



The Nymph Hay

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	The Nymph Hay
Location:	Kington St. Michael
Grid reference:	ST896779, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 173
Area:	5.83 hectares (14.41 acres)
Designations:	Asset of Community Value

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

The Nymph Hay wood is a small wood located on the northern edge of the village of Kington St Michael, a few miles north of Chippenham. The site was planted in 1998 with mixed native broadleaves including oak, ash and field maple and includes an area of open space in the south eastern corner which has a picnic table and oak tree celebrating the Diamond Jubilee.

2.2 Extended Description

The Nymph Hay is an attractive 5.75 ha site located on the northern edge of the village of Kington St Michael, just north of Chippenham. Formerly open fields, the site lies over Oxford and Kellaway clays and gently slopes down to a small stream. The surrounding landscape is predominantly agricultural with a mosaic of arable and pasture uses; the area is sparsely wooded but small plantations like The Nymph Hay are not uncommon.

The design of the wood was carried out through consultation with the local community and was planted in 1998 as part of the Woodland Trust “Woods on Your Doorstep” project with mixed native broadleaves, principally oak, ash, field maple and birch. A bridge was installed over the stream in the north east corner as the Millennium Feature to provide a circular walk around the site and provide easier access from the adjacent recreation ground. There has been continued local involvement since the initial design and tree planting, including planting bluebells along the ride edges. In 2012, to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee, an oak tree was planted and two picnic tables were installed on the northern edge of the meadow, along with further planting of native bluebells and wood anemone on ride edges.

Priory Farm (also known as Kington Priory), to the west of the Wood lies on the site of St Mary’s where remains of a Medieval Benedictine Priory dating back to AD1155 can be found. It is thought that nuns from the Priory used to spin and exercise in the field where the wood now stands. The old field name was Nymph Hay so this was chosen for the name of the woodland by local people.

The western boundary of the wood consists of a long established hedge, which contains an element of Barberry, likely to have existed during the Priory days. A small amount of Barberry was therefore included in the species planted in 1998. Three larvae of the extremely rare Barberry Carpet Moth *Pareulype berberata* were found onsite in 2018, taking the known UK population up to 11.

Management access is directly off the narrow country lane running along the western boundary. There are several mown paths around the Wood. The site is fairly level, gently sloping towards the stream running along the eastern boundary. The Wood is well used, mainly by local residents of the village of Kington St Michael.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

- Directions to main entrance:
 1. Once in the village of Kington St Michael, drive north out of the village.
 2. After leaving the village, after approximately 0.3 miles take the very small country lane on your left.
 3. The main entrance to the wood is approximately 0.3 miles on the left hand side.

3.2 Access / Walks

Access

Parking is limited as the lanes approaching the wood are very narrow. It is better to park in the village and access the site from the east, through the adjacent Recreational field by a stone bridge to the southern end of the eastern side or via a wooden bridge to the northern end of the eastern site. The wood has a public footpath running north/south through the site and combined with permissive paths, make several options for circular walks.

The paths are un-surfaced and can become waterlogged and muddy at times.

Public Transport

There is a bus stop located on the village high street, which is approximately a 5 minute walk to the woodland via the recreation ground. The service runs from nearby Chippenham on route 92 and is operated by Coachstyle. Further details can be obtained via their website www.coachstyle.ltd.uk, phone on 01249 782224 or email at mail@coachstyle.ltd.uk

Facilities

The nearest public toilets with baby changing and disabled facilities are located within the Borough parade. Emery Gate shopping centre in Chippenham Town centre approximately 5 miles from the site

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention is for The Nymph Hay to develop as a mature, native broadleaved woodland, managed through limited intervention with a multi-age, multi-species healthy canopy of trees with an understory of sub canopy and understory and woodland ground flora and diverse woodland fauna/biodiversity. This will include retention of populations of common barberry shrub *Berberis vulgaris* throughout the site to promote the retention of the population of Barberry Carpet moth, *Pareulype berberata*, which is one of only 11 known populations of this species. There is also the intention to retain some of the oaks planted in 2003 and in 2012 to develop into mature oaks of the future.

Located in an attractive area where locals take a keen interest, The Nymph Hay will be managed as an important open access area, where the public are welcome. Signs, information board, paths and wooden bridge all encourage public use of and interest in the woodland; thus helping to achieve the Trust's aim to increase people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland and also to achieve the Trust's vision of "a UK rich in native woods and trees enjoyed and valued by everyone". The wildlife value of existing habitats such as the hedgerows and streamside scrub will be enhanced as they eventually merge into the new woodland. The rides and paths will be kept open and mowed as necessary to provide appropriate access and valuable ride side habitats. As the developing canopy closes, rough grass in the planted areas will gradually diminish as shade loving plants more typical of recent secondary woodland take over.

The two veteran oaks will be retained for as long as possible due to their conservation value and allowed to continue growing / decaying at their natural rate. The meadow area will continue to be mown in late summer to encourage the establishment and spread of native wildflowers and the several well-spaced specimen oaks planted in 2003 in the meadow area and the Jubilee oak planted in 2012 will be allowed to mature into attractive, full-crowned parkland-type 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 Informal Public Access

Description

A well-used wood easily accessible from the village of Kington St Michael. The wood is directly adjacent to the recreation field. A public footpath runs through the wood with several permissive paths giving access throughout the Wood. There are four entrances - two kissing gates off the narrow road from the west and two via bridges from the recreation field. At the southern bridge there is an information board. There are benches in the northern and south western sections of the site.

Significance

Informal public access to The Nymph Hay fulfils the Trust's corporate objective of inspiring everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.

The wood also adds interest to the village of Kington St Michael and provides an excellent place for locals to walk and enjoy quiet recreation.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to identify opportunities for regular local community involvement in the wood such as by a local school or community group by making the site interesting, attractive and easy to visit for a wide range of people. Ensure continued easy access from the well-used recreation ground.

Factors Causing Change

Increase or decrease in level of use

Change in the type use such as undesired use e.g. motorbikes

Closing canopy along path edges resulting in narrowing of the paths

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that contains a network of well-maintained paths that will join to the wider public rights of way network. The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation predominantly by locals from Kington St Michael.

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

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public frequently enjoy. Entrances, facilities and path network are appropriate for level and type of use.

Work Programme:

Cut all paths 3 times per year, including around benches and in glade area around the picnic benches and Diamond Jubilee Oak and associated entrance maintenance as per WT specifications. Rideside coppicing programme to maintain access for visitors and diversity in habitats present for a variety of wildlife.

Tree safety inspection of Zone B as per site risk assessment requirements.

Works resulting from Entrance Audit - 1. Remove and dispose offsite of old wooden finger post sign at main entrance (consult with RoW team to get approval first).

2. Sand and treat wooden name board on main entrance and at bridge entrance. Scrape out and repaint lettering in white.

3. Remove and dispose offsite of plastic walkers welcome sign at management entrance.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

The Nymph Hay contains a mixture of native broadleaves and shrubs, covering approximately 70% of the whole site. The mature boundary hedges, the stream edge, scrubby areas, open glades and two veteran oak trees provide a tremendous variety of existing and potential woodland habitats.

Significance

The Trust's objective of creating more native woods is adequately fulfilled in the new woodland becoming established. The common barberry plants onsite *Berberis vulgaris* are the food plant of the caterpillar of the Barberry Carpet moth, *Pareulype berberata*. This is an extremely rare species due to historical removal of the plants as they were a host for wheat rust fungus. Larvae of the moth found onsite in 2018 took the known populations of this moth to 11.

Opportunities & Constraints

Trees were planted at approximately 2.1m spacing with shrubs confined to ride edges. Therefore the trees are densely stocked and have narrow crowns and dense canopies. This leads to large areas of dense and dark woodland without age and size variation. There may be the opportunity to develop structural variety, faster than just allowing the woodland to develop via natural processes, such has been the case in previous management plans, by undertaking strategic thinning of tree species and inter compartment coppicing of shrub species. This may benefit tree growth and development; provide an opportunity for community involvement; increase light levels to encourage natural regeneration to encourage development of structural diversity for the future, thus resulting in better wildlife habitat potential.

The site is still very young in woodland age terms, and areas under ash are still heavy with grasses and nettles so any works require careful consideration as over-thinning could result in coarse vegetation such as nettles/grass/brambles to the detriment of woodland flora. Equally as the site was a field originally, it will take time for woodland flora to develop onsite. Thinning itself won't result in a sudden increase in diversity of ground flora, but increase light levels will help any natural tree and shrub regeneration.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive non native species - Himalayan balsam and Giant Hogweed
 Tree diseases
 Deer/squirrel/rabbit pressure on any regeneration/planting
 Dense canopy
 Strong colonisation by coarse species
 Loss of specimen planted oaks

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying age and size structure and habitats. A mixture of trees, woody shrubs, open space and ground flora.

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

A maturing woodland that is successfully integrating into the existing habitats and landscape with diversity of age, species and structure. Including a healthy population of barberry plants which support the extremely rare barberry carpet moth (3 larvae of which were found onsite 2018).

Work Programme

- Monitoring and instruction to remove invasive non-natives where present
- Strategic areas of thinning and coppicing to open up dense canopy within planted areas
- Continuation of coppicing of ride edges to help natural regeneration develop, promotion of barberry plants and reduce shading on path edges and diversify habitat for wildlife.
- Planting of approx. 30 barberry shrubs in 2018 to enhance and conserve the population of Barberry Carpet moth. Project to work in partnership with Butterfly Conservation Back from the Brink Project and involving local volunteers with the planting.

5.3 Veteran Trees

Description

Two large oak trees - one in the open glade/meadow area and one just slightly further south along the boundary of the site on the edge of the stream.. The stream side specimen is full-crowned with healthy foliage and a small amount of deadwood which is usual for an oak of this age. The one in the open meadow has no live branches.

Significance

Veteran trees are an uncommon resource. They make excellent features in the landscape as well as playing host to an extensive range of living organisms including many BAP priority species.

Opportunities & Constraints

As these trees develop, they will further increase in conservation value.
Large deadwood trees/parts of tree on a site visited by the public

Factors Causing Change

Windblow
Tree diseases such as acute oak decline
Damage e.g. through fires being lit near base

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Over-mature trees with dead wood, hollows and holes providing a habitat for a variety of plants, lichens, fungi and animals maintained in a safe condition.

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

Operational Objective:

Retain both live veteran tree and standing dead veteran tree to maintain conservation values and monitor their condition over coming years. Ensure at least two of the 6 specimen oaks planted in 2003 and the Jubilee Oak planted in 2012 in the open meadow area continue to mature successfully to develop into mature/veteran oaks of the future.

Work Programme:

- Tree safety inspection of Zone A every two years or as per site risk assessment requirements and action tree safety works as necessary retaining the deadwood onsite where possible to keep conservation value of these old trees onsite
- Monitor veteran trees through tree safety inspection visits and visit to assess of live growth and crown loss. Compare photos and condition assessment to that carried out in 2004, 09, 11, 12. Note any significant increase in threat and decay or loss of any trees and assess health of the specimen oaks in meadow. Action any works as necessary.

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	5.62	Ash	1998	High forest	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland, Veteran Trees	Asset of Community Value

Compartment 1a covers the whole site. It contains mixed native broadleaves planted in 1998 at 2.1 m x 2.1 m spacing (2250 trees / ha) in sinuous lines. Principle species include oak, ash, birch, field maple and cherry. Rowan, willow and woody shrubs are also present along with occasional holly, beech, yew and Scots pine, planted to complement the existing 20 year old groups of pine. A small amount of Barberry, an unusual hedgerow plant that grows well in local hedges was also planted. Barberry is the food plant of the barberry carpet moth, (UK BAP priority species). Three larvae of the moth were found onsite in 2018, bringing the known UK populations from 10 to 11. The southern tip of the site was left unplanted, with the exception of 7 individual, well-spaced oaks and a black poplar. Within this open meadow area are two veteran oak trees, at least 200 years old; one is a healthy specimen, the other is now standing deadwood. Plug plants including knapweed, betony, ladies bedstraw, great burnet and cowslip were planted in the meadow are by local volunteers but most have not survived. The meadow cranesbill has been successful and a small amount of yellow rattle at the eastern edge. Native bluebells, snowdrops, wild daffodils and ramsons were planted on some ride sides by volunteers. A meandering stream (C1) runs the entire length of the south eastern boundary. Buffering the stream is willow, hawthorn and blackthorn scrub, often in dense patches. Hedges form most of the remaining boundaries with pasture and arable land surrounding the site. A low voltage overhead powerline runs NE - SW and a public footpath runs north west to south east .

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	1a	Thin	0.54	19	10
2018	1a	Thin	0.40	33	13
2018	1a	Selective Fell	5.82	4	21
2019	1a	Thin	0.92	13	12
2019	1a	Thin	1.83	15	28

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.