WOODLAND TRUST

Green Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Green Wood
Location:	Runcorn
Grid reference:	SJ562839, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	8.79 hectares (21.72 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This broadleaf woodland, located about 4 miles to the east of Runcorn is in an intensively urban setting, but the woodland itself is a quiet, tranquil place to visit and wander amongst mature trees including several which were planted by the Brooke estate who used to own the land. There is a mostly flat footpath through the wood from the small car park on Manor Park Road. In the south western corner of the site the path passes a pond and there are herons nesting on site. The site is adjacent to Lodge Plantation (also owned by the WT) and Oxmoor Local Nature Reserve (owned by Halton BC).

2.2 Extended Description

Green Wood is an 8.8ha urban woodland in the Manor Park district of Runcorn, about 4 miles to the east of the town centre. The surrounding landscape has been intensively developed in recent years and is now part of the urban fringe of Runcorn. It is bordered to the south east by a business park; to the south by a main road (the A588 Daresbury Expressway); Keckwick Brook runs along the eastern boundary with several large warehouse buildings across the far side of this from the wood; to the west of the site lies a closed section of Warrington Road and a row of cottages with Lodge Plantation (also owned by The Woodland Trust) across the other side of this road to the south west; and the northern boundary of the site is bordered by an area of scrub, wetland and young woodland that is owned by Halton Borough Council.

The wood was formerly part of the Brooke Family estate (centred around nearby Norton Priory) and was purchased by the Runcorn New Town Development Corporation in the mid-1970's as part of the future development of Runcorn New Town. The Development Corporation subsequently installed surfaced paths for public access in the wood and carried out understorey planting in the 1980's. The wood along with several others in the local area was given to the Woodland Trust by the Commission for New Towns in 1995. The Woodland Trust owns twenty one woods in the Runcorn area covering a total of over 100ha.

The site is flat with sandy loam soils, typical of the local area. There is a fairly large pond in the southern half of the site and also a series of drainage ditches in the northern and western part of the site including a ditch from the pond which flows into a large drainage channel outside the wood.

It is secondary broadleaved woodland which is a key feature of the site. The main species are birch, oak and sycamore, along with beech, hornbeam, willow, alder and rowan. Several mature trees in the wood are remnants from the former Brooke estate and have veteran tree status. The canopy is dominated by Silver birch, oak and beech in the southern half and sycamore in the northern half of the wood. The understorey consists of natural regeneration of the main tree species along with hazel, holly, hawthorn and elder. Rhododendron was widespread in the wood, but has been cleared in recent years. The ground flora is typical of lowland broadleaved woodland with frequent bracken and bramble as well common woodland species including lesser celandine, bluebell and ramson. The wood is an important habitat for wildlife and has been designated a Local Wildlife Site by Halton Borough Council.

Informal Public Access is a second key feature of the site with a permissive footpath running through the wood from Manor Farm Road to Warrington Road. The wood is generally quiet with low levels of public usage, mainly by local people and workers from the nearby offices.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Green Wood has approximately 380m of permissive footpath with the main entrance located off Manor Farm Road and a second entrance via a small footbridge from Warrington Road on the northern boundary of the site. There is approximately 120m of surfaced footpath from the Manor Farm Road entrance leading to and around the pond, from here an unsurfaced footpath continues through the wood to the entrance on Warrington Road. The footpath is mostly flat, but with some gentle gradients near the pond. The section of unsurfaced footpath can become very wet and muddy in winter.

There is a small car park with space for 5 cars by the entrance from Manor Farm Road near to the junction with the Daresbury Expressway.
The nearest bus stop can be found on Warrington Road - For more information go to www2.halton.gov.uk/publictransport/pdfs/runcornbusmap
The nearest public toilets including disabled toilets are 3 miles away at the Halton Lea Shopping Centre, Runcorn. For more information go to www.halton-lea.co.uk

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Green Wood is to secure the regeneration and continuity of mixed broadleaved high forest and associated woodland edge habitat. It will be managed predominantly as a landscape and conservation feature 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 buildings, roads 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 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 380m of permissive footpath in the wood with two public access points. The main entrance is from Manor Farm Road on the south western boundary of the wood where there is a small car park (owned by the WT) which has space for about 5 cars. From the car park there is a surfaced footpath leading to a pond located in the south western part of the site. From the pond the footpath is unsurfaced and continues to the northern boundary to cross over a ditch via a wooden footbridge where there is a second entrance onto Warrington Road. There is a metal gate for management access from the car park. The unsurfaced section of footpath can become very muddy in winter. There is a network of old drainage ditches across the site which drain into larger ditches and then into Keckwick Brook located on the eastern edge of the wood.

Significance

Increasing access to and enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes. Green Wood provides an easily accessible woodland near to a growing residential and industrial area of Runcorn and serves as an important green space for public amenity and recreation. The wood is a prominent landscape feature in the local area and provides a range of amenity benefits, including helping to "soften" the surrounding urban landscape, absorption of pollution and acts as a barrier against noise from nearby roads.

Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland is small and surrounded on three sides by roads and buildings and there is limited management access onto site due to the wet ground conditions.

Factors Causing Change

The ground conditions and footpath can become very wet/ muddy in the winter due to waterlogged soils and poor drainage of water from adjoining ditches and land.
Fly tipping and litter is an occasional problem in the area by the car park.

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 380m of surfaced footpath, 4 entrances, signage, fencing, gates and steps will be maintained in good condition. 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 infrastructure. Threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken to deal with them where it is practical and achievable.

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

Maintain entrances and footpaths by cutting back encroaching vegetation and trees; inspect signs, fences, entrance gate and footbridge; remove accumulations of litter & fly tipping as necessary- to be done annually via the EMC.
Coppicing along path edge and roadside boundaries to be carried out to improve sight lines and visibility by the end of the current plan period.
Carry out regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to buildings, roads and footpaths) and site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The woodland canopy contains pedunculate oak, birch, sycamore, beech, hornbeam, alder and willow with a mixed understory of oak, sycamore, birch, beech and rowan. The shrub layer contains hawthorn, hazel, holly and elder. Rhododendron was present in the woodland but has now been cleared although regen. is likely. The ground flora is typical of lowland broadleaf woodland and includes bracken, bramble and common woodland species including lesser celandine, bluebell and ramson.

Significance

The woodland is a significant landscape and amenity feature within a very urban area (largely industrial & business parks) and therefore forms an important landscape feature and wildlife habitat. The mix of habitats found on and adjoining the site (woodland, ponds/wetland, scrub) make it a significant part of the local ecological landscape and habitat for wildlife, particularly birds (with up to a dozen herons nesting on site) and for a variety of mammals and amphibians. The importance of the site for wildlife has been acknowledged by Halton Borough Council who have designated it as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Local Wildlife Site).

Opportunities & Constraints

Management operations are limited due to the small size of the site, poor management access and its urban setting.
Removal of rhododendron should enable a more diverse understorey layer to develop.
Tree safety work will create opportunistic gaps in the canopy which will encourage natural regeneration and help diversify the age structure of the woodland.

Factors Causing Change

Rhododendron regeneration could spread and needs to be monitored and controlled.
Himalayan Balsam is spreading into the wood from ditches and land adjoining the site, but it is not being controlled on neighbouring land.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to maintain the continuity of broadleaved high forest as a landscape and conservation feature. The wood will be largely managed by a minimal intervention approach with mature trees retained into senescence and standing columns of dead wood kept as important deadwood habitat where there is no compromise to public safety. The main reason for management intervention is likely to be for tree safety which will create opportunistic gaps in the canopy promoting natural regeneration and enabling the understorey to be more diverse. Threats to the wood from pests, tree disease and invasive species (particularly rhododendron regeneration) 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

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.91	Sycamore	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site
The canopy in this compartment is dominated by sycamore with a small number of mature and semi-mature oaks and silver birch. The shrub layer is poorly developed and previously rhododendron was widespread and the dominant species. Bramble, bracken and ramson are the dominant ground flora species, and Himalayan Balsam is getting a foot hold in this particular part of the site. Bluebell can also be found in this compartment. The sites main feature of conservation interest can also be found in this portion of the site. This is a large heronry monitored by Mersey Ringing Group.							
2a	4.45	Birch (downy/silver)	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site
This compartment is dominated by birch, and a good number of juvenile oaks. However sycamore is beginning to colonise particularly along the northern edge of the compartment. The shrub layer is poorly developed and previously rhododendron was widespread and the dominant species, however some understorey planting off hazel, rowan, beech and holly has been carried out along the western edge of this compartment. Ground flora in this compartment is poor with mostly bramble and Himalayan Balsam being the dominant species.							
3a	1.44	Sycamore	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site
The canopy in this compartment is the most varied, with species including oak, sycamore, beech and hornbeam. Some of the trees are remnants of estate plantings and fine specimens of both beech and hornbeam can be seen here. On the whole the shrub layer is poor, although there has been plantings of hazel and rowan. Ground flora includes lesser celandine, ramson and bluebell. This compartment also contains a large pond which has been used for fishing in the past. There is also a small car park with space for approximately 5 or 6 cars. This currently has no vehicle barrier and is subject to occasional fly tipping. The neighbouring electricity sub-station is maintained using a road running through the car park.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	2
2023	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	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.