



Kirkless Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Kirkless Wood
Location:	Wigan
Grid reference:	SD610069, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
Area:	7.37 hectares (18.21 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Kirkless Wood lies to the north west of the village of Pennington Green near Wigan, Greater Manchester. The site was acquired and planted by the Woodland Trust in 1997. The woodland extends existing secondary woodland known as Woodshaw Ruck, which is owned by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC). Funding for the acquisition and management of the site came from Red Rose Forest, The Countryside Commission, Wigan MBC, The Forestry Commission and private individuals. The site was planted with 10,126 trees and consists of 4.0 hectares of young mixed native broadleaved trees. Species such as oak, ash, birch, cherry, hazel, rowan, hawthorn, guelder rose and dog rose along with 0.5 hectares of conifer planting (scots pine) which is interspersed with the broadleaved planting. New native woodland is a key feature of the site. The site also has approximately 2.98 hectares of open ground consisting of rides, meadow areas and a small pond. The site was planted as part of the Woodlands On Your Doorstep project (WOYD), which created 200 new woodlands in England & Wales to mark the millennium. Local people were involved in the design of the site and asked to suggest a name for the site, Kirkless Wood was chosen as it was the most popular name with local people. Kirkless is the name of the district, which is well known for its iron works. All WOYD sites have a millennium feature, and a pond was chosen to be the millennium feature at this site. The land use around the site is at present pastoral with some arable farming and woodland. The site is bounded to the west by arable farmland and to the north and east by Woodshaw Ruck. The south of the site is bordered by a small reservoir, which is owned by a local angling club and a private house. A public footpath runs along the full extent of the site's western boundary, however only the lower half is within our boundary. This footpath links directly into Woodshaw Ruck and the wider countryside. The site also contains a network of approximately 1000 meters of informal, circular mowed footpaths. The site is well used by local people and is within easy reach of local housing. Informal public access is a key feature of Kirkless Wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Kirkless Wood can be found North West of the village of Pennington Green near Wigan, Greater Manchester. The site was acquired and planted by the Woodland Trust in 1997. The woodland buffers and extends existing secondary woodland Woodshaw Ruck, which lies to the north and east of the site and is owned by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council. Other land use around the site is at present pastoral with some arable farmland to the west. The south of the site is bordered by a small reservoir, which is owned by a local angling club and a private house. Two other Woodland Trust sites Crawford's Wood and Lady Mabel's are located less than a mile to the north and can be accessed via the Public Right of Way network from Kirkless Wood.

The wood is planted on slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils and is flat in nature. A small pond was also created when the site was first established.

The site was planted with 10,126 trees and consists of 4.0 hectares of young mixed native broadleaved trees. Species such as oak, ash, birch, cherry, hazel, rowan, willow, hawthorn, guelder rose and dog rose along with 0.5 hectares of conifer planting (scots pine) which is interspersed with the broadleaved planting. New native woodland is a key feature of the site. The site also has approximately 2.98 hectares of open ground consisting of rides and meadow areas.

The site was planted as part of the Woodlands On Your Doorstep project (WOYD), which created 200 new woodlands in England & Wales to mark the millennium. Local people were involved in the design of the site and asked to suggest a name for the site, Kirkless Wood was chosen as it was the most popular name with local people. Kirkless is the name of the district, which is well known for its iron works. All WOYD site have a millennium feature, and a pond was chosen to be the millennium feature at this site. Funding for the acquisition and management of the site came from Manchester City of Trees (formerly Red Rose Forest), The Countryside Commission, Wigan MBC, The Forestry Commission and private individuals.

A public footpath runs along the full extent of the sites western boundary, however only the lower half is within our boundary. This footpath links directly into Woodshaw Ruck and the wider countryside. The site also contains a network of approximately 1000 meters of informal, circular mowed footpaths. The site is well used by local people and is within easy reach of local housing. Informal public access is a key feature of Kirkless Wood.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Kirkless Wood lies to the north west of the village of Pennington Green near Wigan, Greater Manchester. Access to the site is from a track to the south west. The track leads off a minor road (Withington Lane), which emanates in the industrial estate to the south of the Leeds and Liverpool canal basin. The minor road is a public highway; however it is in poor condition. There are 5 pedestrian squeeze gap access points available to the site from public footpath no. 21 which runs around the outside of the western half of the site. The site itself contains a network of around 1000 meters of mown, level grass paths, the paths are not surfaced and can get slippery and muddy when wet.

Parking is available on nearby local roads such as Withington Lane but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: Located approximately 3 miles away at Asda Superstores, Robin Park Wigan. Toilets are suitable for disabled users.

Nearest bus stop: Located at Withington Lane, approximately a quarter of a mile from the site. Information from Traveline website.

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 Woodland Trusts long-term intention is to create and maintain a diversely structured (in terms of age and size classification) native broadleaved high forest woodland. This will be interspersed with areas of transitional and permanent open ground providing a mosaic of habitats and environments that will be a benefit to native flora and fauna.

The development of natural secondary woodland will be promoted through the encouragement of any further areas of natural regeneration, on areas not designated as long-term open spaces. Active thinning work will take place over the next Management Plan Period (2015-2020) to help ensure a diverse mix and age range of tree species.

Transitional zones between the naturally establishing secondary woodland and open spaces will be maintained through a programme of annual cutting of ride/wood edge vegetation.

The present network of open access for pedestrian use will be maintained through a regular mowing regime in the summer months under the sites Estates Maintenance Contract. Our aim will be to increase public usage through the promotion of the site locally and regionally (for example through Manchester City of Tree's literature).

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

There are 7 access points available to the site from public footpath no. 21 which runs around the outside of the western half of the site. The site itself contains a network of around 1000 meters of mown, level grass paths along with grassy ride edges and features of interest such as a pond. The site is well used by local people for informal recreation and links in well with adjoining woodland owned and managed by Wigan MBC known as Woodshaw Ruck, which itself has a number of paths.

Significance

Kirkless Wood is adjacent to the village of Pennington Green, and links into other recreational areas and path networks such as Woodshaw Ruck. It is a pleasant and peaceful area to spend some time, and gives people the opportunity to easily get away from the urban environment.

Opportunities & Constraints

The site is relatively small and is most likely to be used by local people who live close to the site, however the site does link into a public footpath network. The site has suffered isolated incidence of vandalism, most notably many tree guards were removed from the trees soon after planting. Illegal access by motor bikes is also an on-going issue.

Factors Causing Change

Damage caused to paths by motorbikes.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The existing level and quality of access will be monitored and maintained by the Trust. The Trust will endeavour to be flexible and adapt to any increase in recreational use.

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

Paths continue to be cut as necessary (4 times per year in 2015) to maintain easy public access. Other facilities such as welcome signs and entrances will be maintained at least annually. The site is due to be audited as part of the Welcoming Sites Project (WSP) in Summer 2015. We are seeking funding to erect a fence which will keep motorbikes off the site permanently(Summer 2015). We will continue to remain actively engaged with the Police to help manage illegal bike activities.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

The site consists of 4.5 ha of native broadleaved and conifer planting. The site also contains 2.98 ha of open ground in the form of rides, meadows and a pond.

Significance

This is a small native broadleaved wood in an area with very little woodland at all and certainly very little native woodland, and hence it will improve the habitat in the local area. The woodland also helps to extend Woodshaw Ruck which is a woodland owned and managed by the local authority.

Opportunities & Constraints

Initial tree growth has been rapid and the basic structure of the woodland will develop quite quickly. The site was a small arable field before planting, and its small size will limit its conservation value. However, it does link and extend Woodshaw Ruck, a woodland which lies to the east of the site.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The aim is to create a high forest of mixed predominantly native broadleaves. The wood will be managed predominantly as a recreational and landscape feature. This will involve maintaining the diverse mix of species, regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted.

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

Thinning work will be carried out in 2020 & 2021 to promote age & species diversity on site.

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 open ground, the effects of ash disease 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	7.48	Ash		High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Community Forest
<p>4.5 hectares (11.1 acres) planted with a mixture of native broadleaves and native pine in December 1997 located near the village of Pennington Green near Wigan. The site was sown with a low yielding grass seed mixture prior to tree planting, the planted trees are now well established and broadleaved regeneration is also occurring. The site links to Woodshaw Ruck which is an existing woodland owned by the local authority. The woodland has been created on former agricultural land, there is also evidence that the land could have been mined at some stage. A well used network of informal paths and a Public Right of Way can be found on site.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Thin	4.50	20	90

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.