularly near the ponds. Domestic gardens and houses abut the south western and most of the eastern boundaries; the southern boundary is adjacent to Lyons Lane/ Broom Avenue and the northern and western boundaries abut the playing fields of Broomfields High school. Public and management access is available via an entrance from Caversham Close with a second pedestrian squeeze access point from the school playing fields.</p>							
1b	0.17	Oak (pedunculate)	1880	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This small sub-compartment lies to the north of Broom Avenue. It abuts the footway next to the road to the south, sheltered housing on Epsom Gardens to the north, Cavendish Close to the west and a continuation of the woodland (owned by Warrington Housing) to the east. The wood has mature Oak, Sycamore and Alder forming the upper canopy and natural regeneration of Cherry and Sycamore. It was under planted in the 1980s with Ash, Cherry and Sycamore along with Hazel, Elder and Holly. The ground layer is sparse with mainly bramble, ferns, and localised patches of bluebell. There is no public access or footpaths in the sub-compartment.</p>							

1c	0.63	Oak (pedunculate)	1880	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Tree Preservation Order
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This sub-compartment lies to the south of Broom Avenue and to the north of Lyons Lane. The western boundary is adjacent to a small area of grassland and trees (owned by Warrington BC) at the junction of Broom Avenue and Lyons Lane and the eastern boundary which borders domestic properties and gardens on Harlow Close. It has considerable variation both in terms of species and structure within the wood. The bulk of this wood is of mature Oak and Sycamore forming an upper canopy with an understory of Hazel, Rowan, Holly and Birch planted in the 1980s. On the eastern and western shoulders of the short valley the under planting is now well established and forms a significant canopy. The area of Beech in the northeast is well-spaced but the areas of Alder and Ash is densely spaced. The ground layer is sparse with mainly bramble, ferns, and localised patches of bluebell, but has large areas of bare ground. There is a permissive footpath that runs from the south eastern corner on Lyons Lane through the wood to emerge on the northern boundary on a footpath by Broom Avenue.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2016	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	20	2
2018	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	20	2
2022	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	20	2
2026	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	20	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.