WOODLAND TRUST

Dora's Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Dora's Wood
Location:	Lanchester
Grid reference:	NZ169469, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 88
Area:	3.37 hectares (8.33 acres)
Designations:	Area of Landscape Value

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Dora’s Wood comprises level ground, incorporating broadleaf woodland and new woodland. The wood was designed and created by the local community and named after a local 19th century poet.

2.2 Extended Description

Dora’s Wood is located on the southern edge of the village of Lanchester, 13km to the northwest of the city of Durham (NZ 169 469). The site was acquired by the Woodland Trust in July 2000 and covers 3.28 ha of level ground situated between Smallhope Burn to the south and west and the old railway line to the northeast, which is now a public right of way known as the Lanchester Valley Walk.

It consists of 0.79 ha of existing broadleaved woodland alongside Smallhope Burn (Cpt 2) and 2.49 ha of new native woodland (Cpt 1) planted on former arable land in 2001 under the Trust’s Woods on Your Doorstep (WOYD) campaign. Oak and ash are the most numerous tree species and hazel the most common species in the understory. The ground flora mostly consists of grasses but some wild flowers also occur such as red campion. No public rights of way exist on site but the whole wood is open to free public access on foot and is well used by local people for informal recreation. Management access is taken off "Woodlands" in Lanchester via the paved cutting through the Lanchester Valley Walk to the northwest end of the site then along the edge of the embankment south into the wood. A sewerage pipe also runs along the inside of the northeast boundary, part of which is above ground supported on concrete pillars.

The wood is named after local poet Dora Greenwell who lived at Greenwell Ford only a few hundred metres from the site in the first half of the 19th century.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Dora’s Wood can be entered on foot directly off the Lanchester Valley Walk (LVW) via two pedestrian entrances along its northeast boundary, each with a flight of steps down the embankment. The wood can also be entered at its northwest end (no entrance furniture) from the Woodlands via the cutting through the LVW, following the edge of the embankment south.

Local parking is difficult and visitors to the wood are encouraged to park in the village or use the small public car park off Mount Pleasant, just along from the public library, then follow the LVW south to the wood. For those wishing to reach the wood by public transport, bus stops are located on the A691 Durham Road from where the wood can be reached within a few minutes by walking along this road and turning down into the Woodlands. The wood itself is on level ground and the grass paths are cut three times a year to keep them open for walkers.

3.2 Access / Walks

The wood is located alongside the Lanchester Valley Walk, an old mineral railway line that is now a 12 mile recreational route running between Lydetts Junction near Consett to Broompark. The route can be used by cyclists, horse riders and walkers and a guide to it can be found at: http://www.durham.gov.uk/media/4405/Railway-Path---Lanchester-Valley/pdf/RailwayPathLanchesterValley.pdf

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Dora’s Wood will be managed in order to realise its potential as a Woods on your Doorstep site by maintaining vigorous, native broadleaf high forest woodland across the site.

In compartment 1, native high forest broadleaved woodland has been successfully established so the tree cover will now be managed on a minimal intervention basis. Over the long-term (50 to100 years plus), the wood will become self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity. Informal public access will continue to be encouraged by annually mowing the permissive paths and glade to ensure these remain unobstructed for walkers.

In compartment 2, the native oak/ash broadleaved high forest woodland will be maintained in perpetuity whilst woodland biodiversity will be enhanced by establishing an understory through encouraging natural regeneration of native species where this occurs or through enrichment planting.

By working towards these intentions, contributions will be made towards achieving the Trust’s corporate objectives of increasing new native woodland, improving woodland biodiversity and increasing enjoyment of woodland.

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

Although no public rights of way exist in Dora's Wood, the whole site is open to free public access. To facilitate this, an extensive network of permissive paths is maintained across compartment 1, whilst compartment 2 is readily accessible via numerous desire line paths created by many years of use. Besides the main entrance at the northwest corner of the wood, two other entrances exist along the northeast boundary that link Dora's Wood directly into the Lanchester Valley Walk. At all entrances Woodland Trust welcome signs are located to invite people to walk in the wood. A small glade exists in the middle of the wood in which a wooden seat is located for visitors to use.

Significance

Providing public access to woods is a cornerstone of the Trust's management approach to its properties and is encapsulated in its corporate objective of increasing enjoyment and understanding of woodland. Being located on the southern edge of Lanchester, the wood acts as an important local amenity, providing one of the few areas around the village where people can wander freely.

Opportunities & Constraints

The location of Dora's Wood next to the Lanchester Valley Walk provides an excellent link with the wider public rights of way network increasing this small wood's recreational potential. Unfortunately, the Lanchester Valley Walk also provides an easy route by which motorbikes and horses can trespass, causing damage to paths within the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Motorbike trespass causing path damage.

Horse rider trespass causing path damage.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure free public access on foot to the wood continues to be available in the future by maintaining the three entrances currently in use and by keeping all permissive paths free of obstruction for walkers.

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

The three entrances currently servicing the wood will be maintained in perpetuity to ensure the public enjoy the same level of access to the wood in the future as they do today. All formal paths in the wood will also be maintained for future public access.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Approximately 2200 native trees and shrubs were planted in February 2001 over a gross area of 2.49 ha in order to create new a native broadleaved wood on former arable farmland.

Significance

Native broadleaved woodland is a vital habitat for many plants and animals found in the UK. Over the centuries, our countryside has lost most of its natural tree cover, with a consequent loss of biodiversity. By planting new native woodland we are helping to reverse this depletion and fragmentation of the countryside. Planting on former farmland provides a net gain in biodiversity that will increase as the wood develops. Consequently, increasing the area of new native woodland is one of the Trust's four key corporate objectives that the creation of Dora's Wood helps to fulfil.

Opportunities & Constraints

Both the woodland plantings and the hedge are now fully established. Tree shelters were removed in 2007, so past problems with theft of shelters are now obsolete.

Factors Causing Change

None identified at this time

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure that native high forest broadleaved woodland is successfully established and to ensure this remains healthy and vigorous so that, over the long-term, the wood becomes self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity.

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

Healthy native broadleaved woodland cover will continue to flourish across compartment 1 and no significant impact from tree diseases will have occurred during this plan period. By 2025, a mixed native broadleaved canopy will be well established with an understory containing native broadleaved natural regeneration of various age classes adding structural diversity to the wood, as well as helping to ensure its future development. Noxious weeds will be absent or present only as isolated plants having no adverse impact on ground flora, which by then will include some common woodland species as well as grasses.

5.3 Secondary Woodland

Description

A narrow strip of mature oak/ash broadleaved woodland alongside Smallhope Burn, covering an area of 0.79 ha. No understory exists under the open canopy and the field layer is poor, made up chiefly of coarse grasses with some bramble.

Significance

The fact that Cpt 2 consists of mature broadleaved woodland makes it an important habitat and a diminishing resource in its own right. Its location next to Smallhope Burn provides important marginal habitat for wildlife along this watercourse, whilst its association with the new tree planting in Cpt1 will contribute both structural and biological diversity as the wood develops. Cpt 2 also provides important habitat in the form of standing deadwood.

Opportunities & Constraints

The greatest constraint to the long-term viability of woodland in Cpt 2 is the apparent lack of natural regeneration under the canopy trees. However, because the wood has a fragmented canopy, several small open areas offer the opportunity for enrichment planting to be carried out to address this problem. At the same time the opportunity can also be taken to plant some shade tolerant species, such as hazel that will help create an understory and increase biodiversity that will enhance the ecological value of this strip of woodland.

Factors Causing Change

None identified at this time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain predominantly native oak/ash broadleaved high forest woodland across Cpt 2 in perpetuity whilst enhancing the wood's ecological value by encouraging greater biodiversity through establishing an understory and by protecting and encouraging natural regeneration of native species where this is found and/or through enrichment planting.

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

By the end of this plan period either enrichment planting or natural regeneration will have establish a scattered understory of native broadleaved species across 40% of compartment 2. During 2016, a woodland condition assessment will have been carried out that will establish the existing level of understory within compartment 2 and this will be used to decide if a programme of enrichment planting needs to be carried out or if sufficient natural regeneration is already occurring to achieve 40% understory cover.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.49	Oak (pedunculate)	2001	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Informal Public Access	Area of Landscape Value
Dora's Wood was planted during February 2001. In total, 1.99 ha was planted, with the remaining 0.50 ha consisting of open space made up of paths and small glades. Before trees were planted, Cpt 1 consisted of arable land used for growing wheat. Prior to planting, the ground was ripped at 3 m centres and then planted with native broadleaved trees and shrubs at a stocking density of 1100 trees per ha. English oak is the dominant tree species and hazel the most common shrub. A new mixed hedge was also planted along the southeast boundary of the wood.							
2a	0.79	Ash	1850	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Informal Public Access	Area of Landscape Value
Compartment 2 consists of a along narrow strip of mature broadleaved woodland located alongside Smallhope Burn, covering an area of 0.79 ha. At its northwest end is located a small allotment, occupying 600 square metres and used for keeping hens and geese. However, the bulk of the woodland lies to the south and southeast and consists of ash/oak woodland with the odd sycamore and a single Scots pine. Little understorey exists under the open canopy and the field layer is poor, made up chiefly of coarse grasses with some bramble here and there. Fragmentary of a hawthorn hedge runs along the boundary between the two compartments but has not been managed for a long time. The age of the existing canopy trees is unknown but Cpt 2 is marked on the 1st Series Ordnance Survey map of 1861, so an age of around 150 years plus for the larger trees is not unlikely.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	2.55	16	40

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.