



# Moss Leach Wood

## Management Plan 2015-2020

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## THE WOODLAND TRUST

### INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

### PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](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.

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## 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>      | Moss Leach Wood                     |
| <b>Location:</b>       | Preston                             |
| <b>Grid reference:</b> | SD544339, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 102 |
| <b>Area:</b>           | 1.61 hectares (3.98 acres)          |
| <b>Designations:</b>   | Scheduled Ancient Monument          |

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

This site consists of two narrow strips of woodland to the west and east of Midgery Lane in Fulwood, Preston. They were created by the Central Lancashire New Town Development Corporation as structure planting for the development of this part of east Preston.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Moss Leach can be found in Fulwood, Preston and consists of approximately 2.2 hectares of secondary broadleaved woodland. The site borders pasture fields to the north, a large industrial unit to the south, the M6 Motorway to the east and a housing estate to the west. It is part of a cluster of Woodland Trust sites in this area including Midgery Wood, Fernyhalgh Wood & Masons Wood.

The whole site is flat apart from Cromwell's Mound and lies on poorly drained clay soil. Moss Leach brook flows along the northern boundary of the site just outside Woodland Trust ownership.

The woodland was planted in the early 1980s by the Commission For New Towns with mixed broadleaved species such as field maple, oak, ash, cherry, willow, hawthorn, hazel, dogwood and spindle. The woodland also contains some older hedgerow trees in the form of oak, ash, cherry and alder. Secondary woodland is a key feature of the wood.

The site was transferred to The Woodland Trust by the development corporation as part of a package of several sites in 1996. Prior to planting the previous land use was mixed farming. Cromwell's Mound is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and is located on the northern boundary of the wood. It is a Civil War fieldwork and remains in good condition, a rare surviving example of a monument of this class which is associated with the Second Civil War of 1648 and is another of the sites key features.

Both compartments have informal access in the form of an unsurfaced grass path and a public right of way which runs through the woodland for approximately 500 metres. The path network is well used by local people for informal recreation and links Moss Leach to other Woodland Trust sites nearby such as Midgery Wood and is one of the site key features.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Moss Leach is located in the suburb of Fulwood which is around six miles from Preston city centre. Both compartments of Moss Leach can be accessed from Midgery Lane; there is no vehicular access to Midgery Lane due to a locked vehicle barrier. Midgery Lane can be found to the north of Oliver's Place which is a small road which lies to the east of Eastway. Proceed down Midgery Lane for around 200 yards, the entrance to compartment 2 is on the right and is accessed through a kissing gate. The entrance to compartment one is approximately fifteen yards further on to the left and is accessed through a pedestrian squeeze stile. The footpath network at Moss Leach is unsurfaced and level, it can become muddy and slippery when wet.

Parking is available on nearby local roads such as Oliver's Place but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: Is located at Asda Superstore, Eastway, Fulwood which is around half a mile away from the wood.

Nearest bus stop: Located at Oliver's Place, which is approximately 200 metres away from the wood. Oliver's Place is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) or phone 0870 608 2 608

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Moss Leach will be managed as a mixed broadleaved, predominantly native high forest under a minimum intervention management regime. Both native and non native regeneration will be accepted within the woodland. Gaps created by trees gradually reaching senescence, or by trees been felled for safety reasons will be filled by natural regeneration. The woodland will require little active management other than ensuring that natural regeneration levels remain adequate. Periodic thinning will also take place approximately once every 10 years where the site borders the M6 motorway & footpaths for safety reasons. We will retain older trees of any species across the whole site as long as safety allows.

The open area around Cromwell's Mound must be maintained so as to retain the integrity of this scheduled ancient monument.

Moss Leach is part of a patchwork of similar woods established or retained by the New Town development corporation, which now form a network of opportunities for recreation which will be maintained for the enjoyment of local people.



## 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 Secondary Woodland

#### Description

Planted (circa 1980) native species broadleaved woodland abutting much older hedgerows. Moss Leach forms part of the structure planting carried out by the New Town Development Corporation as part of their overall landscape strategy.

#### Significance

Broadleaved woodland cover is very low nationally, regionally and locally. Around 7% of land use in Britain is taken up by broadleaved woodland, regionally and locally the figure is around 3%. Therefore Moss Leach provides an important habitat for local flora and fauna in a very urban landscape.

Without woodland planting this part of East Preston would be dominated by light industrial buildings, Moss Leach and other woods break the landscape down into small areas bounded by woodland and other landscape features.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland is small, and its long thin shape means its value to wildlife will always be limited, the fact that it does not buffer or extend other habitats and is surrounded in the main by light industrial units compounds this fact. However locally the woodland is an important landscape feature, and also acts as a sound barrier between the industrial units and the M6 motorway.

#### Factors Causing Change

The woodland gets allot of windblown litter from the nearby industrial estate.

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

Mature, stable broadleaved high forest, with a continuous canopy and diverse age and species range and succession by natural regeneration. As trees gradually reach senescence or are removed for tree safety purposes the gaps left in the canopy will be colonised by natural regeneration of oak, ash, birch etc.

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

Active thinning work will be undertaken where the woodland borders the M6 and along side footpaths to ensure long term stand stability. Tree safety inspections will be undertaken on a regular basis and work carried out if necessary for public safety. The site will be checked once during this plan period to asses whether there is sufficient regeneration to ensure the long term future of the canopy. A Woodland Condition assessment will be carried out once every five years to help guide future management.

## 5.2 Archaeological Feature

### Description

Cromwell's Mound is an earthwork constructed to divert water to the moat of Broughton Tower, the mound is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The mound takes the form of a 'T'-shaped earthwork measuring approximately 37m long by 8m-12m wide and up to 1.9m high with its longest side orientated north west-south east. The tail of the 'T' shape is formed by an embankment sloping down south westwards from the highest point of the mound.

### Significance

The siting of this feature at some distance from the moat is unusual and the historical context is unclear and may demand further research. The obscuring of the feature by tree cover would diminish its' value.

### Opportunities & Constraints

The maintenance of this feature requires that it not be covered by trees.

### Factors Causing Change

Encroaching vegetation, especially dogwood.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

Cromwell's mound will be safeguarded by maintaining it within a clearing in the wood.

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

The clearing around Cromwell's mound will be mown annually in August and the dogwood cut back and possibly eradicated if it proves to be particularly invasive.

### 5.3 Informal Public Access

#### Description

Informal access in the form of an unsurfaced grass path and a public right of way which run through the woodland for approximately 500 metres. The path network is well used by local people for informal recreation.

#### Significance

Opportunities for informal recreation in urban areas are highly valued by local people.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The ground can be very wet in winter, this sometimes may limit access. Many people work in the immediate area and woods including Moss Leach are good places to pass break-times.

#### Factors Causing Change

Fly Tipping

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

Moss Leach will continue to be used by local residents and workers for informal recreational purposes.

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

Access audit has been carried out as part of the Welcoming Sites Project (WSP) in 2015 and entrances and signage has been refreshed. The signs, entrances, and paths will be checked at least annually and litter will be cleared at least annually as part of the Estates Maintenance Contract.

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## 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      | 0.58      | Ash          | 1980 | High forest       | Mostly wet ground/exposed site | Archaeological Feature, Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | Scheduled Ancient Monument |

Compartment one is bounded by the Moss Leach Brook to the north and to the south by a factory. The eastern boundary is Midgery Lane and the western boundary is Preston Borough Land which abuts Eastway (an arterial road.) It consists of field maple, oak, ash, cherry, willow, hawthorn, hazel, dogwood and spindle which were planted circa 1980. The compartment is regenerating well with broadleaved species such as oak, ash and birch. In addition there are three hedgerow remnants dominated by hawthorn with some hazel, in which are found some older field boundary trees such as oak, ash, cherry and alder which show the common characteristics of local hedgerow trees, they are small, pollarded and have numerous cavities. The herb layer is to an extent suppressed by the dense canopy and shrub layer however woodland plants such as bluebell can be seen. A path leads from the entrance on Midgery Lane to an area of open grassland in the west of the compartment which contains an earthwork known as Cromwell's Mound which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

|    |      |     |      |             |                             |  |  |
|----|------|-----|------|-------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 2a | 1.00 | Ash | 1980 | High forest | People issues (+tve & -tve) | Archaeological Feature, Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland |  |
|----|------|-----|------|-------------|-----------------------------|--|--|

Compartment two lies between Midgery Lane and the M6 motorway. The northern boundary is again the Moss Leach Brook, to the south the land has been developed for light industrial use. This section is L shaped, continuing the orientation of the western compartment until it meets the M6 where it continues south eastwards. It consists of field maple, oak, ash, cherry, willow, hawthorn, hazel, dogwood and spindle which were planted circa 1980. The compartment is regenerating well with broadleaved species such as oak, ash and birch. The herb layer is to an extent suppressed by the dense canopy and shrub layer however woodland plants such as bluebell can be seen.

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## Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

| Forecast Year | Cpt | Operation Type | Work Area (ha) | Estimated vol/ha | Estimated total vol. |
|---------------|-----|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2018          | 2a  | Thin           | 1.00           | 3                | 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.