WOODLAND TRUST

Whitings Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Whitings Wood
Location:	Barnet
Grid reference:	TQ228949, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 176
Area:	7.09 hectares (17.52 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Green Belt

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Definitely not an ancient woodland! But, after planting with broadleaf trees in 1996, its 7 hectares now have a character all of their own with large open paths and tree tunnels. It is connected to Whitings Hill Open Space.

2.2 Extended Description

Falling within Watling Chase Community Forest, Whitings Wood is a 7 hectare flourishing young semi-urban woodland lying just southwest of Barnet in north London. Formerly improved grassland it was planted in 1996 with mixed native broadleaves, mainly oak, ash, field maple, wild cherry, willow and some woody shrubs.

Local people were involved in the woodland creation from the outset including via consultation with the Community Forest and parish council, whose input and views were reflected in the woodland design. The wood comprises two rectangular shaped blocks of 2ha and 5ha, each housing a mosaic of trees and grassland wrapped by mature hedgerows.

The woodland forms part of a hillside known as Whitings Hill which is managed by the London Borough of Barnet. The surrounding landscape is characterised by grazed fields and amenity grassland for approximately 1km, in turn enclosed by the urban sprawl of London's northern suburbs. The site is fairly flat and wet with fertile soils, typically on top of London Clay.

Management access is directly off Mays Lane leading into a network of grassy rides and meadows. Unfortunately the site has suffered badly from rubbish dumping and vandalism in the past and a lack of surfaced clay tracks mean the ground can easily be churned up and poached through the winter.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access obtained at two points direct from Mays Lane into compartment 2 or via Whitings Hill into compartment 1.

3.2 Access / Walks

Two pedestrian access points off Mays Lane, alternatively park off Whitings Hill and walk through the parkland to Whitings Wood.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision at Whitings Wood is for an attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland containing a healthy mix of trees, shrubs and understorey, including some areas of good quality timber. This maturing wood will eventually be managed as high forest on a continuous cover basis (i.e. it will never be clear felled). In order to achieve this management access will be improved and thinning will be undertaken over this management period to establish access racks and develop the understorey, laying the foundations for sustainable low-impact management in future.

With semi-urban surroundings, this young woodland will be managed as an important biodiversity and open access area where the public are welcome. Liaison with London Borough of Barnet should continue in order to achieve maximum recreational benefit with the adjoining Whitings Hill. The Woodland Trust entrance signs and well-kept paths will help encourage public interest and participation in the woodland, fulfilling one of the Trust's objectives of inspiring everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.

Shade-loving plants and coarse vegetation typical of recent secondary woodland are well established under the closed canopy and the wildlife value of existing habitats such as the hedgerows will be retained as they continue to merge into the young woodland. The rides and glades will be kept open and mowed as necessary to provide valuable additional habitats,including wood edges important for nesting birds, invertebrates and woodland / grassland flora.

Any older trees in the hedgerows will be left to senescence and beyond and deadwood both on the ground and standing will be left in situ unless it conflicts with safe public access.

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

The site forms part of Watling Chase Community Forest and is adjacent to Whitings Hill, a well used open space resulting in a steady stream of foot traffic, dog walkers, and horse riders (technically not permitted) through the wood and its network of paths. Several access points around the perimeter lead into a network of grassy paths and meadows providing a pleasant stroll for regular visitors.

Significance

Informal public access to Whitings Wood raises people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland, fulfilling one of the Trust's four corporate objectives.

Surrounded at a landscape level by development and located as it is within greater London, Whitings Wood is a valuable open natural space. Whilst there are a variety of formal parks and gardens available there are few natural woodland areas with open access for people to enjoy. Despite not having a car park it is easily accessible and has a large catchment area. Being part of the Community Forest and green belt it helps to break up and arrest the extensive blocks of suburban development which surround it.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to maintain the involvement and use of the local community by making the site attractive and easy to visit.

The site has suffered badly from rubbish dumping at the main entrance off Mays Lane which can easily give this area of the wood an untidy and neglected appearance especially in winter when the ground flora has subsided. Informal camps and fire sites have been established from time to time. Winter horse riding when the ground sits wet has cut up and poached the main open grass areas in both compartments creating an uneven walking surface in the summer. Ash die back could result in large and potentially risky levels of deadwood and may require the imposition of biosecurity measures at the entrances to the woodland. Infestation with Oak Processionary Moth could require restricted public access for safety reasons.

Factors Causing Change

Fire, fly Tipping, vandalism.
Tree disease
Oak Processionary Moth

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that contains a network of well-maintained attractive paths and grassy meadows. The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation predominantly by locals from the nearby community.

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

Operational Objective:
Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public can enjoy.
Entrances, facilities and path network will be appropriate for the levels and type of use and in line with access category B.

Work Programme:
Replace and refresh all signs and furniture during this management plan period
Cut all paths three times a year and maintain entrances and signs in good condition.
Cut meadows once a year in late August after any skylarks have nested and flown.
Clear any dumped rubbish as required.
Carry out tree safety inspection along roadside boundary every 12-18 months allowing for seasonal variation.
Carry out tree safety inspection along internal paths every 3 years allowing for seasonal variation.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Whiting's Wood contains a mixture of young native broadleaf trees and woody shrubs. The species mix is dominated by ash and oak but also includes field maple, cherry, willow, birch, rowan, hazel, alder, hawthorn, and blackthorn . As well as the planted species, existing blackthorn hedgerows are spreading out and natural regeneration is emerging under the closed canopy alongside an extensive field layer. Complimenting these are the stream/wet ditches and open areas, all combining to create a tremendous variety of existing and potential woodland habitats in a relatively small area.

Significance

An early successional woodland with a diverse structure and some good quality timber will help sustain and enhance biodiversity, fulfilling one of the Trust's corporate objectives whilst meeting its statutory obligations to maximise asset quality, and increasing the woods attractiveness to external organisations (Estate cat.4 wood).

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities: To sustain and develop an attractive, bio diverse, and productive native broadleaved woodland in an area where such habitats have not been common in recent times.

Constraints: Closed canopy and even-aged nature of young wood restricting development of woodland shrub layer and structural diversity. Poor management and silvicultural access restricting scale of interventions and long -term ability to execute continuous cover management and secure income from any timber felled. Extensive squirrel damage to field maple and willow. Threat of ash die back which could significantly reduce the main tree species planted in the wood

Factors Causing Change

Closure of canopy, even-aged structure, spacing of trees, pests and disease

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland supporting a range of structures, habitats, and timber quality via a robust and resilient mix of trees, woody shrubs and tall-herb communities Good access and infrastructure facilitating low-impact continuous cover management. Well-functioning streams and open space with associated flora and fauna, fully integrated into the overall woodland habitat.

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

Operational Objective:
A healthy woodland with good management access and the beginnings of structural diversity, ready to mature further as a diverse, productive, and attractive woodland

Work Programme:
Complete removal of all spirals, high prune best stems and where access is difficult

Improve management access to allow lorries to pull on and off Mays Lane onto the site and limit rutting at pinch points between cpts 1 & 2.
Cut racks to allow future low impact access for forestry machinery. Racks to be created by removal of every 6th row or equivalent (17% of canopy). Light thin of matrix to favour best stems and coppice clusters of field maple and willow to begin structural diversification (13% of canopy). Saleable firewood to be extracted to roadside, lop and top to be cut up small and left to rot in situ to begin development of woodland soil profile (except for coppice trees where it will be piled over stumps to protect regrowth). Unsalable firewood to be stacked off racks as habitat piles in order to increase deadwood levels within the wood..

Ash Die-Back: In the event of significant death of ash trees restocking/enrichment planting of the gaps should be undertaken with more shade tolerant species or those which will contribute to structural diversity. Suggested planting mix:
Hornbeam, lime, birch, yew, hazel, wild service, crab apple, rowan, alder.

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	0.76	Mixed native broadleaves	1996	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Mixed native broadleaves planted in January 1996 at 2.1m spacings to give a stocking density of 2250 trees/ha. The principal species are ash and oak with significant field maple and willow elements over a sparse shrub layer of hawthorn and blackthorn (apart from on the boundary with 1c where woody shrubs dominated by hazel form a graded edge to the open ground beyond). A dense field layer of coarse and shade tolerant vegetation exists alongside scattered natural regen from all the canopy species but particularly field maple. The ground sits wetter here than in cpt 2 but the trees appear vigorous, if a little drawn up, only marred by the extensive squirrel damage to the willow and field maple canopies. The canopy has closed and would benefit from a silvicultural thin to favour the best stems and increase structural diversity in the shrub layer by bringing on the seedlings and resulting stump regeneration below. Some slightly larger ash coppice exists at the centre of this sub-cpt which would appear to pre-date the planting. An underground water main runs north-south through the subcpt.							
1b	0.58	Mixed native broadleaves	1996	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Mixed native broadleaves planted in January 1996 at 2.1m spacings to give a stocking density of 2250 trees/ha. The principal species are ash, oak, and willow with a significant field maple element and occasional alder and rowan over a sparse shrub layer of hawthorn and blackthorn (apart from on the boundary with 1c where woody shrubs dominated by hazel form a graded edge to the open ground beyond). A dense field layer of coarse and shade tolerant vegetation exists alongside scattered natural regen from all the canopy species. This is the wettest part of the site bounded as it is by the Dollis Brook on its eastern edge. Large mature willows and ash, former hedgerow trees, sit along the eastern boundary providing some age-class diversity and an abundance of seed and roosting. The trees appear vigorous, if a little drawn up, only marred by the extensive squirrel damage to the willow and field maple canopies. The canopy has closed and would benefit from a silvicultural thin to favour the best stems and increase structural diversity in the shrub layer by bringing on the seedlings and resulting stump regeneration below. An underground water main runs north-south through the subcpt.							

1c	0.61	Open ground	1996	Non-wood habitat	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Green Belt
The largest area of grassy open ground in the wood. Runs in a wide belt north-south across the compartment bounded by the woody shrubs along the internal edges of sub-cpts a and b. A 4-8m wide grass path is mowed twice a year and the entire meadow cut once a year. The blackthorn on the edge of sub-cpts a and b is beginning to encroach a little but otherwise it remains largely uncolonised by woodland pioneers or scrub. The area around the southern field gate providing access into cpt 2 can sit quite wet which may be due to poor drainage from the silted ditch and culvert which lie alongside and under the unowned track between the two cpts (over which WT has a right of way). . An underground water main runs north-south through the subcpt.							
2a	4.43	Mixed native broadleaves	1996	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Green Belt
The main block of woodland on the site. Mixed native broadleaves planted in January 1996 at 2.1m spacings to give a stocking density of 2250 trees/ha. The principal species are ash and oak, with a significant field maple and wild cherry element, and occasional birch over a sparse shrub layer of hawthorn, blackthorn, and less frequently Hazel. The field layer is less dense/vigorous than cpt 1 but the only bare patches occur under field maple clusters where canopy shade is dense, and it generally supports a good mix of coarse and shade tolerant species as well as an abundance of regen from ash and cherry and less frequently field maple and oak. Large mature hedgerow trees, mainly oak and ash sit along the northern, western, and southern (road) boundaries providing some age-class diversity and an abundance of roosting. Along the northern edge the blackthorn hedge has spread vigorously into the wood enveloping the path which now exists as a tunnel through the blackthorn. The trees appear vigorous and healthy only marred by the extensive squirrel damage to the field maple canopies. The canopy has closed and would benefit from a silvicultural thin to favour the best stems and increase structural diversity in the shrub layer by bringing on the seedlings and resulting stump regeneration below. A large (0.4 ha) area of open ground exists in the middle of the sub-cpt which is beginning to be colonised by thorn, oak, ash, and birch but remains predominantly grassland and will form a nice feature glade as the woodland matures.							
2b	0.25	Mixed native broadleaves	1996	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

Description: A narrow sliver of woodland running down the north-eastern edge of the compartment forming the boundary with the neighbouring livery yard/stables. The boundary is marked by a dilapidated and collapsed fence and silted ditch which are not the WT responsibility to maintain. Mixed native broadleaves planted in January 1996 at 2.1m spacings to give a stocking density of 2250 trees/ha. The principal species are ash and oak, with a significant field maple and wild cherry element, and occasional birch over a sparse shrub layer of hawthorn, blackthorn, and less frequently Hazel. The field layer is less dense/vigorous than cpt 1 but the only bare patches occur under field maple clusters where canopy shade is dense, and it generally supports a good mix of coarse and shade tolerant species as well as an abundance of regen from ash and cherry and less frequently field maple and oakg. The trees appear vigorous and healthy only marred by the extensive squirrel damage to the field maple canopies. The canopy has closed and would benefit from a silvicultural thin to favour the best stems and increase structural diversity in the shrub layer by bringing on the seedlings and resulting stump regeneration below.

2c	0.46	Open ground	1996	Non-wood habitat	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

Another large area of grassy open ground running north-south to the management access gate at Mays Lane. Not as wide as 1c, but again bounded by a hazel dominated shrub mix on the internal edges of subcpts 2a and 2b. A 4m wide grass path is mowed twice a year and the entire meadow cut once a year. The blackthorn on the edge of sub-cpts a and b is beginning to encroach a little but otherwise remains largely uncolonised by woodland pioneers or scrub. The area around the northern field gate providing access to cpt 1 can sit quite wet which may be due to poor drainage from the pond and silted ditch which lie alongside the gate and down the eastern boundary of subcpt 2b but are outside of WT ownership and responsibility for maintenance.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	0.76	39	30
2020	1b	Thin	0.58	40	23
2020	2a	Thin	4.43	40	178
2020	2b	Thin	0.37	41	15
2028	1a	Thin	0.76	46	35
2028	1b	Thin	0.58	52	30
2028	2a	Thin	4.43	45	200
2028	2b	Thin	0.37	54	20

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.