



# Hazel Pear Wood

## Management Plan 2016-2021

---

## MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

### ITEM Page No.

Introduction

Plan review and updating

Woodland Management Approach

Summary

1.0 Site details

2.0 Site description

2.1 Summary Description

2.2 Extended Description

3.0 Public access information

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 Long term policy

5.0 Key Features

5.1 Informal Public Access

5.2 Secondary Woodland

6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Glossary

### MAPS

Access

Conservation Features

Management

## 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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](http://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

<b>Site name:</b>	Hazel Pear Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Acton Bridge
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SJ600746, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 117
<b>Area:</b>	2.70 hectares (6.67 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Community Forest

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

Hazel Pear Wood was planted in 1998/99 as part of the Woodland Trust's Millennium Woodland On Your Doorstep (WOYD) programme. It was designed and planted by people in the local community. At the heart of the wood there is a standing stone with a time capsule buried beneath it. The wood's name comes from a local variety of pear called the Hazel Pear and twelve of these trees were planted throughout the site.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Hazel Pear Wood is a small new native broadleaved woodland covering 2.70 hectares, created as part of the Woodland Trust's "Woods on Your Doorstep" (WOYD) project. It is located in the village of Acton Bridge near Weaverham in North Cheshire. The surrounding landscape is predominantly improved grassland pasture for livestock grazing interspersed with small wooded copses and hedgerows.

The land was previously improved pasture used for grazing and was planted in early 2000 and is part of the Mersey Forest. It was purchased with the help and support of the Millennium Commission, the Sainsbury Family Trust, Homebase, the Mersey Forest and through donations from local residents. Local people were involved in the design and subsequent planting of the new woodland.

The site is roughly square, low lying flat ground with clay soil. It has ditches along the northern and eastern boundaries which can result in the ground being wet and even waterlogged at times.

It was planted in three blocks covering just over 2 hectares with approximately a quarter of the site left as grass path rides and open ground. The trees planted were native broadleaves comprising oak, common alder, ash, silver birch, rowan, willow and woody shrubs including hawthorn, hazel, dog rose and blackthorn.

There is an old marl pit pond in the north western corner of the site and a wetland scrape that was created by the Woodland Trust on the eastern boundary with an area of unmanaged grassland/scrub around it. A Millennium feature of a standing stone with a time capsule buried beneath it was created near the centre of the wood and twelve Hazel Pear trees were planted in groups of three next to footpaths and glades.

Public access is available via a network of grassy path rides around the wood, which can become muddy in places during the winter. The wood is used daily by local people, but has relatively low numbers of visitors.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Hazel Pear Wood is located in Acton Bridge in North Cheshire. Public access into the wood is from Station Road (B5153) through a metal kissing gate.

There is no parking at the wood but about 200 metres further west along Station Road is the Hazel Pear pub which has a car park.

The nearest bus stop is on Hill Top Road which is the next turning on the right if heading north west away from the site entrance about 5 minutes walk. From the bus stop head south to the junction with Station Road, turn left and the entrance to the site is a short distance up on the left hand side, this journey is all on pavements.

There is a train station at Acton Bridge which is a few minutes walk from the wood and is located on the Hill Top Road / Station Road Junction.

There are no public toilets in the vicinity although the Hazel Pear pub has toilets for customers.

For more travel information visit the Traveline website on <http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm>

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention is that Hazel Pear Wood will be managed as high forest of mixed native broadleaves with diverse structure, species and age composition and sufficient natural regeneration to ensure the perpetuity of the woodland habitat. It will contain an increasing volume of dead wood, both standing and fallen, which serve as important habitat for invertebrates.

The wood will be allowed to grow and develop naturally as much as possible allowing areas of unmanaged grassland to become transitional habitats and scrub, and the pond and wetland areas will be managed by minimal intervention.

Management operations will be focused on maintaining public access, tree safety and for biodiversity. Some silvicultural intervention will be necessary to ensure the wood has a diverse mix of species to make it as resilient as possible to cope with future pressures from climate change, pests and tree diseases

Public access will continue to be provided at a level appropriate for this rural site and visitor numbers. The public access points, signage and path rides will be maintained regularly to ensure the site is welcoming for visitors.



## 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 to the wood is from Station Road through a metal kissing gate with a management gate to the side. There is approximately 600 metres of grass path rides around the site and 0.7 hectares of open space and two ponds/ wetland habitats (one of which has been extended and the other was a new wetland scrape created by the Woodland Trust). The wood has a Millennium Feature comprising a standing stone with a time capsule buried beneath it containing information about the local area and people. There is no parking at the wood, however car parking is available at the Hazel Pear pub which is less than 200 metres walk away. The site has fairly low levels of visitors and is used mainly by local dog walkers.

#### Significance

The site affords new opportunities for quiet informal recreation in the local area where few public footpaths and open spaces exist for people to enjoy. It is part of the Woodland Trusts Millennium project Woods On Your Doorstep (WOYD) and part of the Mersey Community Forest which aims to improve the management and public access to woodland in the North Cheshire region. The wood provides opportunities for the public to access and enjoy nature close to where they live and as it matures Hazel Pear Wood will become a significant local landscape feature.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The small size and limited structural variety at the wood means that opportunities for community involvement are limited. The Trust will continue to foster an interest and sense of ownership amongst neighbours and local residents, and maintain close links with local organisations including the Mersey Forest to promote use of the new wood. The lack of on site parking means that it is only likely to be used by people that live close by and can walk there.

#### Factors Causing Change

The site is situated on clay soils which mean the paths are poorly drained and frequently can be wet or waterlogged in the winter which can lead to new paths being created to avoid the wet areas. Growth of trees will encroach along path rides limiting views and overtime make access more difficult.

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the present levels of public access with appropriate signage, one access point and suitably maintained footpaths for visitors to feel welcome and enjoy visiting the wood.

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

The short term objectives during the plan period are to:

- Maintain entrances, signage and fencing.
- Cut/ maintain the grass path rides annually to maintain good access for visitors.
- Coppice trees along edges of paths to improve/ maintain public access/ sight lines.
- Remove litter & fly tipping.

## 5.2 Secondary Woodland

### Description

Hazel Pear Wood was created in 2000 on land that was previously improved pasture. An area of 2.08 hectares was planted as new native woodland and 0.62 hectares left as open ground. The planting mix comprised oak, common alder, ash, silver birch, rowan, willow and woody shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, dog rose, and blackthorn).

There is an old marl pit pond which was restored and extended in 2000 and a new wetland scrape was created at the same time.

The boundaries comprise mixed thorn hedgerows with occasional mature and semi-mature oak, alder and ash. The species composition and age of the incorporated trees suggest that the hedges are quite old and may be a source of wildflower seed as well as being valuable wildlife havens.

### Significance

The new woodland provides a landscape feature and wildlife habitat in an area which has little woodland and across Cheshire there is less than 4% woodland cover. It provides a valuable green space for the local community to visit and experience nature close to where they live.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Tree establishment has been very successful with ash, birch, alder and willow doing particularly well whilst growth of oak has been slower. Due to the uniform age and structure of the woodland there is an opportunity through selective thinning to create a more varied structure, age and species composition and at the same time increase the amount of deadwood habitat on site.

Opportunities to involve local people / volunteers to help with woodland management and create a greater sense of community ownership at the site.

### Factors Causing Change

Growth of trees overtime will lead to canopy closure and open ground areas will develop into transitional scrub habitat if not managed.

The pond/ wetland will silt up over time and mature trees around the pond will result in shading of the pond.

Tree disease - Chalara will result in the loss of ash trees in the wood which would have a significant impact on the mix of species.

Mammal damage to trees - rabbits and grey squirrels are causing some damage by browsing and bark stripping of young trees although minor at present and not having a significant impact.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create a high forest of native broadleaves managed predominantly as a recreational and landscape feature. This will involve maintaining a mix of species, diverse structure and age classes, with shrub layer and woodland ground flora. The volume of fallen and standing deadwood should increase over time.

Areas of unmanaged grassland will be left to develop naturally into scrub and the pond / wetland areas will be managed through minimal intervention.

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

The short term objectives during the plan period are to:

- Monitor the health of trees as part of the woodland condition assessment for any diseases, pests or other threats to the wood.
- Carry out coppicing/ thinning by volunteers to create a more varied structure, encourage natural regeneration and develop community involvement in the management of the wood.
- Maintain the roadside hedge for public access and highway visibility.
- Minimal management work is planned for the ponds unless necessary for public safety.

---

## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
------	--------------	-------------	--------

## APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.70	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest

2.08 hectares (74%) was planted with mixed native broadleaves consisting of Oak (35%), Common Alder (20%), Ash (15%), Silver birch (10%), Rowan (5%), Willow (5%) and woody shrubs (10%). Shrub planting consisted of Hazel (5%), Hawthorn (2%), Dog Rose (2%) and Blackthorn (1%). The Oaks were planted in blocks of approximately 50 trees, the Ash and Alder in blocks of 30, and Rowan, Birch and Willow in blocks of 15. There were also 12 Hazel pear trees planted in 4 groups of 3 around the path edges and glades. Prior to planting the site was seeded with a low vigour fescue mix which remains the dominant plant in the herb layer.

The remaining 0.62 hectares (26%) of the site was left as open ground including path rides, glades and unmanaged grassland.

There is an old marl pit pond located in the north western corner of the site which was restored in 2000 and a new wetland scrape created at the same time near the eastern boundary.

All boundaries are defined by hedgerows. The southern boundary abuts Station Road and offers the only management and public access point. The north west boundary abuts a stable and small paddock, and the remaining boundaries are adjacent to improved pasture used for grazing. A drainage ditch runs along most of the length of the northern and eastern boundaries.

## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2016	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	40	2
2016	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	40	2
2016	1a	Coppice	0.80	4	3
2017	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.05	20	1
2017	1a	Coppice	0.25	12	3
2018	1a	Coppice	0.25	12	3
2019	1a	Coppice	0.25	12	3
2021	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.25	8	2
2023	1a	Thin	2.00	5	10
2033	1a	Thin	2.00	5	10

## 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.