



Sledge Wood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Sledge Wood
Location:	Repton
Grid reference:	SK313254, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 128
Area:	5.22 hectares (12.90 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Sledge Wood is predominantly oak, with a smaller proportion of ash. There is a stream crossed by a bridge and a bench looking down towards Repton village with an information board at the entrance. Access is from Hartshorne Road or Robins Cross

2.2 Extended Description

Sledge Wood is located at the southern end of Repton village, in South Derbyshire. The wood was planted in December 1999 as part of the Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' project, which created 200 new community woods within walking distance of towns and villages in celebration of the new Millennium. The land was acquired by the Woodland Trust in December 1998 via a private sale. Financial support to buy the land was kindly provided by local people, South Derbyshire District Council, Repton Parish Council and the Millennium Commission. The local community were very involved in the both the design and planting of the new woodland. The land slopes from east to west across the site and the slopes used to be favoured for winter sledding. This is where the wood gets its name.

Sledge wood is composed of a mixture of native broadleaved trees. The main tree species in the bulk of the woodland are oak, ash, hazel and birch. On the western side of the wood the land slopes towards a stream and wet woodland area, where willows dominate. Other minor tree species include rowan, holly, aspen, black poplar and alder buckthorn. Before planting the land used to be predominantly a grass field. In the north end of the wood are 2 areas of gorse-dominated scrub, which was present before the wood was planted

The wood has a good network of managed paths and is well used by people living close by. There is a parking area to the south, on the opposite side of Robins Cross Lane from the wood.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The wood is located on the outskirts of Repton. The wood can be accessed direct from public highways Hartshorne road and Robins cross. A public footpath crosses the site in a north-south direction. This enters the site on the northern boundary over a stile. A further squeeze post is also located on the boundary with Robins Cross Lane, in the south east of the site. Both of these points of entry are unsuitable for wheelchair access. The terrain of the site lies on a steep gradient therefore will limit access for some users.

Within the site grass rides allow pedestrian access this follows in a circular route round the perimeter of the eastern section of the woodland. These can be muddy and slippery when wet and care should be taking into consideration in particular with the topography of the site. A wooden bridge unsuitable for wheelchair access allows pedestrian passage between the two sections of the woodland, thus joining the Hartshorne Road entrance to the public footpath network.

There is no car park to the site, however there is car parking nearby. The site is well used by local walkers.

The nearest bus stop is situated on Hartshorne road which lies adjacent to the south end of the site. For bus information and timetables please access the traveline web link for further information www.traveline.org.uk or contact 0871 200 22 33.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring broadleaved woodland. Hence the wood will be diverse in tree species and structure with a good mixture of both young and mature trees being present, as well as understorey species. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future, and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife. Silvicultural management will take place when necessary to ensure these woodland conditions are present.

A network of managed wide rides will be present throughout the wood. These rides will benefit wildlife requiring open habitat conditions, and they will also create variety and interest for visitors to the wood.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Sledge Wood. The path network will be kept open for use and the entrances will be welcoming, accessible and clearly signed. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections in high risk zones.

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

The woodland is an established broadleaved plantation which was created in 1999. The major tree species are oak (40%), ash (15%) and birch (10%). Minor species such as hazel, hawthorn, aspen, black poplar, holly, rowan and white willow make up the rest of the plantation mix. Approximately one hectare of the wood is made up of gorse-dominated scrub, which was present before tree planting took place.

Towards the stream on the western side, the wood is dominated by willows with occasional alder, where the ground is often waterlogged. The flora in this part of the wood is also more diverse, and although nettles are common there is also yellow iris and golden saxifrage. This part of the wood forms the eastern edge of Repton Carr, a wet woodland habitat and designated County Wildlife Site. Elsewhere in the wood the ground flora is mainly grasses, nettle and scattered bramble. However, a small patch of native bluebell is present on the lower slope near to the public footpath - these plants have been presumably been introduced to the wood in recent years. On the southern boundary of the wood there are 3 veteran sweet chestnut trees, which are mostly outside the boundary of the wood and part of the highway verge.

Significance

Sledge Wood is a useful semi-natural buffer and extension to Repton Carr, which is an important wet woodland to the west.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is the opportunity to create wider rides through the wood, which will have a positive effect on wildlife as well as improving the wood for visitors. Although ash dieback is likely to lead to a loss of many ash trees in the wood, it will also improve the structure of the wood by allowing the space and opportunity for younger trees to develop.

Factors Causing Change

Browsing damage by deer and grey squirrels could cause be a future threat to trees and woodland habitat. Ash dieback disease is likely to have an impact on the proportion of ash present in the wood.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create a mature broadleaved wood which is diverse in native tree species and in structure, enabling it to be resilient to change. The proportion of ash will be lower than the initial planting level due to the impact of ash dieback.

To maintain a proportion of open space in the form of wide sunny rides. Approximately 10% of the woodland area will be open rides.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is improve the quality of the rides and to monitor and take action on any threats to the wood. This will be achieved by:

- Carrying out ride-edge coppicing along parts of the main path network (approximately 500m in total length). This will include the public footpath that runs north-south through the wood and one east-west ride. The coppicing will be carried out in a scalloped fashion so the rides vary in width between 6 and 12m. This work will be completed by 2018. The ride underneath the powerline will be annually mown to a width of 10m to maintain a herb-rich grassy habitat, the length of this ride is approximately 100m.
- Conducting monitoring 2019 to assess the impact and threat of deer browsing and tree diseases on the wood. In particular this will look at the scale of ash dieback disease in the wood, and the severity of deer browsing on coppice regrowth. A full woodland condition assessment, following Woodland Trust guidelines, will be carried out in 2021 to inform the new management plan review.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Sledge Wood has a good network of permissive paths and a right of way running North-South across the full length of the wood. There are approximately 1.2km of pedestrian-only paths in total, offering a good variety of circular walks. The wood has 5 entrances, including one close to the edge of the village, off Hartshorne Road. There is a car parking area to the south (which is managed by the local Council), on the opposite side of Robins Cross Lane from the wood. An entrance to the wood is located just opposite this car park. The 2 main entrances, off the main roads, are very prominently signed with the others being more low key. The wood has some interesting features offering a variety of experiences for the visitor including a wetland and stream habitat on the eastern side, some steep slopes and a scrubby gorse area to the north. The natural grassy paths and steep slopes will make the wood difficult for less-abled visitors to get around. The Trust has given this wood a Category B for access provision, which equates to: a site with regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day.

Significance

The wood provides a quiet area for informal recreation, especially suitable for local people living close to the nearby village. The public footpath running through it means the wood has good accessible links to the surrounding countryside.

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood is likely to remain of interest for local visitors only, owing to its relatively small size. However there is the opportunity for local people to take a greater role in the management of the wood in the future, should there be sufficient interest in developing more of a community woodland site.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Access facilities will, on the whole, be low key and appropriate for this small locally visited site. However a good standard of access provision will be maintained at Sledge Wood: the path network will be kept open for use and the entrances will be accessible and clearly signed. More prominent welcome signage will be maintained at the 2 main entrances off Robins Cross Lane and Hartshorne Road. Wide sunny rides will also be maintained along a large proportion of the path network. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors and neighbours through regular tree safety inspections in high risk zones. Site infrastructure such as the footbridge will also be inspected regularly to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to provide public access which is safe and enjoyable. This will be achieved by:

- Annual management of the main paths, totalling 1.2km
- Annual management of the all entrances and access furniture, including welcome signage, gates and seats.
- Conducting annual tree safety surveys along the roadside boundaries.
- Conducting tree safety surveys along the main path network at least once during each plan period.
- Conducting safety inspections of access infrastructure, such as the footbridge, at least once during each plan period.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	5.24	Oak (pedunculate)	1999	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access	

A broadleaved plantation created in 1999 composed of mainly oak, ash and birch, with willow, rowan, poplar, aspen, holly & hazel contributing as minor species. In the northern half of the wood is a scrub area dominated by gorse, which predates the planting.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2022	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.50	100	50

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.