



Mancombe Wood

**Management Plan
2012-2017**

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Mancombe Wood
Location:	Roundham
Grid reference:	ST427102, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 193
Area:	10.07 hectares (24.88 acres)
Designations:	Special Landscape Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Mancombe Wood lies within a Special Landscape area characterised by deep cut, hidden valleys. With mature broadleaf woodland, spring displays of bluebells and primroses, and a small meadow, there is plenty to explore.

2.2 Extended Description

Mancombe Wood is 2 km northwest from the small town of Crewkerne in Somerset and is within a Special Landscape Area characterised by deep cut, hidden valleys. The wood is on the south side of the Mancombe Valley and is surrounded by a mixture of permanent pasture and woodland. At the bottom of the valley is a small stream.

The main access from the road is along a private surfaced road and then a gravel track which becomes very steep and prone to water erosion. The underlying geology is sandstone.

The woods are not ancient however early Ordnance Survey maps show the majority of the Mancombe Valley as being wooded by 1889 and some mature trees clearly date back to that time. Some conifer planting took place in the 30's but only a few specimen conifers still exist.

In 1996 Mancombe Wood was acquired by the Woodland Trust with an extension in 1997. Today the woodland is predominately young broadleaved woodland, planted during the late 1990's with a small meadow area. There are patches of woodland flora including bluebells and primroses and these are spreading as the canopy closes.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Mancombe Wood is located on the edge of Roundham, 2 km northwest of Crewkerne in Somerset.

The main access route from the A30 road is along a private owned shared use surfaced road (also classified as a bridleway) and then down a steep gravel track which is prone to water erosion and can be slippery due to leaves in autumn and winter. Parking is very limited at the wood, with only space for 2 or 3 cars at most near the main gate.

After entering the wood through a gate, there are wide grassy paths throughout with no stiles or other gates along the way. There is one other wide access point into the wood where the bridleway exits and continues through the fields. The first part of the wood has flat paths, the remainder includes some sloping areas.

Nearest bus stop: Buses run regularly throughout the day along the A30 between Chard and Crewkerne, via Roundham. Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608.

Nearest public toilet: There are public conveniences with disabled and baby changing facilities in South Street car park, Crewkerne (open 7am-7pm). For more information look under public conveniences at www.southsomerset.gov.uk

This information was collected from site visits and websites in October 2007.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision for Mancombe Wood is to develop healthy mixed broadleaf high forest to further the Trust's aim of protecting wildlife and increasing the area of native woodland. The watercourses add to the habitat opportunities available.

Paths and glades within the site will be managed with an intensity suitable for the level of use so visitors are welcomed to the site. The woodland should offer a peaceful pleasant place to visit which will become valued by those who find it.

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

Mancombe Wood is quiet and secluded valley woodland which provides a peaceful area for quiet informal recreation.

A public bridleway crosses the site and links to a permissive footpath network within the wood. Part of the path runs through a wet area of woodland, a bridge and 'corduroy' path have been provided to facilitate access. There are two benches situated at natural viewpoints.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that everyone should recognise that trees and woods are an essential part of a healthy environment and that there should be a wood with open access close to everyone's home. We aim to achieve that through our ownership of Mancombe Wood.

The public bridleway running through the wood forms part of a longer network, this important link should be maintained.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

- The use of the woods by the public is limited due to its distance from the nearest large population (Crewkerne) and the lack of Woodland Trust car parking.

Factors Causing Change

The management track is prone to erosion following heavy rain.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the wood as an attractive and tranquil place where people can enjoy informal recreation. The public bridleway and the permissive footpath network within the site will be maintained in a condition that suits the low level of usage. The open areas within the woodland will be maintained for both their amenity and wildlife value.

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

The short term objective is to maintain the site in an attractive welcoming and safe condition in accordance with access category C.

This will be done by:

- Cutting the path network regularly to prevent it scrubbing over.
- The upper section of the bridleway prone to erosion will continue to be maintained, scraping and filling erosion channels as required.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

This is a mixture of woodland which has existed since at least 1880's and newer planting in the 1990's. Parts of the older woodland generally correspond to W8 ash-maple woodland which has been replicated in the new planting, with other areas dominated by veteran beech and conifers. There are wet areas along the edges of the streams where alder dominates. The ground layer was improved grassland under the new plantings however a number of woodland plants can now be found spreading from the areas of mature woodland (bluebells, violets and primroses). Some patches of rhododendron are present.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that there should be twice as much tree cover like that at Mancombe Wood across the UK. Through managing Mancombe we aim to provide an example of this and deliver our aim of protecting native wood, trees and their wildlife for the future.

Additionally the Mancombe Valley is a quiet, unspoilt area managed for wildlife by the Trust. The mix of habitats is diverse and the new planting has buffered and linked the existing woodlands adding to the local biodiversity and increasing native woodland cover.

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Deer Damage, Invasive Rhododendron, Squirrel damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain this area as healthy mixed native broadleaved woodland with a diversity of species naturally occurring throughout the site due to the varying ground conditions and mixtures of open spaces. The mature conifer will be allowed to remain but with a gradual reduction in numbers as they reach the end of their lives.

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

The short term objective is to ensure the continuing health of the woodland. This will be done by:

- Checking for and removing any laurel and rhododendron regrowth along with any other invasive species.
- If deer numbers become too high to allow the survival of natural regeneration then control measures will be considered. A survey will be undertaken once within this plan to assess.
- Once every three years cut the open grass areas to prevent scrubbing up and conversion to woodland.

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	2.16	Ash	2001	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Special Landscape Area
Planted with blocks of trees in 2001 oak, ash and shrubs. Open ground left around four open grown mature oak trees and along the route of a bridleway. The grassland is improved and not species rich.							
1b	1.11	Beech	1997	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/ mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Special Landscape Area
A compartment of wide spaced mature trees with two small areas of newer planting P97 and P93. The tree species are predominately beech, oak and ash. The ground flora is dominated by grass with patches of bluebells, violets, bramble, foxgloves and nettle. Some natural regeneration of ash and oak. Rhododendron grows along the track edge spreading from the neighbouring garden.							
2a	4.28	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/ mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Special Landscape Area
This block includes the extension to Mancombe Wood which was purchased in late 1997. Planted 1997 and 98 with mixed native broadleaved species (oak, ash field maple hazel and woody shrubs) The compartment is on a slight slope. The ground vegetation is dominated by grass species which are expected to be shaded out by the closing canopy. An overhead powerline crosses this compartment.							
2b	1.62	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/ mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Special Landscape Area

This compartment is very steep in places towards the bottom is a small stream. Much of the compartment is wet/ water logged. The tree species are a mixture of remnants of plantation forestry (Douglas Fir, hybrid poplar, Japanese larch and sycamore). Stored Alder coppice dominates the wetter areas with oak and ash in the strip along the north western boundary. On the dryer slopes mature broadleaves are found alongside younger planting by the previous owner during 1993 of broadleaves. Nettles and cleavers dominate the ground flora. Grass, bracken and brambles are also present. In the scrub layer a privet bush can be found as well as wild currents. Laurel and rhododendron have been controlled in part of the compartment.

2c	0.83	Mixed native broadleaves	1997	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Special Landscape Area
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The compartment is dominated by bracken and bramble. The previous owner undertook felling and replanting during the 1990's. 0.09ha was planted with broadleaves these are the more mature trees on the SW side. The rest of the compartment was probably planted with Douglas Fir only about 10-20% of the planting stock survived. The compartment was replanted in 1997 with broadleaved species. The compartment is on a steep slope.

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.