



Lower Hartley Bank Wood

Management Plan

2014-2019

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 Planted Ancient Woodland Site	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Lower Hartley Bank Wood
Location:	Kirkburton, nr Huddersfield
Grid reference:	SE190118, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 110
Area:	3.44 hectares (8.50 acres)
Designations:	Green Belt, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A small gate at the northern end of this very attractive wood leads to a steeply-sloping path. This path runs almost to the valley bottom where a meandering stream gives the western boundary a feeling of tranquillity. There is a sometimes-steep, circular unsurfaced path with steps and also a narrow footpath which leads to the southern end where there is a squeeze stile in the roadside wall. Car parking is available along Thunderbridge Lane and there is a railway station at nearby Stocksmoor.

2.2 Extended Description

The site, which extends to 4.05ha (10 acres) was acquired by the Trust on the 23rd December 1997. The woodland is located just to the north of the village of Thunderbridge and approximately 6 miles from Huddersfield. No details are currently available on the history of the woodland other than it appears to be an ancient woodland site, which was felled during the Second World War and subsequently replanted.

The wood appears very attractive, the aesthetic qualities no doubt arising from the mixture of mature broadleaved and coniferous trees and varied ground flora. The meandering stream along the valley bottom further compliments the wood and provides a tranquil feel to this area of the woodland.

A permissive path has been created by the Trust in to the wood from Thunder Bridge Lane, at the northern end via an old gateway. The path runs down through the wood to the bottom of the valley where it becomes indistinct, with a low level of public use generally limited to locals.

Whilst close to the built up area of Huddersfield, Lower Hartley Bank wood is situated in a relatively well-wooded valley where the steep valley sides have been less valuable for farmland and have been left for woodland. The wood is located on a steep west facing slope between Thunder Bridge Road and the small fast flowing beck called Thunder Bridge Dike, bounded to the west and north by open grassland and by the road and further woodland to the east.

The wood falls within the Greenbelt and Area of High Landscape Value in the draft Unitary Plan formed by Kirklees Metropolitan Council. The wood is also subject to Tree Preservation Order No 1 (1977) and part within the Thunder Bridge Conservation Area.

Planted ancient woodland site. The mature tree species are even aged planted in the 1940's and consist of a mixture of tree species include Scots pine, larch, spruce, oak, beech, ash, sycamore, elm, lime, silver birch, rowan, alder, willow and cherry. Shrub species include holly, hazel, hawthorn, elderberry and common laurel. Ground flora species include ivy, bramble, dog's mercury, herb bennet, bracken, lady fern, male fern, hard fern, foxgloves, wild garlic, lesser celandine and wood sorrel.

The wood was felled during the Second World War and replaced with mixed species as described above. Since then the wood appears to have been thinned leaving the softwoods at about 30-40% the tree species. Prior to acquisition by the Woodland Trust little management work appears to have been undertaken, since Woodland Trust ownership the Woodland has been thinned to waste with the conifer element reduced as part of the overall planted ancient woodland restoration programme.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

ACCESS TO THE SITE

The wood is situated approximately 4 miles to the south of Huddersfield just off the A629 near the hamlet of Thunder Bridge. Roadside car parking is available along Thunderbridge Lane which links the A629 to Thunder Bridge.

ENTRANCE AND FOOTPATHS

At the northern end of the wood is a small gate which leads to a steeply sloping track which runs down to nearly the valley bottom. The wood contains a circular grass path of approximately 600m, which is steep in places and contains a flight of steps. A narrow footpath leads to the southern end of the wood where a squeeze stile is found in the roadside wall.

PARKING

Roadside car parking is available along Thunderbridge Lane which links the A629 to Thunder Bridge.

PUBLIC TOILETS

No public toilets known within 5 miles

BUS STOPS

Bus routes run through to the main street of Causeway Foot, from where it is a very short walk to the woodlands. Information from the traveline website as of 03-12-09, Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2608.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Further information about public transport contact Traveline on www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intentions are to manage the wood as a mixed broadleaved and conifer high forest with a diversity of species and age structure. Being an ancient woodland site it is hoped to very gradually reduce the dominance of any remaining conifer trees through natural losses as trees die or are blown over through old age, and through the natural regeneration which is likely to be dominated by a mixture of broadleaved species.

Open public access to the woodland will be maintained along the circular path with two access points and seating.

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

Small track enters the woodland by an old gateway at the northern end of the wood from Thunder Bridge Lane. The track runs down the hill to the valley bottom where it becomes indistinct. Low level of public use on the site.

Significance

Open access to woodland locally is fairly limited despite the wooded nature of the area, and the wood will provide an attractive site mainly for local people.

Opportunities & Constraints

An short but attractive circular walk has been created within the wood with two entrances at either end of the wood in to Thunder Bridge Lane. Seating erected in the peaceful valley bottom, alongside the stream,. No further improvements appear necessary.

Factors Causing Change

Increased public access

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain a circular footpath approximately 700m in length with two entrance points at either end of the wood.

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

To maintain the circular footpath (700m) with two entrance points from the road

5.2 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

Description

Planted ancient woodland site containing a mixed broadleaved tree species, together with conifers (pine and larch). Attractive ground flora indicative of ancient woodland sites.

Significance

Woodland cover in the Yorkshire area is one of the lowest in the country at about 2.7% (source NCC 1989). Only 6% of this figure is considered to be ancient woodland. The site is therefore especially important for this area of the country. This woodland does form part of a larger area of ancient woodland and ancient woodland sites to the south of Huddersfield, but is not within any local Ancient Woodland Concentrations.

Opportunities & Constraints

There would be some advantage for selective tree removal to encourage native natural regeneration to promote a more uneven age class structure. However access is poor and large scale tree removal would be un-economic with little long term gain. The conifer elements within the woodland are secure and pose no significant risk to the overall woodland structure.

Factors Causing Change

Beech & Sycamore regeneration levels.
Squirrel Damage.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain high forest to be predominantly broadleaved species, with an element of conifer high forest.

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

Monitoring of non-native species to ensure there regeneration levels do not outcompete native broadleaves and ultimately change to composition of the woodland.

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	3.49	Mixed broadleaves	1940	PAWS restoration	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Green Belt, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Tree Preservation Order

Situated on a steep north west facing slope down to Thunder Bridge Dike, bounded to the north and west by pasture grassland, and by Thunder Bridge Lane and further woodland to the east. The majority of the compartment is mixed broadleaves which appear to have been planted in pockets with groups of larch 20%, pine 15%, oak 20%, ash 10%, sycamore 10% and beech 15%. Other tree species include birch, cherry, spruce, alder, rowan 10%. Shrub understorey sparse limited to mainly holly with small number of hazel, hawthorn, elderberry and odd common laurel. Natural regeneration of beech in many areas with oak and ash limited to a few specimens. Along the flatter valley bottom the woodland consists of sycamore, ash, elm, beech, cherry, alder, pine. The ground flora varies from bramble and ferns to occasional grasses.

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.