



Five Ponds Copse

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Five Ponds Copse
Location:	Warrington
Grid reference:	SJ591903, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	1.15 hectares (2.84 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This small, mature woodland is long and narrow and sandwiched between two areas of housing, making it highly convenient and accessible. It has the added interest of the original marl pits which have now become ponds; a big attraction for wildlife. A surfaced footpath goes through the wood from Wrexham Close and joins with a surfaced footpath in the green space corridor that links to Sankey Valley Park to the south of the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Five Ponds Copse is a small (1.15 ha) woodland located in the suburb of Callands, Warrington, approximately 2 miles from the town centre. It provides a prominent feature in the local, increasingly urban landscape and is bordered by housing and roads on three sides of the wood with public green space, (Sankey Valley Park) adjoining the other boundary. The woodland is important as a wildlife habitat in the local area and is part of a mosaic of woodlands, grassland, wetlands and ponds in the Sankey Valley.

It was originally a farm woodland and was purchased by the Commission for the New Towns (CNT) in the early 1980's. The CNT underplanted the wood with native broadleaves in the late 1980's as part of the landscaping of the New Town. The woodland along with several other small woodlands in the area was then gifted to the Woodland Trust in December 1995.

Five Ponds Copse is secondary woodland with a mix of native broadleaf tree species, primarily ash, oak and alder in the canopy with birch, sycamore, and field maple. The understorey includes birch, ash, oak, alder, hawthorn, field maple, beech, rowan and blackthorn. The ground layer includes common woodland flora as well as patches of bluebells, bramble and ferns.

A number of old large marl-pits have become ponds, which adds significantly to the biodiversity of the site. Flooding has been a problem in the past however this has largely been caused by the failure of adjacent landowners to maintain the ditch network adequately. This problem has been addressed by the Warrington Council who are responsible for the ditches adjoining the site. A permissive surfaced footpath runs through the site, crossing over small ditches in the wood, from Wrexham Close on the north-eastern side to the southern boundary where it joins with surfaced paths that link to Sankey Valley Park. The wood is used by local people to walk to nearby shops as well as for informal recreation within the local green space network.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There are two pedestrian entrances into the wood from Wrexham Close and a third entrance at the southern end of the wood which is linked to Gresford Close via a tarmac path. Through the wood there is a surfaced footpath which links to all the entrances.

Limited parking is available on nearby residential roads.

The nearest bus stops are located on Callands Road, which is approximately 300m from the wood.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Five Ponds Copse is to maintain a well-structured, mixed woodland of native broadleaves which provides a landscape and amenity feature in the local area, and forms part of the wider ecological landscape of the area.

Management objectives will aim to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment in line with Woodland Trust policies. Public safety and access will be the key drivers for any woodland management work and we will where necessary undertake thinning work for long term tree safety and stand stability.

Where safe to do so the we will retain older trees as long as possible to encourage the development of veterans and the decline of mature trees will be allowed to develop naturally. Gaps created by trees gradually reaching senescence, or by trees being felled for safety reasons will also create opportunities for natural regeneration and structural change.

The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections, and corresponding remedial work.

Public access will be maintained with three pedestrian entrances and approximately 280 metres of surfaced footpath 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 a surfaced permissive footpath from Wrexham Close on the north-east boundary which goes through the wood past the ponds to exit the wood on the southern boundary and joins a surfaced footpath on adjacent green space owned by Warrington Council. The footpath provides a link to the wider network of green spaces and footpaths in this part of north west Warrington.

Significance

The woodland provides an amenity and woodland habitat feature in the surrounding urban landscape and provides the opportunity for local people to access and enjoy woodland and pond features close to where they live.

Opportunities & Constraints

The site is small, isolated and partially surrounded by housing so there is very little opportunity to enhance or increase public access.

The close proximity of a large population means that the wood is subject to intense use and sometimes misuse (fires, den building, vandalism, litter and fly tipping) that need to be taken into consideration when carrying out any management operations.

Factors Causing Change

No significant factors are affecting the wood at present.

Den building and remains of camp fires are found occasionally, but this is not causing any notable impact to the wood.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the present level of public access to the wood with entrances, signage, paths and access furniture regularly maintained to provide a good standard of public access with clear signage. Guided by the parameters set out in the Woodland Trust's woodland management principles and access policy, management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The wood 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 furniture.

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

During this plan period the short term objectives are to provide good, safe access for visitors and any threats to the wood arising from public access/ use will be monitored and managed. This will be achieved by:

1. Carrying out annual maintenance of the entrances, footpaths, and bridges/culverts to ensure they are easy and safe to use. Vegetation encroaching on the footpaths and roadside will be cut back, signage will be clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate and litter / fly tipping will be removed as part of the EMC.
2. Improving management and public access from Wrexham Close.
3. Conducting regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (e.g. the edges of the roads, next to houses and along the footpath) and inspections of site hazards and access furniture to ensure the wood is as safe as possible for visitors, neighbours and road users.
4. Monitoring public access and use of the site during the plan period to assess whether the access provision is adequate and if there are any issues relating to the wood from public usage. Appropriate measures will be undertaken to control any threats/ issues identified.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Five Ponds Copse is a mixed secondary woodland containing mature broadleaf trees with the main species comprising oak, alder, ash, birch and sycamore. It was originally a farm woodland and contains a series of marl pits which have now filled with water and are permanent ponds, although water levels can fluctuate significantly during the year. In the 1980's the New Town Corporation carried out woodland edge and under planting with a mix of native broadleaves which has developed into a well structured, multi-layered woodland. The wood is partially surrounded by housing along part of the western and eastern boundaries.

Significance

Five Ponds Copse provides an significant local landscape and conservation feature within a residential suburb of Warrington. The wood is part of a wider green space corridor within the Sankey Valley Park which connects a variety of woodlands, grasslands, ponds, wetlands and open spaces together for people and wildlife to use. The mature woodland provides a valuable wildlife habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals.

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the site limits management access and opportunities to undertake any significant silvicultural management work, however tree safety work may provide future opportunities to restructure and enhance the woodland.

The close proximity of a large population means that the wood is subject to intense use and sometimes misuse (fires, den building, vandalism, litter and fly tipping) that need to be taken into consideration when carrying out any management operations.

Factors Causing Change

The impact of trees disease, particularly ash dieback could result in the loss of a number of mature trees in the woodland.

Squirrels are causing some minor damage to trees by bark stripping, although it is not having a significant impact at present.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain a broadleaved high forest, with continuous canopy and diverse species composition, age and size classes and succession by natural regeneration. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, beech, lime and sycamore. Dead wood, standing and fallen will be retained where safe to do so.

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

During the plan period the short term objectives are to:

1. Manage existing trees for long term stand stability and tree safety by carrying out selective thinning focusing in areas where the site borders housing, footpaths and roads.
2. Monitor the health and resilience of the woodland by carrying out a woodland condition assessment to monitor levels of natural regeneration, identify any threats from tree disease, pests or non-native invasive species, and take appropriate action where necessary.

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	1.15	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

The compartment is flat with a well-structured, multi-layered mix of broadleaf trees and shrubs. The main species are oak, ash, alder, Silver birch with some sycamore, willow, cherry, field maple, rowan and the occasional Scots Pine. There is a dense understorey of natural regeneration and under planting from the 1980s. The shrub layer is well developed including hazel, hawthorn, holly, and dog wood. The ground layer consists of typical woodland ground flora including some patches of bluebells.

There are three large ponds in the southern half of the site which contain water all year round and a fourth pond which is normally dry, although can hold water after prolonged periods of wet weather. Several shallow ditches cross through the northern part of the site, although they now are silted up and hold little water.

Within the compartment there is plenty of standing and lying deadwood resulting from tree safety operations which contributes to the diversity of habitats within the wood.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.15	13	2
2021	1a	Selective Fell	0.20	15	3
2023	1a	Thin	1.15	17	20
2025	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.15	13	2
2035	1a	Thin	1.15	9	10

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.