



Flowers 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Flowers Wood
Location:	Ilmington, Stratford
Grid reference:	SP223426, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 151
Area:	1.65 hectares (4.08 acres)
Designations:	Local Wildlife Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The site is a small rectangular woodland (planted 1995) on flat-ish land that was formerly pasture. It is less than one mile from Ilmington, accessible along quiet lanes. A disused railway line embankment forms the western boundary with a line of mature trees fringing a stream forming the northern one. The southern and eastern boundaries are to highways and are essentially hawthorn hedges.

2.2 Extended Description

The land, on which Flowers Wood has been planted, was given to the Trust by the late Dennis Flower in August 1994. The Flower family are well known as brewers of beer. Mr Flower helped plant some of the trees in December 1995 celebrating his 80th birthday! The site was included as one of 200 planted by the Trust to celebrate the Millennium under their Woods on Your Doorstep initiative.

More recently in the site has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site through a Habitat Biodiversity Audit carried out on behalf of Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

The site is a small (1.62ha) rectangular woodland on flattish land that was formerly pasture. It is less than 1 mile from Ilmington, accessible along quiet lanes. A disused railway line embankment forms the western boundary with a line of mature trees, predominantly ash and willow, fringing a stream forming the northern edge. The southern and eastern boundaries are to highways and are essentially hawthorn and blackthorn hedges with the occasional mature ash or oak.

The interior of the woodland was planted with a range of broadleaf species primarily consisting of oak and ash, along with cherry and shrub species such as hazel and dogwood. The age range within the woodland is uniform for the most part due to it being planted relatively recently, with the addition of some more mature specimens along the boundaries of the site.

The understory within the woodland is currently underdeveloped, again due to its age, however ground flora such bluebells are starting to become established to towards the eastern side of the site. As the woodland develops over time natural regeneration of trees and shrubs should add greater structure and diversity to the site.

A seat in the glade at the northern end of the site forms the millennium feature. A circular path is maintained which opens up to form wider glades, one of which hosts two young planted scots pine specimens. In wetter months the site can become quite damp and soft under foot, leading to some muddy areas along the pathway. The new woodland compliments existing mature broadleaf woodland immediately to its north, with the wider surrounding landscape being made up of arable fields with a few scattered residential buildings

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Flowers Wood is situated in a rural area near Ilmington in SW Warwickshire. It can be reached from quiet lanes, one of which is a national cycleway (Stratford-upon-Avon - Ilmington - Hidcote Manor - Welford-on-Avon. Two circular routes: 12 and 24 miles long, including the Greenway). Local people were instrumental in fund raising and the woodland conception and retain an interest in it still.

Facilities include a kissing gate at the entrance, seat and 500m of paths which are mown on a regular basis during the summer. The whole of the site is available for informal public access. Flowers wood is located right on the doorstep of the village of Ilmington and just a couple of kilometres from Shipston-on-Stour. It sits in a landscape well served with public rights of way and suited to further exploration. The entrance to Flowers wood does not restrict pedestrian access and there is no other form of access provided. The circular route is flat, even and surfaced with grass. It can be damp and muddy in wet weather.

There is no official car parking provision though parking on the wide verges nearby is possible.

The number 23 bus service provided by Johnsons Coaches operates between Ilmington & Stratford throughout the day, stopping at Ilmington, Front Street, Red Lion, Ilmington Red Lion, a nearby public house. There is no information on public conveniences within 5 miles of Flowers wood.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Now that the initial establishment period is over, the woodland will be managed through small scale thinning where necessary to create space for the canopy development of tree species such as oak. This will allow for a more resilient and robust woodland through healthier trees and also the creation of space for natural regeneration. Intervention will only occur when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity or to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes in accordance with the Woodland Trusts Management Approach.

Additional operations will include essential tree safety work and ride edge coppicing where this is seen to benefit visitor access enjoyment.

The proposed management is for the development of native, broadleaf, high forest woodland with a diverse range of species including oak, ash and cherry being the major canopy species, and with a range of shrub species such as hazel and dogwood.

The condition and health of the woodland will be monitored through key feature (new native woodland) observations

Paths will be cut and maintained so as to allow easy access. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public safety will be assessed regularly and tree safety inspections (Zone A) will be carried out every 24 months along the two boundaries shared with public roads. Tree safety surveys will also be undertaken within the woodland, along the circular (Zone B) path every 36 months.

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

Flowers Wood is situated in a rural area near Ilmington in SW Warks. It can be reached from quiet lanes, one of which is a national cycleway. Local people were instrumental in fund raising and the woodland conception and retain an interest in it still.

Facilities include a kissing gate at the entrance, seat and 500m of paths which are mown on a regular basis during the summer. The whole of the site is available for informal public access.

Significance

Flowers Wood is the result of community co-operation in raising funds, assisting with the design and with the planting. It therefore has 'ownership' by this community who continue to provide input and enjoy the resource provided.

Opportunities & Constraints

An opportunity exists to provide facilities for cyclists such as posts for locking cycles due to the proximity of a national cycle route.

Factors Causing Change

Level of public use
 Encroaching vegetation along footpaths and rides
 Negative human impact - misuse of the site

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Open access will be retained throughout the whole of the site. The 500m of grass paths and entrances will be cut during the summer months to keep them clear and well defined. Welcome signs will be maintained for visitors use at the entrance.

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

Mow internal paths each summer and trim around entrances, signs etc. Check all facilities for stability / safety on an annual basis.
 Carry out ride edge coppicing where access is restricted. Tree safety inspections, Zone A (24 months) and Zone B (36 months).
 Monitor level of use through key feature observations.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Trees were planted in Dec 1995 at 1100 / ha (3m centres). 1.2m tree shelters were employed due to the risk of deer browsing, plus shrub shelters. Natural regeneration / encroachment has been encouraged along the northern stream side boundary. The guards are increasingly becoming redundant as the trees mature and may require removing to prevent damage being caused to the trees.

Light levels need to be maintained to parts of the stream so as to retain the presence of aquatic plants. It may be necessary to coppice / pollard some trees within this area where such plants still occur. Actual sites and trees are to be identified through woodland condition and key feature observations.

Significance

Flowers Wood is adjacent to the disused railway embankment and Blackwell Bushes - a broadleaf woodland to the north. It will act as a natural extension to these area to both flora and fauna with both woodland, woodland edge and open ground habitats beside the common watercourse.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities to work with local volunteers from the Cotswold Voluntary Warden team

Factors Causing Change

Pests and disease such as Chalara/Ash Dieback.
Deer browsing and squirrel damage.
Density of broadleaves in planted interior affecting development of species such as oak

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The continued establishment of a native broadleaf woodland.

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

To remove any remaining tree shelters that are likely to cause damage to developing trees towards the end of the plan period. Carry out essential tree safety work, some boundary hedge work against the main road, some ride edge coppicing where this will enhance visitor enjoyment.
Halo thinning around oak trees will take place within the planted areas, allowing increased room for trees to develop. Timber will be stacked in habitat piles on site providing areas of deadwood which are not currently in great supply due to the age of the woodland.
The quantity of timber coppiced on site with a desirable measurable volume (material 10cm or less for thinnings) will be less than 5m³ thus no requirement for felling licence.

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	1.62	Ash	1995	Wood establishment	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

The whole of Flowers Wood is included within this compartment. Former pasture land, it was planted in December 1995 with native, broadleaf trees, the main species being oak, ash and cherry with alder near the stream on the northern side. An area immediately adjacent to the stream remained unplanted, where natural encroachment from the streamside trees (ash, elm, birch, willow etc) is being encouraged.

A circular path 500m long provides access around the wood, it opens into wider glades in places. An entrance kissing gate, seat are facilities available to visitors.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2017	1a	Selective Fell	1.62	3	5
2018	1a	Selective Fell	1.62	3	5
2019	1a	Selective Fell	1.62	3	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.