



Toft Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM	Page No.
Introduction	
Plan review and updating	
Woodland Management Approach	
Summary	
1.0 Site details	
2.0 Site description	
2.1 Summary Description	
2.2 Extended Description	
3.0 Public access information	
3.1 Getting there	
3.2 Access / Walks	
4.0 Long term policy	
5.0 Key Features	
5.1 Informal Public Access	
5.2 New Native Woodland	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
Glossary	
MAPS	
Access	
Conservation Features	
Management	

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Toft Wood
Location:	Toft
Grid reference:	TL357564, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154
Area:	3.35 hectares (8.28 acres)
Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Toft wood is a community wood dominated by oak and ash on the edge of Toft village in an attractive setting alongside a small stream. A public footpath enters the site from Millers road and runs along the edge of the wood next to the stream.

2.2 Extended Description

Toft Community wood sits in an attractive setting alongside a small tributary stream of the Bourne Brook, at the North west edge of Toft Village. A public footpath runs along the edge of the eastern boundary next to the stream. The rest of the site is gently sloping to the south and east, making the area well drained for the most part, but with occasional flooding along the unplanted stream margin. A large open glade forms the centre piece of the wood where seating is available and well used by visitors via the public footpath which enters the site from Millers road and follows the eastern boundary leaving the site at the extreme northeastern corner. Other internal paths are flat but unsurfaced.

It was planted on 25th of November 1995 entirely by volunteers on previously arable land which had been grass seeded in the October prior to planting. The planting was a mix of broadleaved trees that occur in natural woodlands nearby and dominated by Oak and Ash. Establishment was impeded by a severe drought in the early years after planting, with many whips being replaced to achieve full stocking. Establishment has continued to be slow on the more exposed areas of the site, possibly with shallower soils. However some natural regeneration of ash is occurring in the area near the south east corner of the site, where closed canopy has been achieved for the most part (2014), with an average top height of around 4 meters.

Toft Wood lies on the boulder clay uplands of west Cambridgeshire, surrounded by arable land on three sides, with the steam and well tended gardens to the south. It is, however, less than 1km away from Hardwick wood SSSI, one of a string of ancient woodlands that remain in this area.

The key Features of the site are:

- Informal Public access
- Woodland creation

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

In the village of Toft a public footpath enters the site from Millers road and follows the eastern boundary leaving the site at the extreme northeastern corner. Other internal paths are flat but unsurfaced. No public toilets in locality. Parking is available next to entrance along Millers rd. Bus stop in main street near the start of Millers rd about .5km away from wood. For bus route and times contact www.traveline.org.uk or ring raveline on 08712002233. Anti vehicle bollards only at entrance

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

A structurally and species diverse secondary woodland dominated by native broadleaf species, regularly enjoyed and valued by the local community. Management will support natural processes where ever possible. The site will be well visited and enjoyed by local people with a well maintained network of paths and entrance points.

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

Toft Wood was planted up as part of the Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. Local people were pivotal in the fundraising, design, planting and early maintenance. Within easy walking distance of the village of Toft it is accessible from Millers Road and The public footpath network. There are 850m of paths throughout the site and a large amount of open grassland and an attractive natural stream. The wood is well used for quiet enjoyment by many locals

Significance

Promoting Informal public access is a key corporate objective for the Woodland Trust. Toft wood was very much a product of the local communities interest to create local accessible woodland and has proved a great success. There is natural woodland in the locality, but none of this is for open public use. The nearest semi natural woodland is 1km away to the west (Hardwick Wood). There is no woodland open for public access within 6km

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

Can be adversely affected by irresponsible dog owners not picking up after their dogs.
Winter flooding of the southern paths makes access difficult at this time.

Opportunities

The wood is on the edge of the village and its paths are linked in with parish public rights of way system, also has excellent views of the surrounding fen landscape.

Factors Causing Change

Encroachment of vegetation blocking paths.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Open safe access linking into the public rights of way network, well used and valued by local people.

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

Maintain paths as open and welcoming to WT spec 2.1 by mowing 3 times during the growing season and removal of overhanging vegetation. Ride edge clearance/ coppice to maintain good access to be undertaken as necessary, with works identified through biennial inspection. Signs should also be inspected at this time and replaced/ repaired as necessary to ensure they remain in good condition at all times.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

A young woodland which has begun to shade out the ground covering grasses and weeds in a few areas. The use of a wide range of tree and shrub species has aided the woods development. The wood is primarily oak /ash but there are another 5 tree species and 7 shrub species planted giving a significant amount of scrub habitat on the glade margins. In addition there is a natural stream/scrub habitat on the wood edges with a lot of dead wood and large areas of grassland managed for wildlife.

Significance

Toft wood is situated on the west Cambridgeshire boulder clay uplands - one of the most wooded parts of the county so adds to the existing habitat mosaic. However the area is still well below the national average in terms of woodland cover, so even as a small island habitat, Toft wood is a significant woodland by local standards.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

It's a relatively small area which still has intensive arable management on three sides
Tree growth has been in check due to drought and an initial wide spacing has delayed canopy closure

Opportunities

The stream, and hedgerows which form boundaries already act as wildlife havens for common species which could move into the new woodland
There is scope to incorporate more trees into the surrounding arable landscape, better linking the woodland into the landscape and aiding permeability for wildlife.

Factors Causing Change

- Effects of climate change - pests and disease (ash dieback symptoms becoming apparent in 2014)
- surrounding land use change - Development or expansion of the village.
- Agricultural run-off.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Broadleaved native high forest with the woodland community to include Old and over mature, dead wood standing and fallen as well as young seedlings and saplings and all ages in between.

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

Monitor general woodland health through biennial inspection. Take particular note of ash dieback, it may be necessary to replace some of the lost ash trees with a mixture of native broadleaf species where the canopy is already sparse or underdeveloped.

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	3.30	Ash	1995	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

This compartment comprises the whole of the wood. The wood was created under the Cambridgeshire woodland fund project and all 2525 trees were planted over two days in November 1995. The trees are planted at a density of 11,000 per hectare and are a mix of native broadleaved species mainly Oak and Ash but also including Field maple, Willow and Wild cherry as well as a mixture of 7 shrub species on the edges of the ride network, The trees were stressed in the first 2 or 3 years after planting by very dry summer conditions and losses have been replaced on frequent occasions. There is a large central glade with a number of paths emanating from it and connecting the public footpath that run over the site. The wood boundaries are well defined being the original field hedges (mixed thorn, elm) to the north and west. A natural stream and section of fence on the eastern boundary and a well-grown elm hedge along the road edge to the south. The compartment is gently sloping to the east and south on chalky boulder clay. The stream which has a 10m unplanted strip adjacent occasionally overtops its bank during the wet winter period, during these occurrences the lower parts of the wood are flooded. The wood is well visited by locals.

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.