



Dobshall Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM	Page No.
Introduction	
Plan review and updating	
Woodland Management Approach	
Summary	
1.0 Site details	
2.0 Site description	
2.1 Summary Description	
2.2 Extended Description	
3.0 Public access information	
3.1 Getting there	
3.2 Access / Walks	
4.0 Long term policy	
5.0 Key Features	
5.1 Informal Public Access	
5.2 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat	
5.3 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)	
Glossary	

MAPS

Access
Conservation Features
Management

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Dobshall Wood
Location:	Arnside
Grid reference:	SD451780, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 97
Area:	3.87 hectares (9.56 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Dobshall Wood is located in the village of Arnside, South Cumbria in the heart of the Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is a charming and varied mixture of ancient woodland and species rich meadow with spectacular vistas across the scenic Morecambe Bay. A circular route of over 500m takes you through the woodland and meadows. Access to the wood is from Knott Lane where there is a pull in with parking for 2 cars approximately.

2.2 Extended Description

Dobshall Wood was acquired by the Trust in 1997 with local funding support from Arnside Village Society, Arnside Parish Council and local people. Dobshall Wood is located on the south western side of the village of Arnside, in South Lakeland, within the Arnside/Silverdale 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.' The site is almost a rectangle with the western boundary running along Knott Lane. At an altitude of 40 to 60m and on the gentle north western slope of Arnside Knott, views out to Morecambe Bay can be gained from the site. Dobshall is indicative of limestone woodlands and grasslands of the upland area and commands a dramatic vista in the local landscape with the meadow sweeping up to the wood. To the east of the wood is improved grassland and woodland, to the south there is private gardens with woodland buffering to Dobshall Wood. To the northern boundary are private gardens.

Access to the wood can be gained direct from Knott Lane to the North West corner, where there is roadside parking for up to two cars and to the west of the site. A public right of way runs along the northern boundary. From either entrance a circular route through the wood and meadow can be enjoyed on approximately 500m of permissive footpath. The public right of way is surfaced and easy walking whilst through the wood and meadow the ground slopes gently North West. The wood is in a rural location and is popular with locals. Informal Public Access is a Key Feature of the site.

The whole site of 3.89 ha, although varying in structure and species composition with woodland to the south and meadow to the north, is treated as one compartment for the purposes of management as pasture, with light grazing of the pasture with stock during the winter months. The woodland has the character of upland mixed ashwood NVC W8 with a mixed canopy of oak, birch and sycamore. The under storey is well-developed and consists of hazel and frequent scattered hawthorn and holly. Ground flora includes abundant primrose, bramble and cowslip. Deer are present in large (and increasing) numbers. Roe, red and fallow deer are all known to inhabit the wider area of the Knott and extensive woodland areas. Ancient Woodland is also a Key Feature at Dobshall Wood.

Semi Natural Open Ground is the final Key Feature at Dobshall Wood. It consists of an area of neutral grassland NVC MG5/6 containing grasses such as sweet vernal-grass, red fescue, crested dog's-tail and yellow oat-grass. Also a wide variety of herb species occurs in the meadow abundant daisy, eyebright, meadow buttercup and red clover.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Dobshall Wood is located on the south western side of the village of Arnside, in South Lakeland, around 10 miles from the town of Carnforth. There are two entrances to the wood from Knott Lane. At both entrances there is a kissing gate, which provides access into the grassland and from either entrance a circular route through the site can be enjoyed on approximately 500m of permissive footpath through the wood and meadow. A surfaced Public Right of Way runs just inside the sites northern boundary, it can be accessed from Knott Lane. The PROW heads in an easterly direction towards Parkside Drive. A bench is located close to the gate just inside the western entrance from Knott Lane.

Parking is available in a lay-by off Knott Lane but may be limited.

Nearest Public toilet: A public toilet is located at the Promenade, Arnside which is around half a mile from the woodland. Information provided by South Lakeland Council. www.southlakeland.gov.uk

Nearest bus stop: Located at Arnside railway station, which is approximately 1 mile away from the wood. From the railway station the walk to the wood is along suburban roads with pavements. Information from Traveline website.

Nearest railway station: Arnside railway station which is approximately 1 mile away from the wood.

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

The Trust aims to maintain and enhance the condition and relative proportions of the woodland and grassland by management of the site as one unit through controlled grazing and coppicing. The intention is to maintain an overall high forest continuous-cover open-grazed structure of the predominantly native woodland within the ancient woodland area. Long term this will achieve sufficient regeneration to allow the wood to survive at its current density without planting, whilst maintaining and enhancing the array of calcareous limestone wild flower sward within the grassland. Long and rank vegetation is to be removed in autumn and winter (after seeding), ideally by grazing rather than cutting, preferably with stock that will tackle rank vegetation, without causing damage to mature trees. The type and period for grazing will be driven by these objectives and monitored against them.

The Trust aims to enhance the biodiversity of the site which will include conserving standing and fallen deadwood communities and mosses and lichens, small scale coppice coupes and controlling invasive species of ragwort and thistle.

Other features such as stone-walls and hedgerows will be conserved and managed to maintain the continuity of habitat. All Woodland Trust boundaries will be maintained.

The Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland on some 700m of permissive and public footpaths and the provision welcome signs. A circular path through the grassland and woodland is maintained and access encouraged along this route, to minimise the impact of access and possible erosion damage throughout the site. Public access will be encouraged with paths and structures, maintained and improved where necessary so that local users and visitors can continue to share in the beauty of this landscape and gain an understanding of the sites importance and it's rich wildlife habitat, which is irreplaceable. Public information and promotion of the woodland both nationally through the Trusts publications and directory's and locally will be enhanced where possible and posters will be used to inform and involve visitors with the woodland.

It is anticipated that this approach will safeguard and enhance the existing environmental value of the wood and maintain and enhance the level of public access in the woodland.

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

Dobshall Wood is well used by local people. There are two entrances to the site from Knott Lane. At the main entrance in the northwest corner there is roadside parking for up to two cars. A public right of way runs from the main entrance along the northern boundary of the pasture. At both entrances there is a kissing gate, which provides access into the grassland and from either entrance a circular route through the wood can be enjoyed on approximately 500m of permissive footpath. The public right of way is surfaced and easy walking whilst through the wood and meadow the ground slopes gently northwest.

Significance

Dobshall Wood provides informal recreation opportunities for the local community and visitors and is on the edge of the busy rural village of Arnside. Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Trust key outcomes. Dobshall Wood is a small but significant feature that the local people of Arnside were extremely keen to ensure was put in safe hands, with any threats of development or unsympathetic management removed. The local Arnside Village Society and the Parish Council were extremely supportive of the local fund-raising campaign, and local people contributed a considerable amount of money to the acquisition of the wood by the Woodland Trust.

Opportunities & Constraints

Although limited by size the woodland attracts many local users. The footpath network at Dobshall wood is limited by its small size, however a public right of way continues in a north easterly direction off site and visitors can extend their walk up to Arnside Knott managed by the National Trust. Some visitors may be deterred from visiting due to livestock being on site, although this is currently limited to the winter months.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland on some 700m of permissive and public footpath, with welcome signs at all entrances. Public access will be maintained with an identified circular route from the kissing gates cleared to encourage visitors to engage in the wood-pasture rather than take short cuts. Public information and promotion of the wood-pasture both nationally through the Trusts publications and directory's and locally will be enhanced where possible.

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

Signs or plaques welcoming the general public to make use of the site will be maintained at the entrance points. Vegetation encroaching onto paths will be cut back and annual maintenance of all woodland fixtures; including, signs, gates, and fences will be maintained. The site will be kept clear of litter and fly tipping.

5.2 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

The open ground habitat is indicative of limestone grasslands of the upland area and commands a dramatic vista in the local landscape with the meadow sweeping up to the wood. The meadow is an area of neutral grassland NVC MG5/6 which in the past has been degraded and improved by the use of fertilisers. The meadow contains grasses such as sweet vernal-grass, red fescue, crested dog's-tail and yellow oat-grass. Also a wide variety of herb species occur in the grassland and include abundant daisy, eyebright, meadow buttercup and red clover.

Significance

Dobshall Wood lies in the Arnside/Silverdale AONB. This is a designated landscape of special importance, covering 75 sq km, straddling the boundary of Cumbria and Lancashire. The Limestone geology and coastal aspect of the area sustains a complex mosaic of habitats. There are many semi-natural ancient woodlands, wildflower-rich limestone grasslands, protected limestone pavements, coastal salt-marshes, rare butterflies and many other diverse habitats of which Dobshall is a part of. The primary purpose of designation of the AONB is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. The open ground at Dobshall has high floristic value and is a Cumbria Wildlife Site, a local designation for important conservation sites surveyed by the Cumbria Wildlife Trust (2001).

Opportunities & Constraints

The pasture has been previously grazed all year round and the ground flora was indicative of intensive grazing. Implemented now is a low intensity winter grazing regime aimed at allowing flowers and grasses to seed, encouraging revival of the more uncommon limestone plants, whilst removing rank grasses through winter grazing. The constraint to this is the density of the primrose population may be under threat as the wooded area is able to regenerate more and there is increased canopy closure. There is an opportunity to increase and decrease grazing numbers, extend the grazing period and alter the type of stock grazing the pasture to achieve increased grazing and this option will be less dramatic than felling, will be gradual and will not impinge on the natural ageing process of the older canopy trees. The populations of ragwort and thistle are small enough to control manually without the use of herbicides. The management of this pasture by livestock grazing is hindered by the limited size of the pasture. However there may be opportunities to work with nearby land/stock owners with similar objectives to rotate and manage stock over a larger area.

Factors Causing Change

Natural Succession to woodland along the boundary to the meadow, Invasive Sycamore, Grazing intensity - controlled livestock, Deer Damage, Rabbit Damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain a species rich limestone grassland indicative of upland areas and prevent encroachment of meadow by woodland.

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

The pasture will continue to be grazed over the winter months with light grazing intensity (6-8 cattle max). All boundaries need to remain stock proof to retain the livestock within.

5.3 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

The woodland has the character of upland mixed ashwood NVC W8 with a canopy of mixed broadleaves and shrub species. To the east the woodland has a closed canopy, approximately P1950, whereas to the south east the canopy is fairly open and the wood has a young age structure with abundant pioneer birch and ash present. The ground flora under the trees includes abundant primrose, bramble and frequent cowslip.

Significance

Dobshall Wood lies in the Arnside/Silverdale AONB. This is a designated landscape of special importance, covering 75 sq. km, straddling the boundary of Cumbria and Lancashire. The Limestone geology and coastal aspect of the area sustains a complex mosaic of habitats. There are many woodlands, wildflower-rich limestone grasslands, protected limestone pavements, coastal salt-marshes, rare butterflies and many other diverse habitats of which Dobshall wood is part. The primary purpose of designation of the AONB is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Woodland provide a continuous habitat for our native species and are protected through national and regional forest strategy. Many of these species can live nowhere else. Some plants and animals have very specialised requirements and spread very slowly. The wooded area is also protected by a Tree Preservation Order No. 4 1974 and No. 46 1982.

Opportunities & Constraints

An opportunity exists to allow the woodland to age, produce old growth and continue to regenerate. There is also an opportunity to intervene and selectively coppice small areas to retain a more open canopy and the coppicing will compliment the winter grazing. Coppice regrowth will need to be monitored annually for browsing from deer and rabbit and if damage is significant we will need to re-consider the long term sustainability of coppicing in the woodland. Standing deadwood has ecological importance but retention may need to be balanced against safety issues in certain parts of the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Increasing deer damage, deer population is expanding rapidly in surrounding areas such as the Knott.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with diverse age range and succession by natural regeneration. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, ash, birch etc. It is desirable to retain some coppice management and the diversity of structure it provides so long as successful regeneration of the coppice regrowth is achieved.

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

Small coppice coupes (0.25ha) will be created annually to ensure diversification of species and age structure. A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site, key elements of which are likely to include the effects of ash disease, deer damage and the development of natural regeneration.

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	3.89	Ash		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access, Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Tree Preservation Order

Compartment 1a is 3.89ha in size and located in the Village of Arnside, South Cumbria. It is roughly rectangular in shape and nestles on the lower slopes of Arnside Knott. It is composed of a mixture of native upland mixed ashwood and a meadow area of neutral grassland. Although varying in structure and species composition with woodland to the south and meadow to the north, is treated as one compartment for the purposes of management as pasture, with light grazing of the pasture with stock during the winter months. The woodland has the character of upland mixed ashwood NVC W8 with a mixed canopy of oak, birch and sycamore. The under storey is well-developed and consists of hazel and frequent scattered hawthorn and holly. Ground flora includes abundant primrose, bramble and cowslip. It is served by a public right of way and a circular permissive path and is well used by local people.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2017	1a	Coppice	0.25	10	2.5
2018	1a	Coppice	0.25	20	5
2019	1a	Coppice	0.25	20	5
2020	1a	Coppice	0.25	20	5
2021	1a	Coppice	0.25	20	5

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.