



George's Wood

Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	George's Wood
Location:	Bury
Grid reference:	SD763106, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	2.54 hectares (6.28 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Green Belt

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

George's Wood can be found in the village of Ainsworth, about 2 miles west of the town of Bury and forms part of the Red Rose Forest. The site is bounded to the east by Knowsley Road, and to the south and west by housing, land use to the north of the site is agricultural rough grazing pasture. The woodland was planted in 1974 on former pasture land and consists of a mixture of species which is dominated by Japanese larch, Scots pine, sycamore, ash and beech. Other species which can be found more occasionally include Southern beech, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, oak and western balsam poplar. At present there is a limited regeneration, shrub layer and ground flora due to intense shading from the dominant conifer species. However thinning operations carried out in 2000 and 2013 are beginning to rebalance the canopy in favour of native broadleaves species.

In 1995 the woodland was gifted to The Woodland Trust by a private landowner. Secondary woodland is one of the sites key features. A public footpath enters the site in the south east corner and runs along the southern boundary of the site, another public footpath skirts the western boundary of the site although this is just outside Woodland Trust land. Furthermore a circular permissive footpath has been created at the site. The woodland has developed into a significant local landscape feature and the path network is well used, hence informal public access is a key feature.

The Woodland Trust will aim to work in partnership with local people and organisations to deliver this management plan wherever possible.

2.2 Extended Description

George's Wood can be found in the village of Ainsworth, about 2 miles west of the town of Bury and forms part of the Manchester City of Trees Community Forest. The site is bounded to the east by Knowsley Road, and to the south and west by housing, land use to the north of the site is agricultural rough grazing pasture.

George's Wood was planted on slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils. The wood is square in shape and the land flat.

The woodland was planted in 1974 on former pasture land and consists of a mixture of species which is dominated by Japanese larch, Scots pine, sycamore, ash and beech. Other species which can be found more occasionally include Southern beech, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, oak and western balsam poplar. In 1995 the woodland was gifted to The Woodland Trust by a private landowner. At present there is a limited regeneration, shrub layer and ground flora due to intense shading from the dominant conifer species. However thinning operations carried out in 2000 and 2013 are beginning to re-balance the canopy in favour of native broadleaves species. Secondary woodland is one of the sites key features.

A public footpath enters the site in the south east corner and runs along the southern boundary of the site; another public footpath skirts the western boundary of the site although this is just outside Woodland Trust land. Furthermore a circular permissive footpath has been created at the site. All paths on site are level but unsurfaced so can become muddy when wet, the permissive paths link directly with the public right of way allowing visitors to explore further afield if they wish to. The woodland has developed into a significant local landscape feature and the path network is well used, hence informal public access is a key feature.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

George's Wood can be found in Greater Manchester, about 2 miles west of the town of Bury in the village of Ainsworth. The wood is located just off Knowsley Road, although Knowsley Road is a private road it is also a Public Right Of Way. Knowsley Road can be found off the B619 (Bury Old Road). Head along Knowsley Road for around 200 yards, on the left is a metal field gate and a pedestrian squeeze gap entrance into George's Wood. A circular footpath network of around 100 meters orbits the wood; the path is unsurfaced and can get muddy and slippery when wet.

Parking is available on nearby local roads such as Knowsley Road but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: Located approximately 4 miles away at Asda Superstores, Spring Street, Bury. Toilets are suitable for disabled users.

Nearest bus stop: Located at Church Street, which is approximately 100 metres away from the wood. Church Street is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Our long-term intention for Georges Wood is to ensure the continuity of high forest and the conversion to a predominantly oak/birch with beech, rowan and ash canopy. Management operations will be designed to ensure maximum structural diversity in terms of species composition, age distribution and size classification. The aim of this work will be to promote stand stability in this urban fringe and exposed location and to encourage predominantly native broadleaved regeneration.

The site is well used by local people, we will continue to monitor and maintain the path networks to ensure informal recreational opportunities are maintained. We will also encourage local people to become actively involved in the site by recruiting them as voluntary wardens where there is sufficient interest.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

The woodland has five main access points. A Public Right Of Way enters the site on its south eastern boundary and heads west for approximately 140 meters before exiting the site on its south western boundary. Another Public Right Of Way skirts the entire length of the western boundary, however it is just outside our land. A more informal, unsurfaced permissive path forms a circular walk around the wood, and links up with 3 more pedestrian access points. The paths are well used by local people for informal recreation.

Significance

Because of the urban nature of the surrounding area, informal recreational activities are limited. Georges Wood provides a quiet place for local people to visit for informal recreational purposes.

Opportunities & Constraints

Due to the wet nature of the site the footpaths are often very wet and boggy, even in summer. The site is quite small therefore visitors tend to be restricted to local dog walkers in the main. However a Public Right Of Way links the site into the wider countryside and gives walkers a chance to explore further a field if they wish to.

Factors Causing Change

Youths camping in the wood can be an issue over the summer months.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The existing level and quality of access will be monitored and maintained. The Trust will be flexible and adapt to increases in recreational use.

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

Improvement work has recently been carried out at several of the pedestrian entrances as part of the Welcoming Sites Project (WSP). Footpaths will be kept clear of overhanging vegetation, litter removed, and entrances & signs will be maintained at least once annually under the Estates Management Contract. We will continue to keep close links and stay actively engaged with the Police and voluntary wardens to tackle camping and anti social behaviour issues.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Secondary woodland dominated by Japanese larch , Scots pine , sycamore, ash and beech. Other species include Southern beech , sweet chestnut, horse chestnut , oak and western balsam poplar. At present the shrub/ground flora layer is suppressed due to intense shading from the conifers although the site has been thinned recently in 2000 & 2013. Good numbers of broadleaved regeneration is present in areas where previous thinning operations have allowed light levels to increase on the woodland floor.

Significance

Woodland cover in Greater Manchester is very low, around 2.2% of land use in the county. Therefore Georges Wood provides an important woodland habitat for local flora and fauna.

Opportunities & Constraints

At present the woodland is dominated by exotic, non native coniferous species such as Japanese larch. Some selective thinning of the non native conifers has been undertaken and will continue as per the twenty year silvicultural plan. The aim of this work will be to promote stand stability in this urban fringe and exposed location and encourage native broadleaved regeneration.

This work may appear rather destructive to local people, therefore there will be a need to communicate with local people and visitors to the site to explain why we are doing the work. Management Plan consultation and on site posters will give us an opportunity to communicate with interested parties.

Factors Causing Change

Broadleaved regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Our long-term vision for George's Wood is to ensure the continuity of high forest and the conversion to a predominantly oak/birch with beech, rowan and ash canopy. Management operations will be designed to ensure maximum structural diversity in terms of species composition, age distribution and size classification.

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

Ensure that conifer thinning operations are carried out as per the twenty year silvicultural plan (next thin 2023), and that subsequent regeneration of a broadleaved canopy takes place. Woodland condition assessment every plan period will monitor broadleaved regeneration levels.

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	2.54	Japanese larch	1974	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest, Green Belt

2.43 hectares (6 acres) of secondary woodland situated on a small flat former pasture field in the village of Ainsworth, nr Bury. The canopy is dominated by coniferous species and non native species mainly Japanese larch and to a lesser extent Scots pine and southern beech but a mixture of broadleaved species such as beech, sycamore and oak were also planted. Heavy shade cast by the dominant coniferous species means that the site has limited ground flora and natural regeneration. However recent thinning operations carried out in 2000 and 2013 are beginning to rebalance the canopy in favour of broadleaved species. The site contains both a Public Right of way and a network of informal paths which are well used by local people for informal recreation.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2023	1a	Thin	2.43	21	50

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.