



Church Plantation

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Church Plantation
Location:	Bassenthwaite
Grid reference:	NY227291, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 90
Area:	1.26 hectares (3.11 acres)
Designations:	Area of Special Development Control (caravans), Environmentally Sensitive Area, National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Extended Description

Church Plantation is a small rural wood close to the shore of Bassenthwaite Lake, near Keswick within the Lake District National Park. The property was donated to the Trust in 1994 and forms a small rectangular block of woodland surrounded by grazed pasture. The wood has a maximum elevation of 94m and slopes westwards towards the Lake to approximately 70m. There are a number of small woodlands between the Lake and the Skiddaw Massif to the east and the Forestry Commission property Dodd Wood forms the largest block at the foot of Skiddaw. The river Derwent flows into Bassenthwaite Lake to the south; both are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and the whole area is with the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment and the Cumbria Fells & Dales Natural Area.

This small 1.26 hectare woodland is not listed on the ancient woodland register and is said to be secondary woodland although within the ground flora there are some woodland indicators that there has been tree cover here for some time. The records available only date the wood from 1930. Although named a plantation the wood is varied in character with mature oak, cherry, sycamore and beech. In general the canopy is dominated with oak (*Quercus petraea*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). P1930, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are frequent, birch (*Betula pendula*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) are abundant but localised. Also present is wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), larch (*Larix decidua*) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*). The understorey is frequent containing hazel (*Corylus avellana*), rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), with hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*) and guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) all present. The woodland flora is varied with dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and common dog violet (*Viola riviana*). Ospreys nest in this valley.

Access to the wood can be gained from the public highway Scarness Road, via the public footpath. The public footpath dissects the woodland north south and there is a pleasant seating area within the wood. One branch of the Allerdale Ramble, a 54 mile long distance footpath route, uses this public footpath and passes through the wood. The old church of St. Bega's lies just to the south of the wood on the public footpath.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Church Plantation is 5 miles north of Keswick on the eastern fringe of Bassenthwaite Lake. Public access is via a public footpath crossing the wood, running north - south, from Scarness Road to the A591. There are step stiles on this route but the terrain is flat. The wood is only small but in conjunction with wider walking routes and local facilities can make a worth while trip. The long distance footpath route the Allerdale Ramble passes through the wood and cycle route Regional Route 38 passes to the north along Scarness Road; for more details see www.sustrans.org.uk.

By car from the A66 near Keswick, take the A591 signposted to Bassenthwaite village. Follow this past Dodd Wood and the Sawmill tea rooms and take the next left minor road for Scarness village. Follow this for approx 1 mile where limited parking is available close to a public footpath signposted on the left. Enter the field and follow this path to the left for about 1 mile, as it continues southwards in a straight line, crossing a track and more fields before going through Church Plantation. Longer walk routes can be followed from the nearby parking area at Dodd Wood (Forestry Commission) and the Sawmill Tearooms where there is pay and display car parking and toilets. Ospreys nest have nested in the valley since 2001 and there is a viewpoint at the adjacent Dodd Wood, Forestry Commission site. The Lake District Osprey Project view point is open annually from April to late August/September, 7 days a week from 10am until 5pm.

From Keswick bus station the X4 to Workington via Bassenthwaite village stops opposite Ravenstone Lodge just 60m past the turning for Scarness Road. There are no trains to Keswick.

Traveline Cumbria provides comprehensive timetable and fare information for all bus, coach, rail and Lakeland ferry journeys to/from and within Cumbria & the Lake District. A journey planner will help you plan your journey regardless of who operates the services Tel: 0871 200 22 33 or go to <http://traveline.info/>

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Church Plantation is within the Lake District National Park and within the flood zone of Bassenthwaite Lake. Although defined as secondary woodland Church Plantation has the character of Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland NVC W10 with an alder flush to the west. It is the Trust's objective through minimal intervention to allow the characteristics of this woodland within the landscape to develop naturally; to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the whole woodland, as well as increase people's awareness and enjoyment of this ancient habitat through the management of two key features; in line with the outcomes in the Trust's Action Plan 'Keeping Woodland Alive' and the Woodland Trust management principles:

Key Feature 1: Informal Public Access

The Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland commensurate with the usage (category C low usage); managing the provision of entrances with welcome signs, a path through the wood with stiles and gates maintained and improved where necessary and open access encouraged so that local users and visitors can continue to enjoy the wood and the wider landscape.

Key Feature 2: Natural Secondary Woodland

The Trust aims to maintain the predominately high forest structure of this mixed wood; whilst encouraging the natural development of regeneration and maintaining and enhancing the conditions in which the woodland communities can flourish and become more robust. The Trust aims to enhance the biodiversity of the ancient woodland characteristics by conserving old growth, deadwood communities, mosses and lichens and old wall features; thereby protecting and promoting the ecology of the woodland for all species. On-going review and monitoring through woodland condition assessments is essential to ensure successful outputs.

It is expected that the wood will develop self-sustaining systems, shaped largely by natural processes alone with minimal intervention to maintain good access and safety. It is anticipated that this approach will safeguard and enhance the existing environmental value of the wood and maintain the level of public access in 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

Church Plantation attracts relatively few visitors as it is in a quiet rural location some distance from the road and from any conurbation. Generally visitors will be on longer walks and pass through the woodland, although for some it is a special, quiet place near Bassenthwaite Lake and St Bega's Church. There are two public entrances to the wood with entrance signs welcoming visitors. The public right of way from Scarness Road to the A591 passes through the wood north - south. There is limited parking available along Scarness Road. Bassenthwaite Lake is to the east of the wood and the Skiddaw Massif to the west. The long distance walk route the Allerdale Ramble passes to the south east of the wood and on through Dodd Wood (National Trust property) at the foot of Skiddaw. Pay and display parking is available at Dodd Wood and there is a tea room and toilet facilities.

Significance

Church Plantation provides informal recreation opportunities for the local community and visitors to the surrounding countryside. Increasing enjoyment and understanding of woodland and the wildlife within is one of the Trust key outcomes and a cornerstone to the vitality of the woods. The Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan incorporates the action for landowners to give the public the opportunity to experience and appreciate wildlife and that this is synonymous with improving biodiversity. Public appreciation of woodlands is good for the well being of those visiting the wood and ultimately, good for the wood itself through increased public understanding of woodlands and for wildlife. This complimented the recent Bassenthwaite Reflections Programme which encouraged access and involvement of people in and around the Lake Catchment and there are a number of local walks and points of interest on their website www.bassenthwaite-reflections.co.uk

Opportunities & Constraints

From Church Plantation links to more extensive walking routes can be made on public rights of way, through Forestry Commission woodland and from the adjacent Mire House historic property and estate. The wood is easily accessible and of a fairly flat topography. There is an opportunity to enable the public to appreciate the woodland within the wider landscape and as part of the National Park and the Bassenthwaite Catchment. The Trust can inform the public of management practices and the wildlife interest in the wood through posters and the Woodland Trust website.

Factors Causing Change

None

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Ongoing management of the key access attributes: paths, footbridges and entrances to maintain visitor access commensurate with the current level of use. Where necessary liaising with the County Council footpaths division on public rights of way. The Trust will continue to promote the woodland amongst people in the region and members nationally through the website.

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

Cut back encroaching vegetation annually and trim to pedestrian width the footpath identified on the map (approximately 50m), clearing any encroaching branches and fallen timber from the footpath. Maintaining the path network to the Woodland Trusts Maintenance Specifications. Maintain and repair access points (x2), footbridges, stiles, gates and benches and welcome signs to Woodland Trusts Maintenance Specifications. Undertake regular tree safety inspections at defined intervals (see Site Risk Assessment for intervals). Maintain woodland dedications once during the plan period.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Church Plantation is close to Bassenthwaite Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest and is within the Lake District National Park. There are a number of small woodlands between the Lake and the Skiddaw Massif to the east; the Forestry Commission property Dodd Wood forms the largest mixed block at the foot of Skiddaw. The small 1.26ha woodland is not listed on the NCC register of ancient woodland and is said to be secondary woodland although the ground flora has some indicators that there has been a tree cover here for some time. However the records available only date the wood from 1930. Although named a plantation the wood is varied in character with mature oak, cherry, sycamore and beech. In general the canopy is dominated with oak (*Quercus petraea*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) P1930, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are frequent, birch (*Betula pendula*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) are abundant but localised. Also present is wild cherry (*Prunus avium*). The understorey is frequent containing hazel (*Corylus avellana*), rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), with hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*) and guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) all present. The woodland flora is varied with dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and common dog violet (*Viola riviana*).

Significance

Although the wood is not designated as ancient on the ancient woodland register it has been wooded for some time; at least since 1930 and the varied flora possible indicates longer. For some time it has therefore provided continuous habitat for the woodland communities it contains. It is also notable for a well-developed uneven aged shrub layer and a varied ground flora. Some plants and animals have very specialised requirements and spread very slowly, if at all, into new woods. Wet woodlands have been identified as part of the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan as in decline or under threat and necessary for conservation and restoration and Church Plantation is within a local ancient woodland concentration. Although Church Plantation has only a small area of alder flush woodland this is worth noting. Again although not ancient with on going threats to ancient woodland it is important to protect the next generation of semi natural woods. Church Plantation is a small but significant feature in the wider landscape; forming a patchwork of woodland with Bowness Wood, Highfield Wood, Cassocks Wood all within a kilometre square. Woodlands are important in the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment to help filter nutrients; slow down water movement into the Lake and provide natural flood areas.

Opportunities & Constraints

Due to its small area Church Plantation has limited conservation potential; with such a small core area population density of species will be constrained. However there is an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the ancient woodland characteristics by conserving old growth, deadwood communities, mosses and lichens and old wall features and by adopting working practices that do not impact adversely on the integral environment; thereby protecting and promoting the ecology of the woodland for all species. The presence of this semi natural habitat supports the wider local concentration of ancient woodland found through Borrowdale, Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake.

There are overhead electricity cables running the full length of the northern boundary which prevent maintaining high forest over this section of woodland. Conversely this area is coppiced regularly by the Utilities Company and shows healthy coppice growth and an alternative niche habitat.

The south end of Bassenthwaite Lake is an important conservation area, home for all or part of the year to a wide range of birds. Most famously, Ospreys have returned to nest in this valley.

The woodland is land-locked by grazing fields but with the Trust ownership brings the opportunity to ensure that the woodland is retained in perpetuity, allowing retention of the older trees as a legacy and a living heritage and for their own ecological value as old trees. It is important to the continuation of the well-developed understory and shrub layer that the wood boundaries are maintained in a stock proof condition. There is an opportunity to monitor the flora and fauna by observation and identification. There is an opportunity to favour native species within any silvicultural work planned and to monitor non-native species density, controlling only if considered to be causing habitat change or threatening the loss of species.

Factors Causing Change

Flooding, climate change, ash dieback, pest & diseases.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term aim is to maintain a continuous cover uneven aged structure throughout the woodland retaining older trees monitoring and managing them as necessary, retaining standing and fallen dead wood where safe to do so, maintaining a well developed shrub layer, enabling tree regeneration and promoting good ground flora and fauna communities present associated with the continuously wooded canopy. It is anticipated that no active management intervention will be required during this plan period.

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

Monitor the woodland condition and succession through observation once during this plan period particularly monitoring whether there are any threats to woodland succession. Monitor for ash dieback, and impact of losing significant canopy cover (30-50%), and means of regeneration. Once during the plan period review the condition of Woodland Trust boundaries ensuring all stock proof (post and wire with sheep net erected in 2000). Once every ten years review old growth ATH cherry. Once during the plan period review the condition of the ditches particularly the one draining the neighbouring farmers field and ensure running.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.26	Ash	1930	High forest	Legal issues, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Environmentally Sensitive Area, National Park

Church Plantation, compartment 1A is the entire wood. The wood has a slight westerly aspect and is almost rectangular. There is semi improved pasture on all sides. Some of the oldest and largest trees are on the boundary of the wood; these are oak, beech, sycamore and cherry (P1930) with frequent ash, birch, alder. The understorey is mixed and multi-aged with abundant hazel, rowan, holly, crab apple, willow, blackthorn, hawthorn and guelder rose. Regeneration is frequent with ash, birch, sycamore, beech, cherry and alder all regenerating. An overhead power-line runs along the northern boundary and the trees beneath are coppiced by the utility company. There are two ditches running east to west one along the northern boundary and one through the middle of the compartment and there is a third ditch running southwest across the western edge of the wood. The east of the wood is drier with more oak and hazel, whilst the west of the wood there is more abundant alder, birch and willow. There are many ground flora species present including dog's mercury, herb Robert, bluebell, foxgloves, cuckoo pint and yarrow. There are two public entrances one to the north and one to the south and the public right of way cross the wood north/south. The boundaries are all post and wire and were all renewed in 1999/2000. Old drystone wall exists to the southwest. There are two small footbridges crossing the ditches and a bench to the east of the footpath.

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.