



Lodge Plantation

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Lodge Plantation
Location:	Runcorn
Grid reference:	SJ558838, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 108
Area:	6.76 hectares (16.70 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Mature broadleaf woodland adjacent to the former Manor Lodge Farm. Tree species include birch, oak, yew, sycamore, horse chestnut and beech with some veteran examples of the latter. Understorey include ivy (climbing), holly, elder, hawthorn, hazel and occasional rowan. Ground flora includes bramble, fern, bluebell, wild garlic and red campion.

2.2 Extended Description

Lodge Plantation is a broadleaf woodland in the Manor Park area of Runcorn, about 4 miles to the east of the town centre. The woodland lies within a predominately urban setting with business/ office units, a new housing estate and roads surrounding it. The site is bounded to the north and east by Warrington Road; new housing borders most of the southern boundary along with Manor Farm Road, business and office units border the north west boundary and Red Lodge lies on the western boundary. Across the road from the eastern boundary lies Green Wood, which is also owned by the Woodland Trust.

The site is flat with a sandy loam soil, typical of the local area. There are two ponds/ wetland areas, which often flood to become one large pond, near the north eastern boundary. There is also an old drainage ditch that flows through the site from the southern boundary to the northern boundary near to the pond, although it is culverted underground for much of its length.

Lodge Plantation is secondary woodland with a canopy of mixed broadleaves comprising mainly silver birch, sycamore, oak, beech, willow, alder, rowan, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, yew, Poplar, with an under storey of hazel, holly and elder. The ground flora to be found on site is typical of a lowland woodland and species such as brambles, lesser celandine, bluebell and wild garlic. There were previously extensive areas of rhododendron which has now been cleared from the site.

The mix of habitats found on the site (woodland, ponds/wetland, scrub, open ground along ride edges) make it an important refuge for wildlife in the local area, particularly birds, mammals, butterflies and amphibians. It is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, now called a Local Wildlife Site, 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 a surfaced footpath 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.

Public access is available to the wood with several entrances from the roads and land adjoining the site. There are no formal public rights of way, but there is a network of permissive footpaths that are quite well used by the general public and workers from the nearby businesses and offices.

The site has two Key Features: Informal Public Access & Secondary Woodland.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There are five formal entrances to the wood with approximately 720m of permissive footpaths on site. The paths are flat and the main footpath runs through the middle of the wood from west to east and is surfaced. There are two entrances leading onto this path from Manor Farm Road and a third entrance from Manor Farm Mews, all of which have kissing gates and welcome signs. A further two entrances, one on the northern boundary from Warrington Road and one next to Red Lodge on the western boundary lead onto unsurfaced footpaths in the wood.

Getting there:

By car: From central Runcorn, head east on the A533 (Bridgewater Expressway), and continue on to the A558 (Daresbury Expressway). Leave the expressway after the Manor Park junction taking the slip road onto Warrington Road. There is a small car park immediately on the right hand side of the road for Green Wood and Lodge Plantation is a further 100 yards along the road past the car park. Parking is also available on nearby roads adjoining the wood. Nearest postcode is WA7 1TF.

By bus: The nearest bus stop can be found on Warrington Road alongside the northern boundary of the wood. It is a short walk then to one of the entrances into the wood.

By train: The nearest train stations are Runcorn East (4.8km/three miles) and Runcorn (4.8km/three miles). For up-to-date information on public transport, visit traveline.org.uk; or telephone 0871 200 22 33.

The nearest refreshment/ toilet facilities are at Norton Priory museum and walled garden which has a café and toilets (2km/1 mile from the wood).

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention for Lodge Plantation is to ensure the continuity of high forest mixed native broadleaf woodland. The canopy will contain silver birch, sycamore, oak, beech, willow, alder, rowan, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut and yew, with an under storey of hazel, holly and elder and a diverse ground layer. It will primarily be managed as a recreational and landscape feature providing an important habitat for wildlife and people to enjoy.

Guided by the Woodland Trust's woodland management approach, conservation and access policies long term management will aim to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The wood will be managed to maintain a diverse structure and mix of species to ensure that it is as resilient as possible to future threats such as climate change, pests and tree disease. Mature trees and natural regeneration will be encouraged and standing/ fallen dead wood will be retained where safe to do so. The key drivers for management operations will be for public access, safety and long term stand stability.

Public access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity and the current level of access will be maintained with approximately 720 metres of footpath and five formal entrance points.

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 threats from tree diseases, pests, non-native species, human impacts and 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

Informal public access is available to Lodge Plantation with five entrances and approximately 720m of permissive footpaths on site. The paths are flat and the main footpath runs through the middle of the wood from west to east and is surfaced. Two entrances lead onto this path from Manor Farm Road along with a third entrance from Manor Farm Mews, all of which have kissing gates and welcome signs. There are two further entrances, one on the northern boundary from Warrington Road and one next to Red Lodge on the western boundary which lead onto unsurfaced footpaths in the wood. Parking for the wood is available at the small car park next to Green Wood which is about 100m along the road from Lodge Plantation and there is also space to park on some roads adjoining the site. The paths are quite well used by the general public, local residents and workers from the nearby businesses and offices.

Significance

Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Lodge Plantation provides people with the opportunity to access and enjoy woodland and nature close to where they live and work. The surrounding area has been developed and is now an urban fringe landscape and so the woodland provides a valuable "natural" landscape feature and amenity space. The wood is close to other nearby areas of woodland and, semi-natural habitats which provides important green space for local people to enjoy.

Opportunities & Constraints

The building of more houses on land to the south of the wood will lead to more people using the site which provides an opportunity to raise local awareness of the Woodland Trust and to promote this woodland to local people.

Conversely the growing local population means that the wood may be subject to potential misuse (fires, den building, vandalism, litter and fly tipping) and this will need to be monitored and any new threats dealt with.

The relative small size of the wood limits the opportunity to increase public access other than to maintain the present footpath network and access infrastructure.

Factors Causing Change

Development of neighbouring land for housing will lead to increased pressure on the wood and wildlife (more visitors and potentially more litter, vandalism, fires and fly tipping).

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term intention is to maintain the present levels of open public access so that visitors can continue to enjoy the woodland. 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 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 furniture. 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)

During the plan period the aim is to maintain the current level of public access and upgrade entrances where necessary to enhance the site for visitors.

The short term objectives are to:

1. carry out annual maintenance of all entrances, signage, footpaths and fencing to ensure they are fit for purpose. Any vegetation encroaching on footpaths will be cut back and litter/ fly tipping removed as necessary.
2. undertake regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to houses, roads and footpaths) and site hazards (as per the Trust's safety inspection regimes) to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.
3. carry out monitoring at least once during the plan period to assess whether the current access provision is adequate for the level of public use, to identify if there are any people issues/ threats to the wood, and taking appropriate action to address them if necessary.
4. improve the entrance at Manor Farm/ Warrington Road junction by replacing the old gates, post and rail fencing and welcome signage in 2019.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Lodge Plantation is broadleaf secondary woodland surrounded by urban development (housing/roads/light industry/office unit). The main canopy contains sycamore with oak, silver birch ash, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, poplar, willow, yew and occasional beech some of which are veteran status. The under storey contains hazel, hawthorn, elder, and holly and natural regeneration of canopy species. Bramble and bracken dominate the ground flora, however there are also significant pockets of bluebell and ramson. Rhododendron was quite widespread within the wood, but this has been cleared in recent years, although there are small pockets of regen occurring.

Significance

The woodland is of significant value to both local people and wildlife. It forms an important landscape feature and wildlife habitat within the urban setting and also creates a mature wooded landscape setting in an area that is otherwise dominated by housing, business and industrial developments. It provides an important wildlife habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals. The ponds and ditches in the wood are of significant value for local biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

Gaps in the canopy from tree safety work and the natural decline of mature trees will create opportunities for natural regeneration and ground flora to develop and enhance levels of deadwood in the wood.

Poor management access in some parts of the wood is a constraint to carrying out management work in those areas.

Factors Causing Change

There is small pockets of rhododendron regenerating in places and will spread if not controlled which will impact on natural regeneration and ground flora.

The proximity of new domestic properties with gardens mean that fly tipping, particularly of garden waste may increase leading to non-native garden species spreading in the woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term objective for the wood is to maintain a high forest, continuous canopy cover of native broadleaves with mixed structure, species and age composition, diverse shrub layer and ground flora. The wood will be left to develop largely through natural process with mature and over mature trees, standing and fallen deadwood retained where are safe to be left, and succession promoted through natural regeneration. Due to its urban location, tree safety work may be required for public safety which will create gaps in the canopy to promote natural regeneration. Threats to the wood from pests, invasive species and tree disease will be monitored and where necessary appropriate action taken to control them.

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

During this plan period the aim will be to manage the woodland through minimal silvicultural intervention (other than tree safety work identified as part of the tree inspection programme). The short term objectives are to monitor the health of the woodland during the plan period to identify any threats from tree disease, pests, animals or people, and take appropriate action where necessary.

Monitoring will also be undertaken during the plan period to assess rhododendron regrowth and carry out work to control it from spreading in the wood.

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	6.77	Sycamore	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Local Wildlife Site
<p>The canopy in this compartment is mixed broadleaves predominantly sycamore and birch however many other tree species can be found on site including oak, rowan, alder, yew, beech, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, willow and poplar. The shrub layer is well developed in places and dominated by hazel and elder, although holly can also be found. Bramble, bracken dominate the ground flora however there are also significant pockets of bluebell and ramson. Rhododendron was quite widespread within the wood, but this has been cleared in recent years, although there are small pockets of regen occurring.</p>							

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	0.05	40	2
2026	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	40	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.