



Colwell 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Colwell Wood
Location:	Totnes
Grid reference:	SX796602, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 202
Area:	0.95 hectares (2.35 acres)
Designations:	Area of Landscape Value

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A small wood that commands spectacular views towards Dartmoor. A diverse mixture of native broadleaf trees, the site contains a small wetland area. A stone path runs through the centre of the site and smaller paths branch off to form the path network. In 1997 an area of the field was planted by local volunteers under the Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep Project (WOYD), with a mixture of native trees, and shrubs. In 1998 an orchard of 50 selected Devon fruit trees was established including many rare varieties. Although predominately of apple, varieties of pear, plum, cherry, damson, medlar and mulberry were also planted. A number of the trees are 'grafted' from trees planted in an orchard at 'Druid' a country house, north of the town of Ashburton, in the 1880s.

2.2 Extended Description

This small site consists of a slightly sloping north-facing wood commanding spectacular views over Totnes, in South Devon, towards Dartmoor and distant views to Haldon Hill. Formerly rough grazing, with a piggery at the eastern end, this area was sown prior to planting with shade tolerant native grassland species characteristic of South Devon. Colwell Fields, upon which the wood is planted, were named after a local family and the wood derives its name from there. In 1997 an area of the field was planted by local volunteers under the Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep Project (WOYD), with a mixture of native trees, and shrubs. A section of more unusual species was also planted by "The Men of the Trees" now known as the International Tree Foundation. A public consultation process established the design of the wood with an expressed demand for an orchard, pond or wet area for amphibians etc. and a play area for children.

In 1998 an orchard of 50 selected Devon fruit trees was established including many rare varieties. Although, predominately apple, varieties of pear, plum, cherry, damson, medlar and mulberry were also planted. A number of the trees are 'grafted' from trees planted in an orchard at "Druid" a country house, north of the town of Ashburton, in the 1880s. An original plan of the orchard at Druid, owned by a family of Totnes town's solicitors, Windeatt, is kept in the Totnes Museum Archive and some of these trees may now represent the only or one of a few surviving trees of certain varieties.

The site is leased by the Woodland Trust from the adjacent Housing Association. Long-established private properties adjoin the northern boundary.

There is parking for one car at the main gate then a stoned path runs up the centre of the site and is well used by the local community. Further paths link to form a small circular route within the site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The nearest bus stop is on the bypass road approximately 200m away. The nearest toilets are in Totnes town centre. For up to date local travel information see the travel line website www.travelline.org.uk or for bus route information visit http://www.cartogold.co.uk/Devon_Transport/Devon.htm

3.2 Access / Walks

Access can be gained via Harpers Hill, an ancient lane on the SE boundary of the site which is also a public bridleway. This in turn is accessed from the western bypass above the town. A small permissive path crosses the site with short circular options. The central main path is level, hard surfaced and 2 benches are provided. There is space for a single car to park at the entrance to enable wheel chair access; otherwise the nearest parking is 200 metres away, opposite the Bay Horse Inn, where there are more than 30 spaces. A gate, from Harpers Hill, leads directly onto the main path through the wood. This path is wide and level with no obstacles. The top path is more of a bare woodland path and it can get sodden after rain. There is an unofficial but well used entrance, from the Housing Association gardens to the north of the orchard

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for Colwell Wood is attractive and structurally diverse woodland surrounding a productive orchard area. Intervention will be necessary to maintain the vitality of the orchard through pruning. Similarly, intervention will be necessary to prevent the occlusion of narrow paths and the loss of views to the north. This will include coppicing of ride side shrubs to vary light conditions, whilst, improving access and benefiting wildlife, on an estimated 15 year rotation.

Informal Public Access will be maintained at a level appropriate to support the access requirements. (Corporate objective: Aim 3 - Inspiring everyone to enjoy and values woods and trees).

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 Local Woodland Habitat

Description

The woodland, which was planted in 1987 with native broadleaved species, predominantly with ash and oak. It has now reached canopy closure, but being a very narrow strip still contains mainly light demanding plants as relics of the former grassland. Conservation features were identified as part of the design process and a small area of open grassland occur at the eastern end of the site and a seasonal wet area is fed from a drain on the lane. The play area of grass is cut regularly throughout the summer generally on a weekly basis and the sump leading to the pond cleaned out when possible.

Significance

Corporate objectives: Aim 1 - New Woodland has been created helping to deliver local, regional, national BAP/HAP

Aim 2 - Protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future. Although small, it is an important local landmark and much valued by the local community.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: The small size of the site means the wood will not develop into much more than a thin woodland strip. The pressure to maintain views conflicts with the development of mature trees.

Factors Causing Change

Tree diseases could affect the site and squirrel damage could also become a problem. The open grassland area and pond could decline in condition if not maintained at the frequency currently done by the volunteer warden. Vandalism has periodically been an issue on the site. The pond area could become dominated by alien water plants and buddleia could become an issue. Shading from the trees could also encourage canker in the fruit trees

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Attractive, native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats. A mixture of trees, woody shrubs, open space and ground flora fully integrating as part of the overall woodland habitat.

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

Operational Objective:

To begin restructuring the woodland, through coppicing blocks on an estimated 15 year rotation and maintain the pond and grass area. This will be done by:

1. Regular mowing of the grass area by the entrance
2. Coppicing an area approximately 50m by 10m at the north western end of the wood next to the orchard.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

The site provides free public access to the town of Totnes. A single formal entrance from public bridleway provides opportunities to passing walkers, but the site is predominately used by the local community. There is also an informal (not legally agreed) access point from the Sovereign housing development on the northern edge of the wood. Two benches are positioned along the central surfaced path and provide good views. There is also an unsurfaced path through the woodland. Paths are mown through the grass around the orchard to give access to the trees.

Significance

(Corporate objective: Aim 3 - Inspiring everyone to enjoy and values woods and trees).

As part of the WOYD (Woods on Your Doorstep Project) the local community were involved in the acquisition, design and planting the site. The site continues to provide much valued free public access close to the town centre. The wood is used as a 'taster session' venue for forest schools, and the orchard is very popular being used by local orchard groups for training events as well as local people taking the fruit.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: Travellers occasionally use the 'play' area to camp. They normally only stay for a short time and move on. Local PCSO's are aware of the site and will attend when reported to them.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism and tree diseases could affect the wood and therefore its pleasant feel to visitors.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A site that is pleasant, easy and safe to visit with well-maintained, attractive paths with at least one clear viewpoint in the centre of the wood. providing an informal experience for local visitors, and the general public

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

Operational Objective:

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland and orchard that a wide range of public frequently enjoy. Entrances, path network and facilities (benches + viewpoint) are appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category B. This will be done by:

1. The main path will be scrapped clean and re-stoned as necessary.
2. Cutting paths and maintaining facilities twice a year including around the base of all the orchard trees
3. Carrying out tree safety work when required on the bigger trees along the boundaries.

5.3 Orchard

Description

South Devon orchards have declined, but are significant, locally distinctive woodland components of the South Hams AONB. 50 local variety fruit trees were planted at the lower end of the site. Predominately Apples, the orchard contains many rare varieties, some possibly unique, but also plums, cherries, gages and quince. A list of the 50 species is recorded on the Woodland Trust database.

Significance

(Corporate objective: Aim 3 - Inspiring everyone to enjoy and values woods and trees).
The orchard has a number of rare and possibly the only 'Druid' trees left in the country.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: The close proximity of the woodland and the northern boundary to the orchard means that the orchard trees on the edges will always be competing for light and against other vegetation swamping them.

Factors Causing Change

Fruit tree diseases, particular canker may affect the trees, along with the competition for light and from other vegetation. Damage may also be caused by people either vandalising the trees or from overzealous harvesting of the fruit by climbing into the trees themselves.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

An orchard of standard trees, the species composition of which should be predominately local and rare varieties acting as a genetic resource for other orchards. The orchard should also provide a free resource of fruit to local people and visitors.

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

Operational Objective:

Management of the area will focus on providing light airy conditions for the fruit trees by limiting competition from other trees, bramble etc . The trees themselves will be pruned to manage canker and to promote a stable growth structure and fruiting. The grassland beneath the orchard will have one half of it cut and raked in the late summer in alternating years

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	0.64	Oak (pedunculate)		Coppice	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat, Orchard	Area of Landscape Value
<p>Rectangular strip of woodland creation planted 1997 of mainly Oak and Ash. Grass sward is species poor, dominated by agrostis sp and ruderal weeds. A species rich hedge exists on the southern boundary of the compartment with the occasional standard native trees.</p>							
1b	0.32	Other		High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat, Orchard	Area of Landscape Value
<p>Wide spaced orchard planting (1997) of 50 local variety fruit trees. (See orchard sub file for varieties) Grass sward is heavily improved and dominated by agrostis sp.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	0.64	0	0

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.