



Cross Land

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM	Page No.
Introduction	
Plan review and updating	
Woodland Management Approach	
Summary	
1.0 Site details	
2.0 Site description	
2.1 Summary Description	
2.2 Extended Description	
3.0 Public access information	
3.1 Getting there	
3.2 Access / Walks	
4.0 Long term policy	
5.0 Key Features	
5.1 Secondary Woodland	
5.2 Informal Public Access	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
Glossary	
MAPS	
Access	
Conservation Features	
Management	

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Cross Land
Location:	Thorne St. Margaret
Grid reference:	ST098204, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 181
Area:	9.89 hectares (24.44 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Cross Land is a young broadleaf woodland set in a rural location between the villages of Thorne St Margaret and Holywell Lake, five miles from Wellington. Sited on a hillside on the edge of the Vale of Taunton, it has views towards the Blackdown Hills and the Wellington monument. The undulating landscape surrounding the wood is mostly pig farming, with hedgerows and scattered small woodlands.

The site was planted with native broadleaf trees in 1998 - species planted include oak, ash, cherry, hazel and silver birch. At the southern end of the site there are boundary strips of woodland with large beech trees which are remnants of a larger wood, and the boundary hedges are still visible across the site. Under the Woods on Your Doorstep scheme the local communities helped to design and plant the woodland. A network of rides and glades link in with the public footpath network. A small parking area is maintained at the roadside entrance and there are good circular walks around the woodland.

2.2 Extended Description

Cross Land is set in a rural location situated between the small villages of Thorne St Margaret and Holywell Lake, 5 miles from Wellington. Sited on a hillside on the edge of the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes (NCA146), it has views towards the Blackdown Hills and the Wellington monument. The undulating landscape surrounding the wood is mixed farming, with tree cover provided by hedgerow trees and scattered small woodlands. The underlying geology of the area is largely Permo-Triassic Mudstones, although small but significant outcrops of Triassic and Jurassic marls and Permian Sandstones outcrop.

The site was planted with native broadleaf trees in 1998 - species planted include oak ash and silver birch. At the southern end of the site there are boundary strips of woodland which are remnants of a larger wood, and the boundary hedges are still visible across the site.

Under the Woods on Your Doorstep scheme the local communities helped to design the new woodland and undertook the first planting of new trees, and they continue to take an interest in the development of the wood. A network of rides and glades was integrated into the wood design which link in with the public footpath network. A small parking area is maintained at the roadside entrance to facilitate access. Although not immediately adjacent to the villages the woods are generally well used and appreciated by the local community.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The main entrance to the site is direct from a minor country road running between Thorne St Margaret and Holywell Lake. This northern entrance has a small stoned parking area large enough for 4 cars. From here a kissing gate leads into the wood. Within the site path surfaces are of natural grass or compacted mud, and can be uneven and of variable slope, however there is a relatively level section leading to the first seat from where there is a fine viewpoint across the valley to the Wellington monument. A public footpath runs north-south along the eastern boundary, and another runs east-west through the middle of the site. All entrances other than the northern entrance from the car park are kissing gates allowing foot access only, and all the paths then pass into farmland. A further step over stile in the middle of the southern boundary provides permissive access from adjacent land. Permissive footpaths with a natural grass surface form further loops around the wood. A gateway halfway through the site can hold water for long periods following rainfall.

Nearest bus stop: Holywell Inn, Holywell Lake approximately 1/2 mile across the fields, 3/4 mile by road. See www.travelinesw.com or phone 0870 608 2 608 for up to date information.

Nearest toilet: Wellington - various toilets including at Longforth Road - facilities for disabled people (RADAR key required) & baby changing facilities approximately 1 1/2 miles. See www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision at Cross Land is for attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland of a high forest structure. A healthy canopy of trees with an understorey of woodland shrubs, integrating with other habitats such as the hedges & wide rides. Light thinning work was due to take place 15-20 years post planting but due to the onset of chalara within the planted Ash trees (first spotted in 2016 but rapidly increasing in 2018), this intervention has been postponed. The wood will be allowed to develop naturally and self thin; the reducing ash canopy will allow natural regeneration to occur throughout the woodland, and the species mix to diversify over time.

Access will be maintained along the existing ride network and scrub allowed to develop along the edges of the wider rides, creating a soft edge to the woodland and increasing the biodiversity value of the site. Benches and signs will be replaced in line with the trusts policies.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

Native broadleaf woodland was planted in 1998 with a design incorporating wide rides, viewpoints, glades and shrub edges, on 4 fields formerly used for agriculture (cpt 1a). This new planting re-establishes a woodland habitat in the southernmost field, cleared in 1960, and helps to extend and buffer the remnant strips of this older woodland (shown wooded on 1841 Tith map) still present on the southern and south eastern boundaries, as well as the mature hedges on the boundaries and through the site (cpt 1b). These provide a potential source/route for woodland species to cross into the newly planted woodland - for eg bluebells, snowdrops and wood sorrell, already present in the older woodland.

Significance

As a Woods on Your Doorstep site the project has been funded on the understanding that a woodland will be established and maintained for future generations. The mature woodland strips has characteristics of ASNW/AWS; the new woodland will buffer and extend this habitat, whilst contributing to the patchwork of small woods and copses within the surrounding landscape. Despite the relative young age and poor structure of the establishing wood, Dormice are abundant across the site and a monitoring scheme is in place.

Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunity is to establish an attractive, predominantly native broadleaved woodland with a varying structure, connected through a series of mature hedgerows to the wider landscape.

Factors Causing Change

- Ash die back (chalara) reducing the canopy cover and inhibiting ash regeneration
- Browsing by deer, affecting regeneration
- Squirrel damage to establishing trees, such as oak
- Further canopy loss through other tree diseases

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats. A mixture of trees, shrubs and open rides with a developing ground flora, providing a mosaic of associated semi-natural habitats.

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

Allow the woodland to develop naturally, monitoring through woodland condition assessments and monitoring chalara through tree safety inspections. Light thinning work was due to take place 15-20 years post planting but due to the onset of chalara within the planted Ash trees (first spotted in 2016 but rapidly increasing in 2018), this intervention has been postponed. The wood will be allowed to develop naturally and self-thin; the reducing ash canopy will allow natural regeneration to occur throughout the woodland, and the species mix to diversify over time.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Although not immediately adjacent to the villages, public access is available direct from the road and via public footpaths across adjoining fields, with rides and paths circulating the site. Two seats installed by the parish council provide the opportunity to rest and enjoy these views and the peaceful atmosphere of the woodland.

A group of trees planted at the top of the glade is the Millennium feature for this wood.

Significance

Created as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project, the local community has been involved in the fundraising, design and planting of the site. The site is well used by local walkers, who arrived either along the connecting public footpaths or by parking in the small car park.

Opportunities & Constraints

To maintain the existing footpath network, allowing continued access and enjoyment for future years.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die-back (chalara) affecting the safety of the woodland and its path network.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that contains well-maintained & attractive paths & entrances that will form part of the wider network of rights of way. The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation.

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

The site will remain inviting and welcoming to visitors, with entrances and path network will be maintained appropriately for the level of use. Tree safety schedules will take the progression of ash dieback into consideration and remedial work will be tailored accordingly.

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	9.40	Mixed native broadleaves	1998	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>Four fields planted in 1998 by volunteers and contractors with a mixture of native broadleaf trees (Oak 45%, ash 10% silver birch 20%, wild cherry 10% and rowan 5%) and shrubs (Hazel, guelder rose, hawthorn). These trees are growing very well on the fertile ex agricultural land, and are in general good health. Mature hedges and strips of woodland form an established habitat around all but the north eastern edge, where a new hedge planted in 1998 is also establishing well. These established areas help to provide wildlife corridors from the surrounding land to the new woodland. The southern end was previously woodland until cleared for agriculture around 1960. The land is undulating and a network of rides and glades have been created to fit the topography and preserve views. Two public footpaths cross the compartment. Access directly off the public highway is into a stoned parking area with a track running part way through the compartment.</p>							
1b	0.50	Mixed native broadleaves	1900	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
<p>Narrow strip of mature secondary woodland along part of the southern and eastern boundary. This was once part of a larger block of woodland shown on the 1888 - 1891 ordnance survey maps as woodland/wood pasture of variable density. Central areas of this were cleared in 1960 leaving this fringe. Predominantly Oak, birch, rowan with a gorse and hazel understorey. There is a small element of sycamore and sweet chestnut, some of which has been previously felled in an attempt to control their spread. A large Badger sett is present in the north of this compartment.</p>							

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.