



Ford 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Ford Wood, Keith Wood
Location:	Bassingbourn, Bassingbourn
Grid reference:	TL334434, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154 TL337427, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 154
Area:	2.34 hectares (5.78 acres) 1.67 hectares (4.13 acres)
Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A volunteer-planted wood of mainly ash and field maple, part of Ford Wood is an old orchard and large hedgerows enclose the trees. A well used path runs through the wood and numerous paths link small grassy glades.

2.2 Extended Description

Both Ford Wood and Keith Wood lie near the village of Bassingbourn in South Cambridgeshire, with Ford Wood being immediately next to the village. Both woods are small, totalling 10 acres together, and are positioned on chalky clay soils in an intensively managed arable landscape, where woodland cover is generally quite sparse and ancient woodland is almost absent. The nearest site of conservation importance is Therfield Heath SSSI, at Royston to the south, which is important for chalk grassland species.

Ford Wood is predominately an ash and field maple wood with other species including oak, cherry and hazel. It was planted on a grass field in February 1995 entirely by volunteers as part of the Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. The wood was financially supported by the county and district councils and by local contribution. Mrs Marriage donated the land and the wood is named after a well-known local family who once owned the field on which it now grows.

A public footpath runs through Ford wood linking South St and Spring Lane in the village. The wood is within easy walking distance for residents of Bassingbourn and is regularly used by the locals. There are over 800m of paths with interlinking small grassy glades.

Keith Wood is approximately 0.5km to the south of Ford Wood, and is accessed by following Spring Lane out of the village and then following the byway (part of the Ickneld Way) heading west. Keith Wood was also planted in 1995, as part of the same project, on the corner of a very large arable field, and the trees were planted by volunteers on the 4th of March that year. The woodland is quite mixed in species and includes ash, field maple, beech hazel, hornbeam and wild cherry. The wood is leased to the Trust on a 999-year lease from Bassingbourn Parish council. Keith wood is named after John Keith, a former clerk to the parish council. The wood has a managed path network but is less used by the public, being further out from the village.

The Woodland Trust have assigned the following key features to these woods, which are most applicable:

- Informal public access
- Secondary woodland

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access can obtain access from the public footpath crossing the property. Access and internal paths are generally in good condition with no adverse gradients or obstructions, however they can become muddy in wet weather. Public toilets, including diasabled are available in Bassingbourn library in the High Street, phone 01763 247. Regular bus services pass through the High Street of Bassingbourn, for time and sevices ring the Traveline on 0871202233 visit www.traveline.org.uk.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term aim is to create mature native woodlands which are diverse in species and age structure. In this way the woods will be resilient and robust to any changes imposed on them in future, especially from tree diseases. Periodic silvicultural intervention may be necessary to maintain these conditions. It is likely that ash dieback disease will have an impact on the woods, and ash will drop from being a major tree component to a minor one in the next 10-20 years. This process of change will be allowed to develop naturally as ash trees are lost, and it will introduce gaps into the canopy of the woodlands which will enhance the age structure and create conditions for natural regeneration to occur. Ash will not be preferentially thinned from the woods either, and ash regeneration will be welcomed so long as it is part of an overall mixture of other species. Some intervention for safety reasons may be necessary with regard to ash dieback, for instance felling to lessen the safety risk along rides and boundaries.

In the long term the major trees species are likely to be field maple, beech, wild cherry and hornbeam, with shrub species of hazel, blackthorn and hawthorn.

The woods will develop a healthy deadwood habitat over time, and ash loss through disease will supplement this. Standing dead trees will be retained wherever possible and where they do not pose a safety risk or conflict with management operations.

An element of open space will be maintained, particularly in Ford Wood, in the shape of open rides and small glades.

Public access for pedestrians will be maintained at the woods in perpetuity. The woods will be welcoming, with appropriate signage at the entrances and a managed network of paths. But facilities on the whole will be low key and appropriate to these small local interest woods.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

Young broadleaved plantations, planted in 1995 and consisting of ash, field maple, beech, hornbeam, wild cherry and hazel. Ground flora is limited due to the age of the woods. Some sections of the woodland (north edge of Ford Wood) have derived from the spread and colonisation of old hedgerows and a former orchard. There is an open ground element to Ford Wood in the shape of several wide rides and small glades.

Significance

In a locality with little semi natural habitat, Ford and Keith woods provide valuable wildlife refuges and help to break up the intensively-managed arable landscape in the surrounding countryside.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

The management access at Ford Wood is tight and adjacent to residential properties which is likely to conflict with operations involving timber extraction. Overall the small size of the woods and resulting low timber volumes are likely to make timber extraction uneconomical, although there may be potential for small scale local producers to make it work.

Opportunities

Although ash dieback disease will result in a loss of this species, it will add some structural diversity to these young plantations

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback disease is likely to significantly reduce the proportion of ash in the woods, which will alter their overall composition.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term aim is to create mature native woodlands which are diverse in species and age structure. In this way the woods will be resilient and robust to any changes imposed on them in future, especially from tree diseases. Periodic silvicultural intervention may be necessary to maintain these conditions. It is likely that ash dieback disease will have an impact on the woods, and ash will drop from being a major tree component to a minor one in the next 10-20 years. This process of change will be allowed to develop naturally as ash trees are lost, and it will introduce gaps into the canopy of the woodlands which will enhance the age structure and create conditions for natural regeneration to occur. Ash will not be preferentially thinned from the woods either, and ash regeneration will be welcomed so long as it is part of an overall mixture of other species. Some intervention for safety reasons may be necessary with regard to ash dieback, for instance felling to lessen the safety risk along rides and boundaries.

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An element of open space will be maintained, particularly in Ford Wood, in the shape of open rides and small glades.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to allow the woods to develop naturally, whilst ensuring they are safe as practical. An element of open ground habitat will be retained and managed in Ford Wood. In order to achieve these objectives the following works will be undertaken:

- A regular safety assessment of trees in high risk areas of the wood, such as the residential boundaries and footpaths. The ongoing assessment of the impact of ash dieback disease will be undertaken during these visits. To pre-empt the probable need to remove many of the ash trees in high risk zones in future years a felling operation will be carried out in 2021 to remove approx 50 ash trees in Ford Wood on property boundaries and path edges. This operation will minimise the risk in the wood, and provide advantages in generating a useable parcel of timber for the local market.
- The removal of all the remaining tree guards in both woods will be carried out in 2020.
- The management of a wide open ride under the powerlines in Ford Wood, via annual mowing, will be carried out. The ride will be approximately 150m long and 6m wide, although variable (scaloped) in width.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Ford & Keith woods were created as part of the Woodland Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project in 1995. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design, planting and early maintenance. Both woods are within walking distance of the village of Bassingbourn, with Ford wood being immediately adjacent and therefore much more well-used. Keith wood is approximately 1km to the south of the village and accessed off a public byway. Ford wood has approx 800m of managed paths and Keith has 450m. Both sites are small and therefore mainly of interest to residents living close by. Both sites are flat and easy to walk around. Facilities are low key, with minimal public information and infrastructure, but all main entrances are signed to welcome visitors. Both woods link to the public rights of way network, via Spring Lane and the long distance footpath/byway - The Icknield Way.

The Trust have given Ford Wood & Keith Wood a category B for access provision which equates to: regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day.

Significance

The woods are positioned within an intensively managed landscape, where woodland is generally quite sparse. There are no other woods open for public access within 10km's other than other small Woodland Trust Woods in the local area. Hence these small woods make an invaluable contribution to providing people with accessible semi-natural places to enjoy, in locations which would otherwise lack this facility.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

The woods are within walking distance of a nearby village (Bassingbourn). They are located on flat ground offering opportunities for access by the less-abled.

There is an opportunity for a local community organisation or group to take on the management of these woods, potentially adding value to them for local people.

Constraints

The small size of the woods is likely to limit their interest to people living very close by.

Nearby parking in the village is very limited,

The byway next to Keith Wood can suffer from misuse by motorcycles

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Ford Wood and Keith Wood will remain open for public access in perpetuity. The Trust have given Ford Wood & Keith Wood a category B for access provision which equates to: regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day. Hence a good standard of access provision will be provided, but facilities at the sites will be low key in recognition of them being small, locally frequented woods with a limited wider interest. There will be a managed path network in each wood and all main entrances will be clearly signed and welcoming to visitors. The woods will be made as safe as practical for their enjoyment by the public.

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

The short term objectives during this plan period are to ensure the woods are open, accessible and safe for use by the public. This will be achieved by:

- Carrying out annual maintenance to the path and entrance network (a total of 1200m of path and 5 entrances). All entrances will be signed so the woods are welcoming to visitors. Monitoring will be carried out once during the plan period to ensure this standard of provision is maintained.
- Carrying out routine safety checks, especially of trees in high risk zone. Trees within falling distance of residential gardens at Ford Wood will be inspected annually, and one inspection of trees along the path network will be carried out during this plan period. As mentioned under the woodland key feature, pre-emptive felling of ash trees along property boundaries and paths will be carried out in 2021.

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	2.33	Mixed native broadleaves	1995	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>Ford Wood. Plantation of native broadleaves with the approx species mix: 50% are ash, 20% field maple, 10% cherry, 10% alder, & 10% shrubs (hazel, wayfaring tree, goat willow) as well as occasional oak, elm and rowan. The boundaries of the wood are dominated by outgrown hedges of mature blackthorn, hawthorn and bramble hedges. A small historic orchard which predates the planting is located in the northeast corner. The old fruit trees are now well out of productive rotation.</p>							
2a	1.60	Mixed native broadleaves	1995	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>Keith Wood. Plantation of native broadleaves. Ash is the dominant species but the wood also includes field maple, wild cherry, beech, hornbeam and shrubs such as hazel and blackthorn. A mature hedgerow to the north has led to the expansion of scrub into the wood, consisting of blackthorn, bramble and hawthorn.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	200	20

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.