



Top Ardles 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Top Ardles Wood
Location:	Ravensthorpe
Grid reference:	SP673705, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 141
Area:	4.79 hectares (11.84 acres)
Designations:	Special Landscape Area, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Top Ardles Wood refers to the old field name for this site which was planted in November 2000 and has notable views of the nearby Ravensthorpe reservoir. Grassy paths have been created giving a choice of circular routes around the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Top Ardles Wood was planted up as native broadleaved woodland in November 2000 by volunteers and contractors as part of the Woodland Trust's Millennium projects "Woods on Your Doorstep". The site is an undulating ex-arable site offering notable views of the nearby Ravensthorpe reservoir. The varied topography of the site provides further interest wet flushes and sloping ground

Mature hedgerows runs along the western, northern and eastern boundaries some of these have been previously laid using traditional techniques others will be retained as tall bushy features.

The site was sown in August 2000 with a low maintenance grass mix and the following trees species were then planted: Oak, Ash, Field maple, Hornbeam, woody shrubs along the path edges and woodland margins (Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Guelder rose, Spindle and Damson) with a few Small-leaved lime, Silver birch, Scot's pine (in groves on the higher ground) and Crab apple at a density of 2250 per hectare and planted with 30 - 45cm transplants in sleeves and shrub shelters. An older mature broadleaved plantation woodland abuts the site to the east.

0.5 hectares of hazel and osiers have been planted to be managed as coppice and part of the southern end of the site is maintained as open grassland in order to retain the notable views of the reservoir.

Access from the recreation ground is along an 8 metre wide strip of land along the field edge to the site. This strip is marked with stock proof fencing along with the southern boundary. Grassy paths have been created within the site giving the visitor a choice of circular routes around the wood. Welcome signs and an information board have been erected at the main entrance. Car parking is available in the recreation ground car park, although the gates are not always open.

The name 'Top Ardles Wood' has been chosen locally and refers to the old field name for the site

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access is over the recreation ground which links up with the strip of land acquired by the Trust that skirts the intervening field to the wood. Visitors arriving by car should park in the recreation ground car park off Teeton Road. The gate will be closed but not locked. There is space for at least 4 cars. Please do not park in either The Hollow or Church Gardens. There are no restrictions at the entrance and the paths are generally in level and in good condition. An information board indicates the path network, however the surface can become very wet in places

No public toilets in vicinity

Public transport by bus is available to Ravensthorpe with the nearest stop being about 200m from the wood entrance. For routes and times contact Travel line on www.traveline.org.uk or ring 0871 2002233

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Trust's corporate objective of increasing new native woodland has been achieved by the establishment of broadleaved woodland on this site.

In the long term the main body of the woodland will be managed as high forest. The small area of Hazel/willow coppice will be managed on a traditional coppice rotation (<3yrs Osier and <10yrs hazel) to retain the view and to provide produce for use if required

Appropriate levels of public access will be maintained by management of the paths and path edge trees. Signs, seats and the information boards will be kept clear and visible. An area at the southern end of the wood will be managed as open grassland in order to retain site of the reservoir from view points from that end of the site

Over the wood as a whole there will be three elements:- high forest, coppice woodland and open grassland. In the long term a proportion of deadwood will be retained on the site.

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

Top Ardles Wood has been planted up as part of The Trust's 'Woods on your Doorstep' project. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design and planting. The site is easily accessible from the village. Paths have been created throughout the site and they will be maintained as grassy rides. The large area of open grassland will be cut annually. Welcome signs and an information board have been erected at the main entrance.

Significance

As a Wood On Your Doorstep site it is important site in an area of relatively little publicly accessible open space consisting of semi natural habitat

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

Being so accessible to the local population there is an opportunity to involve the public in the ongoing management of the wood especially with coppicing, as well as community groups such as schools.

Constraints

None to speak of

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

An established broadleaved woodland with informal public access.

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

Ensure the site is signposted from the car park.
Cut grass paths regularly to maintain open path network, including grassland area
Coppice path edge trees as necessary to maintain levels of public access for a category C site

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

The site was planted up as a native broadleaved woodland in November 2000 using species in keeping with the area. Mostly ash oak and field maple

Significance

Increasing new native woodland is one of The Woodland Trust's key objectives, especially in an area of relatively low woodland cover

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

Creation of a new native woodland

Constraints

it's relative small size means that some characteristics of native woodland may not fully develop

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A native broadleaved woodland mimicking a natural woodland in structure and species mix.

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

Monitor health of young trees and act accordingly

5.3 Landscape Value

Description

There are very attractive views across the site of Ravensthorpe reservoir to the north-east from several points in the wood. The reservoir is a very important landscape feature

Significance

To local people who have supported the project, the views are extremely important. Funds would not have been forthcoming if we had not agreed to incorporate the views into the design and presumably future support would also be affected.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

The growth of the trees create the possibilities to enhance the views as the wood changes with the seasons and evolves over time. There is also the opportunity to adapt the coppice cycle to ensure views are retained.

Constraints

Certain view points will be lost as the wood matures

Factors Causing Change

Natural succession to mature woodland

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Views of Ravensthorpe reservoir maintained from seat on edge of recreation ground, Kildonan bungalow and at points along the main ride within the woodland.

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

Coppice hazel and osiers on approximately a 5 year rotation to maintain views and create traditional coppice habitat

Maintain open grassland area by cutting at least annually

Path edge coppice to maintain view if it can be combined with maintaining public access

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	4.22	Ash	2000	High forest		Informal Public Access, Landscape Value, New Native Woodland	
<p>The compartment was an undulating arable field that was sown with a low maintenance grass seed mix in August 2000. Planted up as a native broadleaved woodland using the following species: oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam, small-leaved lime, silver birch, crab apple, scot's pine and woody shrubs (hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, guelder rose, spindle and damson). 30 - 45cm transplants were used in sleeves and shrubshelters at a density of 2250 per hectare. The shrubs planted along the ride edges and woodland margins. The scot's pine planted in 3 groups on the higher ground to reflect the surrounding historic planting in the landscape.</p>							
1b	0.50	Hazel	2000	Coppice		Informal Public Access, Landscape Value, New Native Woodland	
<p>An area of hazel (0.3ha) and osier (0.2ha) coppice. <i>Salix viminalis</i> has been planted on the wetter lower ground.</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.