



Belhus Chase

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Belhus Chase, Gurnett's Fields
Location:	Aveley, Aveley
Grid reference:	TQ569819, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177 TQ566816, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177
Area:	55.44 hectares (137.00 acres) 5.99 hectares (14.80 acres)
Designations:	Community Forest, Green Belt, SE corner part of a Historic Park & Garden Community Forest, Green Belt

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A new woodland rich in history, Belhus Chase and neighbouring Gurnett's Fields are part of the Thames Chase Community Forest, which is transforming the landscape to the east of London. They are also connected to the area's fascinating heritage as part of the grand Belhus Estate, and the woods' planting scheme echoes the style of the estate's Capability Brown landscaping.

2.2 Extended Description

Belhus Chase is a predominantly secondary woodland creation site with large areas of open space. It was acquired by the Woodland Trust (WT) in 1998 with the help of major sponsorship by Hanson Environment and The Countryside Agency. The acquisition of Belhus Chase was a significant development as it formed a 'hub' linking three public access areas into a single whole; namely Belhus Woods Country Park (Essex County Council), Belhus Park Golf course, Recreation and leisure centre (Impulse Leisure) and Oak Wood and Ash plantation (Thurrock Council).

Subsequently the Forestry Commission purchased a large area of land adjacent to Belhus Woods Country Park and in recent years Essex County Council has extended the Country Park so that

there is now an area of approximately 1000 acres of publicly accessible land available. The current situation echoes the objective of earlier failed attempts to get a new Royal Park for East London created in time for the Millennium.

Historically the land at Belhus Chase formed part of 'Belhus Park' once the residence of Lord Dacre. What survives of the now much degraded Belhus Park is a remnant of a mid 18th C Landscape park. A formal park and gardens evident on the 17th C estate map of Aveley was overlaid by Capability Brown's (1753-4) and later Richard Woods' work for Lord Dacre. Elements of the original park still remain despite recent abuse, including the construction of the M25 through the heart of the park. Within the WT ownership can be found a deeply ditched park boundary, some remnant parkland trees and an 18th C stench pipe from a former sewage disposal system. With the Friends of Belhus Park a circular way marked trail was created taking people around the original park as part of a Local Heritage Initiative sponsored scheme. Vandalism of the posts and boards has led to the decline of this trail.

The site was designed under consultation with an officers steering group, presided over by Thames Chase Community Forest, and with the local community (Belhus Chase forms part of the wider landscape scale Thames Chase Community Forest). Overall the site was designed to mimic a 'parkland feel' and reflect the sites history. Woodland creation areas are largely comprised of native woodland species but there are number of exotic species or species/stands typical of landscaped parks scattered throughout the plantings.

The original intention of creating an open parkland feel was significantly undermined by the presence of an extensive network of hedges, some showing signs of an ancient nature, effectively closing in various views. Removal of these hedges to open the views was not an option and with the rich biologically diverse grassland failing to materialise greater environmental and public access benefits may be achieved by planting additional areas of native woodland.

Topography is gently undulating in the wider scale, with Belhus Chase being particularly flat. The M25 Motorway runs along the eastern edge of Belhus Chase and impacts with noise and visual pollution. On the western edge is the Romford Road. A stream, Running Water Brook, runs along part of the northern boundary and this, apart from ditches, is the only permanent and significant water feature. Soils are predominantly clay and the site is prone to water logging. The site is also closely adjacent to large communities, South Ockendon and Kenningtons Estate.

Multiple public access points can be found along all boundaries and the primary management access is off the Romford Road. The site does not have its own car park although extensive car parking facilities are available in the adjacent Belhus Woods Country Park (parking charges apply). Local dog walkers and some visitors park on the wide roadside verge next to the management gate, but there is only limited parking available here. The site is not heavily used but has a steady flow of visitors particularly focussed at dawn and dusk dog walking time. Usage naturally increases during both the weekends, holiday periods and over the warmer months. A network of paths cross the site with most being unsurfaced but linking to path on adjoining properties.

The Key Features of the site are:

New Native Woodland
Informal Public Access

Historic Landscape

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

By bus:

The 373 service between Grays to Romford stops at Derwent Drive, Belhus, which is a (0.5km) from the woods. The service runs every half hour from Monday to Saturday and hourly on Sundays.

By train:

Upminster station is about three miles from Belhus Chase and Gurnett's Fields. For further information on public transport, contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit traveline.org.uk

By car:

From junction 30 of the M25 take the A13 east. At the first exit take the A1306 north towards Rainham. At the next junction go right onto Sandy Lane (B1335) and continue on to a roundabout. There, go left. The woods are about 2km further on, on the right.

Parking: There is no on-site car park, but parking is available in nearby Belhus Woods Country Park (charges apply).

3.2 Access / Walks

The woods provide a network of paths that link to neighbouring open spaces. Paths are mostly unsurfaced, the land is fairly flat and there is good access for wheelchair users.

With the help of the volunteer group Friends of Belhus Park, a circular waymarked trail has been created that guides the visitor around the old park.

There are a number of points of access to the woods; the main entrance is off Romford Road. There is no car park, but parking is available in nearby Belhus Woods Country Park (charges apply).

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision at Belhus Chase is for attractive, mature and predominantly native broadleaf woodland. A healthy resilient woodland with a canopy of trees containing a mix of ages and structures and with an understorey of woodland shrubs, integrated with the existing hedges and maintaining a number open space habitats in a design that attempts to reflect the parkland history of the site. The exotic planted trees, which formed part of the initial design, will be retained and allowed to develop to also help in part to mimic a landscaped parkland.

Areas of planted trees were specifically sited (sub compartment 1a) to help buffer and extend the neighbouring Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and thereby helping to create a more resilient core area, will be maintained. Other areas (sub compartment 1b) where planting is adjacent to existing hazel coppice in Belhus Woods Country Park, the majority of the sub compartment will be managed on a traditional hazel coppice rotation of about 10-12 years whilst the north eastern section will mirror the Country Park coppice rotation of harvesting on a 24 year rotation (to create a Dormice habitat should they naturally colonise the area or as part of an introduction programme).

Open space areas will be maintained to ensure a minimum of 20% over the entire site. Attempts to date to develop a biologically rich open space grass sward has not been very successful, possibly due to high fertility levels from historic farming on site. Areas of greatest potential will be identified with further investigation undertaken to assess the opportunities to a) diversify the grass sward, b) maintain as grass meadows or c) redesigned to allow for additional patch of woodland creation whilst maintaining the key visual vistas.

The Woodland Trust corporate objective of increasing enjoyment of woodland will be achieved through continued path and ride management in order to provide a range of routes through the site. Belhus Chase will be managed as an important open space area with linkages to the other open spaces owned and managed by other organisations locally and making up a continuous open space provision of about 1,000 acres of publically accessible land.

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 New Native Woodland

Description

28.88 Hectares of land have been planted with new woodland designed to create a 'parkland feel', in an attempt to reflect rather than recreate the now largely lost designed 'Capability' Brown landscape of Belhus Park. The planting was all done within rabbit fenced blocks using mainly native broadleaved species but also including a number of exotics and other species to reflect the tradition of 'Parkland Ornamental' planting e.g Corsican Pine, London Plane and Small Leaved Lime. Planting was carried out over two main phases - winter 1998 and winter 1999. Most of the rabbit fencing has now been removed as the trees have established well.

Following a bad experience with local arsonists the interrow cutting and other protective grass cutting within and around planted blocks as part of fire prevention measures was continued for a number of years beyond the traditional 5 year establishment phase.

Two small areas totalling just over 1ha were left to develop through natural regeneration. However the vigorous grass mix sown meant that after 4 years not a single seedling was found and it was decided to plant these two areas up with a wet woodland mix.

A small area of just over 3 ha was gifted to the WT by Thurrock Council and was planted with local people as part of the WT Millennium Woods on Your Doorstep project. The area, known as Gurnett's Field, was prone to significant anti-social behaviour problems, e.g regular use by youths on motorbikes. Strong fencing was erected to successfully reduce these problems. Some over-the-fence green waste dumping is now apparent and requires action.

Significance

1. Creation of native woodland, providing habitats and improving biodiversity in the local area.
2. Acts as a buffer to the adjacent Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to the north, Belhus Woods Country Park.
3. Extends and joins the adjacent wooded/grass areas to form the wooded part of the wider publically accessible open space, by linking access networks and ownership objectives of providing a green space for local people to enjoy.
4. Maintains a wooded heritage in a rural area subjected to historic wooded landscaping over several eras.
5. Increase area and participation in Thames Chase Community Forest, one of only 12 in the UK.
6. Area of hazel coppice extends the area already coppiced by Belhus Woods Country Park.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

- C1. Vandalism and general Anti-social behaviour problems
- C2. Fire
- C3. Archaeological and historic park conservation needs;
- C4. Limited deer browsing of coppice stool (follow up monitoring required)

Opportunities

- O1. To link with existing adjacent ASNW and other woodland to create a large contiguous 'wooded area' with significant open ground habitats
- O2. Cooperation with Belhus Woods Country Park regarding coppicing of 3.92ha of Hazel, as an extension to their existing coppice programme.
- O3. To create additional woodland in the medium term in particular to strengthen links with existing ASNW.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism, fire, ash die back, deer browsing, joy riding and increased incidents of high winter rainfall (climate change) leading to a higher winter water table

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The establishment of a large predominantly native broadleaved woodland that enhances physical links with adjacent woodland and which reflects the sites parkland heritage.

Successfully establishment of coppice rotational management in sub-compartment 1b with the areas of coppice immediately adjacent to Belhus Woods Country Park and mirroring their coppice cycle programme.

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

- 1. Open ground: assess existing biodiversity value of open ground to identify priority areas, design and assess funding/community engagement opportunities for planting new native woodland in patches of the less successful biologically rich grassland areas.
- 2. On-going development of a coppicing programme on a ten-year coup rotation cycle across 75% of the hazel coppice across the majority sub-compartment 1b . The hazel coppice adjacent to the coppicing area within Belhus Woods Country Park (north east area with sub-compartment 1b) will coppiced on a similar 24 year cycle in keeping with their plans to provide Dormouse habitat for either a natural arriving populations or as a back-up site suitable for a re-introduction population. Annual harvesting levels will be below 5 cubic metres and therefore do not require a felling licence

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Informal Public access to whole site currently takes the form of a network of some surfaced but mainly unsurfaced footpaths and PRoW across the site. Historically there have been severe problems from anti-social behaviour by local youths and required the introduction of a sustained programme of enhanced security measures to tackle the problems, e.g strength boundary fencing, ditching and bunding, anti-motorcycle gates.

Significance

The wider connectivity to the large provision of local public open space is significant and offers a wide range of amenities available close to major residential communities.

Belhus Chase also lies within Thames Chase Community Forest.

The site lies at the centre of the wider open space provision and it acts as a node to access cohesion, joining adjacent green spaces.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

C1. On-going anti-social behaviour problems.

C2 Economic factors and individual organisational priorities across the five linked land ownerships, has limited the ability to provide a cohesive and common access provision throughout the wider area.

Opportunities

O1. To improve integration of the access infrastructure between and within the five public sites

O2. To raise the profile and visitor use of the area through joint branding and promotion

O3. To increase community ownership and involvement across the wider public space provision

Factors Causing Change

Increasing public access, vandalism and illegal access by motorcyclists.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To raise the profile of Belhus Chase as part of a much larger area of coherent public open space. Management of this wider area should if possible be integrated across the several land ownerships.

The wider area should have seamless links to the local path network and to local communities, including Upminster.

Paths at Belhus will be a mixture of surfaced strategic paths and unsurfaced minor paths. In particular along the boundary with the Belhus Park Golf Course.

Establishing an area wide Friends Group that run events, work parties and social events. The Friends Group will play a key role in promoting local 'ownership' of the 'Park' which will be instrumental in reducing problems arising from anti-social behaviour.

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

1. Existing paths to be maintained through five path cuts per year to maintain paths of at least 2m width. Sections of path that are impassable in periods of heavy/prolonged wet weather to have sections of boardwalk installed and side drainage channels created.
2. Install new entrance signs and interpretation boards.
3. Work with the Belhus Woods Country Park to establish a joint or at least linked Friends and/or Volunteer groups with shared annual event programmes and work parties.

5.3 Historic Landscape

Description

Belhus Chase (as part of the historic Belhus park) has been subject to identified landscape changes since the late Roman/early Saxon period. Much of the area has not been archaeologically surveyed but contains numerous cropmarks, consisting of sequences of pits, ditches and enclosures. The legacy found today is predominantly that of the Mid 18th Century parkland. It was redesigned by Capability Brown (1753-4) and later by Richard Woods. This landscape was centred on Belhus Mansion, which was demolished after the World War II. Across both the WT and wider area, elements of the former park and its structures still remain, e.g the Ice House, foundation of the mansion, long pond and a number of woodland stands e.g the Shrubbery and a number of tumps now within the golf course. Within the WT's landholding there is the 'Stench Pipe' (not owned by the WT) which is a listed monument and the remains of the old park boundary. The main ride from Belhus Woods Country Park to The Shrubbery was once the main carriageway through the park

The M25 now bisects what was once the open parkland and (as well as preventing access) creates both a visual and noise disturbance. The core of the former park has also been converted into a golf course and recreation ground. The land within the WT ownership has been converted from parkland to arable farming and now into either new woodland or grassland.

Historically there was an active Belhus Park Friend's Group which promoted the parks heritage and status. In addition they also undertook a range of tasks and projects. A joint project was undertaken with the WT to establish a way marked trail following the former park boundary and taking people round those features that remain. Waymarking and signage was unfortunately not robust enough to cope with the local vandals and the Friends group is now much less active.

Significance

The landscape area of the former Belhus Park (which takes in all of Belhus Chase) is an example of a formal 17th and 18th Century landscape reshaped by Capability Brown and Richard Woods. An opportunity exists to maintain and reinstate part of this important landscape while improving opportunity for the public to appreciate it.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

- C1 Persistent vandalism problems
- C2 Fragmentation of the former park across four land ownerships
- C3 Need to balance today's community's needs with desire to restore a much abused historic landscape.
- C4 Intrusion by M25 motorway.

Opportunities

- O1 To create and maintain a landscape to reflect the historic park tradition in the area
- O2 To encourage cooperation between neighbours in the restoration, maintenance and promotion of the historic landscape
- O3 By working with the Friends and Volunteers at Belhus Woods Country Park and drawing on the sites important heritage, encourage greater community ownership of the wider public open space area within the local community.

Factors Causing Change

Poor response to the creation of biodiversity rich grassland areas
Cost of mechanically managing open grassland areas
On-going vandalism
Fragmented land ownership and priorities

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The landscape of Belhus Chase should meet present and future users needs and also reflects the site's designed landscape heritage. The areas historic and cultural heritage will underpin the core development of the area. Local people will be encouraged to take greater ownership and responsibility for both Belhus Chase and the wider areas of public open space.

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

1. Re-establish a cost effective and biologically rich balance between woodland and grassland habitats by assessing the existing biodiversity value of open ground to identify priority areas, design and assess funding/community engagement opportunities for planting new native woodland in patches of the less successful biologically rich grassland areas.
2. Maintain key visual elements of the historic parkland, i.e. maintain areas of open grassland to reflect the historic parkland feel, protect and appropriately manage notable/veteran trees and hedgerows, maintain key views, treed avenues and vistas that reflect a more formal managed parkland feel.

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	26.64	Woody shrubs	1999	High forest	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Historic Landscape, Informal Public Access	Community Forest, Green Belt, Other
<p>10 individually fenced compartments of broadleaf woodland creation established over the 1998-99 and 1999-00 planting seasons. An eleventh block on the north east corner was initially proposed for establishment by colonisation but the vigorous grass growth on the site meant no natural regeneration was found after 4 seasons. This area was subsequently planted with the help of Debretts in 2002-03</p> <p>As part of the initial five-year maintenance programme the rabbit fenced areas were planted with a variety of locally native trees and shrubs, at a density of 2250 per hectare. Early problems resulting from the vigorous grass mix used, leading, for example to enhance fire risk and vole damage, meant that 100% cut of the interrows was necessary.</p> <p>Tree Species are as follows: Pedunculate Oak, Ash, Hornbeam, Hazel, Cherry, Field Maple, Dogwood, Wild Service Tree, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Purging Buckthorn, Guelder Rose. The planting blocks in the South East of the site (adjacent to Belhus Park Golf Course) contain Corsican pine, Plane, Lombardy Poplar, Holm Oak and Small Leaved Lime. These species were chosen to introduce a 'Parkland' landscape.</p> <p>Prior to First Phase Planting all land was cleared of agricultural crops/weeds and sown with a native meadow mix, under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme Grassland Creation. The three areas adjacent to Aveley are Woods on Your Doorstep (WoYD) plantings, known as Gurnett's Fields. These were part-planted by the community in the 98-99 planting season. WoYD represents 3.034 hectares and approximately 6826.5 trees.</p> <p>Known pests are rabbits, some deer damage and, during establishment, voles (damage to ash trees from voles found in 2000). The site has been prone to repeated vandalism, joyriding and arson attacks. Most Rabbit fences have now been removed and the trees have established well.</p>							
1b	5.13	Woody shrubs	1999	Coppice	People issues (+tve & -tve)	Historic Landscape, Informal Public Access	Community Forest, Green Belt

Area of coppice creation with the predominant species being hazel. Planted in 1998 other tree species are Pedunculate oak and Ash. Shrub mixtures are Field Maple, Hawthorn, Blackthorn and hazel. The hazel is planted at 1.5-2 metre spacing, to produce future coppice stools, with oak and ash in 12 groups of six (60 per hectare) to form future standards.

During the first five year there was some fire damage to the area with about 100 trees lost and replanted. Land adjacent to the stream on the northern boundary was originally identified as an area likely to have successful natural regeneration due to its proximity to the Ancient Woodland. However, the natural regeneration was very limited due to the very vigorous grass growth and consequently the area was planted with a native wet-woodland mix with the help of BP and local children.

A stream runs across the northern boundary, separating Woodland Trust land from Belhus Woods Country Park. A foot bridge links the two sites. The bridge, which was constructed by Essex County Council, unfortunately is made from tropical hardwood. An inconsistency in the original design has meant that wood was planted in a way that separates it from the robust hedge on the southern boundary. The path was changed in 2007 and hedge and wood are now contiguous.

2a	32.03	Open ground	1999	Non-wood habitat	Legal issues, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Historic Landscape, Informal Public Access	Community Forest, Green Belt
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Non-woodland creation areas were sown with a native grass mix in 2000. The grassland areas were all under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme under which the grassland was managed as follows:

Cut hay each year after the 14th July. Cutting should leave a sward height of 20-500 mm

Leave a minimum of a 1 metre uncut along field edges and manage by cutting one year in three.

Thistle control and bird scaring prior to mowing

Development of the grass sward has not been good in biodiversity terms although it is good from an agricultural perspective, possibly due to high fertility level from historic farming on the site. Following a review of the long-term viability of retaining the open ground areas those thought worth retaining will be investigated for opportunities to diversify the grass sward whilst other areas will be redesigned to allow for additional patch of woodland creation whilst maintaining the key visual vistas.

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.