



Charleycombe 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Charleycombe Wood
Location:	Cornworthy
Grid reference:	SX825559, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 202
Area:	5.01 hectares (12.38 acres)
Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Charleycombe Wood lies in a steep valley immediately to the north of the village of Cornworthy, near Totnes, and is within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The picturesque valley overlooks Bow Creek, which is a tributary of the River Dart, and is surrounded by pasture and arable farms. Small woodlands characteristically occur on the steeper ground throughout the River Dart catchment. Charleycombe Wood is very varied in terrain; from a steep hill with magnificent distant views towards Dartmoor, falling down to a warm and pleasant valley bottom where a stream flows north into Bow Creek. It was planted as broadleaved woodland, dominated by oak and ash, by the community of Cornworthy in December 1999 as part of the Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' project and has established well. It was previously an improved grassland field, on acidic soils, bounded by Devon Banks topped with mature mixed species hedgerows and the occasional standard Oak which have now become part of the woodland. The local community were actively engaged in the design process and this is reflected in the wood. The centre of the wood around the stream was left unplanted to replicate similar woods in the area and also to form the basis of the Millennium Feature. This is an area of open space in the centre of the site that has the form of a natural 'amphitheatre'; the base of this area was lightly levelled to form a meeting point for the community and is now well used. Several benches were also installed at the same time.

2.2 Extended Description

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Management access from the Highway is along a shared narrow farm track, past some pretty cottages. Cattle are often driven along the track and it can be muddy in places at times. The track leads to the south west access point of the wood where there are a number of paths which lead the visitor around the wood, along the stream to the picnic benches and up the steep valley sides to see views across Devon to Dartmoor. Some of the paths can be very slippery in wet weather.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access is available via a public footpath running north along the farm access track from the west end of Cornworthy village, and is sign posted 'Public footpath'. This is part of the Dart Valley Trail, a long distance walk which now incorporates a path through the western edge of Charleycombe Wood. Three access gates are provided along this boundary. The main access is through a kissing gate about 150 metres from the residential road where limited on-street parking is available. The two other access points from the public footpath are a stile at the mid-point and a kissing gate at the furthest end. Within the wood there is a network of permissive grassy paths through the wooded areas. The valley-shaped topography means that most paths are steep in places (apart from the valley bottom) and can be muddy and very slippery at times. There are several crossing points over the stream which is bridged by culverts and also a wooden footbridge.

There is no formal car park but it is possible to park sensitively on the highway within the village, please obey parking restrictions near the footpath that leads to the wood. The wood can then be approached as described above. A public car park is available in Dittisham which is about 2 miles east of Cornworthy.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for Charleycombe Wood is an attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland; a healthy canopy of trees with an understory of woodland shrubs, integrating with other habitats such as the hedges, wide rides and a stream. This will assist in fulfilling the Trust's Objectives of increasing new native woodland cover in the UK, and improving woodland biodiversity. This maturing wood will eventually be managed as high forest on a continuous cover basis.

Located in an attractive village where locals are the principal visitors, Charleycombe Wood will be managed as an important open access area, where the public are welcome. The signs and well-kept paths will all encourage public interest and participation in the woodland; fulfilling the Trust's corporate objective of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland.

The rides and paths will be kept open and mowed as necessary to provide appropriate access and valuable ride side habitats. There will be many wood edge habitats, important for nesting birds, invertebrates and woodland / grassland flora. As the developing canopy closes, rough grass in the planted areas will gradually diminish, as shade loving plants more typical of recent secondary woodland take over. Some ride side shrubs will be coppiced to vary light conditions, improving access and benefiting wildlife.

The open area (amphitheatre), established as the Millennium Feature, should remain as open grassland but will develop into a central 'glade' at the heart of the wood as the trees grow. It will change over time and become increasingly attractive and beneficial to wildlife. As the woodland matures ride and glade edges may be coppiced to allow light in and improve the woods structure for wildlife.

Stream side vegetation may be managed if changes in vegetation require it. Culverts and the bridge will be maintained.

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 around the majority of the site. Three formal entrances exist from the public right of way (Dart Valley Trail) providing access to passing walkers but the site is predominately used by the local community. Benches are positioned around the wood and a welcome sign is situated by the entrance. Paths lead the visitor around the site taking in the stream, open picnic area and views of Devon on the higher edges of the wood. Many of the paths are steep and can become very slippery in wet weather or after heavy usage. The core of the open space area is used for community gatherings. The higher ground provides exceptional views of the local area.

Significance

As part of the WOYD (Woods on Your Doorstep Project) the local community have been involved in acquisition, design and planting the site. The Dart Valley Way goes through the wood. It helps fulfil the Trust's aims of protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future and to Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints - the site is extremely steep in places, limiting access to the higher ground only to physically able visitors.
 Opportunity - Work can be done to create a more level route around the western half of the wood by putting in some steps and re-profiling some of the existing paths.

Factors Causing Change

Canopy closure may affect vegetation growth on the paths and therefore in combination with walkers create bare muddy ground making walking difficult. While the woodland and its paths were designed with the views in mind it is possible that as the woodland matures some of the views may become more limited.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation, on a network of well-maintained paths, predominantly by locals from the Cornworthy area. The natural 'amphitheatre' will be well used by the local community as open space

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

Operational Objective:

Easily accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that a wide range of public frequently enjoy. Entrances, path network and facilities (benches + viewpoint) are appropriate for level and type of use and in line with access category B.

Work Programme:

Maintain paths and open area to ensure they are accessible and easy to use for visitors by cutting 2-3 times per year or as required.

Re-profile some of the paths and install low level steps to provide an easy access circular route around the western half of the wood.

Ensure view and paths remain open by coppicing shrubs on edges where appropriate.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The woodland was planted in 1999 and was designed to have a central area of open space along the valley bottom which includes a levelled picnic area. The open areas are predominantly species poor and some areas have rank nettle, particularly along the stream edge where former dredgings have been dropped. The woodland is made up of 30% English oak, 30% ash and 10% cherry with a mixture of other species making up the rest. The old Devon banks have a natural flora and this is spreading slowly into the wood. The existing improved grassland species will die out as canopy closure takes place providing greater opportunity for the natural woodland flora to increase. The steepness of some of the paths means that although small parts of the wood are rarely visited which will provide a greater value for breeding birds as the woodland continues to develop.

Significance

One of the Trust's corporate objectives is to see an increase in the area of native woodland - this objective is adequately fulfilled in Charleycombe Wood becoming well established. It was also a core aim of the Woods On Your Doorstep project (WOYD) to create new native woodland for future generations

Opportunities & Constraints

Landscape assessment required that the central sub compartment remain unplanted (1B) - this must be maintained as open space; however this is complementary to access provision. The planting has provided the opportunity to create a particularly diverse woodland structure (in line with F.C. Bulletin 112)

Factors Causing Change

Canopy closure will change the vegetation beneath the trees but may create an even aged stand of trees in the short term. Deer browsing may affect natural regeneration in the woodland but browsing levels are currently unknown. Much of the wood is ash and ash die back could have a major effect on the wood in the future. Himalayan balsam could become an issue as it spreads down the river Dart.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats. It will be a mixture of trees, woody shrubs, open space and ground flora. A healthy stream with associated flora and fauna, fully integrating as part of the overall woodland habitat. Ride edges will have a diverse structure providing interest for the visitor and habitat for wildlife. The boundary hedges will effectively become the woodland edge.

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

Operational Objective:

Maturing woodland that is successfully integrating into the existing habitats and landscape. Retain a healthy stream and grassland & wetland habitat.

Work Programme:

Cut and remove nettle from the stream banks.

Control Himalayan balsam where it occurs.

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	5.07	Ash	1999	High forest	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The entire site is varied in terrain falling steeply from a high knoll in the east down to a small stream and rising again to a small plateau area. The area is bounded by mature Devon Hedge and Bank. It was planted [1999] with 30%Oak, 30%Ash and 10% Cherry, the remainder comprising locally native minor trees and shrubs. A small group of willow were planted adjacent to the stream in the SE of the site. A memorial group of pines is planted on the highest point and there are groups of coppice species around the viewpoint areas. The area to the west of the stream was planted by the local community, and the remainder by contractors.

In the valley bottom there is a level area encircled by a natural 'amphitheatre' This and a large linear area [1ha] of open ground around the stream is unplanted and consists of improved grassland and wetland species.

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.