



# Grappenhall 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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

<b>Site name:</b>	Grappenhall Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Warrington
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SJ641858, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 109
<b>Area:</b>	8.09 hectares (19.99 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Community Forest, Woods on your Doorstep

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Grappenhall Wood is a woodland creation site that was planted in 1998/99 as part of the Woodland Trusts millennium project 'Woods on Your Doorstep' (WOYD) to create new community woodlands. The wood was planted with oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, rowan, common alder and shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and dog rose). Approximately a third of the site is open ground with scrub developing and there is a small pond and dipping platform on the eastern edge of the site. Public access is available via a network of grass footpaths across the site. There are two entrances to the wood, one directly on Broad Lane and the second via a public footpath leading from Grappenhall village.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Grappenhall Wood is a woodland creation site that was planted as part of the Woodland Trusts millennium project "Woods on Your Doorstep" (WOYD) to create new community woodlands. Prior to the Trust's ownership the site was arable farmland. It was purchased with help from the local community, the Millennium Commission and the Mersey Forest in late 1997 and following community consultation, the site was planted in the winter of 1998/99.

The wood is located to the south of the village of Grappenhall near the outskirts of Warrington. The local landscape is dominated by arable farmland interspersed with hedgerows and small wooded copses. The area is becoming increasingly urbanised with several new housing developments within a couple of miles to the west and south at Grappenhall Heys and Appleton.

The Woodland Trust owns and manages a further ten woodlands (31ha) within 5kms of Grappenhall Wood including Grappenhall Heys and Lumb Brook Valley about a mile to the west.

The site lies between thirty and forty metres above sea level, on mostly flat land with a northern aspect. The soil is sandy-loam to sandy-clay-loam with a sandstone substrate. A stream runs along the western boundary, with a small pond on the eastern boundary and the hedgerows border the site on all sides.

It was planted in two compartments with 5.9ha of native broadleaved woodland and 2.2ha of open ground. The planting consisted of English oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, rowan, common alder and shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and dog rose. Additional planting included 800m of gapping up and new boundary hedge predominantly with hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and dog rose. Approximately a third of the site was not planted and left as open ground.

The wood provides informal public access for the local community and is well used by local people. There are two public access points and an extensive network of grass path rides including a public footpath that runs through the site from Broad Lane to a minor road (Canal Side) in Grappenhall village. Near to the main entrance is a Millennium sculpture called "The Wizard of The Woods" which was created by pupils from Grappenhall Hall Residential School and the artist Paul Noon.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

### ACCESS TO THE SITE

The wood is located approximately two miles to the south of Warrington, close to the village of Grappenhall and within easy access of the M6 motorway. Access from the M6 is from Junction 20 (Lymm Services), then follow the A50 signposted for Warrington. At a roundabout take the first exit onto Grappenhall Lane signposted for Appleton and Arley Hall. After a mile there is a roundabout and turn right onto Broad Lane. Follow the lane for approximately another mile and the wood is on the right hand side.

### ENTRANCES AND FOOTPATHS

The wood is accessed via a kissing gate on Broad Lane at the southern end or from a public footpath that enters the wood at the northern end from Grappenhall village. There is a network of grass footpaths which are mostly flat with occasional very slight gradients. They can become muddy in the winter.

### PARKING

There is a small layby on Broad Lane with space for two cars to park by the entrance into the wood.

### BUS STOPS

The nearest bus stop is in Grappenhall on Chester Road which would involve a 20 to 30 minute walk along pavements and roadsides over the canal (heading south) onto Church Lane and then turning right onto Broad Lane. Follow this up hill and the entrance to Grappenhall Wood is about half a mile along the lane on the left hand side just before Whitehouse Farm. Care must be taken as there are no pavements on Broad Lane and it can be a fast and busy road. For further information about public transport in the area visit the Traveline website [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

### PUBLIC TOILETS

There are no public toilets in the vicinity.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention for Grappenhall Wood is to create a mixed broadleaved woodland with a diverse species and age composition. It will be managed as high forest, primarily as a recreational and landscape feature.

The new woodland will be allowed to develop by natural processes where possible, but intervention in the form of thinning and coppicing may be necessary in order to diversify the species mix, age and structure as the wood matures. In the long term the site should contain an increasing volume of dead wood, both standing and fallen, which serve as important habitat for invertebrates.

The key drivers for any woodland operations being public access, tree safety and encouraging a more diverse and resilient woodland for the future capable of withstanding pressures from climate change, pests and diseases.

Open ground areas will be allowed to develop into scrub transitional zones with occasional cutting to control weed growth. The pond will be managed through a minimal management regime although intervention may be required to ensure that elements of open water and sufficient light levels are retained through periodic coppicing of bank-side vegetation and control of any marginal vegetation.

Public access will be maintained at current levels to provide safe enjoyable access for visitors with the two entrance points, appropriate signage and grass path rides being maintained annually.

## 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

Grappenhall Wood has a network of approximately 1400 metres of grass footpaths across the site. There are two public access points with the main entrance from Broad Lane in the south eastern corner of the wood where there is a kissing gate and management access gate. A second entrance is from Grappenhall Village via a public footpath which leads from Canal Side to the north western corner of the wood which is accessed via a kissing gate. Parking is only available on Broad Lane where there is a small layby with space for two or three cars. The site has quite low numbers of visitors, but is used on a daily basis by local people, mainly for dog walking. It is also used weekly by a Forest School for pre-school children.

#### Significance

Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's key outcomes and Grappenhall Wood provides local people with the opportunity to access and enjoy woodland and nature close to where they live. The wood was created as a community woodland as part of the Woods on Your Doorstep (WOYD) project to provide new public access to woodland for the local communities in Grappenhall. It is within the Mersey Community Forest which promotes public access and use of woodlands.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The lack of car parking space is a constraint for increasing visitor numbers to the site and so the main visitors to site will continue to be mainly local people from Grappenhall village and nearby areas.

#### Factors Causing Change

Proposed future housing development on nearby land may subsequently result in an increase in levels of local visitors who can walk to the site, which may result in more anti-social issues (litter, dog fouling, fires and vandalism) .

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will continue to maintain open public access provision at the current level of public access to the wood so that visitors can continue to enjoy the woodland. The site will be made as safe as practicable for visitors and neighbours through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, site hazards and access furniture. Any threats to the wood arising from public recreation or misuse will be monitored and appropriate measures taken if necessary.

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

To maintain the current level of public access to the site by:

Carry out maintenance of the entrances, visitor access infrastructure - gates, benches, signage, etc (annually).

Clear vegetation encroaching on the footpaths (annually) to maintain easy access for visitors (annually).

Remove any litter/ fly tipping as necessary during the year.

Undertake regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (i.e. next to houses, roads and footpaths) and site hazards as per the Trust's safety inspection regime to ensure safety of visitors and neighbours, and undertaking any remedial safety work identified.

Assess whether the current access provision is adequate for the level of public use, to identify if there are any people issues/ threats to the wood, and taking appropriate action to address them (if necessary) by the end of the plan period.

Carry out path side coppicing and at entrances to maintain wide open path rides and improve sight lines for visitors by the end of the plan period.

## 5.2 New Native Woodland

### Description

Grappenhall Wood was planted in 1998/99 with a mix of native broadleaved trees comprising English oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, rowan, common alder. Woody shrubs (hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose) were planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodland edge. Approximately 2.2ha of the site was left as open ground and wide grass rides between the new plantings. There are hedges along all the boundaries and the planting included 800m of gapping up and new hedgerow. Grasses are the dominant plant in the ground layer. Tree establishment has been successful with oak, birch and ash doing well across most of the site, but alder, cherry & rowan have struggled in some areas. Other habitats include a restored pond on the eastern boundary and a stream that runs along the western boundary (that is outside the Trusts ownership).

### Significance

Cheshire is one of the least wooded counties in England with less than 5% woodland cover. This new community woodland has created a significant landscape feature which forms part of the local ecological network and is linked to other nearby semi-natural habitats in the local area by hedgerows and the stream that passes by the wood. The wood provides a valuable habitat, food source and nesting sites for a variety of birds and small mammals.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Silvicultural management will create opportunities to diversify the structure and species mix in the woodland which has developed stands of mostly even-aged, uniform species in straight planting rows.

Management access is restricted to the entrance from Broad Lane and there are no surfaced tracks on the site. The wet ground conditions during the winter and at other times of year is a constraint to carrying out management work requiring vehicle access.

There are opportunities to engage local people through carrying out woodland management and for people to volunteer and help with management work on the site.

### Factors Causing Change

The growth of the young trees will lead to canopy closure overtime, and appropriate woodland management intervention will be required.

The development and encroachment of scrub especially along rides is leading to the loss of open ground areas.

Ash dieback is likely to result in the loss of a significant proportion of trees, but may also provide opportunities for natural regeneration of other species.

Himalayan balsam is establishing in the wood along the western boundary and if not controlled will spread further into the wood.

Future house building developments in the local area may have a direct or indirect impact on the wood and other nearby habitats.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

In the long term this will become high forest broadleaved woodland with a diverse structure (in terms of species composition, age/size classification) with a mix of tree, shrub and ground flora species. The wood will develop largely through natural processes maintaining continuous canopy cover to produce a variety of age classes, mature and over mature trees (where they remain safe), deadwood habitats, and succession through natural regeneration. The site will retain a mosaic of transitional habitats including scrub, open ground and a pond to enhance the biodiversity value of the site. Non-native, invasive species such as Himalayan balsam will be controlled to prevent it becoming dominant within the ground flora.

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

Active thinning work to promote a mix of age and species diversity across the site and for long term stand stability (15-20% thin across the site) during the plan period.

Woodland management tasks to involve volunteers in the management of the site (small tree felling as part of thinning and coppicing, removal of Himalayan balsam and cutting back vegetation along paths). There is currently a Woodland Trust volunteer working group doing this work at the site.

Monitor the health of the woodland by the end of the plan period to identify any threats from tree disease, pests, non-native invasive species, human impacts, and take appropriate action where necessary.

Remove any remaining tree guards/ tubes by the end of the plan period.

Remove Himalayan balsam to stop it spreading further in the wood by the end of the plan period (to be done by the volunteer group).

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## 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	5.14	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Community Forest
<p>The compartment is flat with a very slight northern aspect and occupies the area to the north east of the public footpath and overhead power line. It is 79% woodland and 21% open space including footpaths, rides and a pond on the eastern boundary. The planting mix comprises English oak 40%, ash 30%, silver birch 5%, wild cherry 5%, rowan 5%, common alder 5% and 10% woody shrubs (hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose) planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodlands edge. Prior to planting the site was seeded with low vigour grasses. The north east and eastern boundaries are hedgerows abutting farmland. A public footpath from Grappenhall village enters the compartment in the north-west corner and continues into compartment 2a.</p>							
2a	2.96	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Community Forest
<p>This compartment has a gently westward slope and occupies the area of the site to the south west of the public footpath and overhead power line. It is 62% new native woodland planted in three mixed stands and 38% open space including footpaths and rides. The planting mix comprises English oak 40%, ash 30%, silver birch 5%, wild cherry 5%, rowan 5%, common alder 5% and 10% woody shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and dog rose) planted on the margins of the blocks to create a graded woodlands edge. Prior to planting the compartment was seeded with low vigour grasses. The western boundary abuts a stream and is defined by a hedge and stock fence. The southern boundary abuts Broad Lane and is defined by a hedge. A public footpath passes through the compartment to Broad Lane where there is a management gate and pedestrian access point with kissing gate.</p>							

## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2015	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	0	0
2016	1a	Thin	0.50	4	2
2016	2a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	20	2
2017	1a	Thin	0.25	12	3
2018	1a	Thin	0.25	12	3
2018	2a	Ride edge Coppice	0.10	10	1
2019	1a	Thin	0.25	12	3
2020	1a	Thin	0.25	8	2
2020	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	2
2024	1a	Thin	5.00	10	50
2024	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.20	10	2
2030	1a	Thin	5.00	4	20

## 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.