



Cuttle Brook 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Cuttle Brook Wood
Location:	Temple Balsall
Grid reference:	SP200759, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 139
Area:	6.85 hectares (16.93 acres)
Designations:	Green Belt

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Cuttle Brook has a number of paths providing a variety of circular walks and views over adjoining fields and towards Springfield House. Access is from the B4101, part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways, where you'll find information boards.

2.2 Extended Description

Cuttle Brook Wood was planted in February 2000 as part of the Woodland Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' project, which created 200 new community woods nationally to mark the Millennium. The project was supported by the Millennium Commission with funds from the National Lottery and this wood was one of 20 sites also sponsored by Homebase Ltd., as part of the 'Homebase Woodlands for the Millennium' scheme.

The site is 7.12 ha in area and lies mid-way between Knowle and Basall Common on the B4101 Kenilworth Road. This forms part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways. The new wood is opposite Springfield House, presently a school and Environmental Study Centre for children with special educational needs. It also adjoins an existing secondary woodland to the east, once a Victorian pleasure garden and boating lake associated with Springfield House, now a nature reserve managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The site was named by the community after the Cuttle Brook watercourse that runs along the sites eastern boundary.

The site was previously an arable field and was grass seeded prior to tree planting over 6.76ha and has slight south/south-east slope. A narrow strip of mature woodland extending to 0.1 ha exists along the western roadside boundary. The remaining 0.26ha of the site, which includes most of the northern roadside boundary, is owned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council who purchased it in advance of a proposed road re-alignment scheme. This road improvement is currently on hold, and the Woodland Trust is therefore managing this area and the roadside hedge by agreement, as part of the wood.

The woodland was designed following consultation with the site neighbours, including the Environmental Study Centre and the Wildlife Trust, and local people who took part in a public planting event in February 2000.

The design for Cuttle Brook Wood is based on the site's relationship in the landscape to Springfield House, with the north-west corner comprising group plantings in an open setting, echoing those around the House. This fragmented edge to the wood, complemented by the open ground set aside for the road re-alignment, allows views into the wood for passing traffic, as well as retaining views out from Springfield House along the wide main ride towards a mature turkey oak on the southern boundary. This edge treatment also has the effect of disguising the linear corridor of the overhead powerline, which follows a second ride towards the south-eastern corner of the wood. The rides provide a variety of circular walks for visitors and views out over adjoining fields, into the neighbouring woodland and back towards the façade of Springfield House. These footpaths can be accessed via entrances located on the boundary with the B4101 Kenilworth Road and also via an access point on the eastern boundary, leading to the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve. During wetter months the footpaths on the site can become quite soft and wet underfoot. The wood's Millennium Feature, a circular brick seat built from bricks salvaged from the byre that once stood in the field corner, is set at the intersection of the main rides, affording views in all directions, with the theme of looking backwards to the past and forwards to the future.

The main tree species are ash with oak, silver birch, field maple and rowan, giving way to alder and crack willow on slightly lower and wetter ground adjoining the existing secondary woodland to the east. Scots Pine and Corsican Pine are present in the group plantings opposite Springfield House to again strengthen the visual link with this dominant feature of the local landscape. Shrub species include hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose, holly and purging buckthorn, planted predominantly at the ride edges. Due to the age of the woodland and previous land use the ground flora presently consists of grasses, which dominate areas, along with mosses and small pockets of bramble.

The key features at this site are Informal Public Access and New Native Woodland.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The main management and pedestrian access to the site is on the northern boundary with the B4101, Kenilworth Road, which is part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways. Cycle stands and an information board have also been installed at this point.

A second field gate and pedestrian squeeze post entrance has been installed in the roadside hedge opposite the public footpath that meets the Kenilworth Road just below the entrance to Springfield House School. This access point is into that part of the field that is not in Woodland Trust ownership, but the access has been installed with the consent of Solihull MBC.

Creation of public access from/to the adjoining Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Reserve has recently been agreed and can be found in the far south-eastern corner of the site where a small culvert allows passage over the brook.

Public access is not presently available from Cuttle Brook Wood into the adjoining Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Reserve, although the creation of such a link will be sought in the future.

Cuttle Brook wood is located off the B4101 road between Balsall Common and Knowle. It is equidistance from both. There is a public right of way network throughout the landscape that links the site to a wider area for exploration. Within the site the circular route is flat and even but not surfaced. The footpaths through the site can become quite wet during the winter months and soft underfoot.

There is no parking available at the site and nearby verge parking is not present either.

There is a bus stop 1 mile away at Warwick Rd, Solihull B93 0EB (near Watery Lane), South-West of the site. Further information can be found via ww.diamondbuses.com/services. Service 88 Solihull to Balsall Common.

Information correct as of 07/04/2015.

There is a bus stop less than a kilometre away at nearby Temple Balsall: FEN END RD, Bey, Balsall St, Temple Balsall. Service Number 197 provided by Central Buses stops there.

There is no information on public conveniences within 5 miles of Cuttlebrook wood

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In 50 years time, Cuttle Brook Wood will be a structurally and species diverse native broadleaved woodland. There will be a mix of ages and structures within the wooded areas. The site will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation throughout. It will serve to compliment the landscape associated with Springfield House, which is adjacent.

In accordance with the Trusts Woodland Management Approach the trees will be allowed to grow and develop as far as possible through natural processes with exception of essential tree safety work and possibly some and ride edge coppicing in selected areas to enhance visitor enjoyment.

Paths will be cut and maintained so as to allow for easy access. Ride edge coppice work in selected locations will be undertaken to enhance visitor enjoyment. Use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly. Public safety will be assessed regularly and tree safety inspections made. The paths and boundaries are areas for review. 0.26ha at the northern most part of the site has been purchased for highway improvements. These are currently on hold but the Trust will continue to manage the grass and hedgerows as per the rest of the site until road works commence.

A close working relationship with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will be encouraged to co-ordinate the management of the two woods where this might lead to the enhancement of the landscape, visitor enjoyment or the biodiversity of the sites.

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

Cuttle Brook is situated between Knowle and Balsall Common on the B4101. Parking is difficult and great care should be taken on this busy road. Visitor access to the site is available from the two pedestrian squeeze gap entrances off the B4101, Kenilworth Road. This road forms a part of the Meriden Gap and Kenilworth Cycleways (route 52) and therefore cycle stands have been installed at the main entrance along with an information board.

An additional entrance is also located between Cuttle Brook Wood and the adjoining Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve to the east via a small culvert allowing passage over the brook.

Within the site, a network of mown grass rides and areas of open space provide a series of circular walks and lead to the site's Millennium Feature, a circular seat built from bricks salvaged from the demolished byre that once stood in Cpt 1a.

Significance

Cuttle Brook Wood provides an important area for informal recreation for the local communities of Temple Balsall and Knowle, as well as a resource for the adjoining Springfield House School. The creation of new native woodlands that are open for public enjoyment cover core objectives of the Woodland Trust.

Opportunities & Constraints

With the recent addition of a new entrance allowing access in/from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve, further opportunities to work together to enhance visitor enjoyment and access to the both sites should be perused.

The proposed road re-alignment scheme, if undertaken in the future, will include new fencing and gating arrangements along the line of the legal boundary, as part of the accommodation works. The opportunity should be taken to seek enhanced vehicular access to the wood, including the provision of a pull-in or layby that might provide visitor parking.

Factors Causing Change

Proposed road re-alignment scheme.
Partnership working with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Open access will be retained throughout the site. The 1050m of grass paths and entrances will be cut during the summer months to keep them clear and well defined. Welcome signs and an information board will be maintained for visitors use at the entrance. Regular inspections will be made to check the visitor facilities.

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

To regularly inspect and maintain three two entrances to the site with any repairs undertaken as necessary the two pedestrian squeeze gaps; associated post and rail fencing; two management access gates and removable bollards; four cycle stands; two WOYD Welcome signs and the WOYD information board to ensure easy and welcoming access for visitors.

To inspect and maintain the Millennium Feature seat.

To mow all rides, glades and open areas to areas to a minimum width of 3-4 metres (X number of times a year) and on the last cut of the year to their full width.

Ride side coppicing where beneficial for visitor access and enjoyment and habitat enhancement to be determined through KF and woodland condition observations.

Tree safety inspections, Zone A (24 months) and Zone B (36 months).

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

This is predominantly native broadleaf woodland planted as part of the 'Woods On Your Doorstep' initiative and adjoins an existing secondary woodland, a Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve on the eastern boundary, as well as the parkland landscape around Springfield House to the north. Some Scots and corsican pines have been incorporated in groups within the woodland, to mirror the latter.

Trees have been planted in species groups with shrubs and minor trees around the margins and ride sides. Trees are predominantly ash, oak and birch and are protected against rabbits in 0.75m Sleeves.

Alder is naturally generating at the eastern end in the damper area near the Cuttle Brook. This could engulf planted trees and lead to a loss of diversity in this area.

Significance

Cuttle Brook Wood effectively extends the adjoining secondary wet woodland to the east, and has been designed to complement the Victorian plantings around Springfield House. As it matures, it will provide an increasingly important physical and visual link between these existing elements of the landscape. One of the core objectives of the Woodland Trust is to create new native woodlands.

Opportunities & Constraints

This woodland has the opportunity to both enhance and expand the wet woodland nature reserve to the east managed by the Warks Wildlife Trust. The wider expanse of woodland should prove more attractive to wildlife and increase bio-diversity.

Additionally, the new woodland will act as an important landscape contribution adjacent to the impressive Springfield House. Woodland rides capture and frame the house from within the wood and will provide views out through the wood from the House.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive alder

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure the establishment of a predominantly native broadleaf area to high forest as a visual and physical extension of the adjoining area of secondary woodland and the landscape surrounding Springfield House.

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

To carry out an annual cut of the existing roadside hedge.

To monitor establishment of planting to ensure this continues to develop and mature successfully. Maintain deadwood habitat at a safe distance from public access areas such as footpaths and entrances.

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	0.10	Mixed broadleaves	1920	Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Green Belt
<p>A narrow shelterbelt of mature trees, mainly turkey oak (<i>Quercus cerris</i>), adjoining the road at the north-western corner of the site. Holly forms the main under-story. An old barn was demolished when the Trust purchased the site for safety reasons. It stood at the western end of this Cpt.</p>							
2a	6.76	Mixed native broadleaves	2000	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Green Belt
<p>Cpt 2 forms the main body of the site. This was planted in Feb 2000 with ash, oak and birch forming the main canopy species. Willow was planted at the damper eastern end and this is now being complimented by an impressive quantity of alder natural regeneration. This is also growing within the path area.</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.