



Hewitts Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Hewitts Wood
Location:	Mobberley
Grid reference:	SJ802796, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 118
Area:	1.07 hectares (2.64 acres)
Designations:	Special Area of Conservation, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The wood is located in a rural flat landscape, mainly farmland with hedgerows and scattered woodland copses. Hewitts Wood contains a mix of oak, beech, sycamore, Scots and Corsican pines. There are a series of old marl pits, now filled with water located in the northern part of the wood and a permissive footpath runs through the site.

2.2 Extended Description

Hewitts Wood lies on the northern edge of the village of Knolls Green near Mobberley in East Cheshire, approximately halfway between Alderley Edge and Knutsford on the B5085. It is located on Newton Hall Lane near to the junction with Knutsford Road. The site and surrounding landscape is flat, predominantly farmland for grazing with hedgerows and woodland copses. It has sandy soils with a high silt content capped with a rich mull humus and leaf litter.

The site is mixed secondary woodland dominated by pines (Scots & Corsican), oak (English, sessile & turkey), beech and sycamore with ash, common alder, horse chestnut, and hornbeam. The understory includes wych elm, sycamore, holly, beech, ash, elder, hornbeam and birch. Rhododendron had been abundant in the understorey although this has been cleared in recent years creating space for the growth of ground flora and natural regeneration. There are a number of permanent and seasonal ponds linked with an old ditch network in the northern half of the site.

The wood was gifted to the Woodland Trust by Margery Hewitt Chapman on the 24th May 1996. After a period of initial works the wood was opened up for the public to enjoy and a permissive footpath created through the wood linking a public footpath on the southern boundary with two public entrances on Newton Hall Lane.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access is available via two squeeze gap entrances from Newton Hall Lane at the northern and southern corners of the wood, and a third entrance in the south western corner from an adjoining public footpath that crosses farm fields. An unsurfaced permissive footpath runs the length of the wood.

There is no parking adjacent to the wood and the nearest parking is at the nearby Bird in Hand pub car park at the junction of Newton Hall Lane and Knutsford Road.

The nearest bus stop is on Knutsford Road, approximately 5-10 minute walk away.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim is to manage Hewitts Wood as high forest woodland canopy which is a local landscape feature and provides informal quiet recreation for the local community. The woodland should have a diverse mix of species, age and size classification which will be achieved through gradual restructuring by undertaking tree safety work and through natural loss. This should maintain a varied structure in terms of canopy height, under storey and ground layer.

Tree safety and public access will be the main drivers for any woodland management work and we will seek to maintain a balance between conservation and public enjoyment in line with Woodland Trust policies. We will retain older trees as long as possible to encourage the development of veterans and the decline of mature trees will be allowed to happen naturally with standing dead retained where safe to do so to enhance the dead wood habitat. Gaps created by trees gradually reaching senescence, or by trees being felled for safety reasons will also create opportunities for natural regeneration and structural change.

The ponds will be maintained as conservation features, but will be subject to a minimal intervention approach.

Public access will be maintained with three public access points and the permissive footpath in the wood.

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

Hewitts Wood has two public entrances from Newton Hall Lane at the north eastern and south eastern corners of the wood and a third entrance at the south western corner where a public footpath enters from adjoining farmland. There is an informal unsurfaced footpath through the wood linking these entrances. A wooden dedication bench is sited next to the pond nearest to the northern boundary of the wood. The site is used mainly by local people and has few visitors and is classified by the Trust as access category C for low usage sites.

Significance

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. The woodland, although small provides an important landscape and conservation feature to the surrounding community. It provides local people with the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

The site is quite small and has little opportunity to enhance or increase public access.

Factors Causing Change

No significant human factors affecting the wood at present.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will continue to maintain the present level of low key public access to the wood, with the footpath, entrances and access furniture maintained regularly to provide a good standard of public access with clear signage. Guided by the parameters set out in the Woodland Trust's woodland management principles and access policy, management will continue to seek a balance between conservation and public enjoyment. The wood will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access furniture.

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

During this plan period the short term objectives are to provide good, safe access for visitors and any threats to the wood arising from public access/ use will be monitored and managed. This will be achieved by:

1. Carrying out annual maintenance of the entrances, footpaths, and bridges/ culverts to ensure they are easy and safe to use. Vegetation encroaching on the footpath and roadside will be cut back, signage will be clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate and litter / fly tipping will be removed as part of the EMC.
2. Conducting regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (e.g. along the roadside and footpaths) and inspections of site hazards and access furniture to ensure the wood is as safe as possible for visitors and road users.
3. Monitoring public access and use of the site during the plan period to assess whether the access provision is adequate and if there are any issues relating to the wood from public usage. Appropriate measures will be undertaken to control any threats/ issues identified.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Hewitts Wood has a full canopy comprising a mixture of conifer and broadleaf trees. Although predominantly mature, the wood has some structural variety with areas of dense understorey such as elder, holly, wych elm, sycamore, beech, ash, hornbeam and birch. In terms of dead wood habitat the wood is reasonably well stocked with numerous mature and over mature trees and retained columns of standing and fallen deadwood. Although secondary woodland the ground flora is reasonably varied. Rhododendron had been spreading in the northern part of the wood, but in recent years this has all been cleared.

Significance

The wood has a number of features such as mature and decaying trees, areas of scrub and ponds that provide a wide range of wildlife habitats and food sources. The Cheshire landscape has less than 5% woodland cover and therefore Hewitts Wood serves as an important landscape feature and wildlife habitat.

Opportunities & Constraints

The small size of the wood and limited management access is a constraint to undertaking any significant silvicultural management work, however tree safety work may provide future opportunities to restructure and enhance the diversity of the woodland habitat.

Factors Causing Change

No significant factors are affecting the wood at present.

The impact of trees disease, particularly ash dieback could result in the loss of several mature trees in the woodland.

Squirrels are causing some minor damage to trees by bark stripping, although it is not having a significant impact at present.

Rhododendron has been cleared from the wood, however it could regenerate and spread so will need to be monitored.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term vision for the wood is to develop a mixed stand of predominantly native broadleaves with a varied structure in terms of species and age class distribution.

Where it does not compromise public safety, mature trees will be retained into senescence, and standing columns of dead wood will be kept on site to provide important deadwood habitat. Tree safety work along with natural processes such as die back and wind throw will create gaps in the canopy that should result in the regeneration and formation of a mosaic of species, age and height structures across the site.

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

During the plan period the woodland will be managed through minimal silvicultural intervention and the main short term objectives will be:

1. Carrying out a woodland condition assessment once during the plan period to monitor the health and resilience of the woodland and identify any threats from tree disease, pests, mammals or people.
2. Monitoring for signs of rhododendron regrowth as part of the woodland condition assessment to prevent it spreading.
3. Undertaking regular tree safety inspections and carry out any identified work necessary for public safety.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

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

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.03	Mixed broadleaves	1935	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Special Area of Conservation, Tree Preservation Order

The compartment is secondary woodland with a series of permanent and seasonal ponds and old ditches linking the ponds located in the north west corner of the site. The canopy is dominated by pines (Corsican and Scots), oak (English, sessile & turkey), beech, and sycamore, with occasional horse chestnut, common alder, ash and hornbeam. There is a well developed under storey layer and natural regeneration including sycamore, beech, ash, wych elm, elder, birch, hornbeam, rowan and holly. The ground flora is rich and includes bramble, ivy, blue bells, ferns, celandine, wood anemone, rushes and various Umbelliferae. The eastern boundary alongside Newton hall Lane is defined by a mixed thorn hedge along most of the length with several sections of chestnut pale and post and rail fencing where there are gaps in the hedge. The southern boundary abuts a public footpath and is defined by a post and wire fence. The western boundary abuts farmland pasture and is defined by a mixture of thorn hedge and post and wire fence. The northern boundary abuts the garden belonging to a property called "The Bungalow" and is defined by post and rail fence and a hedge. An informal permissive footpath runs through the wood and links two pedestrian access points at the southern end of the wood to a third entrance point in the north-east corner on Newton Hall Lane.

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.