



Reach 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Reach Wood
Location:	Reach
Grid reference:	TL565658, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154
Area:	4.59 hectares (11.34 acres)
Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Volunteers from the nearby villages of Reach and Swafham Prior planted 3,200 young trees on this site in a single day as part of an initiative to create new woodland. Chalk is quarried here and there is a striking backdrop of steep chalk cliffs.

2.2 Extended Description

Reach Wood was planted on an arable field in November 1994. The whole wood (3200 trees) was planted in a single day by volunteers from the nearby villages of Reach and Swafham Prior. It consists of two distinct areas- the northern wooded section planted on an undulating site which was once quarried for clunch, a type of chalk used as a building material locally, and the lower southern section which is a newly created chalk grassland surrounded by some small areas of planting and natural regeneration. The under-laying soil is thin and poor.

The planting was at a density of 1100 trees per hectare in a random mix of beach, ash, cherry, field maple, crab apple and yew with a variety of shrub species including hazel, dog rose, wayfaring tree and spindle on the path edges.

Beech is the dominant tree- there is an area of pure beech in a slight hollow in the centre and most of the ash was planted in the north western section.

An electricity powerline runs along the extreme north eastern boundary of the site.

The wood is linked into the public rights of way network and is only a 2 minute walk from the centre of Reach via Clunch Pit Lane. There are some chalk cliffs on the edges of the wood left over from the quarrying activity. There are some small areas of scrub associated with these. To the south west the ground falls away to form a steep chalk cliff with regenerating ash and thorn scrub. Very good views of the surrounding fens can be had from several vantage points

The southern most half of the site is chalk grassland, seeded on a previously arable field. The field was seeded with a mixture of chalk loving grass species and it is possible that other species have moved into the sward from the surrounding area. The poor soil is proving excellent for the meadow with many herbs now well established and orchids often found in the shaded areas bordering it.

The grassland is bounded to the east and west by a small amount of planting carried out in 1993/4 and to the south by a low chalk cliff which has a naturally seeded ash/thorn scrub habitat developing on it.

The trees have struggled since planting due to the poor, drought prone soil. However, by 2017 the site is well established even though many trees are smaller than we would expect for a site of this age.

The Key features of this site are:

- Informal public access
- New native woodland
- Open ground habitat

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access can be gained from the north via Clunch Pit Lane that runs from Reach village green for approx 200m to the wood entrance. Parking is available on the village green. Alternative access is available the east of the site via a public right of way. All access routes and the internal paths are generally level but are largely unsurfaced and can become very muddy in wet weather. No public toilets in locality. Bus stop on the village green next to the start of Clunch pit lane. For routes and travel times visit www.traveline.org.uk or call Traveline on 08712002233. Anti vehicle bollards at entrance

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

in 50 years the site will be a robust high forest system, consisting of primarily native broadleaved tree and shrub species. Natural regeneration of trees and shrubs is to be positively encouraged to gain a wide range of tree age classes. Standing and fallen deadwood will be left in situ wherever it is safe practicable to do so.

It is important to maintain the areas of open space, including the network of paths, glades and the chalk grassland. Thus providing a range of habitats and maximising biodiversity in this comparatively small but locally significant oasis of woodland.

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. The paths, signs and other furniture that allow safe access are to be maintained in good order. Community involvement has been important in the woods establishment and development, and should be continued in the future.

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

Reach wood was planted up as part of the Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design, planting and maintenance. There was a great deal of community involvement from the very start. Within easy walking distance of the village of Reech, it is accessible from the village square via an old green lane. There are 900m of paths throughout the site and a large area of open chalk grassland near the southern edge. The wood is well used for quiet enjoyment, being far enough away from the village to provide protection from vandalism yet close enough to be accessible to most people.

The wood is also linked to nearby village of Swaffham Prior via the public right of way network. There is added interest in that the site of the wood was an old quarry from which clunch a special type of chalk was extracted. The old quarry working faces are still visible nearby.

Significance

The wood was very much a product of the local communities interest in creating local woodland. at the time, there was very little woodland of any kind in the locality, the nearest being approximately 4 miles away in wicken fen and no woodland open for free public access within 10km's other than another Trusts wood at Burwell. Since then the community have created other smaller woodland sites in and around the village with help from other conservation organisations, including Reach planation (1998 - Cambs County Farms owned) and part of the Reach 24 site (2013 - purchased by the National Trust).

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

On site hazards - Cliffs/ steep slops associate with Quarry activity

Opportunities

Links to public rights of way network to create circular walks.

Factors Causing Change

Scrub encroachment

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Open safe access that links into the public rights of way network and to provide a large open grassland space for informal recreation

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

Site remains open and easy to use. Internal paths maintained to WT spec 2.1. Entrance signage remains in good condition at all times, (currently standard WT 'Bread-board' threshold sign) inspected annually and replaced/ repaired/ enhanced as appropriate.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Mixed broadleaved woodland dominated by beech and ash with a variety of shrubs and other trees including some yew. Growth is slow due to the poor chalk soils.
The design also compliments the existing hedge and scrub areas adjacent to the site and includes wide paths and a large chalk grassland created in 1994.

Significance

Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in England and this part of Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded districts in the county- the nearest ancient wood is 12km away to the south.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

The soils are thin, very nutrient poor and prone to drying out

Opportunities

The cliffs and hedges which form boundaries already contained small populations of chalk loving plants and animals which could move into the new woodland.

The very poor nature of the farmland adjacent to the wood may give opportunities for extending the wood

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Broadleaved high forest with a variety of species and ages of trees. The woodland community to include old and over mature, dead wood lying and fallen as well as young seedlings and saplings and all ages in between. The wood to include a range of other habitat types in roughly the same proportions as exist at present.

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

Maintain woodland under principals of minimum intervention. Annual assessments of woodland health will be carried out, only intervening to prevent the spread of invasive species/ disease, to protect public safety, or in the interests of KF1.

5.3 Open Ground Habitat

Description

Area of chalk grassland to the south of the site, planted in April 1994 with a mix of chalk loving grass species.

Significance

A significant area of open space, providing diversity within the woodland and softening its impact on the landscape. Well used by locals for picnics, this much loved area provides a haven for wildlife, being one of very few open spaces in the vicinity not intensively managed for agriculture

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

useful base for site based events

Community engagement - removal of cuttings

Constraints:

Access can be challenging

Factors Causing Change

Scrub encroachment

colonisation of invasive weeds.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain as open space, with diverse mix of grasses and wild flowers.

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

Mow annually (in late summer, once everything has seeded) with low impact finger/ bar cutter or similar (not flail) to prevent scrub encroachment but protect inhabiting wildlife. Arisings to be removed by community, organised by Parish Council.

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	2.90	Beech	1994	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>This compartment consists of the northern wooded section of Reach wood, which was planted in 1994 on an undulating former clunch stone quarry (a hard chalk building stone). As a result the soil is thin and poor. The planting was at a density of 1100 trees per hectare in a random mix of ash, beech, cherry, field maple, crab apple and yew. Along the path edges a variety of shrub species were included, namely hazel, dog-rose, wayfaring tree and spindle. There is an area of pure beech in a slight hollow in the centre. However mostly ash was planted in the north western section. An electricity power line runs along the extreme north eastern boundary of the site. There are three public access points in to the compartment which are interlinked by 900m of permissive paths. There are some small areas of scrub and hedges on the borders of the compartment. To the south west, the ground falls away to form a steep chalk cliff with regenerating ash and thorn scrub.</p>							
1b	1.40	Other		Non-wood habitat		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund
<p>The southern most half of the site was seeded to form a chalk grassland in April of 1994. Previously an arable field, the field area was seeded with a combination of the following grass species:- Shheps fescue, red fescue, common bent, smooth meadow grass, crested dogs tail, Yellow oat grass, Small leaved timothy. In the contract it also states that the grassland was to be further enhanced by the spreading of seed collected from nearby Devils Ditch SSSI, it is not known whether this was carried out. Now well established, it is topped one a year in September to prevent scrub encroachment. The community showed concern in 2012 that it was being carried out with a flail type mower head. To protect small mammals, amphibians, reptiles etc, a low impact bar cutter will be used, set relatively high leaving a 4inch sward. The community manually rake off the arisings. The grassland is bounded to the east and west by a small amount of planting carried out in 1993/4 and to the south by a chalk cliff which has a naturally seeded ash/thorn scrub habitat developing on it.</p>							

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.