



# Meridian Wood

## Management Plan 2016-2021

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## 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 New Native 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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.

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## 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>	Meridian Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Bluntisham
<b>Grid reference:</b>	TL361749, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 142
<b>Area:</b>	1.00 hectares (2.47 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

An attractive Millennium planted woodland on the edge of the village of Bluntisham. A 'circular' footpath takes you to the southern end of the wood where there are distant views over the valley of the Great Ouse. Here there is also a cleaver sundial set out in a grassed area.

### 2.2 Extended Description

A Small rectangular planted native broadleaved woodland site situated on a low hill on edge of the Cambridgeshire fens in Huntingdonshire District. Surrounded by arable fields on 3 sides, with an active orchard (apple) over the road to the north.

Meridian wood, so called because of its proximity to the meridian line, was planted for the millennium as part of the WTs Woods on your doorstep program. The "Millennium feature" is a human sundial in the southern part of the site. A Large proportion of the site has been left unplanted due to underground and overhead services, which also accounts for the high proportion of low growing trees and shrubs in the planting mix. A Small area to the north of the site is planted with local varieties of fruit trees, including Cambridge Gage.

The key features are:

- New native woodland
- Informal public access.

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## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Located some 100m to the east of Bluntisham on the Heath road. Parking very restricted near to entrance to the wood. No roadside footpath from village. Internal paths are level and even in wet weather do not often become muddy. Nearest bus stop is in the centre of the village some 1km from the wood entrance. For bus routes and time visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) or call Traveline on 08712002233. Access via a kissing gate, not wheel chair friendly

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Fully established native broadleaved woodland comprising a range of native species and displaying more than one age class.

With close ties to the community, the wood will be regularly enjoyed by local visitors for quite informal recreation, with access provision appropriate for level use.

## 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

Has a very good view to the south in a low-lying area not renowned for the views. Close enough to the village for visitors to walk and the path network within the site makes good use of the space.

#### Significance

An oasis of accessible green space in an area of intensive arable farmland.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

##### Constraints

Small and narrow site with only one entrance.

Not yet connected to any public paths

##### Opportunities

Potential for expansion of wood or agreement to connect to nearby path.

#### Factors Causing Change

scrub growth narrowing the paths. Plum suckers from the hedge row creeping in over the accessible open space.

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

Meridian wood will be open, safe and easy to access on foot and be regularly enjoyed by local people who value and care for the site.

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

To maintain site as an area of open public access, with ride system cut to a minimum of 2m to allow unhindered access for the public, areas of open space will not be allowed to scrub up with natural regeneration. Entrances kept in a presentable and tidy condition at all times, with clear signage in line with current WT brand and standards. Visual inspection by SM every 2 years, action as required.



## 5.2 New Native Woodland

### Description

The woodland was planted in 2000 with a native broadleaved species mix with help and support from local people. The trees have become established with an average to height of 4m and continue developed steadily.

### Significance

Cambridgeshire is the least wooded county in England (2015) and local land use is dominated by intensively managed arable farmland. Meridian provides a small island refuge for a wildlife and people alike.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity:  
to create further native broadleaved woodland with open public access close to Bluntisham. Hedge rows provide some connectivity for wildlife.

Constraints:  
very small island of woodland.  
Overhead power lines and underground services limiting the extent of woodland on site and species choice.

### Factors Causing Change

Climate change - pests and diseases.  
alterations in surrounding land use/ farming practice.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Broadleaved woodland with a variety of species and ages of trees, resilient in the face of climate change. The wood to include some open space and edge habitat to maximise wildlife value and aesthetic appearance.

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

The trees will be allowed to develop naturally, management only to support natural processes or for safety reasons. Edge shrubs and hazel on a medium length coppice rotation (between 8 and 12 years dependent on growth rates) to encourage a varied structure. This will be carried out by individuals and/or groups from the local community, with mutual agreement of SM and Long standing Volunteer Warden. Visual inspection of tree health by SM every 2 years, paying attention to coppice areas and how the wood is responding. Alterations in management to be discussed with Vol-warden and implemented as required.

The hedge making up the eastern boundary should be laid in this plan period, and any gaps filled with \*appropriate species, to maintain a continuous and manageable boundary in the future. Rabbit protection (cane and spiral guard) will be required on all planting, and a 1m weed free radius maintained for no less than 3 years. \*Species should include field maple, hawthorn and blackthorn.

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## 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	0.88	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest	Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Narrow strip of planting dominated by native broadleaved shrubs (guelder rose, hazel, buckthorn, Wayfaring tree, field maple, dog wood, Crab apple, but with small proportion of mixed broadleaved trees - Ash, oak, wild service, silver birch, towards the western boundary of the wood. Criss-crossed by underground water mains and one overhead power line. A strip of land down the eastern boundary has been left as open ground. In the southern end a human sundial has been constructed</p>							
1b	0.14	Mixed native broadleaves	2000	Non-wood habitat		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>Small area at the northern end of the site planted as a small orchard of locally occurring fruit trees including Cambridge Gage Plum. Hedged on its western edge.</p>							

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**Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)**

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2016	1a	Coppice	0.05	40	2
2017	1a	Coppice	0.05	60	3
2019	1a	Coppice	0.05	60	3
2020	1a	Coppice	0.05	60	3
2021	1a	Coppice	0.05	60	3

## 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.