



Danson's Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Danson's Wood
Location:	Whitchurch
Grid reference:	SJ523418, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 117
Area:	4.83 hectares (11.94 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Danson's Wood was acquired and planted by the Trust in early 2001 with a mixture of native broadleaves and contains a small pond. There is a pleasant circular walk through the wood and several paths allow you to explore the site.

2.2 Extended Description

Danson's Wood is a small and isolated but well used woodland creation site. Just over 5ha in size it lies to the west of Whitchurch. The woods south-west boundary runs adjacent to the Shropshire Union Canal. Other adjacent land use is predominantly pasture with small pockets of planted woodland (p2000).

Before the land was acquired and planted by the Trust, it formed part of a larger holding known as Danson's Farm. In early 2001 the Trust planted the site as part of the 'Woods on Your Doorstep' millennium project. A species mixture of native broadleaves including Oak, Ash, Alder, Field Maple and Wild Cherry were chosen mirroring those found locally. Shrub and field layer development is variable across the site but mostly limited to the path and the planted woodland edges where light levels are higher. Other natural features on site include three large veteran Oaks that predate the woodland planting, a semi mature hedge following the line of the track/Public Footpath which bisects the site in a NE-SW direction. And a small pond in the eastern portion of the wood.

Danson's Wood slopes gently to the south-west and contains a number of unusual undulations and hollows which are thought to be the result of land use in the 1800's as borrow pits in connection with a nearby former brick works. The site is easily accessible via the public footpath and there are two smaller circular routes leading off this allowing visitors to explore the site further.

Parking nearby is very difficult as there is no official parking here. Public access is by means of the existing public footpath leading to and across the site [FP81]. The access point to the west of the site is open with no estate works e.g. no stile, kissing gate etc. Access is also available on foot from the public highway across a private track and through a squeeze point.

The key features for this site are:

Informal Public Access
New native Woodland

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Nearest town Whitchurch approximately a mile from the centre of the town. The site is accessed direct off the A41 through a Public Footpath entrance point (squeeze post) on the sites eastern boundary which runs through the site leaving at a further public footpath entrance point at the south-western corner. There is a nice circular walk through the wood which is a little steep in places and can get quite boggy especially on the lower slopes against the canal. There is no parking available nearby

Nearest bus stop - approx ½ mile away Chemistry Road, Whitchurch.

Nearest railway station - Whitchurch - approx 1.5 miles away.

Nearest public toilet - Whitchurch town centre approx 1 mile away.

You can also try www.transportdirect.info or www.traveline.org.uk on the internet for the most up to date details for public transport in the area.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In 50 years time, Danson's Wood will be a species diverse, well-structured native broadleaf high forest woodland. The site will have well developed shrub and field layers.

At present, Danson's Wood lacks structural diversity as the majority of the tree cover is as a result of woodland creation/planting undertaken in one year (p2000). As the woodland develops and matures, intervention will be required to ensure a broad range of tree species are maintained across the site long term. In the absence of this, one or two more competitive species e.g. ash, will become dominant out-competing less vigour tree species and in doing so making the wood less resilient and robust in the face of threats such as climate change, pollution, pests and diseases.

The Veteran Oaks within Danson's Wood will be retained and the trees around them managed appropriately to ensure these older trees are kept alive for as long as possible. Ancient and veteran trees that are very old, or, if younger, already have the cavities and dead wood of ancient trees, support many species that need the very special conditions such trees provide. Many of these specialist species are already rare and becoming rarer still as we lose old trees and deadwood from our landscapes. It is therefore, vital to retain and care for ancient and veteran trees to ensure the survival of the species that depend upon them.

The site will remain fully accessible for people to enjoy for informal recreation. Paths will be maintained and the use of the site will be monitored and provisions for informal recreation reviewed accordingly.

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

Danson's Wood is accessible via the Public Footpath network and has a range of additional rides and paths throughout the site. The site gently slopes to the south-west. There are no surfaced routes.

Significance

The site is close to the town of Whitchurch and is easily accessible on foot linking into surrounding footpath network. Danson's Wood was created as part of the Millennium Project Woodland Trusts 'Woods On Your Doorstep'. From the very beginning, the local community have been encouraged to feel a sense of ownership towards the wood and to participate in its development. The use of nearly all Woodland Trust owned sites for quiet, informal public recreation forms a core to the Woodland Trusts vision for the future. Managed for perpetuity as part of a larger mosaic of habitats, Danson's Wood will attract (over time) a variety of permanent and transient flora and fauna making the site an ideal location for observing wildlife and gradual changes in local biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:-

Site can become waterlogged and saturated near the base of the slope by the canal.
There is no parking available nearby.

Opportunities:-

The site is quite well used by local people with the majority of visitors appearing to arrive on foot via the public footpath network.

Factors Causing Change

Change in type and frequency of site visits.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A well maintained easily accessible choice of routes allowing visitors to explore the site.

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

Rides, paths and main entrances to be maintained. There will be a minimum of two ride cuts a year to the Woodland Trusts standard path and entrance cutting specification as the site is very used and the grass grows particularly vigorously at this site.

Due to the trees establishing and developing so successfully, a number of path sections have now become narrow, particularly against the canal making them increasingly difficult to negotiate. As such, selected sections of ride edge coppicing will be undertaken to widen these pinch points to ensure they remain passable to visitors.

Ride edge coppicing locations will be identified through site monitoring and included as part of the annual estate management contract during the plan period to ensure paths are maintained to an acceptable width and remain welcoming and inviting to visitors..

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

A native broadleaved woodland on a 5 hectare former arable site forming a feature in the landscape as well as enhancing the environmental value and providing additional wildlife habitats of high nature conservation value. The existing soil conditions on site and native species growing nearby dictated the planting design. Trees including English Oak, Ash, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch, Gean and other mixed broadleaves were planted along with shrubs including Hazel, Hawthorn, Guelder Rose, Dogwood and Spindle emulating NVC woodland Type W8 (Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland with Dogs Mercury).

Significance

The creation of new native broadleaved woodland is an aim of the Woodland Trust and has also been identified as a priority by the Government in The England Forestry Strategy. The juxtaposition of Danson's Wood within a landscape regionally poor in woodland, and near an area of high population means that the wood helps deliver national and regional forestry strategy goals, and the Woodland Trusts own core objectives of "restoring and improving biodiversity - increasing public awareness in woodland" and "creating new native woodland".

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:-

The site lends itself well to the successful establishment of new native woodland.

Constraints:-

The site can become waterlogged and saturated near the base of the slope by the canal.

Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The establishment of a species diverse, well structured native broadleaved woodland.

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

Although the overall establishment of trees following planting in 2000 has been very successful, some species e.g. ash and willow are now out-competing and over-topping less vigorous and less competitive species such as Oak, Field maple and Glean. Many of the latter are now struggling to survive due to the lack of light. To negate this effect and ensure as broad a species range as possible is maintained, selective thinning to favour the retention and development of species other than Ash will be undertaken over the next plan period. Stems with best vigour and form will be selected for retention.

1a - 2020 - selective thin approx. 1ha

1a - 2021 - selective thin approx. 1ha

1a - 2022 - selective thin approx. 1ha

1a - 2023 - selective thin approx. 1ha

1a - 2020 - halo thin around three veteran oak trees due to the dense shade now being cast by the planted trees around them. The heavy shading from surrounding trees is severely limiting the amount of light received by these veteran trees and without intervention, the veteran will eventually die through lack of light. The halo thinning will be undertaken very gradually in a series of stages to avoid sudden changes in the light and moisture regime around each tree. This first stage will create a slight gap between foliage and nearby trees with subsequent halo thins dependent on the successive density and growth of nearby trees thereafter.

As longer term establishment of trees is being threatened by the increasing threat from squirrel damage at this site, control to reduce their density will also be considered. The work will be undertaken in coordination with the adjacent small woodland owner who's planting stock has also suffered acutely from the effects of squirrel damage.

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	5.03	Ash	2001	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

Formerly an area of grazing planted with a mixture of native broadleaves in February 2001. Also contains Conservation feature C1 (mature oak trees) and C2 (pond).

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.