



Oxhouse Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Oxhouse Wood
Location:	Winford
Grid reference:	ST531652, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 172
Area:	2.44 hectares (6.03 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Oxhouse Wood was planted as a native broadleaf wood by the local community in 1998. An open glade was left unplanted as the location of the Millennium Feature. There is also a small man-made pond, originally used for watering stock.

2.2 Extended Description

Oxhouse Wood lies between the villages of Winford and Felton, near Bristol, alongside a busy minor road. The wood is situated across a small north facing scarp with level areas to the north and south; the slope dropping between them. The soils are thin on the top of the site with small chunks of limestone outcropping on the scarp. At the foot of the slope, near the main entrance; they are generally deeper creating moister conditions.

The site was planted as a native broadleaf wood by the local community in December 1998 as part of the Trust's Woods on your Doorstep project. The limestone scarp is unplanted as it had many species typical of semi improved neutral grassland. An open glade near the main entrance was left unplanted for access and as the location of the Millennium Feature, a large stone carved with the word 'peace'. A belt of shrubs was planted along the roadside as a screen.

There is a small man-made pond with a stoned slope into the water which was originally for watering stock. This is near the main management entrance on the western edge.

Public access is available from three points around the edge of the site, two on the main road and another on the minor side lane. An internal path forms a circular route to the upper plateau and back

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location

The wood lies between the villages of Felton and Winford, approximately 5km south west of the outskirts of Bristol. Access is via West Lane and Felton Lane which links the A38 and the B3130

Public Transport

An hourly bus service runs straight past the site, the 121 from Bristol, operated by First

3.2 Access / Walks

Overview & Parking

Access is directly from the adjacent public road via a kissing gate. There is a hard core verge (providing space to park 2 cars) between the gate and road, this road is not suitable for pedestrian access which is better served by the emergence of a 'Road Used as a Public Path' (RUPP) along the western boundary, affording access into the extensive surrounding public footpath network. There is an unplanted strip through the site, part of which is mown to create a path and links the three entrances, of which two are by stile and the third is a kissing gate from the lay-by. This grass covered track climbs the slope to the plateau before looping back round.

Facilities

No public facilities are known within a 5km radius of the wood.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Trust's corporate objective of increasing new native woodland has been furthered by the planting of Oxhouse Wood. The long-term vision is for attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland to develop at the site. A healthy canopy of trees with an understorey of shrubs merges with the other habitats such as the hedges, wide rides and pond; thus creating many wood edge habitats, which may attract invertebrates and flora. Within the trees, shade loving plants more typical of secondary woodland colonise, giving the wood an increasingly natural feel.

The wood is to be maintained as an open access green space where the public are welcomed. The signs and paths invite public interest and involvement in the woodland; this helps fulfil the Trust's corporate objective of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland. The neutral grassland on the limestone scarp will be mown annually to retain biodiversity within the wood.

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

Public access is available on paths looping through the site. Formal entrances have been created from the highway and public bridleway. Whilst the site is not heavily used, it is appreciated by the local residents as an additional accessible natural area. A carved 'peace' stone near the main entrance is the Millennium feature.

Significance

Created as part of the Woods on your Doorstep project, the local community were involved in the fundraising, design and planting of the site. Informal public access to Oxhouse Wood raises people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland, fulfilling one of the Trust's corporate objectives

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood is 1km from the surrounding villages. The access road is fast and well-used making pedestrian access via this route unlikely.

The site is in the flight path of Bristol airport; this disrupts the quiet, contemplative quality of the woodland.

Factors Causing Change

Flight path noise, abuse e.g. litter and flytipping

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The wood will remain valued for the opportunity for quiet informal recreation predominantly by locals, as part of a wide network of accessible green space.

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

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public can frequently enjoy. Entrances, facilities and path network are appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category C. This will be achieved by cutting rides and paths three times annually, collecting litter twice per year and maintaining entrances and access furniture in a safe and welcoming condition?.

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public can frequently enjoy. Entrances, facilities and path network are appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category C. This will be achieved by cutting rides and paths three times annually, collecting litter twice per year and maintaining entrances and access furniture in a safe and welcoming condition?.

Significance

One of the Trust's corporate objectives is to see an increase in the area of new native woodland - this objective is achieved now that the wood is well established. As a Woods on Your Doorstep site the project was funded on the understanding that woodland will be established and maintained for future generations. It provides variety in a landscape with few areas of woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Bristol Airport issued tree planting guidelines which were followed. General restrictions were placed to avoid certain types of trees which are most likely to encourage birds. Management of trees to high forest may be limited by Bristol airport guidelines potential for birds that may roost in the wood and cause nuisance to planes

Factors Causing Change

Grassland deterioration/scrubbing up, birds roosting. Pests and diseases, squirrel damage, invasive species

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats which continues to develop over time. The mix of trees, shrubs and open grassland all combine to provide a valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife.

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

Maturing woodland that is successfully integrating into the existing habitats and landscape. Ensure woodland remains healthy by monitoring and controlling threats where possible.

Maintain the roadside shrub belt to prevent obstruction of the road.

Remove old fence at eastern end of road boundary (30m) and replace with new broadleaved hedge with rabbit spirals. hedge to comprise double row at 4-5 plants per metre

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	2.40	Mixed native broadleaves	1998	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Community Forest

A field planted with mixed broadleaved trees in 1998. The trees are fully established and growing strongly. A small slope runs through the site but this is not steep enough to present access difficulties. The site is bordered by mixed hedgerows on 3 sides with a shrub edge newly planted along the roadside boundary. The adjoining fields are mostly pony paddocks, although within 1km there are NNR's, organic farms and higher level stewardship schemes, meaning the area is one where the intensiveness of land use is decreasing and so wildlife may have an opportunity to thrive. Enquiry of North Somerset Council Highways Dept. has elicited the verbal response that the grass verge along the roadside boundary is part of the adopted highway. Deer are regularly seen on site, although most trees are well established, this could have an impact on natural regeneration in the future. A small stone lined pond exists on the western boundary, it is fed only by groundwater and although it is dry for most of the year by being one of a series of four such water sources in the immediate area it presents an interesting historical feature of the previous usage of the site.

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.